



Women of Faith

LENT (2/10/21)

WOF: LENT

ASH WEDNESDAY

Presented by Candie

On **Ash Wednesday**, Catholics and many other Christians will have ashes applied to their foreheads in the shape of a cross. People generally wear the ashes — which symbolize penance, mourning and mortality — throughout the day to publicly express their faith and penance.

Lent is a 40 day season, not counting Sundays, and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he fasted and where He endured temptation by Satan before beginning His public ministry. It also recalls that Moses and Elijah also spent 40 days in the wilderness.

But let's go back one day. Shrove Tuesday, more commonly called Fat Tuesday, refers to the confession of sins as a preparation for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages. Although the day is still sometimes used for self-examination and introspection, it eventually acquired the character of a carnival or festival in many places and is often celebrated with parades such as the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. As the final day before the self-denial of the Lenten fast, Shrove Tuesday also has many customs pertaining to food. Pancakes are traditional in a number of

European countries because eggs, sugar and fat, commonly forbidden during the Lenten fast, are used up so they will not go to waste.

The Lenten season (from Middle English *lenten*, “spring”) is rooted in the preparation of candidates for baptism at the Paschal vigil. For several weeks they receive intensive instruction, each session followed by prayer and repentance. RCIA provides this preparation for adults who wish to become Catholic or who want to receive sacraments they missed as they grew up.

It was the practice in Rome for penitents and grievous sinners to begin their period of public penance on the first day of Lent in preparation for their restoration to the sacrament of the Eucharist. They were sprinkled with ashes, dressed in sackcloth, and obliged to remain apart until they were reconciled with the Christian community on Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter.

In the modern Roman Catholic Church, the ashes obtained by burning the palms used on the previous year’s Palm Sunday, are applied in the shape of a cross on the forehead of each worshipper. It is an obligatory day of fasting and abstinence, where only one full meal and no meat are to be consumed. Although Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, it is traditionally one of the most heavily attended non-Sunday Masses of the liturgical year.

Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for making an intentional season of focus on Christ’s life, ministry,

sacrifice,
and resurrection. By receiving the ashes, we are saying that we are sorry for our sins, and that we want to use the season of Lent to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness so we will be prepared to celebrate Easter with great joy”.

So what are you not allowed to eat on Ash Wednesday? As far as the exact rules and practices of Lent, those have changed over the years. In the early centuries, fasting rules were strict. One meal a day was allowed in the evening, and meat, fish, eggs, and butter were forbidden. The Eastern church also restricts the use of wine, oil, and dairy products. In the West, these fasting rules have gradually been relaxed. The strict law of fasting among Roman Catholics was dispensed with during World War II, and only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are now kept as Lenten fast days. In place of “giving up” something during Lent, Catholics are encouraged to take up something that will help enrich their faith or that will benefit someone in need.

Verses to Reflect on for Ash Wednesday:

If you'd like to start thinking through and observing Lent and Ash Wednesday, here are a few verses specific to Ash Wednesday to meditate and reflect on, and then a prayer you can pray to observe the day.

Our Creation: [Genesis 2:7](#) - Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his

nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Our Curse: [Genesis 3:19](#) - By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Our Cry of Repentance: [Psalm 51:7- 10](#): Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Christianity.com

The CatholicSpirit.com Church Year - Britannica

WOF: LENT

TRIDUUM

Presented by Domi

Often mispronounced and spelled as TRIDIUM, the correct spelling is T-R-I-D-U-U-M.

Pronounced TRI-DU-UM.

What does the word Triduum mean? Tri means three and du-um mean days.

When is the Triduum? The Triduum is a liturgical season of the Catholic church. Lent ends at sunset on Holy Thursday. So the Triduum goes from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday. But you might be saying, wait that's four days. Technically it starts in the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's supper and goes through evening prayer on Easter Sunday evening.

It is made up of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday going through evening prayer.

