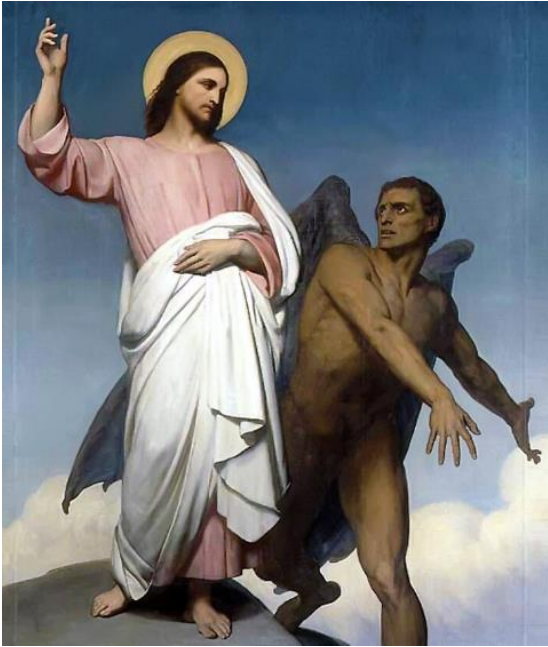


# SUGGESTIONS FOR LENTEN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

**Lent begins on Wednesday March 5th**



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: Fasting, Prayer & Almsgiving)** 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 for the love that He has shown us by His Suffering and Death for our redemption. We also enter into the disciplines of Lent to become more virtuous as disciples of Jesus.

## Here are Seventy Ideas for Lenten Practices:

Prayerfully choose at least three from each category

### Fasting

**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.**

- 1) Excessive drinking (perhaps alcohol all together)
- 2) Weed
- 3) Gossip
- 4) Pornography
- 5) 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.
- 6) Complaining - try accepting the cross you're given instead of objecting that you'd rather choose your own.
- 7) Negativity
- 8) Being snarky or short or cold or whatever it is you do that makes talking to you an act of charity
- 9) Laziness - try exercising for Lent. Fast from sloth. Fast from procrastination.
- 10) Judging people

- 11) Comparing yourself with others
- 12) Anger
- 13) Impure books/television/movies/music
- 14) Lying
- 15) Cursing

**Or maybe there's something good in your life that you are 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):**

- 16) Snacking
- 17) Television
- 18) Eating between meals
- 19) Going to movies
- 20) One meal (especially on Wednesdays and Fridays)
- 21) Social Media: Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, X, Instagram.
- 22) Pop, Starbucks, Tim Hortons
- 23) Gaming
- 24) Secular music
- 25) Sweets/desserts/chocolate
- 26) Hitting the snooze button
- 27) Secular reading
- 28) Meat (especially on Wednesdays & Fridays)
- 29) Junk food
- 30) Fast food (perhaps give up drive-thru)
- 31) Going out for meals. Give the money you save to the poor, a charity, or your parish
- 32) Coffee
- 33) If not coffee perhaps give up cream and/or sugar in your coffee
- 34) Sarcasm
- 35) Staying up: give yourself a bedtime and stick to it. Everyone should get 7 hours of sleep every day. Aiming for that is a good Lenten goal. *"Those who stay up late have decided not to pray in the morning."* -Father Bob Bedard, the Founder of the Companions of the Cross.
- 36) Get up a little earlier.... & get up at the same time every day.
- 37) Wasting time on the internet or scrolling or online chats
- 38) Checking your smartphone when you are present with people
- 39) Driving when you could walk
- 40) Idle curiosity - be content not to know.

