

1: Saints Will Arise: Getting ready for Lent

XLIX. De Quadragesimae Observatione XLIX. Of the Observance of Lent L. Of the Brethren who work at a distance from the Oratory, or are on a journey

How does it grab your imagination? For several years now, mine has been returning to an image that helps both my personal prayer and my participation in liturgy. It also grounds my reflections on almsgiving and fasting. Imagine attending a symphony or school orchestra concert. Picture arriving with the crowd and anticipating how you will relax and enjoy the music. Behind the sounds of chatter and movement, hear the instruments as they warm up. Dozens of different instruments are playing in complete disregard for each other, some engaged in sweeping scales, others going over this or that bit of melody. At a certain moment all the instruments go quiet, which cues the crowd in quiet down, too. Into that silence, an oboist sounds one clear note, an A. Then, all the other instruments match that note, resonating in a unison made striking by contrast to the cacophony that it replaces. Tuning to one instrument helps to ensure that all the instruments will harmonize well with each other in the music they are about to produce. Just as tuning to the oboe allows the instruments to resonate well with each other, so Lent offers the church community a season to tend to the way in which we resonate together in Christ. This image helps me to take in the seemingly paradoxical power of Lent, one that can draw us as church into union precisely by revealing to us those things that can easily drive us apart. Lent is not primarily about what we do as individuals. What often prevents us from addressing the cacophony in our hearts is pain, whether the pain of knowing we have caused injury or the pain of the injuries done to us that may underlie our own problematic attitudes and behaviors. Such pain may prevent us from looking deeper into its root causes. We may slip into denial and even attempt to run away from the deeper reality behind what we do to hurt ourselves and others. Since such pain can run deep, we may need to face it gradually, and Lent provides us an entire season to focus on it. Moreover, when confronted by our mistakes, we may feel a kind of shame that can lead to a sense of isolation from one another. Lent confronts us with the reality of our internal noise but not in order to humiliate us or isolate us. Lenten observance transforms acknowledgement of the mystery of sin from a source of isolation to a point of solidarity. The resulting dynamic is similar to that of meetings in the twelve-step tradition of recovery from addictions. In those meetings, participants acknowledge their common struggle and resolve to rely on their higher power for help. For these participants as well as for the church during Lent, such shared honesty and commitment to grace provide a communal matrix for healing transformation. Throughout Lent, the church invites us as community to intensify our efforts to listen honestly to our own hearts and to the needs of those around us. We quiet down our attempts to distract ourselves from the difficult realities inside us, much like the instruments of the orchestra stop their cacophony in order to hear the oboe.

2: Leo the Great, Sermon XLIX: On Lent XI

Sr. Hilda Frost OSB - "Reflections" THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT. R.B. See now is the acceptable time: see now is the day of salvation. (1 Cor:) These words taken from the readings for Ash Wednesday, express in a nutshell the whole purpose and goal of Lent.

