

PIOUS PRACTICES FOR LENT

Every Lent, Holy Mother The Church advocates certain pious practices that her children should perform to satisfy their requirements to do penance, to pray, to perform good works, to make reparation for their sins, and to further the apostolic work of the Church.

The primary purpose of Lent, of course, is to help us become truly holy—and we should work toward this goal during Lent by extra prayer, penance, good works, almsgiving, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments (the chief sources of grace).

SPECIFIC PRACTICES TO CHOOSE FROM

1. Abstinence: This is the giving up of something we like to eat, drink, smoke, use, etc. (All Catholics 14 and over are currently required to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent.) We can abstain from (give up) meat on days other than those required, give up candy, sweets, dessert, coffee, tea, smoking, beer, wine, hard liquor, eating between meals, and/or our favorite foods and drinks, etc.

2. Fasting: The Roman Catholic Church's traditional method of fasting is to take only one full meal per day, at which meat may be eaten (unless it is also a day of abstinence), plus 2 small meals that together do not equal the main meal and at which no meat is eaten, with nothing eaten between meals.

3. Mortification. - Don't do any unnecessary talking; instead, say little aspirations through the day.

A cold rinse in the shower (three Glorias ought to do it). Seasoning one item on your plate so that it is distasteful. Taking less of what you like and more of what you don't like. When driving alone don't put on the heat/AC

4. Working on virtue. –

For Fathers: I will get to know my boys better, in fact, I will get to know all my children better, so that I will cultivate a healthy relationship with them. This will help me to be someone they will trust for advice, and open up to about their troubles. To do this will entail a sacrifice of time, and possibly other sacrifices too, as I will have to speak with them and do things with them when I might rather attend to other matters.

For Mothers: Knowing how important it is to teach by example, I will make the sacrifice of getting up a little early so that I will get my children to school (and/or Mass) on time. (This resolution would obviously pertain to anyone who has had a problem in this area.)

For Husbands: I will listen more to my wife — not obey, but listen — so that I can cultivate a genuine sympathy for her, studying to understand her needs, fears, and concerns. (Ephesians 5:25).

For Wives: I will revere and obey my husband as head of the family. Colossians 3:18;

For Children/Youth: I will do something pleasantly surprising for my mother and/or father on a regular basis. Note: It will not necessarily be pleasant for me, but will entail some sacrifice, even if only small.

5. In General – Exercise your patience in all things. Don't make any complaints. Restrain any anger, and go out of your way to be kind to the person who caused your anger.

6. I will mind my own business. Refrain from saying some unnecessary thing I wish to say.

7. I will force myself to smile and be cheerful when I feel sad or irritated.

9. I will not complain of little discomforts and inconveniences, and even, at times, seek them out.

10. Whenever it is possible, I will do the will of others instead of my own.

11. I will be especially kind and friendly to the person that most annoys me.

12. I will say a little aspiration and lift my mind to God each time the clock strikes the hour.

13. I will say, "Thank You, God," whenever something happens contrary to my will.

14. When possible, I will wait for a time before doing something I am most eager to do.

15. I will discontinue without delay any pleasurable occupations if duty, obedience, or charity calls me elsewhere.

16. When others do not agree with me in matters of slight importance, I will keep silent and not press my opinion.

17. Whenever I awake in the night, I will raise my heart to God. . I will not excuse myself when blamed.

18. **TV/Internet:** We can drastically limit our TV/Internet viewing, give up favorite programs or eliminate it altogether.

19. **Prayer:** - The daily Rosary. - An extra Mass or more each week. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest prayer there is. - A Holy Hour, once a week, twice a week, or each day.

- Pray for those in Purgatory. - Pray for those who are in danger of dying –

20. Go to Confession once a week: Frequent Confession is generally said to be once a month, but in Introduction to the Devout Life St. Francis de Sales recommends once a week.

21. Perform good works:

- Visit the sick. - Visit people in nursing homes once a week. – Visit the Lonely and forgotten.

- Take someone to Mass with you on Sundays.

22. Give alms:

- Increase your donation at Church. - Give to cloistered monasteries and convents.

- Support good Catholic schools. - Help those who are poor.

23. Do Apostolic work:

- Take someone to Mass with you. - Take someone to Confession with you.

- Invite someone to become a Catholic—start talking to him about it.

- Get him to a priest for instruction. - Get a priest to visit a fallen-away Catholic, especially an elderly one.

- Distribute Catholic books, booklets, prayer cards and leaflets.

24. Engage in spiritual reading: -

Require yourself to do at least 15 minutes of reading from a good Catholic book each day.

REMEMBER:

Lent is a holy season set aside by the Church during which we are recommended to do extra prayer, penance, sacrifice, good works and almsgiving, plus to frequent the Sacraments and attend Mass more often—all for the welfare of our souls. And we should all keep before our minds that many a pious practice begun during Lent has become a lifelong virtuous habit that has thereby helped to perfect those who have made a mere "humble beginning" during Lent.