The Sacred Triduum is a liturgical season unto itself. It is the center and the high point of the whole liturgical year. It is the most important time in the Catholic Church and is often referred to as the high holy days. In the Roman

Missal, it lists all the different days on the liturgical calendar for each year in all three cycles. If you were to graph all the liturgical seasons of the year in terms of importance, we would see that the church has established that the Paschal Triduum is the high point of all of them. All other liturgical seasons flow from the Paschal Triduum.

There are important aspects of each day of the Triduum.

On Holy Thursday, in the gospel we hear about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. That is followed by the washing of the feet of people in the congregation. And during the Eucharistic prayer, we commemorate the Institution of the Eucharist at the Passover Meal which we refer to as the Last Supper.

On Good Friday, we commemorate the Passion and death of our Lord.

On Holy Saturday we celebrate the Easter Vigil which has four distinct parts.

Part 1 is the new fire which symbolizes the light that dispels the darkness.

In Part 2, the liturgy of the word, we listen to several readings that recount salvation history.

In part 3, the liturgy of baptism, new Christians are initiated into the faith of the Catholic church. In part 4, the liturgy of

the Eucharist, we have the memorial of the Institution of the Eucharist.

Easter Sunday – we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord

The Sacred Triduum officially ends with evening vespers on Easter Sunday.

There is so much symbolism in all the parts of the Triduum that I could talk for the whole session. Aside from the symbolism, it is important to ask ourselves, “What do we take away from each celebration.”

I would like to focus on Holy Thursday. In the gospel for Holy Thursday, from the gospel of John 13:4-9 we hear: “he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus said to him, “What I am doing, you do not understand now but you will understand later. Simon Peter said to him, “Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well.”

As we think about this passage, we might ask “Why were the apostles so shocked, especially Peter, that Jesus would take off his cloak and wash their feet”?

They were shocked because that was the job of a slave. Jesus humbled himself to the lowest rank of society then.

He was being a servant. Jesus modeled humility and showed his great love for his apostles. He taught us to serve one another, be a good neighbor, be respectful, assist those in need. The washing of the feet teaches us humility and service, to be present to others, especially in their need.

Another important part of Holy Thursday is when we recall the Institution of the Eucharist. In Matt 26:26-29 we hear “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.”

In Mark 14: 22-25 we hear a similar account:

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Both accounts are similar because Matthew and Mark both used the Q source as their basis for their account. The Q source is a hypothetical written collection of primarily Jesus' sayings.

In Luke 22:14-20 we hear: When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you".

St. Paul tells us in the first letter to the Corinthians, 1 Cor 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."1

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

It is important for us to recognize how the Institution of the Eucharist in Jesus time occurs in every Mass that is celebrated.

When the priest receives the offerings of bread and wine, we recall that Jesus “took the bread” and he ‘took the wine’. Likewise the priest takes the offerings of bread and wine.

During the offertory prayers and the Eucharistic prayer, the priest gives thanks and blesses the bread and wine as Jesus did.

At the point in mass of the breaking of the bread, the priest is doing as Jesus did when he broke the bread.

And in the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest does as Jesus did when he gave the bread and wine to his disciples at the Passover meal.

So Jesus and the priest, take the bread and wine,

Give thanks and bless the bread and wine

They both break the bread and they both give the bread and wine to those present.

The priest is doing as Jesus did. We are doing this in remembrance of Him.

Another important aspect in all the scriptures we just heard is Jesus saying something about a new covenant.

In Matt he says: " This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many".

In Mark he says "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.

In Luke he says "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" and in St Paul's letter we hear: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."I

If this is a "new" covenant, what is the old covenant?

Remember that the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples was part of the Jewish festival of Passover which had been observed annually since Moses led the people out of Egypt. The old covenant was for a specific people in a specific place and time.

The Old Covenant came about at the first Passover when God fulfilled the old covenant with his people Israel which was the promise of restoration. God brought his people out of Egypt thru the Red sea which was parted. He brought them to freedom after centuries of being enslaved in Egypt. This was a pivotal event in the formation of God's people as a nation.