Leo I AD I. But all that is bestowed on the restoration of human souls in the divers works and gifts of grace is put before us more clearly and abundantly now, when no isolated portions of the Faith are to be celebrated, but the whole together. For as the Easter festival approaches, the greatest and most binding of fasts is kept, and its observance is imposed on all the faithful without exception; because no one is so holy that he ought not to be holier, nor so devout that he might not be devouter. For who, that is set in the uncertainty of this life, can be found either exempt from temptation, or free from fault? Who is there who would not wish for additions to his virtue, or removal of his vice? There is a trap in the fulness of riches, a trap in the straits of poverty. The one lifts us up in pride, the other incites us to complaint. Health tries us, sickness tries us, so long as the one fosters carelessness and the other sadness. There is a snare in security, a snare in fear; and it matters not whether the mind which is given over to earthly thoughts, is taken up with pleasures or with cares; for it is equally unhealthy to languish under empty delights, or to labour under racking anxiety. The Broad Road is Crowded the Narrow Way of Salvation Nearly Empty And thus is perfectly fulfilled that assurance of the Truth, by which we learn that "narrow and steep is the way that leads to life;" and whilst the breadth of the way that leads to death is crowded with a large company, the steps are few of those that tread the path of safety. And wherefore is the left road more thronged than the right, save that the multitude is prone to worldly joys and carnal goods? And although that which it desires is short-lived and uncertain, yet men endure toil more willingly for the lust of pleasure than for love of virtue. Thus while those who crave things visible are unnumbered, those who prefer the eternal to the temporal are hardly to be found. And, therefore, seeing that the blessed Apostle Paul says, "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," the path of virtue lies hid and in concealment, to a certain extent, since "by hope we were saved," and true faith loves that above all things, which it attains to without any intervention of the flesh. A great work and toil it is then to keep our wayward heart from all sin, and, with the numberless allurements of pleasure to ensnare it on all sides, not to let the vigour of the mind give way to any attack. Who "toucheth pitch, and is not defiled thereby? Satan is Incited to Fresh Efforts at This Season of the Year And, dearly-beloved, no season requires and bestows this fortitude more than the present, when by the observance of a special strictness a habit is acquired which must be persevered in. For it is well known to you that this is the time when throughout the world the devil waxes furious, and the Christian army has to combat him, and any that have grown lukewarm and slothful, or that are absorbed in worldly cares, must now be furnished with spiritual armour and their ardour kindled for the fray by the heavenly trumpet, inasmuch as he, through whose envy death came into the world, is now consumed with the strongest jealousy and now tortured with the greatest vexation. He sees himself robbed of all his tyrannic power, and driven from the hearts of those he once possessed, while from either sex thousands of the old, the young, the middle-aged are snatched away from him, and no one is debarred by sin either of his own or original, where justification is not paid for deserts, but simply given as a free gift. For the injunction is laid on us, in order that we may seek the aid of Him Who lays it Nor must any one excuse himself by reason of his weakness, since He Who has granted the will, also gives the power, as the blessed Apostle James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. Who is so partial or so unskilled a judge of his own conscience as not to know what ought to be removed, and what ought to be developed? Surely no one is so devoid of reason as not to understand the character of his mode of life, or not to know the secrets of his heart. Let him not then please himself in everything, nor judge himself according to the delights of the flesh, but place his every habit in the scale of the Divine commands, where, some things being ordered to be done and others forbidden, he can examine himself in a true balance by weighing the actions of his life according to this standard. Let threats be laid aside; let bonds be loosed, for he who will not loose them will bind himself with

them much more disastrously. For whatsoever one man resolves upon against another, he decrees against himself by his own terms. Whereas "blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them: Reconciliation Between Enemies and Alms-Giving are Also Lenten Duties Furthermore, as the Lord says, that "the peacemakers are blessed, because they shall be called sons of God," let all discords and enmities be laid aside, and let no one think to have a share in the Paschal feast that has neglected to restore brotherly peace. For with the Father on high, he that is not in charity with the brethren, will not be reckoned in the number of His sons. Furthermore, in the distribution of alms and care of the poor, let our Christian fast-times be fat and abound; and let each bestow on the weak and destitute those dainties which he denies himself. Let pains be taken that all may bless God with one mouth, and let him that gives some portion of substance understand that he is a minister of the Divine mercy; for God has placed the cause of the poor in the hand of the liberal man; that the sins which are washed away either by the waters of baptism, or the tears of repentance, may be also blotted out by alms-giving; for the Scripture says, "As water extinguisheth fire, so alms extinguisheth sin. This sermon was delivered during the Lenten Fast. Lent is the Fast leading up to Easter.

3: Holy Rule of St. Benedict - Christian Classics Ethereal Library

The Observance of Lent This coming Wednesday, March 5, is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Let's take a look at the historical emergence and spiritual significance of the Lenten season.

