

Preparing for Preparation: Lent

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Lent for Religious Educators

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
11 February 2021

Opening Prayer

We invoke your mercy in humble prayer, O Lord,
that you may cause us, your children,
corrected by penance and schooled by good works,
to persevere sincerely in your commands
and come safely to the paschal festivities.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

What is liturgical spirituality?

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. (SC 10)

- **Liturgical celebrations express the Christian faith**
 - Nature of the Church is expressed and disclosed at the liturgy
 - Texts, songs, seasons, prayers, gestures, postures, symbols
- **Liturgical celebrations form disciples into the person of Jesus Christ**
 - Rehearsal of Christian attitudes (Mark Searle), ritual celebrations
 - Ritual celebrations, practice for the world
- **Liturgical celebrations are mediated encounters with the Trinity**
 - Word & Sacrament, Christ's presence in the liturgy
 - *Sacrum commercium* - Holy Exchange - God gives, we receive, we return
- ***The Catholic spirituality***
 - By virtue of baptismal identity - formed as new Christs
 - Corporate and collective spirituality

How do we explore a liturgical spirituality?

1. Scripture
2. Prayer Texts
3. Sacramental Signs/Gestures/Postures

What is the nature of Lent?

Lent has a twofold nature:

1.

2.

What is the nature of Lent?

Lent has a twofold nature:

1. Baptism

2. Penance

The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent—
(1) the *recalling of baptism or the preparation for it*, and
(2) **penance**—should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer. (SC 109)

Baptism is the central focus of Lent

Time of intense preparation before Baptism became Lent

- 5-8th Centuries - Adult Baptism is the norm
- How do adults enter the Church?
- Catechumenate
- Preparation, Catechesis, Conversion
- Scrutiny Rites - purification, strength, exorcism

How does all this penance stuff fit in?

Baptism shifted to infancy. What about adult sin?

- Infant baptism is the norm
- How do we deal with grave, public sin?
- Order of Penitents (as early as 4c.)
- No public office, no military service, no sexual relations, no remarriage for widows
- Liturgical ceremony - Ashes, hairshirt, tunic, no reception of Communion
- Practices - Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving
- Not new - Jewish practices
- Readmission - Holy Thursday night

Modern Lenten Practices

Baptismal Preparation

- RCIA Rituals
 - Rite of Election, Scrutiny Rites, Easter Vigil Initiation
 - Listening to the Word of God
- Scrutiny Gospels - Lent 3, 4, 5 from John
 - Woman at the Well, Boy Born Blind, Raising of Lazarus
- Domestic Rituals
 - Baptismal promises, Water
 - What are you doing around the house?
 - Reminders of our own baptism - Baptism Dates
 - Priests (to bless and pray), Prophets (to speak truth to power), Royalty (beloved of God)

Modern Lenten Practices

Penitential Practices - Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving (Matt 6)

During Lent, penance should be *not only be internal and individual* but also *external and social*. The practice of penance should be encouraged in ways suited to the present day, to different regions, and to individual circumstances. (SC 110)

- Prayer
 - Gratitude, Psalms, Examens, Spiritual Reading
 - For forgiveness, For Catechumens
- Fasting
 - Ash Wednesday/Good Friday (Fasting)
 - Fridays (Abstinence from meat)
- Almsgiving
 - Monetarily - Assisting the poor, vulnerable, outcast, hungry, homeless
 - Advocacy - poor, prisoners, elderly, vulnerable

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- Sacrament of Reconciliation
 - Easter Duty
 - Rehearsal for Forgiveness - Confession, Remorse, Penance, Satisfaction
- Penance vs. Lenten Diet Plan/Challenge
 - Is this penance for me or others? Both?
 - Jim Martin, SJ - Phone-A-Friend
 - Age-appropriate practices

Ash Wednesday

- Sidewalk ash distribution - 8:30-9:30am, 6:00-7:00pm
- On the crown of the head (Jewish practice of humility, mourning, repentance)

