

1: Gift of Lent | We invite you to God's chosen fast

This book was written for busy pastors and lay leaders who want to provide their congregations with a biblical, informative, and motivational monologue series for the Lenten season.

Share Article Your Faith Lent is a beautiful time of renewal that is often missed. Yet, just like an unexpected afternoon free, a chance to walk quietly alone in the forest or along the beach, Lent can provide the space to lean back into the now and take a deep refreshing breath with God when we see it in the proper perspective. The two questions remain though: Will we take this opportunity? If we do, how should we best go about it in a simple, sincere way? The classic Lenten approaches are by sacrifice, almsgiving, and prayer. They are beautiful guides to living this season to the full. However, in these stressful times, it is important that we revisit them in ways they can offer us spiritual refreshment and new perspectives. Otherwise, we run the danger of seeing Lent as just another thing to do in our already overburdened lives. When we think of fasting, it is often seen as a negative act: We are giving up what we like and sometimes even feel we need. Yet, if we reframe the sacrifice of Lent as asceticism, then we see it in a different light: Making our desires and needs smaller so we can appreciate all that is already in our life more deeply. Sacrifice, the first element of Lenten discipline, then becomes something so much more. Once when I was sitting with spiritual writer Henri Nouwen in the kitchen of his apartment located just outside of Harvard Square, we were speaking about the importance of pruning. When you prune something properly, it blossoms more deeplyâ€”not less. Hopefully, what we chooseâ€”be it something to eat or drink, or a behavior that is not serving us or others well, such a sacred blossoming will take place. As children we were often given a little cardboard container to provide money for the poor and vulnerable. This is a nice lesson in generosity that remains today for both young and old as parishes still often distribute little containers in which we can put our coins, allowances, or the money we would spend on extras. But, what if we also saw almsgiving from the perspective of giving of ourselves? What if we did things for others without expecting anything in return: What a true gift that would beâ€”not only to them but also to ourselves as we would learn one of the essences of Grace: Finally, what if we changed our view of prayer during Lent. In other words, rather than simply adding a few prayers, we also sought periodic momentary periods of alone time being in solitude or simply reflective within ourselves while in a crowd during the day? Taking a few moments in the morning, when we are walking or driving, on the way to having a cup of coffee or answering the phone, can help us lean back, breathe deeply, and know God more deeply. Greater inner freedom, a richer sense of compassion, and a deeper sense of our relationship with God are waiting. For more reflections in our Lenten series, [click here](#). Catholic want to know how you and your family choose to observe the solemnity of Lent. Take our survey and let us know about your Lenten traditions. Illustration by Angela Cox Robert J. The Calm within the Storm Oxford.

2: 40 Days of Lent: Find your own spiritual path – The United Methodist Church

The Gift of Lent is our 'undragoning.' It is our willing offering of our repentance—our prayers, our fasting, and our alms. It is our cry to God to burn off our rusts and set right our deformity.

We observe birthdays and anniversaries, for instance. Or are we simply doing what all humans do when they have occasion to celebrate or honor something? Because a basic human way of honoring and loving something is to set aside a span of time in reserve for it. Now Lent is a 40 day quiet time in which we are called to do nothing more or other than focus on the sufferings of Jesus in same way. Just as birthdays cause us to zero in on the happy occasion of birth and the remembrance of November 22, , gives us pause to contemplate the life and death of President Kennedy, so Lent calls us to attend carefully to the Christ Who denies himself for our sakes, goes into the wilderness and confronts evil in preparation for his great saving work. A Family Celebration This brings us to another point about Lent: Yet many people think just this individualistically about the Christian life. But the fact is we are called to observe Lent like all things Christian , not as hermits who are separating themselves from the "impure" but as the Body of Christ growing "to the full maturity of Christ the head, through whom the whole body grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love" Eph. This is the key to understanding what Paul is really talking about when he warns the Colossians against letting anyone "pass judgment on you in terms of what you eat or drink or what you do on yearly or monthly feasts, or the the sabbath. All these were a shadow of things to come; the reality is the body of Christ" Col. Paul is not saying here or anywhere else "Fasts and mortifications are bad because Jesus died for you and you are saved by grace. Moreover, just a few lines later he writes urging the Colossians to "Put to death [that is, mortify] whatever belongs to your earthly nature" Col 3: The Church which is the body of Christ. For you are part of that body too! In short, he is talking about being crucified with Christ and like Christ for the love of his people. And we do so because, like the Apostles who counted themselves fortunate to be worthy of suffering for the Name Acts 5: So in the end, my Protestant friends have nothing to worry about. For Lent is not anti-scriptural. It is not something we give to God to earn his love, but rather his gift of love to us which he wants us to share. It is not primarily about fasting. To be sure, it involves these indispensable things, but it does so as health involves exercise. If we live only for fasting we are as wrongheaded as a health nut who lives only for running. But if we remember that the real goal of both Lent and health is life, love, and union with God and neighbor in the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, we are free to join Jesus in the desert and find, through him, with him and in him, the gift of life for others and for ourselves.

