



St. Mary Magdalene Parish Newsletter

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The Season of Lent

Let us return to the Lord with prayer, fasting and works of mercy

For many Catholics Lent revives memories of days when candy, movies, weddings and other signs of human celebration were “given up.” There is an old sense of Lent as a time of self-imposed penance and asceticism. The explicitly religious expression of the season might have taken the form of weekly stations of the cross and daily Mass. Lent was to be endured.

There is a legitimate sense of the prayer, asceticism and charity towards neighbor that are authentic hallmarks of the lenten season. There is a genuine need to see all these practices and prayers in the light of the Church’s annual retreat in preparation for the Triduum. During those three days new Christians will be born from the font of baptism and all Christians will welcome them with an enthusiasm kindled anew through reliving our own birth in Christ.

Lent is first, last and foremost about baptism. Baptism is about going down with Christ unto death and being raised up with him to glory. This death and rising can be celebrated only after it has been experienced and lived in the daily fabric of human life. So Lent is about dying to self for the life of others. Lent is about dying to all human supports which blind us from seeing that true life is in God alone. Lent is as serious as coming to know the deepest meanings of human life are seen in Jesus who fights every temptation to take the world by power, force or the razzle-dazzle of miracles.

The lenten fast begins with Ash Wednesday.

On this day we are signed with a cross for we live under and in that sign. The sense of Lent as preparation for initiation and its renewal is most clearly proclaimed in the **A Cycle** of Sunday readings. The lenten fast concludes on Thursday of Holy Week. With the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, lent ends and the Christian community enters into the annual celebration of the Passover of the Lord.



The color purple is used during the Season of Lent as a sign of renewal and repentance. Enclosed is a purple ribbon as a reminder that as a faith community we need to return to the Lord, to “return to the Lord with our whole heart.”

May this ribbon be a sign and symbol of your commitment to prayer, fasting and works of mercy (*almsgiving*) during these 40 days.