## **PRAYER**

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

- 41) Going to Holy Mass through the week – maybe even daily! If you are retired you need to ask yourself why are you not at Holy Mass every day, especially in Lent.
- 42) 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.
- 43) Minimum of 10 minutes of meditation a day
- 44) Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- 45) Join a Bible study at your parish/online.
- 46) 20 minutes of Spiritual reading a day
- 47) The Rosary—a decade or even a whole Rosary each day.
- 48) Stop in the Adoration Chapel at some point during the week and spend time in Silent Prayer. Come to Adoration Wednesdays in the cathedral and spend 15 minutes (or more) in silent prayer.
- 49) The Liturgy of the Hours—maybe do Morning or Evening Prayer (or both). It comes every morning in the Flocknote. If you don't get the flocknote contact Father Shawn. [rector@stmaryscathedral.ca](mailto:rector@stmaryscathedral.ca) or go to the website and sign up. Stmaryscathedral.ca
- 50) Spend the time you would have spent watching TV, or online, reading the lives of the Saints or watching documentaries on the Saints. (Go to [formed.org](http://formed.org). Enter: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Kingston, Ontario. You will be prompted to enter a personal email. Tons of great Catholic movies, documentaries, teaching, books etc.)
- 51) Go to Confession—highly suggest to go at the beginning of Lent and then at the end of Lent, even if it is the first time in 30 years. There are Confessions before every Mass that occurs in the Cathedral and Additionally: 1 hour before the 7:45 am Mass, 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 & 7:30 pm Sunday Masses. An Examination of Conscience is provided in this handout.
- 52) Pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday.... or every day. We will pray them after the 12:10 pm Mass, Mon. to Fri., in St. James' Chapel. There will

also be a Stations of the Cross on our website for those unable to come out. [www.stmaryscathedral.ca](http://www.stmaryscathedral.ca)

- 53) Get up earlier, to pray. Even 15 minutes extra will be a great bonus.
- 54) List 5 things you're grateful for every day
- 55) Journal – keep track of inspirations and challenges.
- 56) Be intentional about your time—make a schedule (with prayer featuring prominently) and stick to it.
- 57) 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 do better the next day.
- 58) Listen to good inspirational music and podcasts while you drive
- 59) Intentionally pay closer attention at Mass.

### Almsgiving

**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.**

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

\*\*\*3 years ago a dear parishioner said to me after Lent was over that she had done every single thing on this list during Lent. Impressive! I suggest choosing three or four from each category to make it your best Lent ever.\*\*\*

# THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION/PENANCE

**True repentance has three elements:**

1. **Contrition or sorrow for sin.** This can be obtained only at the foot of the Cross. We may not have an emotion of sorrow, but when we see what our sins have done to Jesus, we shall be sorry.
2. **Confession of all known sin.** This involves a careful examination of our conscience. We cannot confess our sins until we see exactly how we look to the all-seeing eye of God.
3. **Satisfaction and Amendment of life.** We must intend to lead a new or better life. This intention is shown by our acceptance and performance of the penances imposed by the Priest in confession.

**Before examining your conscience, say this prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before your judgment-seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the loving Heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Think of yourself as God's son/daughter, His child, and in the wickedness of following Satan rather than your loving Father.

Do not be in a hurry, and do not worry because you cannot remember everything. Be honest with God and with yourself; this all God asks of you. Do not fret about your sins. Remember, you are trying to recall them in order that you may be forgiven, not that you may be condemned.

***“A broken and contrite heart, O Lord, you shall not despise.”***  
(Psalm 51:17)

# Examination of Conscience

## Love of God

- ❖ Do I love God?
- ❖ Do I make an idol of money, possessions or sex?
- ❖ Do I blaspheme by taking the Name of the Lord in vain?
- ❖ Do I study and listen to the Word of God and try to obey God's commandments?
- ❖ Do I go to Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days? (in Canada that is all Sundays and Christmas Day and New Year's Day).
- ❖ Do I keep Sunday as a holy day, avoiding all unnecessary work?
- ❖ Do I say my prayers regularly?
- ❖ Do I receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin or without the necessary preparation?