3: Pope Francis and the Gifts of Lent - FAMVIN NewsEN

When we feel this way we miss the gifts that the season of Lent has to offer us: the gifts of prayer, almsgiving and fasting as ways to reconnect and rededicate ourselves to a Christian identity that is grounded in relationship.

Photo illustration by Ronny Perry, United Methodist Communications Taking time for introspection and reflection is an important element in making Lent more meaningful. Find your own spiritual path Share: Instead, we are each encouraged to find our own method of confronting our sinfulness, remembering our mortality, and giving thanks for the gift of salvation we receive through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Fasting One of the more common practices is to give something up for Lent. Some abstain from chocolate, social media, shopping, or something else through the season. This is a religious practice known as fasting. We fast to reorient ourselves away from the distraction of those things, and back toward God. Another way to reorient your life toward God, is to focus on devotional practices like Bible study and prayer during the season. Spending extra time in Bible reading and prayer is a great way to observe Lent. Bible reading Many do not know where to begin when reading the Bible. Each day they provide a scripture passage and wonderfully thought-provoking and spirit-enriching material to read and think about. Prayer In the busyness of our everyday lives, prayer can sometimes get squeezed out. Lent is a wonderful time to intentionally work toward finding more time in your life for prayer. You can experiment with different ways to pray during the season, or really delve into a new-to-you way of praying. Enriching your prayer life is a great way to spend Lent. Service Another way to observe a holy Lent is to take on a new way of serving. Throughout the forty days of the season you can adopt a new habit of volunteering in the community, making special financial gifts to service organizations, singing in the choir, or participating in a small group. Rest An important practice with which many of us struggle is the spiritual discipline of rest or Sabbath. You might choose to spend a few minutes during lunch with a desktop meditation , listen to sermons on your commute, or read a poem that feeds your spirit. Each can be a great way of enriching your Lent. The daily Lent Quiz is a great way to be reminded of the season and learn more about it every day. Daily Lent Quiz Testing your knowledge with the daily Lent Quiz is a wonderful way to be reminded that we are in the season of Lent. Every day you have an opportunity to answer a challenging question then check out some other resources about the topic of the day. Use social media to share the questions and invite others to join you on your Lenten journey. Child resources You will also want to find ways to share the meaning of the season with the children in your life. While their focus may be on Easter baskets and new clothes, you can enter into special times to help them find deeper meaning to the season. Some families set aside money each day during Lent through creative ways to collect coins each day or by making small "sacrifices" as a family, like skipping a weekly movie or meal out, and collecting the money saved each week. On Easter Sunday, or soon after, donate the money to help people in your local community or across the globe. Even dyeing Easter Eggs can become a time to deepen our faith experience. Photo by United Methodist Television. Also, consider trying some traditions from other cultures to enhance your Easter celebration. Make instruments during Lent that you can use to celebrate the resurrection in song on Easter Sunday, similar to Christians in Zimbabwe. Or try some special Easter foods, like the Easter breakfast cakes of Poland. Even while dyeing Easter Eggs you can creatively teach children about your faith by sharing The Importance of the Egg: Children and Easter video, which tells of the symbolism of the Easter Egg in a wonderfully lively way. Learning You may also use Lent as a time to learn about the seasons of Lent and Easter , and some of the practices of the Christian church. Common symbols like the cross carry a great deal of meaning. A less traditional symbol like an Easter Totem Pole from Alaska may also be fun to know more about. Learning about rituals specific to the season can enhance your worship. You may also choose to learn more about baptism and communion , the sacraments of the church. Each has a connection to Lent and Easter. This day journey called Lent is a wonderful opportunity to grow in your faith. There may also be special times of prayer, study, and other gatherings that will help you continue your journey throughout the season. If you are not connected to a United Methodist congregation, use Find-A-Church to locate one close to you. Observe a holy Lent This day journey called Lent is a wonderful opportunity to grow in your faith. Find

THE GIFTS OF LENT pdf

your path of self-reflection and spiritual discovery, and invite others to join you as you seek to observe a holy Lent. He may be reached at jiovino.umcom. This story was originally posted February 10,

4: Father Jack's: The Gift of Lent

The Gift of Lent will offer a few short excerpts over the course of these forty days, but the book itself is a thoughtful, gracious, and (mercifully) clear introduction to the meaning and purpose of Lent.

