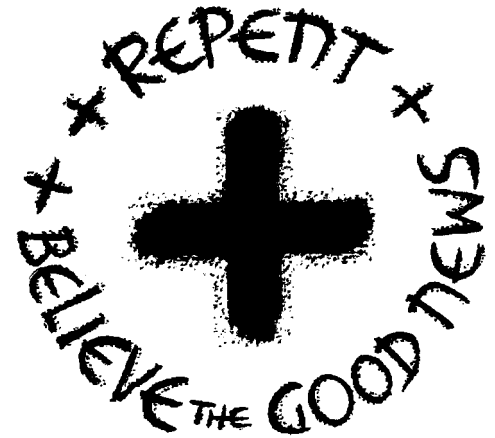


# A PRAYER DURING LENT

Historically,  
Lent is the 40 day period before Easter,  
excluding Sundays,  
which begins on Ash Wednesday  
and ends with the evening Mass  
on Holy Thursday  
which is the beginning of  
the Sacred Triduum.  
By the solemn forty days of Lent,  
the Church unites herself  
to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.



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We remember Your abiding presence among us, O Triune God.  
Lord Jesus, remember us when You come into Your kingdom.

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Even now, says the Lord,  
return to me with your whole heart,  
with fasting, weeping, and mourning;  
rend your hearts and not your garments,  
and return to the Lord your God.  
For gracious and merciful is He,  
slow to anger,  
rich in kindness,  
and relenting in punishment.  
Perhaps He will again relent  
and leave behind Him a blessing.  
Blow the trumpet in Zion!  
Proclaim a fast,  
call an assembly;  
gather the people,  
notify the congregation;  
assemble the elders and gather the children.  
Let the ministers of the Lord weep, and say,  
"Spare, O Lord, Your people."

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Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed.  
Recreate in us, Your own Spirit, Lord.

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Attend and keep this happy fast I preach to you this day.  
Is this the fast that pleases Me that takes your joy away?  
Do I delight in sorrow's dress, says God Who reigns above?  
The hanging head, the dismal look – will they attract My love?  
But is this not the fast I choose,  
that shares the heavy load;  
that seeks to bring the poor man in who's weary on the road;  
that gives the hungry bread to eat,  
to strangers gives a home;  
that does not let you hide your face from your own flesh and bone?  
Then like the dawn your light will break;  
to life you will be raised.  
And they will praise the Lord for you;  
be happy in your days.  
The glory of the Lord will shine,  
and in your steps His grace.  
And when you call He'll answer you;  
He will not hide His face.

Roger Ruston

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In this season of Lent, O holy God, strengthen us in our endeavors against selfishness and evil. Bless our efforts to live in union with You and all the people of the world. Help us to discover whatever hinders us from loving each other. We ask this in union with Christians everywhere who live and journey this holy season. Amen.

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Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God Who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish.

Philippians 2: 12-15

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The season of deliverance has come; the time of salvation is at hand.

Turn to Me with all your heart, says the Lord.

Believing in God's strength and mercy, let us be fortified with patience.

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Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to Your steadfast love;  
in Your abundant mercy blot out my sins.

Wash me thoroughly of my offenses,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

O purify me and I shall be clean;  
O wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Fill me with joy and gladness.

Hide Your face from my guilt,  
and blot out all my offenses.

Create in me a clean heart,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.

Cast me not from your presence,  
take not Your spirit from me.

Give me again the joy of Your salvation,  
with a willing spirit uphold me.

Open my lips and my mouth will sing Your praises.

Psalm 51

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The purpose of the Church in putting ashes on your head is to make you realize that you should be filled with a true spirit of penance. This sacred ceremony is a remnant of the Church's ancient discipline which obliged public penitents at the start of their penance to receive ashes on their heads by the ministers of the holy altars in full view of the faithful.

You should resolve to unite yourself with the Church to participate and prepare yourself by a suitable disposition of heart. This is how we should begin and end this holy season of forty days.

We will die and we will die only once. We will die well and with God only insofar as we have lived in the practice of penance. Do we wish to die a holy death? Let us live as true penitents.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle

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Every good impulse, every noble deed we perform is of God. Christ is in us. At the very same time there is an evil complacent nagging going on, trying to discourage us, trying to impugn our motives, trying to spoil everything of good we do. This complacency, self-satisfaction, is to be scorned and silenced. It shows pride even to be surprised and grieved at the baseness, like sentiment, at the bottom of every good deed. As long as we live there will be a war, a conflict between nature and grace, nature again and again getting the upper hand for the moment, only to be put down rigidly. If we have faith and hope it is impossible to be discouraged.

*The Dorothy Day Book*

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O God, grant that we may be sensitive to Your presence in our lives;  
By taking time to pause for reflection and remembrance.

Lord Jesus, may we use the freedom You have given us;  
To liberate those with burdens too heavy to bear.

During this Lenten season, O God,  
You enlighten us to walk in truth and in love;  
Lead us to share the blessings we receive from You.

Creator God, enkindle within our hearts;  
A cheerfulness of spirit as we approach each day.

O Christ, Lent is the season to renew our lives;  
May Your Spirit help and guide us.

Lord Jesus, You count as done to You all that we do for others;  
Help us to love others as You love them.

Christ Jesus, You are the Way, the Truth and the Life;  
Come to the aid of those searching for meaning in life.

God of mercy, as we journey through this season of Lent, opening ourselves to Your grace, we ask that You will guide us into a true change of heart and reorientation of our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Brother and Savior, Who showed us how to live and to love. Amen.

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Gracious Father,  
when David repented before You in sackcloth and ashes,  
You poured out on him the healing medicine of Your forgiveness.  
May we follow his example so well  
that we too may be fully pardoned of all our transgressions.  
We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You  
because by Your suffering and death on the cross,  
You have redeemed the world.  
Amen.

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**HYMN:**

Lord, Who throughout these forty days, for us did fast and pray,  
Teach us to overcome our sins, and close by You to stay.

As You with Satan did contend, and did the victory win,  
O give us strength in You to fight, in You to conquer sin.

As You did hunger and did thirst, teach us gracious Lord,  
To die to self, and so to live by Your most holy word.

And through these days of penitence and through Your Passiontide,  
Forever more in life and death, O Lord with us abide.

Abide with us that through this life of doubts and hope and pain,  
An Easter of unending joy we may at last attain.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle;  
Inspire us to experience a grace-filled and growthful holy Lent.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!