In the Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, Jesus is commemorating, observing and remembering what God did for his people. At the same time, He is revealing what God is doing for us in the new covenant. Jesus

establishes the new covenant at the last supper where “He gave them bread to eat which He called His Body and He gave them wine to drink which he called His Blood which he poured out for us.”

The new covenant is the relationship between God and us, made possible by Jesus, by His suffering, death and resurrection. The new covenant is for the entire world, for each individual Christian. It is a promise of redemption by God to us, not based on our merits but based on God’s grace.

We remember it first on Holy Thursday and in every mass ever celebrated. The new covenant is the one made by God with us where He sent His only son, Jesus who gives his body and blood on the cross in order to grant us freedom, freedom from sin, freedom from spiritual slavery.

So when we celebrate the Eucharist we are “doing this in remembrance” of Him. We are doing what He told us to do. But just going to mass and celebrating the Eucharist is not enough. It is an empty act of piety if we do not follow the example Jesus gave us of humility and service to others when He washed the disciples’ feet.

The Entrance Antiphon for Holy Thursday summarizes the new covenant for us:

“We should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection.”

And different closing prayers written for the mass give us the instructions for how to achieve this, how to live the new covenant where we are free from sin.

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life

Sources:

NABRE Bible on USCCB website

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Roman Missal

Biblestudytools.com

(Etymonline.com)

WOF: LENT

PREPARATION FOR A MEANINGFUL LENT

Presented by Mary

Lent is a time for self-reflection and deepening one's relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

How do we go about this?

We will have an opportunity to pray, fast and give alms. But what does this mean?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) defines these three terms as follows:

Prayer: The elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise of his glory; a petition made to God for some desired good, or in thanksgiving for a good received, or in intercession for others before God. Through prayer the Christian experiences a communion with God through Christ in the Church.

Fasting: Refraining from food and drink as an expression of interior penance, in imitation of the fast of Jesus for forty days in the desert. Fasting is an ascetical practice recommended in Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers; it is sometimes prescribed by a precept of the Church, especially during the liturgical season of Lent.

Almsgiving: Money or goods given to the poor as an act of penance or fraternal charity. Almsgiving, together with prayer and fasting, are traditionally recommended to foster the state of interior penance.

Why Should I pray, fast, and give alms?

Pope St. Leo the Great tells us that “...there are three things which most belong to religious actions, namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving...” and that “This threefold round of duty, dearly beloved, brings all other virtues into action: it attains to God's image and likeness and unites us inseparably with the Holy Spirit. Because in prayer faith remains steadfast, in fastings life remains innocent, in almsgiving the mind remains kind. (Pope St. Leo the Great <http://www.ancient-future.net/leosermonxii.html>)

Why does praying, fasting, and almsgiving work?

The answer to this question can be found in Jesus description of the greatest commandment.

“...one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”” (Matthew 22:35-39) The whole faith (represented by the law and the prophets) depends on loving god with our whole heart and loving our neighbor as our self.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving direct us toward the three objects of the command. This is why Pope St. Leo is able to say that prayer, fasting, and almsgiving “brings all other virtues into action”. Prayer directs us toward a greater love of God. Fasting leads to self-mastery that allows us to love ourselves in the right manner while also being able to uphold the rights of others even at personal cost. Almsgiving is the direct expression of the love of neighbor in which we are united to him, truly loving our neighbor in the manner in which we love our self.

Practical advice for making the most out of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lent.

1. Consider fasting from some form of noise or media this Lent.

2. Fast for someone particular each day.
3. Let your fast financially support your almsgiving.
4. When you give alms, do not judge the intention of the recipient.
5. Consider adding in addition to subtracting.

Our prayers, fasting, and our service are all done with the intention of loving Christ more.

How will you practice these Lenten disciplines this year?

Consider Lent as a season of love and how you will fall in love with God more deeply.

Reflect on how much you love God and how you might love God more.