So when the Church decided to do some deferred maintenance, Jack was able to put in the low bid, and got the job. As always, he thinned his paint way down with turpentine. One day while he was up on the scaffolding -- the job almost finished -- he heard a horrendous clap of thunder, and the sky opened. The downpour washed the thinned paint off the church and knocked Jack off his scaffold and onto the lawn. Jack knew this was a warning from the Almighty, so he got on his knees and cried: What should I do? Another opportunity for deepening our lives is being given to us. My prayer is that all of us will be able to receive the gift that God is offering to us during these special days. Well, what is that gift? What gift does God have for me, for you? More life, deeper life, a fuller life. God wants us to live with the deepest, fullest life possible. We get this gift by being open to receiving it, by wanting it with all our hearts, by asking for it over and over again, by waiting in the presence of the loving Giver. We should be very clear about one thing. Lent is not really about giving up this or that, no matter how hard this or that may be. There may be a place for some kind of self-sacrifice but only if that self-sacrifice is done with an eye on receiving the gift of deeper life from God. Giving up desserts or your favourite television show is not at the heart of this season. But if giving up something helps you to become more receptive to receiving the gift of deeper life from God, then, by all means, give it up. If television is mainly just a distraction, keeping you from spending time with others whom you love or who need your care, then give it up. We need to let go of whatever is threatening to take over our lives. That is going to be very different for each of us. Many of us have allowed ungoverned, uncontrolled and constant activity to effectively push out any empty space in our lives. Some of us are still trying to consciously fill ourselves up with too many things, too much food and drink, too much entertainment, too much work, too much shopping and so on. You can complete your own personal list. God does want us to pay attention to our desires, but not to our superficial desires. God wants us to pay attention to our very deepest desires-for love, for compassion, forgiveness, mystery, peace, silence. In other words, God wants to give us all the gifts we really need in order to live the loving and God-filled lives all of us really want to live. The Temptations How does the story of the temptation of Jesus fit into all of this? In a nutshell, the temptations were all about one thing-trying to get Jesus to live in a worldly way instead of in a Godly way. Nothing could be easier than to live our lives totally immersed in our everyday activities with only the occasional thought of what it all really means. The spiritual aspect of our lives does not often force itself upon us. So, Lent is a time when we are asked to once again make space for what is at the heart of our lives. Above all, Lent is a time of renewal. We call it the "springtime" of the Liturgical Year, and ask God to help us with the important task of inner renewal. Lent is the promise of a new start for all of us, not a time of discouragement or sorrow. Rather, it is a time when we rejoice that God is a God of refreshment, of new life, of new beginnings. And these promises are not empty ones but are full of the power that comes from the Christ who comes back to life in resurrection. During Lent, we can have confidence that Christ is bringing us with him into a new and wonderful life.

5: Pope Francis and the gifts of Lent - Congregation of the Mission

But if we remember that the real goal of both Lent and health is life, love, and union with God and neighbor in the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, we are free to join Jesus in the desert and find, through him, with him and in him, the gift of life for others and for ourselves.