De generibus Monachorum 16 II. Qualis esse debeat Abbas 20 III. De adhibendis ad consilium Fratibus 32 IV. Quae sint instrumenta bonorum operum 36 V. De Obedientia Discipulorum 46 VI. Quot Psalmi dicendi sunt in Nocturnis Horis 78 X. Qualiter aetatis tempore agatur Nocturna Laus 82 XI. Privatis diebus qualiter Matutini agantur 90 XIV. Of the several kinds of Monks 17 II. What kind of man the Abbot ought to be 21 III. Of calling the Brethren to Council 33 IV. What are the instruments of good works 37 V. Of the Obedience of Disciples 47 VI. Of the Divine Office at night-time 75 IX. How many Psalms are to be said in the Night Hours 79 X. Quo ordine Psalmi dicendi sunt XIX. De Disciplina psallendi XX. Qualis debeat esse modus Excommunicationis XXV. De iis, qui saepius correcti non emendantur XXIX. Si omnes debeant aequaliter necessaria accipere XXXV. De Mensura Ciborum XV. At what seasons "Alleluia" must be said 97 XVI. In what order the Psalms are to be said XIX. What the manner of Excommunication ought to be XXV. Of more grievous faults XXVI. Of those who, being often corrected, do not amend XXIX. Whether all ought equally to receive what is needful XL. De iis qui excommunicantur, quomodo satisfaciant XLV. De Quadragesimae Observatione L. De Fratibus qui longe ab Oratorio laborant, aut in via sunt LI. De Fratibus qui non satis longe proficiscuntur LII. De Hospitibus suscipiendis LIV. De vestimentis, et calceamentis Fratrum LVI. De Filiis nobilium vel pauperum, qui offeruntur LX. Of the Observance of Lent L. Of the Brethren who work at a distance from the Oratory, or are on a journey LI. Of the Brethren who do not go far off LII. Of the manner of entertaining Guests LIV. Ut in Monasterio non praesumat alter alterum defendere LXX. Ut non praesumat quisquam aliquem passim caedere aut excommunicare LXXI. Of the election of the Abbot LXV. That no one presume to defend another in the Monastery LXX. That no one presume to strike or excommunicate another LXXI. That the highest degree of perfection is not contained in this Rule Digitized by Google. Preface Includes bibliographica references.

4: The Observance of Lent | HuffPost

An expert on ecumenism and ecclesiology, Christopher Ruddy said there "seems to be a growing appreciation" of the observance of Lent in Protestant churches.

Take the Lent quiz now! Why do some refer to Easter as Easter and others use Lent or Pentecost and what is the significance of each? In the Catholic Church, the year is divided into liturgical seasons based on significant events in the life and earthly ministry of Jesus Christ as well as the great Mysteries of our Faith. The Church Year, as it is called, begins with Advent, which is celebrated as four weeks of preparation before Christmas. Catholics are called to live liturgically by actually entering into the Church year. Such an approach to life and worship is not simply about re-enacting the great events of Salvation history - or what is called the "Paschal Mystery", the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is an invitation to all the baptized, living their lives now in the Church which is the Body of Christ and thus to enter into the deeper meaning of our faith; to experience our Salvation as an ongoing process as we cooperate with grace and allow the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead, to change us from within making us more like Him. Easter, where we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, is preceded by Lent, a season of self-examination, fasting and penance in preparation for our Easter Day observance. So Lent is a 40 period prior to Easter Day. Easter Day actually begins on Saturday evening with the Easter Vigil. The celebration of the Vigil is in keeping with the Jewish tradition of celebrating the day from sundown to sundown. Easter is also a season that lasts 50 days and ends on Pentecost Sunday, which is an observance based on the second chapter of the Book of Acts where the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles. This day is considered the birthday of the Church. Why do we put ash on our forehead? Ashes are applied to our forehead in the sign of the cross as the words, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return" are spoken to us. The other formula which is used, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel" emphasizes our call to continual conversion and holiness of life. This act symbolizes our mortality as well as our need for ongoing repentance. It is a reminder that this life is short and merely a foreshadowing of what we shall become through the redemption of Jesus Christ on the cross. The work of our redemption will not be complete until we are raised from the dead, in resurrected bodies like His own and called to the eternal communion of heaven. Where do the ashes come from? The ashes for Ash Wednesday normally are made from blessed palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. The ashes are sprinkled with Holy Water and incensed before distribution. When do I wash the Ashes off my face? There is no specific instruction on how long ashes are to be worn. You can, in fact, wash them off immediately after the service if you want. Many people choose to wear their ashes for the remainder of the day both as a reminder of their own mortality and as a witness before those around that they are a follower of Christ and are entering into a season of examination and abstinence. What is Fat Tuesday? Rich foods are consumed as the faithful prepare for time of fasting, abstinence, confession and penance. Customs and practices arose for Fat Tuesday where people would empty their pantries of many items restricted during Lent. One of the terms often used with Mardi Gras is "carnival. Anyone who visits one of the big carnivals held on this day usually bring back stories of self-indulgence and hedonism that make most people blush. Ironically, carnival comes from the Latin "carne vale" which means "farewell to meat" or "farewell to flesh" indicating the end to certain pleasures has come. In some parts of the Christian world the commonly used term for the day is "Shrove Tuesday. In some early practice, Lent was preceded by Shrovetide the week before Lent. The faithful were called to go to confession during that time in preparation for the Lenten observance. Pentecost is a feast day based on the account in the second chapter of the Book of Acts where the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles as they were gathered together in the Upper Room. This is considered the birthday of the Church and the mission to evangelize the whole world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes it as follows: Since that day, the Kingdom announced by Christ has been open to those who believe in him: By his coming, which never ceases, the Holy Spirit causes the world to enter into the "last days," the time of the Church, the Kingdom already inherited though not yet consummated. The 40 days of Lent, which precedes Easter is based on two Biblical accounts: Each year the Church observes Lent where we, like Israel and our Lord, are tested. We participate in

