

Take this list and prayerfully prepare for things to do for Lent.

The three pillars of Lent are *prayer, fasting, and almsgiving*. Did you know that you're supposed to do all three? Did you know that you can do more than one thing in each category? **(I would suggest 3 in each category)** Lent is not the time to go so hard that you die—or make others around you wish they were dead because you're so cranky. But *IT MUST* be taken seriously with an expectant heart for true transformation! We enter into the disciplines of Lent to show our gratitude to the Lord and to become more virtuous as disciples of Jesus.

HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS: Prayerfully choose some from each category.

Fasting is the most obvious. Even non-Catholics will ask you what you gave up for Lent. For some of us, Lent is an opportunity to root out some of the evil that has a firm grip in our lives. Really make a sincere effort to give up the three that afflict you the most.

- Excessive drinking (perhaps alcohol all together)
- Gossip
- Pornography
- Impure actions, impure talk, telling of or listening to impure “jokes.” If you wouldn't tell it to your mother it shouldn't be said or listened to.
- Complaining—try accepting the cross you're given instead of objecting that you'd rather choose your own.
- Negativity
- Being snarky or short or cold or whatever it is you do that makes talking to you an act of charity
- Laziness—try exercising for Lent. Fast from sloth. Fast from procrastination.
- Arguing
- Judging people
- Comparing yourself with others
- Anger
- Impure books/television/movies/music
- Lying
- Cursing

Or maybe there's something good in your life that you're too dependent on. Or even something good that is healthy for you but that you could offer to the Lord for 40 days. Fasting can help you grow spiritually in so many ways. How about giving up (or at least reducing)

- Snacking
- Television
- Eating between meals
- Going to movies
- One meal (especially on Wednesdays and Fridays)
- Social Media: Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, twitter, email.
- Pop
- Chocolate
- Secular music
- Sweets/desserts
- Hitting the snooze button
- Secular reading
- Meat (especially on Wednesdays & Fridays)
- Junk food
- Fast food (perhaps give up drive-thru)
- Going out for meals – give the money you save to the poor, a charity, or your parish
- Coffee
- If not coffee perhaps give up cream and/or sugar in your coffee
- Sarcasm
- Staying up –give yourself a bedtime and stick to it. “Those who stay up late have decided not to pray in the morning.” Father Bob Bedard, the Founder of the Companions of the Cross.
- Get up a little earlier..... & get up at the same time every day.
- Wasting time on the internet
- Checking your smartphone when you're with people
- Driving when you could walk
- Idle curiosity–be content not to know.

PRAYER: Attach an intention to what you are offering and it becomes a prayer of its own. Eg. I am not eating between meals on Monday for the good of my spouse.

Prayer should be at the centre of your life all the time, but especially during Lent. Try one of the suggestions below—altering amount and frequency if you like. Going to Holy Mass through the week – maybe even daily!

- A chapter of the Bible a day. You can get through all 4 Gospels in Lent if you read 2 chapters a day and don't skip Sundays.
- Minimum of 10 minutes of meditation a day
- Chaplet of Divine Mercy
www.thedivinemercy.org/message/devotions/praythechaplet.php
- Join a Bible study at your parish
- 20 minutes of Spiritual reading a day
- The Rosary—a decade or even a whole Rosary each day.
- Stop by an adoration chapel on your way home each day. (St. James Chapel at St. Mary's Cathedral is open from 7 am to 8 pm every Monday to Friday, 7 am- 5 pm on Saturday and 12 noon to 7 pm on Sunday, for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Try it! You'll like it!)
- Don't turn music on while you drive—pray instead
- Get Best Lent Ever. Go to dynamiccatholic.com
- The Liturgy of the Hours—once a day or seven times, if you like.
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours/index.cfm>
- Spend the time you would have spent watching TV reading the lives of the Saints or watching documentaries on the Saints. (Go to formed.org. Search for St Mary's of the Immaculate Conception. You will be prompted to enter your email. Tons of great Catholic movies, documentaries, teaching, books)
- Go to Confession—highly suggest go at the beginning of Lent and then at the end of Lent, even if it is the first time in 30 years... Confessions before every Mass that occurs in the Cathedral and Additionally: 1 hour before the 8 am, 12:10 pm & 7 pm Mass on Ash Wednesday, and each week on Wednesdays during Adoration from 6 pm to 9 pm, Saturdays 4 to 4:50 pm and one half hour before the 8 am & 10:30 am Sunday Masses.

- Pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday or every day. We will pray them after the 12:10 pm Mass, Mon. to Fri., at St. Mary's Cathedral. There will also be a Stations of the Cross on our website for those unable to come out.
www.stmaryscathedral.ca
- Get up early to pray. Even 15 minutes extra will be a great bonus.
- List 5 things you're grateful for every day
- Journal – keep track of inspirations.
- Be intentional about your time—make a schedule (with prayer featuring prominently) and stick to it.
- Spend 10 minutes each night talking to the Lord about your day—thanking him for the good and the bad, apologizing and asking for forgiveness for how you fell short, asking for the grace to be better the next day
- Listen to good inspirational CDs and podcasts while you drive
- Pay closer attention at Mass.

Almsgiving isn't always as easy as giving money to the poor. Figure out how you need to love the people around you and do it.

- Donate the money you would have spent on whatever you're fasting from
- Spend the time you would have spent watching TV with your family
- Be less critical of those you have the duty to love the most: your parents, your spouse and your children.
- Visit a nursing home
- Step up your tithing game (from 10% to 15%). ***If you don't tithe, start!!***
- Save up all your change and give them to charity
- Call your mother, your father, your siblings, your children..... if it is not your habit do it a couple of times during Lent.
- Volunteer once a week— spend time with the poor at a soup kitchen, at St. Mary's Drop in Centre, shoveling snow, whatever!
- Give someone a compliment every day
- Perform an act of charity every day
- Tell someone about Jesus