

Ash Wednesday | Return to me with your whole heart

On Wednesday, February 18, we begin the Lenten season.

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian observance of Lent — a 40-day journey that leads up to the commemoration of Jesus' death during Holy Week and the celebration of his resurrection on Easter. This holy season is marked by the practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Inspired by the words of the prophet Joel: "Return to me with your whole heart" (Joel 2:12, NABRE), Lent invites deep and honest self-reflection. This call summons us to consider where change is needed in our lives and to lean into the still, small voice of God.

For reflection and discussion: What is keeping you from experiencing goodness and wholeness?

Call to action: As we embark upon this journey of spiritual renewal, make space to observe stillness. Carve out time to listen to God who whispers softly and waits for our response.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, deepen our reliance on Your grace and faithfulness. As we return to You with our whole heart, help us release that which no longer serves us. Draw us ever closer to Your unfailing love. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for Ash Wednesday.



Lent 1 | Give to those who are most in need

On Sunday, February 22, we begin the First Week of Lent.

In the Book of Psalms, it is written: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.” (Hebrews 13:16a, NABRE) This passage reminds us of the importance of almsgiving or doing acts of charity, one of the central themes during Lent.

For reflection and discussion: Recall a moment when you extended generous service, sharing what you have for love of your neighbor. How did that experience connect you to community and love of God?

Call to action: With a joyful and generous spirit, share your resources. Show your appreciation when others do the same.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, deepen our commitment to the Value of Service of the Poor. Give us eyes to see Your face in others, especially those most in need. Help us to share resources with reverence and generosity. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the First Week of Lent.



Lent 2 | Prayer helps us be fully present

On Sunday, March 1, we begin the Second Week of Lent.

In the Book of Psalms, we hear: "Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you." (Psalm 102:2) This passage reminds us of the importance of prayer, one of the central themes during Lent.

For reflection and discussion: Recall a time when you found quiet and solitude to experience one-on-one time with God. What do you need in order to create space for cultivating a relationship with the Sacred during this Lenten season?

Call to action: Imagine prayer as time with a friend. When they have something important to say, your natural instinct would be to find a quiet place to listen to what is on their heart. Take time to create time and space to pray and reflect during your Lenten journey.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, shower us with Your grace when we express our deepest concerns. As we place our trust in You, help us to grow spiritually, act justly, and serve faithfully for the sake of the common good. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the Second Week of Lent.



Lent 3 | The practice of fasting

On Sunday, March 8, we begin the Third Week of Lent.

Fasting is a core pillar of Lent and requires self-restraint. Pope Francis spoke of the results of this discipline when he said: "Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security, and as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him."

For reflection and discussion: What are you being called to fast from in order to "feast" on hope? How might you fast from judgement to feast on compassion?

Call to action: Hold in your hearts all who fast during this time – Muslims during Ramadan and Christians during Lent. As they observe these holy seasons, offer them your support, understanding and compassion.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, give us strength to practice fasting and self-restraint. May our hunger lead us to what truly satisfies and awaken us to the needs of others. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the Third Week of Lent.



Lent 4 | Transformational power of grace and forgiveness

On Sunday, March 15, we begin the Fourth Week of Lent.

In the Book of Psalms, we hear these words: “Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.” (Psalms 51:3, NABRE) This passage invites us to be forgiving and to practice repentance which are central themes during Lent.

For reflection and discussion: Where is the transformational power of forgiveness needed in your life?

Call to action: Call to mind a person who might be hard to forgive. Consider how setting aside any obstacles might rekindle the connection. As you recognize and minimize unhealthy attitudes and patterns, notice how it supports personal flourishing.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, give us courage and humility to examine where change is needed in our lives. With Your grace, soften our hearts as we forgive those who have offended us. As we seek reconciliation with others, guide us toward repairing and restoring healthy relationships. May these actions reflect Your love and grace. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the Fourth Week of Lent.



Lent 5 | Inner conversion leads to outward service

On Sunday, March 22, we begin the Fifth Week of Lent.

In the Book of Psalms, it is written: "A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit." (Psalm 51:12a, 14a, NABRE) This passage reminds us of the importance of conversion and spiritual renewal which are central themes during Lent.

For reflection and discussion: What spiritual practices help you grow into the person you feel called to be?

Consider how everyday activities, like prayer, breathing exercises, and finding the Divine in small acts of kindness, help you grow in patience, resilience and love.

Call to action: Be bold and courageous: change your priorities, if necessary, to better practice what it means to live with integrity.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as we observe this holy season of Lent, strengthen us as we renew our lives. May our practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving during this 40-day journey guide us toward inner conversion and lead us to outward service. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the Fifth Week of Lent.



Holy Week | Lessen the burden of others

On Sunday, March 29, we begin Holy Week.

As we enter into Holy Week – the final days of the Lenten season – let us listen to the Apostle John who said: "Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end." (John 13:1, NABRE) This passage foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross.

For reflection and discussion: As you reflect on the cross and Jesus' suffering, where have you experienced suffering? How have you felt God's presence in your own struggles, perhaps through friendships or community?

Call to action: Look for someone who could use some special attention. Lift their spirits and lighten their load by demonstrating kindness, compassion and care.

Prayer: Merciful and loving God, as this holy season of Lent draws to a close, deepen our awareness of Jesus' passion and suffering. As we recall His death, give us joyful hearts that await the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. While we reflect on the mysteries of life and death, help us to lessen the burden of others, especially those in most need. We humbly pray, Amen.

The [Catholic Health Association](#) has prepared resources for the Lenten season. Listen to and share this [audio recording](#) for the Holy Week.