abstinence, times of fasting, confession and acts of mercy to strengthen our faith and devotional disciplines. The goal of every Christian is to leave Lent a stronger and more vital person of faith than when we entered. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies and pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing charitable and missionary works. In the Protestant world, particularly among many evangelical denominations and independent churches, the Church Calendar is not observed. The seasons were omitted along with most of the sacraments and the use of liturgy in their approach to faith. These Christians do observe Christmas and Easter and some might even celebrate Pentecost. When does Lent end? Lent officially ends on Holy Thursday. Easter is not only a day but an Octave eight day celebration leading to a Season of the Church, Easter Season, which ends on Pentecost. Why is the 40 Day season of repentance, fasting and abstinence before Easter called Lent? The word Lent is adapted from an Old English word reflecting the days getting longer in Spring. Why is Lent 40 Days Long? Lent is 40 Days long because Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days with the Lord Exodus. What is the difference between the Lenten fasting and Lenten abstinence? The difference between Lenten abstinence refers to abstaining from eating meat and Lenten fasting mean limiting all food on a particular day. Do we Fast or abstain on Sundays during Lent? No, because every Sunday is a little Resurrection since Jesus rose on the first day of the Week. Ashes Ash Wednesday liturgies are some of the best attended in the entire year. Some people suggest that is just because the Church is giving out something free, but I suspect there are deeper reasons! Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance sackcloth and ashes. They also remind us of our mortality "remember that you are dust" and thus of the day when we will stand before God and be judged. This can be linked easily to the death and resurrection motif of Baptism. To prepare well for the day we die, we must die now to sin and rise to new life in Christ. Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent indicates our recognition of the need for deeper conversion of our lives during this season of renewal. Giving something up For most older Catholics, the first thought that Lent brings to mind is giving something up. In my childhood, the standard was to give up candy, a discipline that found suitable reward in the baskets of sugary treats we received on Easter. Some of us even added to the Easter surplus by saving candy all through Lent, stockpiling what we would have eaten had we not promised to give it up. Some years ago a friend of mine told me that he had urged his children to move beyond giving up candy to giving up some habit of sin that marked their lives. About halfway through Lent he asked the children how they were doing with their Lenten promise. One of his young sons had promised to give up fighting with his brothers and sisters during Lent. That always involves giving up sin in some form. The goal is not just to abstain from sin for the duration of Lent but to root sin out of our lives forever. Conversion means leaving behind an old way of living and acting in order to embrace new life in Christ. For catechumens, Lent is a period intended to bring their initial conversion to completion. Examining our lives The primary way that the Church assists the catechumens called the elect after the celebration of the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent in this conversion process during Lent is through the celebration of the rites called Scrutinies. These ritual celebrations on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent are communal prayers celebrated around the elect to strengthen them to overcome the power of sin in their lives and to grow in virtue. To scrutinize something means to examine it closely. The community does not scrutinize the catechumens; the catechumens scrutinize their own lives and allow God to scrutinize them and to heal them. There is a danger in celebrating the Scrutinies if the community thinks of the elect as the only sinners in our midst who need conversion. All of us are called to continuing conversion throughout our lives, so we join with the elect in scrutinizing our own lives and praying to God for the grace to overcome the power of sin that still infects our hearts. Many parishes today seek to surface the concrete issues that the elect need to confront; these issues then become the focus of the intercessions during the Scrutinies. Some parishes extend this discernment process to the wider community so that all are called to name the ways that evil continues to prevent them from living the gospel fully. Even if the parish does not do this in an organized way, every Catholic should spend some time reflecting on what obstacles to gospel living exist in his or her own life. Then when the Scrutinies are celebrated, we will all know that the prayers are for us as well as for the elect. Taking seriously this dynamic of scrutiny and conversion gives us a richer perspective on Lenten "giving up. Along with the elect we all need to approach

