

### Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. . .



For 40 days Jesus fasted and prepared to proclaim the Good News. Long before Jesus, Moses and Elijah had their 40-day fasts. It rained on the earth and on Noah's ark for 40 days, and the earth had a new beginning. And for 40 years the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, journeying towards the Promised Land. In Sacred Scripture, the number "40" means that something important is taking place.

In our Northern Hemisphere, Lent begins in winter. But when the Forty Days are over, we know that the warmth and new life of spring are surely coming. We enter Lent with ashes on our heads, and for Forty Days we fast in various ways, perhaps by eating less food or foregoing treats. We give alms, which means that we find ways to share what we have, our time and our goods. And these Forty Days have their own ways for us to pray and sing (but without ever singing "alleluia", for that word waits for Easter). In these ways we remember our Baptism, and so try to grow more deeply in the Christian life.

Each Sunday during Lent we listen to some of the most important stories in the Gospels, and we pray for the people who will be baptised on the greatest night of the year, when we celebrate the great Vigil of Easter.

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*"Lent is a privileged time of interior pilgrimage towards Him who is the fount of mercy. It is a pilgrimage in which He Himself accompanies us through the desert of our poverty, sustaining us on our way towards the intense joy of Easter .. ."* **BENEDICT XVI**

[Easter](#) - [Liturgical Year](#)