

LENTEN PRAYERS

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something, take on something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" and the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection. Below are some prayers that you may find helpful during Lent as we prepare ourselves for the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Easter Day.

Petition

Holy God, I come to you in the greatness of your love and I lift up my heart in prayer and praise. You are God of the universe, and yet you know my innermost thoughts and love me as your own child. I lift up to you the desires of my heart and my hopes for the future. Help me to feel your guiding hand in all I do. I pray that my prayers will never be a routine exercise or a burdensome duty, but an amazing privilege. Help me to grasp the wonder of communing with you, the living God. May my life may be spent in unbroken fellowship with you through the Holy Spirit. These things I pray in the Name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

The Desire to Please God

by Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going, I do not see the road ahead of me, I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

A Prayer of St. Benedict

Gracious and Holy Father, please give me: Intellect to understand you; reason to discern you; Diligence to seek you; wisdom to find you; A spirit to know you; a heart to meditate upon you; Ears to hear you; eyes to see you; A tongue to proclaim you; a way of life pleasing to you; Patience to wait for you; and perseverance to look for you. Grant me a perfect end, your holy presence, A blessed resurrection, and life everlasting.