The Gift of Lent begins with a necessary reminder: In Ash Wednesday, we speak these difficult words so that we might resist the influential fictions that our daily lives impress upon us. The fiction that we are in control. That we can fix ourselves. That we were designed first and foremost to love and care for ourselves. Jesus tells us that the Law and the Prophets can be distilled into these two commands: Throughout history, the story of humanity has been an insistent turning away from these invitations and toward ourselves. What seems at first an awful loss—“remember that you are dust”—becomes a gift. Lent offers us the gift of our mortality. The gift of our limitation. We are invited to find the end of ourselves and, in so doing, to find the endlessness of Christ. Lent turns us inside-out for the sake of others. As you and your church observe a Holy Lent, here are some resources to help you receive this gift. Daily Devotion LeaderWorks has been blessed with the chance to help facilitate a Lenten Resource from the Anglican Church in North America that highlights the Lenten discipline of almsgiving. While most Christians know Lent as a time of fasting and prayer, many miss its deep rootedness in habits of giving to the poor. Learn about M25 and ARDF Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25 call us to observe a fast that liberates the oppressed, raises up the poor, and actively seeks to serve the most vulnerable among us. We encourage you to discover and give toward these worthy causes. The website also hosts Daily Prayer from our good friend Rev. Setting Out Perhaps the Lenten journey toward Easter is well-worn path for you; perhaps this centuries-old tradition is brand new to you. Chances are, no matter how we are approaching this season, we could stand some orientation. The Gift of Lent will offer a few short excerpts over the course of these forty days, but the book itself is a thoughtful, gracious, and mercifully clear introduction to the meaning and purpose of Lent. You can watch my interview with him here. As for a Lenten fast, of course everyone should prayerfully consider for themselves what God has for them. But I will say this: Your devices may have become your vices, and you may be surprised at the self-control it takes to resist their influence over you. For more on this and some resources that might push you along the path, check out this article. Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates and resources from LeaderWorks and receive a free gift! By Kolby Kerr T Kolby Kerr For ten years, I taught high school English. Now, I am a part of the LeaderWorks team, hoping to help leaders do their work.

6: A Catholic View - The gift of Lent

Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love.

Lombardi "March Madness" or Lenten Gladness: Which one will you choose? The NCAA basketball finals occur later this month nicknamed March Madness but, take that "invective-incentive" and overcome any "madness" and choose Lenten Gladness, if you know what Lent is really all about. Lent--from the old English word, meaning "Spring"--should be just that, a re-birth, a new way of life in Christ. Usually regarding Lent we think "doom and gloom" and call to mind fasting and ashes and so forth. But think of Lent as a New Springtime of your spiritual life. They all give up things, renounce and live differently. The beginning prayer of Ash Wednesday was: But today some modern Catholics have trouble with renunciation, thinking that its "old fashioned," against the Gospel, or not loving. I just saw an advertisement for a book, smartly packaged called "Chocolate for Lent. Just recently the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of art, Philippe de Montebello, just announced that the "Met" Museum unfairly took art treasures undocumented, possibly looted from Italy. Italy worked out a deal to "loan" the treasures to the Met in exchange on an "ongoing basis. Because they are training for the season and, hopefully, the grand prize, the World Series. Now, Catholics have a higher calling--Heaven and holiness. We are in training too, in Lent, and that requires giving up, renouncing, kinda like a baseball player. Repentance means renunciation of sin and unhealthy attitudes and possessions and relationships. Repentance, though a "tough word" and practice, is essential to the Gospel calling. If I am sick, I need strong medicine to help me. This is basic common, supernatural sense, although unpopular today. This is, or should be, a hallmark Hall of Fame? We must deny ourselves. We must remember, though, as some remind us, that Lent and renunciation of self, of anything is precisely about a relationship--an encounter with the Living Lord Jesus. When a man and a woman fall in love and then date or court, and, eventually, marry, they must, in their relationship, give up lots of things to focus on one another in total love, They give up other persons, time, talent and treasures, they give up personal desires and even possessions for one another. Think of it this way as in any human relationship: Give up some sleep, wake up earlier or in the middle of the night and pray in holy silence as the Savior Himself did. Give up love and human affections, as the Lord did by following the Path of the Cross. These are all costly things to do, but think of it in terms of strengthening and binding your relationship with the Lord. Think of giving up sin. Give up some of your possessions spring cleaning ring a bell?! Yet, it is paradoxical. Some may believe in exotic, esoteric Eastern religions while immediately disagreeing with the rich Roman Catholic Faith. We need disciplines fasting and charity and Truth to direct our desire love in the proper ways. If our love is not perfect toward the Lord or our neighbor, we need to train and correct and purify it so that it is holy and holistic. Disciplines direct desire--we must always remember that. Lent, self-denial and renunciation is essentially, imitatio Christi, imitating Christ. The "genius of Catholicism" aided, of course, by the Holy Spirit! Rather, they would help the child correct the fault to master the topic and gain in wisdom, right? As Catholics with a wealth of spiritual practices to embrace this Lent, we must always be on guard, though, against self: For instance, maybe you are saying, "this Lent I will fast; I will give up chocolate; I will do good to others; I will go to Mass," etc. What do all these good-intentioned disciplines have in common? Paradoxically, the more we sometimes try to do holy things, the more self gets involved or seeks attention or gratification. When a self tries to rid of self there is still self-investment and self-promotion and self-seeking of some subtle sort. We by ourselves will never rid ourselves of inordinate self unless we rely on God and grace. We must purify ourselves of self-glory and give God the glory. Sin, inordinate possessions and faults, and unhealthy behaviors disfigure our souls and tarnish us as disciples. God Who is Beauty, rather, helps and beautifies us. Lenten disciplines are loving responses to this love relationship which seeks to strip the self and selfishness away from the soul so that we may be more like God Himself, the Glorious One. Moses said upon tasting the delight of the Lord: Another classic way to Lenten Gladness is to think of the classic stages of spirituality, namely: Purification, Illumination and Union. Purification is leaving sin and evil and inordinate desires behind. We