## Love of Neighbour

- ❖ Have I hated others?
- ❖ Do I love my family and friends?
- ❖ Have I been faithful to my spouse?
- ❖ Have I been kind and helpful to my children?
- ❖ Have I honoured my mother and father? (Honour is a quality that combines love, respect and being proud of and honest with them)
- ❖ Do I contribute my share of my treasure to the Church? Do I tithe? Tithing is recommended and means giving to God 10% of one's income. At the minimum do I give at least one hourly wage?
- ❖ Do I contribute my share of my time to the Church? This would be works of service and/or time spent in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.
- ❖ Do I contribute my share of my talent to the Church? Am I generous with the gifts God has given me? My singing voice, reading well in public, altar serving, pastoral caring, visiting the sick, volunteering at the Drop-in Centre etc.
- ❖ Do I contribute to the needs of those less fortunate?
- ❖ Have I lived up to my promises made at Baptism and Confirmation?
- ❖ Am I a peacemaker and an example to others of Christian living?
- ❖ Do I speak up for my beliefs and principles as a Christian?
- ❖ Do I encourage my family and children to live a Christian life?
- ❖ Do I give gentle correction when they are not?
- ❖ Do I visit the bereaved, the lonely, those who are sick and unable to get out?
- ❖ Have I respected the integrity of creation – animals and nature?
- ❖ Have I stolen from others?



- ❖ Have I cheated my spouse, my employer, my employee or others?
- ❖ Have I made restitution of what I have stolen?
- ❖ Have I damaged others' good name?
- ❖ Have I been quarrelsome?
- ❖ Have I thought ill of others and used others for my own ends?
- ❖ Have I exploited others sexually? (paid for sex or viewed pornography)
- ❖ Do I strive to forgive those who have hurt me or do I hold on to resentments and the desire for revenge?

### **The Way of Perfection**

- ❖ Do I fast and abstain from red meat as required by the Church? (That is on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays of the year.)
- ❖ Do I practice self control over my emotions and actions?
- ❖ Have I followed what my conscience tells me?
- ❖ Have I tried to acquire habits of wisdom and understanding?
- ❖ Have I wallowed in self- pity?
- ❖ Have I allowed myself to be consumed by ambition, bitterness or disappointment?
- ❖ Have I wasted my money?
- ❖ Have I kept my word?
- ❖ Have I been proud or arrogant?
- ❖ Have I been vain?
- ❖ Have I coveted other people's possessions or status?
- ❖ Have I indulged impurity? (pornography, masturbation, sexual fantasies)
- ❖ Have I been envious of others?
- ❖ Have I been greedy, angry, lazy, indifferent?
- ❖ Do I truly seek first the kingdom of God in my life and place my trust in Him?

## **Review of How to go to Confession**

### **Five Steps for a Good Confession**

1. Examine your conscience.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After your confession do the penance the priest assigns.

## **How to Go to Confession: (the highlighted parts are what you say.)**

### **Make the Sign of the Cross.**

**In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Say these customary or similar words: **Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_\_\_ since my last Confession. These are my sins.**

(List the specific sins which you have committed since your last confession. Tell your sins with sufficient detail so the priest will understand, but without needless details. Speak so that the priest will hear and understand you, but not so loudly that others will overhear your confess. Confess only your sins and not the sins of someone else. )

Finish with: **For these and all the sins of my life I am truly sorry and ask pardon from God and you, Father. (This is so that any sins you may have forgotten, that don't come to mind, just now, are also forgiven.)**

After mentioning of the sins which you offer to the Lord for forgiveness and whatever spiritual counselling the priest gives you, the priest will give you a penance. The penance is usually a prayer, scripture reading or an act that the priests give you to do to externally demonstrate to God that you are sincerely sorry for your sins. Then the priest will ask you to say your Act of Contrition. You then would say the following or an Act of Contrition prayer which you have learned. Don't worry if you don't know one, the priest will help you with it by having a copy to help you or even better bring this along with you and read from it.

### **Act of Contrition. (*one of the following or another that you have learned.*)**

**O my God I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins most sincerely. Not only because by them, I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are so good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace never more to offend you, to do my penance and to amend my life. Amen.**

**Or**

**My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my god, have mercy. Amen.**

**Or**



O my God, I am sorry for my sins because I have offended you. I know I should love you above all things. Help me to do penance, to do better and to avoid anything that might lead me to sin. Amen.

Or

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.

