



Lifting Your Heart to God

During Lent we make a special effort to practice our faith. By the daily practice of prayer—in whatever way of praying is best for you—we not only pray more, but we also become more prayerful... something we can keep doing throughout the year.

From uplifted hearts, hearts full of gratitude,
may this prayer of thanksgiving rise to You,
God of All Gifts and Great Generosity.

We are thankful for times of stillness
which allow us to listen
to that holy river of prayer
flowing in the heart;
for the presence
of Your Holy Spirit within,
the Spirit who prays continuously.

These times of quiet heal us, within and without,
replenish our spirit with new strength
and prepare us to meet the constant struggle of daily life
with renewed hope and joy.

Like Your Son, Jesus,
who climbed mountains at night,
who retreated deep into the desert
to find You in stillness,
may we,
after this silent-solitary communion with You,
allow our lives to reveal
Your glory and grace.

Lord, may the seeds of the tree of stillness
bear fruit for us
and for all the restless world.

Blessed are You, Lord our God,
who gives to us nourishment
in times of silence and solitude. Amen.

Edward Hays, *Prayers for the Domestic Church/A Handbook for Worship in the Home*

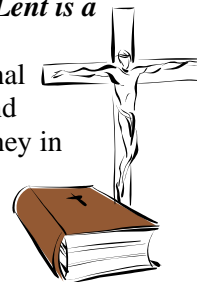
Just as we celebrate the seasons of winter, spring, summer and fall—along with various holidays that take place throughout the secular year—the liturgical year celebrates the mysteries of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is a cycle that repeats itself year after year. But from a spiritual standpoint it is always new, because it continues to draw us more deeply into our relationship with Jesus.

Lent is an important season in the liturgical year. It is a 40-day period of fasting, abstinence, and repentance that begins on Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent culminates with the liturgies of Holy Week, which recall the passion and death of Jesus.



Take Out/Family Faith on the Go, November 2008

The season of Lent was originally a time of intense prayer and study for those who were to be baptized and prepared to join the Church community at the Easter Vigil. Because these new members were to be received into the living Body of Christ, the whole community was called to preparation. Today, *Lent is a time of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer* in preparation for the Paschal Mystery (the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ). It is a journey in which we are called to walk with Christ through his suffering.



Almsgiving calls us to compassion for our brothers and sisters who are less fortunate. In feeding the hungry and clothing the naked we are Christ to one another.

The number 40 is representative of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert battling his temptations that strove to keep him from his earthly ministry. We, too, battle temptations throughout the season of Lent—a season marked by self-examination and repentance.

Fasting reminds us of our need for Christ. Our hunger and thirst also represents Christ's suffering in the desert, and call to mind how empty we would be without him.

The deep purple color that fills the church during Lent symbolizes Christ's suffering and death. However, because purple is also the color of royalty, it foreshadows Christ's kingship and resurrection. At Easter, the liturgical color changes to white to represent Christ's victory over death and the hope that, one day, we will all share in his resurrection at the heavenly banquet.

Take Out/Family Faith on the Go, February 2008

Yours are the eyes

through which the compassion of Christ must look out into the world.

Yours are the feet

with which he is to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands

with which he is to bless his people.



St. Teresa of Avila

Each person's mission
is a mission of love...
Begin where you are,
with the people closest to you.
Make your homes
centers of compassion,
and forgive endlessly.

- Mother Teresa

Learning to Apologize



Lord,
it's often very hard
for us to apologize,
so we
keep putting it off.

Let us realize that the longer we wait,
the more time there is
for bad feelings to build up.

Don't let us ever be so stubborn
that we are unable to say we're sorry
quickly and sincerely.

Renee Bartkowski, *Family Prayers for Daily Grace*.

Simple Prayer Ideas to Enrich Your Lent

- ◆ Attend daily Mass
- ◆ Mark your day with prayer
- ◆ Pray with Scripture
- ◆ Do some spiritual reading
- ◆ Pray with others
- ◆ Make an online retreat
(www.usccb.org/lent or www.Jesuit.ie/prayer, or ww.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html)



WAYS to RECONCILE at HOME

Time together heals hearts when words aren't enough

Establish forgiveness

Establish a habit of forgiveness between parents and child/ren. Say the words "I'm sorry for..." and "I forgive you" as often as necessary. Teach your child to say these words by asking: "Are you ready to say 'I'm sorry'?" Never force or demand an apology.

See "Eye to Eye"

The word reconcile comes from the Latin meaning "seeing eye to eye." Express forgiveness or sorrow by looking straight at the other person, touching their shoulder or hand, or hugging. Body language speaks as loudly or louder than words.

Forgiveness Rituals

Make forgiving one another a part of your family's everyday life. Establish family and individual rituals of forgiveness in the home. Set aside times for reconciliation (bedtime, after church, etc.). Choose a space at home where you can go to reconcile differences (staircase, bedroom, front porch, etc.).

Examination of Conscience

Help your child examine his/her conscience on a daily basis. There are numerous examples in children's prayer books - or create your own. Follow by talking about ways to change bad habits. End with an act of contrition or an informal prayer expressing sorrow and gratitude for forgiveness.

Eucharist

Remember that there is a special time at the celebration of the Eucharist for reconciliation. Remind children to mention in their silent prayer the things they are sorry for at the appropriate time during Mass. Explain the meaning of the term "contrite heart," which the priest uses.



Celebrate forgiveness

When a serious hurt has been forgiven between family members, find a way to celebrate together: go out for a treat, read a special story, enjoy quiet time. *Time together heals hearts when words aren't enough.*

Model forgiveness

Children need to watch adults forgiving each other and resolving conflicts. It helps if parents can share examples of forgiveness such as: "I was very hurt by ___ for what s/he said, but we talked about it and made things right."

Don't fake forgiveness

If you are genuinely hurt by someone over a long period of time and cannot forgive him/her, explain to your child that you understand the necessity and value of forgiving that person. Let your child know that you are trying to forgive and are praying for the grace to reconcile. Sincerity is crucial: never give children the impression of having forgiven someone, then showing unforgiving behavior toward that person.