cannot possibly follow the Lord more spiritually if we hang on to these. Illumination occurs when we have lightened our bodies and souls of "drag" sin -think of trying to fly a kite with a brick tied to it, and then releasing the brick from the string: What do I need to renounce in my life? What practices and disciplines in "Spring training" do I need to embrace to Love the Lord more? How can I cultivate a loving, lasting relationship with the Lord my God? Lent is a time to repent-for this Jesus was sent:

7: The Gifts Of Lent - Sermons And Children's Sermons

Lent is a gift. This year, I hope we will all take advantage of this gift for ourselves and for our ministries, I hope we will journey together into a Holy Lent. Erik Willits is the author of our lenten devotional.

The Gift of Lent For the Eastern Orthodox Church , Great Lent is the seven week period before Pascha Easter during which the faithful fast from certain foods and, more importantly, from sin. In order to enter more fully into the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, we repent through the traditional disciplines of prayer and fasting. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Orthodox Lent is the various services that are offered during this time: What is Presanctified Liturgy? Presanctified Liturgy is a gift given by the Church to the faithful during the spiritual rigor of Lent. In order for the faithful to have the spiritual strength to fast and repent during Lent, the Church offers a mid-week Liturgy with the Eucharist to those who wish to be fed. This ancient service dates back at least to the sixth century and has been an integral part of the Lenten fast for Orthodox Christians for fifteen hundred years. A Presanctified Liturgy or Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service that incorporates many of the characteristics of Vespers such as some of the psalms and hymns and offers Holy Communion. Most churches offer a Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays during Lent, with some larger churches also having a Presanctified Liturgy on Fridays. Describing the Service Personally, I find the Presanctified Liturgy to be one of the most beautiful services in the Church year. The overall mood is very somber and reflective. The lights are dimmed so that the faithful may pray and worship with minimal distractions. All of the hymns are sung in haunting, minor tones. The entire body is involved as multiple prostrations are made, incense is smelled, hymns are sung, and the Scriptures are heard. The service itself is in the evening, so even the darkness outside seems to foster a contemplative, repentant atmosphere. As mentioned before, because it is an evening service, Presanctified Liturgy has many of the elements of the Vespers service in it. I highly recommend this short video by the Orthodox writer Frederica Matthews Green if you want to learn more about the Vespers service, its history and origins, and its structure. Vespers The service begins with psalms read, sung, or chanted. The specific hymns of the day that honor particular saints, feast of the day, or have a Lenten focus are also sung. Then the readings for the day—the first from Genesis or Exodus and the second from Proverbs or Job—are read. Then the Prayer of Saint Ephraim is prayed, and the preparation for communion begins. The faithful venerate the icons and leave. Many parishes have a common meal afterward since most people have been abstaining from food all day in preparation for receiving the Eucharist. Why is Presanctified Liturgy Important? With all of the pressures and time commitments placed on modern families, it can be difficult to make time for the Presanctified Liturgy. As children get older and have more activities and sporting events, it can seem nearly impossible to attend the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. However, I highly encourage all Orthodox Christians to make the time to attend at least one Presanctified Liturgy each Lenten season. And, the more the better! Taking the Eucharist multiple times in a week provides spiritual nourishment and strength needed for the increased intensity of Lent. Lent can be a time of spiritual attack as the evil one seeks to cause us to sin or cease repentance. The Presanctified Liturgy reflects the penitential and somber mood of Lent. The meditative and quiet atmosphere of the Presanctified Liturgy gives refreshment in the midst of a chaotic world. Once I became a parent, I noticed this even more. My soul longed for the quiet, the stillness of this midweek service. It quickly became a highlight of my week. Meeting together with other Christians encourages us in our Lenten journey. Where two or three are gathered, Christ is in our midst. Oh, how we need his presence. The Family and Presanctified Liturgy Perhaps you are convinced and would like to begin attending Presanctified Liturgy at your local parish. However, you have small children. What should you do? There are a few options for you: In the Orthodox Church, children are full members and are considered an integral part of the Church. They are most heartily welcome at Presanctified Liturgy and may even enjoy the unique elements of the service. Many children particularly enjoy making prostrations, and will find that part of the Liturgy memorable. You can also read my post on Engaging Young Children in Church for more ideas. Bring Some of Them. If the thought of wrangling all of your young children for yet another service leaves you nearly in tears, know that you are not alone. If this is you, consider