The priest will then pray the following prayer of absolution in which the Lord washes you clean of your sins”

God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sin. Through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace and I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

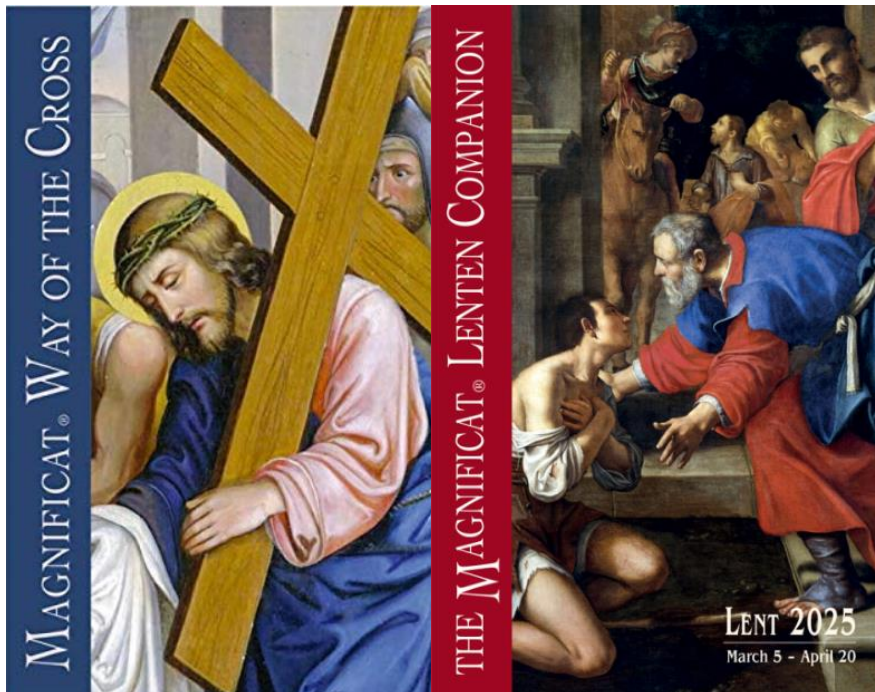
Then the priest will say:

Your sins are all forgiven. Go in the peace of Christ.

You respond: Thanks be to God.

## Suggested Lenten Programs

The Magnificat Lenten Companion and Magnificat Way of the Cross booklets will be available at the back of the church, \$2 each.



FORMED: How to Lent.  
Go to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org)



Sometimes, it feels like Lent is just about giving up chocolate. But deep down, we all desire to do something more for Lent—we just don't know how to do it.

**How to Lent** is a new series from the Augustine Institute that aims to equip Catholics with the tools to understand and practice the pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Guided by Solenne Santiago and with the help of priests and religious, this series will challenge our preconceived notions about Lent, laying out a roadmap for entering the season with a purpose. Don't let Lent sneak up on you like it did last year. Instead, heed the call of St. John the Baptist by preparing for the Lord, using How to Lent to transform your spiritual life this Lenten season.

**Dynamic Catholic: Best Lent Ever.** Go to [www.dynamiccatholic.com](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com)



### **40 Days to Living Your Mission With Christ**

Available on the website: (<https://www.regnumchristi.com/en/lent-2025-40-days-to-living-your-mission-with-christ/>) and by email subscription!



Join Fr. John Bartunek, LC for Lent this year as we embark on 40 days of Living Your Mission with Christ. Each day, you will receive a short reflection (text and audio) to help you grow in love for God and love for others. With questions for reflection at the end, you can set a practical goal for each day to live out this mission.



### **Lent on the Hallow App**

Hallow will once again launch its Lent Pray40 challenge on Ash Wednesday. Jonathan Roumie, Sr. Miriam James Heidland, Fr. Mike Schmitz, and Mark Wahlberg will serve as guides, whose theme will be The Way based on the powerful verse John 14:6 “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

