

Renouncing & Affirming

Baptismal Promises

Most Christians were baptized as infants, requiring these promises to have been made on their behalf by their parents and godparents. At the Easter Sunday Mass, however, we can all speak for ourselves by answering, "I do."

You will hear the priest say:

"Now that our Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and his works and promised to serve God in the holy Catholic Church. And so, I ask you:"

First, you renounce evil:

V. "Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?"

V. Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

V. Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?"

Then, you affirm your Catholic beliefs:

V. "Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?"

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?"

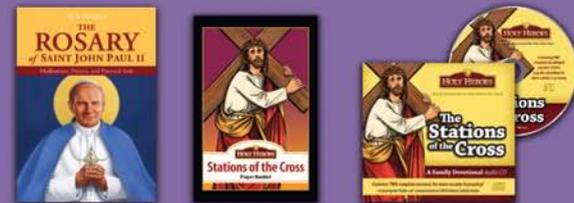
V. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?"

—from the Renewal of Baptismal Promises during the Easter Vigil,
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HOW TO HAVE A

Fruitful Family Lent

ON YOUR JOURNEY TO EASTER



"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights ... and, behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

MATTHEW 4:1–2,11

The True Goal of Lent

The penitential disciplines of Lent prepare us to renew our baptismal promises at Easter. Although we cross ourselves with holy water when we enter a Catholic church as a reminder of our baptism, Easter is the time when we formally renew those promises. Lent helps us prepare in mind, body, and soul to undertake anew the responsibilities of living as "children of God" who, by grace, freely reject the false allure and slavery of sin, and affirm by word and deed the truths of the Catholic Faith.

During Lent we strive to imitate Jesus in the desert by:

- Being led by the Holy Spirit—rather than our own desires
- Resisting temptations of the devil and renouncing his lies
- Fasting to deny our own comforts—seeking instead a closer union with God
- Accepting help from the angels God sends to us

Lent is NOT:

... a covert season of self-improvement, spring-cleaning, or giving up vices and bad habits. We should always do those things.

Lent is:

... a season to create an ever-larger place within our hearts to love. We imitate Christ's sacrifices so that we can grow in our capacity to love.

By willingly denying ourselves some good things in this earthly life, by sharing what we have with others, and by paying more attention to what God wants of us we die to ourselves and grow in love of God and our neighbor.

Lent is not so much "what YOU do" but "what GOD does in you."

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Three ways to imitate Jesus

PRAYER FASTING ALMSGIVING

On **ASH WEDNESDAY**, the first day of Lent, our foreheads are marked with ashes to remind us of our mortality. We hear the sobering words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” or “Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” In the readings at Mass we hear Jesus instruct His disciples how to pray, fast, and give alms (Mt 6:1-6, 16-21). A unifying theme is that we should not make a public show of our penitential practices so other people praise us. Instead, we should keep them secret between ourselves and God, knowing that God will reward us.

PRAYER: God will transform us if we dedicate time to be with Him in prayer. Prayer is speaking with God and listening to God, heart to heart, because we know He loves us.

FASTING: By choosing to sacrifice some enjoyable food or other earthly pleasures, we can grow closer to Jesus, who made the ultimate sacrifice for us. What good things can you give up during Lent, without neglecting others in your home or creating a burden on them? In addition to the sacrifices you choose, the Church requires us to **fast** on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (ages 18-59). We also **abstain** from meat on all Fridays during Lent (ages 14 and older).

ALMSGIVING: Giving alms means donating money or material goods to the poor as well as making other acts of charity. The key is giving something of yourself—something that costs you. It doesn’t have to be a grand gesture. Small, quiet acts of kindness can be immensely meaningful. Simply, be generous!

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

HEBREWS 13:16

Allow God to move you toward Him and away from selfishness.

MOVE AWAY from the devil and his temptations.

- We are not strong enough to resist sin on our own, but Christ’s time in the desert shows us that angels are sent to help us.
- Your Guardian Angel will accompany you through Lent, and you can recite the Saint Michael prayer daily for his help.
- Going to Confession during Lent is essential in allowing God to protect you from the allure of sin. Instead of giving into your sins, you give your sins to God to absolve—and He will give you strength to “go and sin no more.”

MOVE AWAY from worldly attachments and TOWARD our Heavenly interests through prayer.

- Jesus told Satan, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4) This reminds us to look beyond the things of this world to the things of Heaven.
- Read key Bible verses during Lent and prayerfully meditate on their meaning. This method is called *Lectio Divina*.
- Consider keeping a prayer journal to help you recognize the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in your life.
- Go to Mass more often than just on Sundays—the Mass is the highest form of prayer.
- Pray the Rosary during Lent. Let Our Lady tell you about the life of her Son in the Mysteries of the Rosary.

MOVE AWAY from selfishness TOWARD a selfless love of God and neighbor.

- Recall the selflessness of Jesus, Mary, Veronica, and Simon of Cyrene by praying the Stations of the Cross, especially on the Fridays throughout Lent.
- Everything you “give up” for Lent enables you to die to self-love a little bit and increases your capacity to love others. Giving alms to others helps you to give a bit of yourself to them.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

HEBREWS 13:2

SAINT JOHN PAUL II REMINDS US “Jesus Himself has shown us by His own example that prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil.”

“[Jesus said] this kind [of unclean spirit] cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”

MARK 9:29

SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PRAYER

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Stepping Stones to Easter Joy

There are six Sundays during Lent.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT tells us of Jesus’s temptations in the desert and His response of faithfulness to His Heavenly Father.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT reminds us of The Transfiguration, an event meant to reassure us of Christ’s divinity and His ultimate victory over death.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT is known as *Laetare Sunday*—*laetare* means rejoice—and is a day of hope because Easter is at last within sight.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD’S PASSION marks the beginning of Holy Week. Palm fronds help us recall Christ’s joyful entry into Jerusalem and a dialogue reading of the Passion evokes heartfelt attention to His sacrificial love.

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

The Summit of the Liturgical Year

Triduum is a Latin word meaning three days. These most holy of all days begin the evening of Holy Thursday and continue to the evening of Easter Sunday.

HOLY THURSDAY Mass of the Lord’s Supper commemorates Christ’s institution of Holy Orders, the Eucharist, and the Holy Mass. This is the last Mass until the celebration of Easter. It concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to a place for Adoration to commemorate Our Lord’s Agony in the Garden.

GOOD FRIDAY No Mass is celebrated anywhere in the world, however a solemn Celebration of the Passion of the Lord takes place around 3:00 pm. It includes another dialogue reading of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross, and Holy Communion.

HOLY SATURDAY The Church waits at the Lord’s tomb praying and fasting; meditating on Christ’s Passion, death, and descent into hell; and awaiting His Resurrection.

EASTER SUNDAY begins with the Easter Vigil after nightfall on Saturday. Easter Sunday is a day of joy in which we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord. The Alleluia is sung for the first time since the beginning of Lent. Renewal of our baptismal promises and a sprinkling of the people with holy water replaces the Creed. At the conclusion of the Mass, the people are dismissed with a double alleluia—a liturgical expression of Easter joy which is then maintained at all Masses throughout the octave of Easter.