bring only your older children. My youngest children go to bed at 7: We will all attend a Presanctified Liturgy during Holy Week, so the littlest ones will get to experience more of the service than. I usually choose this option and feel no guilt about it. My husband and I take turns going to Presanctified Liturgy. We alternate weeks so that each of us can attend three times over the course of Great Lent. The other spouse takes care of the children. When I attend I generally chant and sing in the choir, and he serves at the altar. This enables both of us to seek the spiritual refreshment that we need to be godly parents to our children. As our children get older, we will likely change our routine, but right now it works for us. Please know that you are most heartily welcome at any Orthodox Church. If you would like to attend a Presanctified Liturgy or any other service of the Orthodox Church, you can do the following: Search for an Orthodox Church in your area. Google is a good place to start. Most parishes have a website. Look on it to find the day and time of the Presanctified Liturgy. When you arrive, go on in. We love Christ, love people, and are glad you are here. If there is a program or booklet, you may take one. This will have the order of the services, the hymns being chanted, and more. However, you may also decide just to observe and listen your first time. That is fine, too. People around you will be making the sign of the cross and venerating kissing icons, but again you are not required to do so. Understand that the Eucharist is only for Orthodox Christians. In the Orthodox Church, communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians in good ecclesiastical standing, who have prepared themselves through the disciplines of prayer and fasting. For an article explaining why, go here. At the end of the Liturgy, however, you are welcome to partake of some of the blessed bread. It is generally in a basket up at the front. Please stay for the meal. We would love to have you stay for the meal afterward, if one is provided. You can ask people questions, talk with the priest, or just enjoy some tasty food. Do you have any questions about Presanctified Liturgy? What does your family do about services during Great Lent?

8: Ash Wednesday and the gift of Lent | NewBostonPost

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends 40 days later (not including Sundays) on Holy Thursday followed by Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. Go to Spiritual Resources Go to Lent & Easter Gifts.