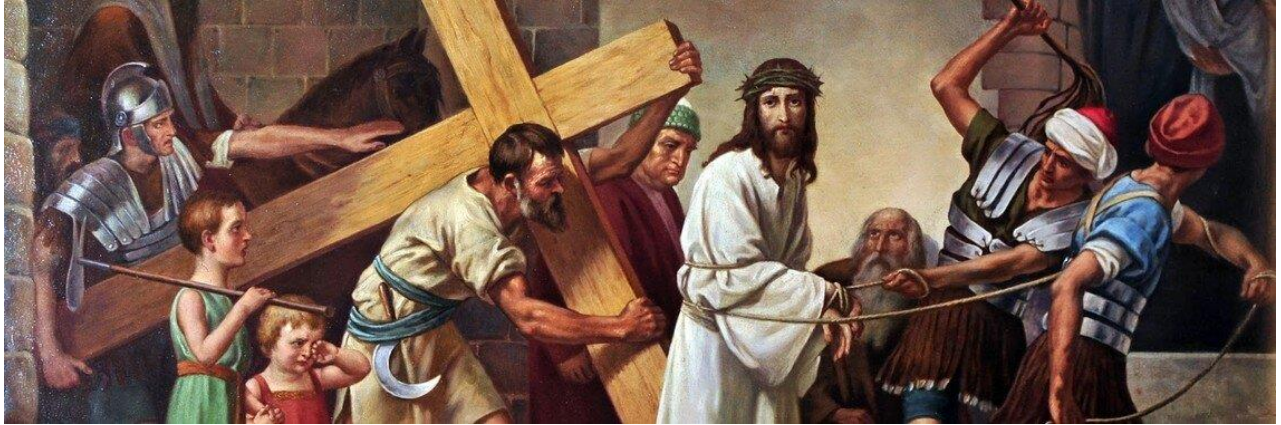
### **Cultivating Virtue with G.K. Chesterton. Sign up for daily Reflections:**

<https://www.chesterton.org/lent-and-eastertide-2025/>





# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



If you can't get out you can pray the Stations of the Cross everyday by going to our YouTube channel and pray the Stations of the Cross from our cathedral. Search for 'St Mary's Cathedral Kingston, Stations of the Cross'



## THE VICES AND THE VIRTUES

For my gluttony, I practice moderation  
For my lust, I practice chastity  
For my greed, I practice generosity  
For my envy, I practice gratitude  
For my anger, I practice patience  
For my sloth, I practice zeal (and manual labor)  
For my vanity, I practice modesty  
For my pride, I accept humiliations

*O only Hope of all below,  
You did the full reward bestow.  
If you will not, who shall condone?  
You can cleanse us, You alone.  
Grant that we may pray aright. Purify  
us in your sight.  
Lord have mercy.  
Christ have mercy. Amen.  
– Pope St Gregory the Great*



# ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON

## ARCHDIOCESEN LENTEN COLLECTION

21 February 2025

*St. Peter Damian, Bishop*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Season of Lent will begin shortly. It is a pruning season meant to cut back the dead wood of our hearts to receive the joyful Good News of the Easter **Season** well: that is, we are made new and called to relationship through our Lord's passion, death and resurrection. The forty days of Lent are traditionally marked by three pillars intended to help in this pruning process: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

It is the third pillar, almsgiving, which we focus on together as an Archdiocese with the **Archdiocesan Lenten Collection**, beginning this year on 5 **March 2025**. Taking up our collection on Ash Wednesday allows us to cultivate a collective spirit of detachment and charity throughout the entire Holy Season. As we have done in recent years, a committee of parishioners under the age of 40 will convene in the coming months under the patronage of St. Nartin De Porres. Together they will identify local initiatives and organizations that are currently addressing the greatest needs in our Archdiocese and beyond. The fruit of their discernment informs the final suggestion of agencies selected for donations.

Through your incredible and generous support last year, we raised \$88,176.18 and allocated \$88,000 to various works of charities within our Archdiocese and beyond. The remaining \$176.18 will be rolled into this year's collection for ease of distribution. Please be assured that your ongoing contributions are making a profound difference in the lives of many.

This Lent, let us remember that giving is not merely a nice gesture or obligation, but an invitation to creatively collaborate with Christ's mission to "rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1 :17) Let us therefore enter this season with a spirit of expectation that our Lord wants to use all things, even our almsgiving, as a means of transformation within us and our communities. May God bless you during this sacred time, and bring you spiritually renewed to the celebrations of the Easter Mysteries.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael Mulhall

Archbishop of Kingston