Lent is a time to take to heart the words of John the Baptist, "He must increase but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

WOF: LENT

LENTEN CANDLE MEDITATION

Presented by Mari

The candle colors

Purple: The liturgical color for Lent season is purple. It is the symbol for penance. It also represents the preparation followers practice during Lent season and the sacrifice of the Christ.

Rose: Rose is the symbol of anticipation of the rejoicing to follow when the Christ is resurrected from the dead on Easter Sunday. The rose candle is traditionally lit on the fourth Sunday of Lent- Laetare Sunday. Laetare is Latin and means to rejoice.

Red: The symbol for passion, blood, and fire, red is assigned to Palm Sunday (Sunday before Easter), Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday), and Christ's passion. It also represents the Holy Spirit.

White: The symbol of purity, light, joy and glory, white is also a symbol of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Meditation

We have come together this morning for renewal—in worship and as a community of faith. We've greeted one another, laughed and hugged. But now the time of reflection and stillness is upon us.

If you haven't already, I ask you to light your candle. Get comfortable. Take a few long deep breaths. Look at your flame. Soften your gaze. If you find your mind wandering, fix your gaze back to the flame. Watch it dance.

Candle 1 (1st Sunday):

We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It's

an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

Candle 2 (2nd Sunday):

Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. The season of Lent is the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, urgent voice. Listen. Jesus is being drawn to Jerusalem. Where is God calling you to? What is God calling you to do?

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injury That we have done against God and others.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on the work of transforming the world. Amen.

Candle 3 (3rd Sunday):

There is so much during the day that clamors for our attention. Friends, family, work, classes, household tasks. And the noise! We are bombarded with sound, from the clock that awakens us to the telephone, the radio, the television, the conversation that we have or overhear. Where is the time and place to listen for the still, small voice of God? Sometimes it seems that God would have to speak in a whirlwind to be heard above the clamor! Listen now. There is a place of quiet rest, and it is the place where God dwells within you. Close your eyes. Be aware of the place. In Lent we journey to the parts of ourselves known only to

God, beneath the clamor. Let the story of Jesus reach us there. Let it teach us wisdom in our secret hearts.

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of violence in the world and to the Earth.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Draw us together in your love, O God. May our restless hearts not resist you, but continue to search until they find their rest in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Candle 4 (4th Sunday):

I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings—relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where you are in your journey this day—I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward. When it is fully present, then listen . . . for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation.

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love.

Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. Amen.

Candle 5 (5th Sunday):

I invite you to consider the word, “sanctuary.” A sanctuary is a place set aside for sacred things. It is a place of refuge and protection. This room is a sanctuary. The season of Lent is a kind of sanctuary, extended in time. And one of the things Lent teaches is that you, too, are a sanctuary. There is inside you a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of war and oppression in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. Amen.

Candle 6 (6th Sunday):

We have gathered here sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will we greet him? Will we follow him all the way to the Cross? The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea, that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this drama? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus?

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

Candle 7 (Palm Sunday):

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. It happened a long time ago, but it happened. Jesus walked on this earth. He practiced a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life acceptable to you, O God. His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to you.

(Silent meditation time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all your children in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit.

(A candle is extinguished.)

What we contemplate this night is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. Amen.

Candle 8 (Easter Sunday):

Proclamation

The light which the world tried to extinguish cannot be put out. So we light the candles again, proclaiming the transforming power of God. As the light returns, we give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us. Tonight we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities. Christ is alive and living among us!

As we light the candles, we acknowledge that there is still pain and suffering in the world, but we place our trust in God and in the way shown by Jesus Christ. In the midst of darkness, there is light. In the pain of death, there is life. In the face of what appear to us to be overwhelming odds, God is at work in us and in the world, working for justice and peace, compassion and love, and life abundant. Christ is risen; Christ is risen in us, for wherever we gather in his name, he is there.

(All candles are re-lit.)

Alleluia, Christ is risen

Source:

<https://candles.lovetoknow.com/about-candles/colors-meanings-lent-candles>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lenten-lights>

<https://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/candle-meditation.html>