The carnival celebrations which in many cultures traditionally precede Lent are seen as a last opportunity for excess before Lent begins. Sometimes, it is the peak of the pre-Lenten festival, while sometimes it is largely occupied with preparations for Lent. The observances vary from culture to culture, and even from town to town. For Catholics, it was meant to be a day of remembrance of the dead ones. However, zakara which means "remembrance", in Arabic was gradually replaced by sakara meaning "getting drunk" in Arabic, and so the occasion came to be known as Khamis el sakara, wherein celebrants indulge themselves with alcoholic beverages. Fasting and abstinence[edit] Further information: Christian dietary laws Fasting during Lent was more prominent in ancient times than today. Socrates Scholasticus reports that in some places, all animal products were strictly forbidden, while various others permitted fish, or fish and fowl, others prohibited fruit and eggs, and still others permitted only bread. In many places, the observant abstained from food for a whole day until the evening, and at sunset, Western Christians traditionally broke the Lenten fast, which was often known as the Black Fast. In addition, a smaller meal, called a collation, was allowed in the evening, and a cup of some beverage, accompanied by a little bread, in the morning. In practice, this obligation, which was a matter of custom rather than of written law, was not observed strictly. The Lenten fast ended on Holy Saturday at noon. Only those aged 21 to 59 were obliged to fast. As with all merely ecclesiastical laws, particular difficulties, such as strenuous work or illness, excused one from observance, and a dispensation from the law could be granted by a bishop or parish priest. In addition to fasting, abstinence from meat was to be observed on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays and Saturdays in Lent. Rather portions were to be: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and allowed episcopal conferences to "substitute abstinence and fast wholly or in part with other forms of penitence and especially works of charity and the exercises of piety". Refrain from eating meat bloody foods on all Fridays in Lent, substituting fish for example. Eliminate a food or food group for the entire season. Especially consider saving rich and fatty foods for Easter. Consider not eating before receiving Communion in Lent. Abstain from or limit a favorite activity television, movies, etc. There is a strong biblical base for fasting, particularly during the 40 days of Lent leading to the celebration of Easter. Jesus, as part of his spiritual preparation, went into the wilderness and fasted 40 days and 40 nights, according to the Gospels. In favour of the traditional practice, observed both in East and West, Thomas Aquinas argued that "they afford greater pleasure as food [than fish], and greater nourishment to the human body, so that from their consumption there results a greater surplus available for seminal matter, which when abundant becomes a great incentive to lust. In Spain, the bull of the Holy Crusade renewed periodically after allowed the consumption of dairy products [71] and eggs during Lent in exchange for a contribution to the cause of the crusade. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales, reports that "in Germany and the arctic regions", "great and religious persons" eat the tail of beavers as "fish" because of its superficial resemblance to "both the taste and colour of fish". The animal was very abundant in Wales at the time. In the tradition of this part of the Catholic Church, abstinence from eating some form of food generally meat, but not dairy or fish products is distinguished from fasting. Fasting involves having during the day only one proper meal with up to two "collations", [73] light meatless meals sufficient to maintain strength but not adding up to the equivalent of a full meal. He also allowed replacing fasting and abstinence with prayer and works of charity in countries with a lower standard of living. The law of abstinence binds those age 14 or over, and that of fast binds those who are at least 18 years of age and not yet Even during Lent, the rule about solemnities holds, so that the obligation of Friday abstinence does not apply on 19 and 25 March when, as usually happens, the solemnities of Saint Joseph and the Annunciation are celebrated on those dates. In some other places, too, where there are strong Irish traditions within the Catholic community, a dispensation is granted for that day. A Book of Devotion for Members of the Anglican Communion, a companion to the Book of Common Prayer, states that fasting is "usually meaning not more than a light breakfast, one full

meal, and one half meal, on the forty days of Lent". Ceuta , Spain Traditionally, on Sunday, and during the hours before sunrise and after sunset, some Churches, such as Episcopalians, allow "breaks" in their Lent promises. Orthodox Christians also break their fast after the Paschal Vigil , a service which starts around At the end of the service, the priest blesses cheese, eggs, flesh meats, and other items that the faithful have been abstaining from for the duration of Great Lent. Lenten traditions and liturgical practices are less common, less binding, and sometimes non-existent among some liberal and progressive Christians, since these generally do not emphasize piety and the mortification of the flesh as a significant virtue. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. January See also: Easter Triduum A Methodist minister distributing ashes to confirmands kneeling at the chancel rails on Ash Wednesday Church of the Holy Sepulchre , Old Jerusalem on Golgotha , Mount Calvary , where tradition claims Jesus was crucified and died There are several holy days within the season of Lent: Lent begins on the first Sunday and the fast begins on the first Monday. Due to the more "joyful" character of the day since laetare in Latin means "rejoice" , the priest, deacon, and subdeacon have the option of wearing vestments of a rose colour pink instead of violet. The fifth Sunday in Lent, also known in some denominations as Passion Sunday and in some denominations also applies to Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Passiontide. This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. After this celebration, the consecrated Hosts are taken solemnly from the altar to a place of reposition, where the faithful are invited to meditate in the presence of the consecrated Hosts. The Easter Vigil during the night between Holy Saturday afternoon and Easter Sunday morning starts with the blessing of a fire and a special candle, and with readings from Scripture associated with baptism. Then, the Gloria in Excelsis Deo is sung, water is blessed, baptism and confirmation of adults may take place, the people are invited to renew the promises of their own baptism, and finally, Mass is celebrated in the usual way from the Preparation of the Gifts onwards. Holy Week and the season of Lent, depending on denomination and local custom , end with Easter Vigil at sundown on Holy Saturday or on the morning of Easter Sunday. It is custom for some churches to hold sunrise services which include open air celebrations in some places.

9: The Gift Of Lent

The Gift of Lent Jack, the painter, often would thin his paint so it would go further. So when the Church decided to do some deferred maintenance, Jack was able to put in the low bid, and got the job.

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