

# LENT

## 2023

Church of St. Patrick  
Bay Shore, New York



“Repent  
and believe  
in the Gospel.”

- The Roman Missal

## THE MEANING OF LENT

We're going on retreat! True, we may not physically be traveling to a far-off place, but we are nonetheless going on retreat. The solemn season of Lent may be seen as a time of retreat for the entire Church, as we prepare to celebrate Easter and the new life which comes to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. In fact, three focal points can form the basis for our Lenten spiritual journey:

- focusing on the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection;
- final preparation of those in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist;
- rediscovery of and recommitment to Baptism by those already baptized, through their penance, spiritual renewal, and ongoing conversion.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II explains: *“The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent — the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance — should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer. More use is to be made of the baptismal features which are proper to the Lenten liturgy...The same may be said of the penitential elements. But catechesis, as well as pointing out the social consequences of sin, must impress on the minds of the faithful the distinctive character of penance as a detestation of sin because it is an offense against God. The role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be passed over, and the need to pray for sinners should be emphasized. During Lent, penance should be not only internal and individual but also external and social. “*

## THE STRUCTURE OF LENT

Most people know that Lent is 40 days long, but they think that the 40 days are the six weeks plus the four days of the week of Ash Wednesday (which totals 46 days) minus six Sundays, which equals 40 days. But Lent does not end on Holy Saturday; it ends on Holy Thursday evening. The Triduum, or Three Days, beginning with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and concluding with evening Vespers on Easter Sunday, is a three-day season unto itself, and not merely the final three days of Lent. The span of days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday is 44 days, but the ancient fathers of the Church calculated 40 days by beginning the count with the First Sunday of Lent, and continuing until Holy Thursday. This practice has been kept to the present time, hence the 40 days of Lent.

**PRAYER** consists of attention. It is the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable toward God. The quality of the attention counts for much in the quality of the prayer. Warmth of heart cannot make up for it.

The highest part of the attention only makes contact with God when prayer is intense and pure enough for such a contact to be established; but the whole attention is turned toward God.

~ *Simone Weil*

**WHEN** we pray, we are not to pray for ourselves alone. We do not say, “My Father, who art in heaven” or, “Give me this day my daily bread;” we do not ask for our own trespasses alone to be forgiven; and when we pray that we may be delivered from evil, we are not praying only for ourselves either.

Our prayer is for the general good, for the common good. When we pray, we do not pray for our own single selves; we pray for all God’s people, because they and we are one.

~ *Cyprian of Carthage, Third Century*

**THERE** are as many ways to pray as there are moments in life. Sometimes we seek out a quiet spot and want to be alone, sometimes we look for a friend and want to be together. Sometimes we like a book, sometimes we prefer music. Sometimes we want to sing out with hundreds, sometimes only whisper with a few. Sometimes we want to say it with words, sometimes in deep silence.

In these moments, we gradually make our lives more of a prayer and we open our hands to be led by God even to places we would rather not go.

~ *Henri Nouwen*

At least four phases of the season can be discerned:

1. **Ash Wednesday and the next three days:** These four days form a solemn preview of the season; the Scriptures and Mass prayers announce the major aspects of the observance and call us to enter into the season. The First Sunday of Lent begins the period of 40 days, with the Rite of Election for the catechumens being one expression of this.
2. **The 28 days from the First Sunday until the Saturday of the Fourth Week:** Scripture readings and penitential rites provide the structure for these days. Penance services and the first two scrutinies for the elect on the Third and Fourth Sundays are all a part of this time. Three feast days — our own Patronal Feast, the Solemnity of St. Patrick (March 17), the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary (March 20 this year as March 19 is a Sunday) and the Solemnity of the Annunciation (March 25) — break this violet period in 2022. The Fourth or *Laetare* Sunday (March 18) brings its own nuances, and rose-colored vestments may be worn that day.
3. **From the Fifth Sunday and following:** Attention becomes focused on the Passion of Christ during this period of Lenten time. The Third Scrutiny for the elect is celebrated on the Fifth Sunday of Lent.
4. **The last days, called Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord:** These days are given the highest liturgical precedence so the Church will not be distracted from final preparations for the Triduum. Focus on the Passion of Christ becomes intensified.

Remembering that Lent is primarily about baptismal preparation and conversion, let us be aware of the structure and movement of this season as we journey toward Easter.

## CHURCH ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER RITUAL ELEMENTS DURING LENT

Our church environment will look different during the Lenten season. The environment in which we worship helps us to enter into a Lenten spirituality — what we see (and don’t see) and smell and hear is all a part of the way we pray. Here are some things you will notice during Lent:

**THERE WILL BE NO FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH.** The Roman Rite is specific about flowers for this penitential season: they are not allowed! The only exceptions this year are the feasts mentioned above and “*Laetare*” Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent.



**OUR BAPTISMAL FONT WILL HAVE A “LENTEN LOOK” TO IT.** Our baptismal font will be decorated with purple bands, as a reminder that these forty days of penance and conversion lead to a renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter. We are thirsting for the new Easter water which will flow at the celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection!

**MUSIC WILL BE MUCH SIMPLER DURING LENT.** For example, the organ will be used only to accompany singing, which means there will not be any prelude or postlude instrumental music, except on *Laetare* Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), when the liturgy has a more joyful tone. In a sense, then, you could say that we are fasting with our music. Don’t worry, though; we’ll make up for it in the exuberance and joy of Easter Time!

**ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, WE WILL KEEP THE CHURCH’S ANCIENT TRADITION OF SINGING THE LITANY OF THE SAINTS AS WE BEGIN OUR LENTEN PILGRIMAGE.** We invoke the names of the saints who accompany us on our journey to Jerusalem.

**FOR THE PENITENTIAL ACT AT ALL SUNDAY MASSES DURING LENT WE WILL RECITE THE CONFITEOR (“I CONFESS TO ALMIGHTY GOD...”) AND THEN SING THE KYRIE ELEISON (“LORD, HAVE MERCY”).** This will highlight for us the penitential nature of the season and help us to more intently “acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.” It also gives us the chance to use the *Confiteor* (“I confess to almighty God...”) which is not often heard at Sunday Masses.

**WE WON’T BE HEARING “ALLELUIA!”** Instead of singing “Alleluia” before the Gospel, we sing instead: “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of Endless Glory.” Also, we won’t sing the word “alleluia” in any of our hymns. We look forward to Easter Time when we celebrate the newness of life and will again sing the “alleluia” with new joy and praise.

**WE WILL USE THE APOSTLES’ CREED INSTEAD OF THE NICENE CREED.** The *Roman Missal* tells us, “Instead of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially during Lent and Easter Time, the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles’ Creed, may be used.” So, to highlight the sacredness of the season, we will use the Apostles’ Creed instead of the Nicene Creed, the one we usually use, for all of Lent and Easter Time. This will highlight for us the baptismal character of both the Lenten and Easter seasons.

**THERE WILL BE NO SINGING OR INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AT THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS DURING LENT.** This will help create a mood of prayerful quiet and reflection appropriate to the season. The Priest may continue to pray the preparation prayers silently, or he may recite them out loud, giving the people the opportunity to respond, “Blessed be God forever.” The exception to this will be *Laetare* Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Lent), when the liturgy has a more joyful tone. We will also pay more attention to a period of silence after Communion before the Prayer after Communion.

**WHILE** fasting with the body, brothers and sisters, let us also fast in spirit. Let us loose every bond of iniquity; let us undo the knots of every contract made by violence; let us tear up all unjust agreements; let us give bread to the hungry and welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them, that we may receive mercy from Christ our God.

~ *Byzantine Vespers*

**REND** your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, rich in kindness and relenting in punishment.”

~ *Joel 2*

**THEREFORE**, as we are about to celebrate that most eminent of all mysteries, in which the blood of Jesus Christ has wiped away all our sins, let us first of all prepare to offer the sacrifice of mercy, so that what we have been given by the goodness of God we may ourselves show to those who have trespassed against us.

We must show more liberal bounty toward the poor and those who suffer from all kinds of affliction in order that many voices may give thanks to God and that the relief of those in need may support our fasts. Indeed, no other devotion of the faithful is more pleasing to the Lord than that which is directed toward the poor.

~ *St. Leo, Fifth Century*

**HOW** does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?

~ *Pope Benedict XVI, Lenten Message 2008*

**LORD**, when did I see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? I assure you, as often as you did it for one of the least of mine, you did it for me.

~ *Matthew 25*

**SIMPLE CHANT TONES WILL BE USED FOR THE EUCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS.** The Holy, Holy, the Mystery of Faith, and the Great Amen will be sung to very simple chants. Also, the Lamb of God chant will be sung using the Latin text (“Agnus Dei...”).

**CROSSES AND IMAGES IN THE CHURCH WILL BE COVERED STARTING THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT.** This custom becomes yet another stark visual reminder of the seriousness of Lent and helps us to truly experience heavenly joy and resurrected life when the images of the saints, who are in heavenly glory, are seen once again come Easter.

There are other ritual aspects that go into the celebration of Lent:

- the omission of the Glory to God in the highest at the beginning of all Sunday Lenten Masses;
- traditional Lenten practices such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving;
- Lenten devotions such as Stations of the Cross.

As we journey through the days of Lenten springtime together, let us enter into its spirit by anticipating the new life which comes to us through Jesus’ resurrection at Easter.

## **SPECIAL LENTEN OFFERINGS AT ST. PATRICK’S**

### **Stations of the Cross**

Every Wednesday of Lent following the 12:10 p.m. Mass and every Friday of Lent at 7:30 p.m. in the church

### **Lenten Soup Supper and Prayer Around the Cross**

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 - 6:00 to 8:30 p.m., Msgr. Purick Hall

Guest Speaker: Brother David Miglorino, OSF

Principal of St. Anthony’s High School

Please register for the soup supper by clicking on the following link:

<https://stpatrickbayshore.wufoo.com/forms/st-patricks-lenten-soup-supper/>

You can also find this link on the parish website: [www.stpatrickbayshore.org](http://www.stpatrickbayshore.org)

### **St. Patrick’s and St. Joseph’s Day Celebration**

Saturday, March 18, 2023 following the 8:00 a.m. Mass, Msgr. Purick Hall

Join us as we take a break from our Lenten fasting to celebrate the feast days of these two great saints who are an important part of our faith community. We will have Irish Soda bread, traditional St. Joseph’s pastries and coffee and tea. *No registration required.*

### **Living Stations of the Cross**

Sunday, April 2 at 4:00 p.m. in the church

Presented by St. Patrick’s Youth Ministry