

The Meaning of Lent

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry.” (Matthew 4:12.)

This is the Biblical basis of the period called Lent, given to us to prepare for the Feast of Feasts, the Resurrection. Just as we need time to prepare for any great event in life, we need time to make ourselves ready to participate in the blessed and wondrous event commemorated by Easter.

Lent gives us the opportunity to:

Renew our commitment to God

Reflect on our lives and let them be directed by God

Respond to Jesus’ call for love and mercy toward all of God’s children
Lent is a special time in the year when we guard against worldly distractions and make room for the Holy Spirit to fill us. During Lent we go into our own inner wilderness—auised by sins, spiritual laziness, and empty vanity. There we confront the devil. Through prayer, fasting, Bible reading, and self-examination we gain the strength to work at being more loving, humble, and gentle.

After a successful Lenten journey, we should each be able to say “Be gone, Satan.” We also will find ourselves hungry after this long effort; hungry for the only thing that can truly fill the place we have worked hard to clear: the beautiful fruit of the Resurrection, which is Life Everlasting with Christ our Lord.

The heart of Lent is inner penitence and reconciliation with God. Begin with self-examination and inner healing. Set aside this period to examine and evaluate your life as a Christian. Spiritual renewal is possible only if you’re willing to repent for your sins and change your life for God.

Uniting with God involves:

Sorrow for Sins—Changing your life begins when you admit that Christ suffered and died for your sins.

Spiritual Growth—Christian maturity begins when you acknowledge dependence on God. Resolve to accept and carry out His will.

Commitment—Realize that commitment to God is more than just going to church. It involves carrying out God’s will daily, whatever the circumstances.

Perseverance—Keep your hope and faith in Easter’s promises alive all year long, every year. Realize that Christians of every age have experienced times of testing and have overcome temptation and despair.

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