

May the crosses of ashes that mark our foreheads be a reminder to us and to those we meet that we belong to your Son.



A Prayer for Ash Wednesday

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, the all-holy one, who gives us life and all things. As we go about our lives, the press of our duties and activities often leads us to forget your presence and your love. We fall into sin and fail to live out the responsibilities that you have entrusted to those who were baptized into your Son.

In this holy season, help us to turn our minds and hearts back to you. Lead us into sincere repentance and renew our lives with your grace. Help us to remember that we are sinners, but even more, help us to remember your loving mercy.

As we live through this Ash Wednesday, may the crosses of ashes that mark our foreheads be a reminder to us and to those we meet that we belong to your Son. May our worship and prayer and penitence this day be sustained throughout these 40 days of Lent. Bring us refreshed and renewed to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

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*Parents have the mission
of teaching their children to pray
and to discover their vocation
as children of God.*

Pope Paul VI



AGAIN WE KEEP THIS SOLEMN FAST,
A GIFT OF FAITH FROM AGES PAST,
THIS LENT WHICH BINDS US LOVINGLY
TO FAITH AND HOPE AND CHARITY.

GREGORY THE GREAT

Enrich Your Lent with Prayer

To deepen your prayer life and make prayer more a part of your life, put prayer on your daily "to do" list this Lent. Tell yourself that you will find a few moments every day to pray. Here are some ways to get you started.

Mark your day with prayer. In the morning dedicate your day to God. In the evening give thanks for the day. You can also pray throughout the day by making everything you do a prayer—not only your words but your thoughts and actions as well.

Pray with Scripture. Read the passage slowly, noticing what stands out and speaks to you. Turn over in your mind what has struck you, and talk with God about its significance for your life. Listen for what comes from deep within you, and from God.

Do some spiritual reading, listening, and viewing. Ask friends, family, or members of your church to recommend some good reading for Lent. Purchase some inspirational books on tape from a local religious bookstore, and have them on while you're cleaning, cooking, or driving.

Pray with others. Consider joining a prayer group or small faith community. Put yourself in the frame of mind that what you do in church on Sunday is prayer. Your singing, spoken prayers, even your posture and how you greet other people—everything—can be prayer.

Go on a retreat. Lent is a good time to go on a retreat—to get away and pray. You have some time away from the responsibilities and pressures of daily life so that when you return, you are refreshed and inspired to live your faith more fully.

During Lent we make a special effort to practice our faith. May your prayer this Lent be a blessing to you and those around you!

Excerpted from "Five Simple Prayer Ideas to Enrich Your Lent" © by Joel Schorn.



Lenten Table Blessing



Begin after a short silence. The leader may alternate among those present.

Leader: I was hungry.
All: And you gave me food.
Leader: I was thirsty.
All: And you gave me drink
Leader: I was a stranger.
All: And you welcomed me.
Leader: I was naked.
All: And you clothed me.
Leader: I was ill.
All: And you comforted me.
Leader: I was in jail.
All: And you came to see me.
Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, may our fasting turn us toward all our brothers and sisters who are in need.

Bless this table, our good food, and ourselves. Send us through Lent with good cheer, and bring us to the fullness of your pass-over.

All: Amen.

Someone at the table reads one of the following Scriptures or the text assigned to the liturgy of the day.

Reader: Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Romans:

I urge you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

The Word of the Lord.

(Romans 12:1-2)

OR:

Reader: Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians:

[God says:] "In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Be-

hold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation...In everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts...We are treated as deceivers as yet are truthful; as unrecognized and yet acknowledged; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and yet not put to death; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

The Word of the Lord.

(2 Corinthians 6:2, 4-5, 8-10)

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: We thank you, O Lord, who give us this food to eat. We pray that you may also provide food for those who are hungry and gather us all together at the table of your heavenly kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

After the meal

Leader: No one lives on bread alone.

All: But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

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It is not how much we do,
but how much love we put into the doing.

It is not how much we give,
but how much love we put in the giving.

- Mother Teresa