the season of Lent asking ourselves what needs to change in our lives if we are to live the gospel values that Jesus taught us. Our journey through these forty days should be a movement ever closer to Christ and to the way of life he has exemplified for us. Scrutinies and Penance The elect deal with sin through the Scrutinies and through the waters of the font; the already baptized deal with sin through the Sacrament of Penance. The same kind of reflection that enables all members of the community to share in the Scrutinies can lead the baptized to celebrate this Sacrament of Reconciliation to renew their baptismal commitment. Lent is the primary time for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, because Lent is the season for baptismal preparation and baptismal renewal. Early Christian teachers called this sacrament "second Baptism," because it is intended to enable us to start again to live the baptismal life in its fullness. Those who experience the loving mercy of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation should find themselves standing alongside the newly baptized at Easter filled with great joy at the new life God has given all of us. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The key to renewed appropriation of these practices is to see their link to baptismal renewal. More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully. We might pray for the elect who will be baptized at Easter and support their conversion journey by our prayer.

5: The Via Viae Of St. Benedict (edition) | Open Library

chapter xlix of the observance of lent THE life of a monk ought at all times to be Lenten in its character; but since few have the strength for that, we therefore urge that in these days of Lent the brethren should lead lives of great purity, and should also in this sacred season expiate the negligences of other times.

Lent When is Lent ? There are different definitions for the duration of Lent. For details see the explanations below. Lent celebrants participating in a street procession during Holy Week. Lent is the annual period of Christian observance that precedes Easter. The dates of Lent are defined by the date of Easter, which is a moveable feast, meaning that it falls on a different date each year. It can also be seen to mirror the 40 hours that Jesus spent in the tomb prior to his resurrection. Lent is a penitential period, involving the dual disciplines of abstinence and fasting. During Lent many Christians commit to fasting or giving up certain foods, habits or luxuries - for example meat, cakes and sweets, alcohol, smoking - for its duration the money saved is often then donated to charity. Lent lasts for 40 days and the first day is always Ash Wednesday the day after Shrove Tuesday. Nevertheless, there is often confusion as to when Lent ends! This is a period of 46 days. However, the six Sundays within the period are not fast days Sundays are always feast days in the Christian calendar and therefore not counted in the 40 days of Lent. In addition, Palm Sunday or alternatively the day before Palm Sunday is sometimes considered to be the last day of Lent. This is incorrect and based on a misunderstanding about the liturgical periods of Lent and Holy Week. They are not exclusive of each other, and Lent in fact continues into Holy Week see above , meaning that the liturgical season of Lent ends on Holy Thursday. The purple is symbolic in two ways: As in Western Christianity, the period of Lent differs in its dates from year to year, with the dates defined by the date of Pascha, which is a moveable feast. Fasting continues until the morning of Pascha. Lent on Wikipedia When is Lent ?

6: Sabbath and the Lord's Day: Canon XLIX.

Lent is the annual period of Christian observance that precedes www.enganchecubano.com dates of Lent are defined by the date of Easter, which is a moveable feast, meaning that it falls on a different date each year.

And this will be worthily done if we restrain ourselves from all vices and give ourselves up to prayer with tears, to reading, to compunction of heart and to abstinence. During these days, therefore, let us increase somewhat the usual burden of our service, as by private prayers and by abstinence in food and drink. From his body, that is he may withhold some food, drink, sleep, talking and jesting; and with the joy of spiritual desire he may look forward to holy Easter. Let each one, however, suggest to his Abbot what it is that he wants to offer, and let it be done with his blessing and approval. For anything done without the permission of the spiritual father will be imputed to presumption and vainglory and will merit no reward. It seems to me that this chapter is applicable in a very literal sense to the lay oblate. Though the biblical narrative puts the Tabor account before Calvary, what I intended to highlight is what happened at those two places. The Cross is the Gospel. As Marshall McLuhan a philosopher of communication theory, and convert to the Catholic Church put it "the medium is the message. The Cross has never been easy to accept, in any age I recall hearing something about some Apostles fleeing the scene when things got rough in a certain garden one night! If we try to sweeten the pill, to dress the Gospel in something more palatable, we do a great disservice to our brothers and sisters; we do not present them with a true image of what the Faith is all about. Our Lord emptied Himself; became obedient unto death; was bruised for our sins. Yet we know that Death was not the victor. Death swallowed up Life and was overcome by it! We know what awaits us if we fight the good fight till the end; we know the prize, the imperishable crown. Yet that prize is only won by walking in the steps of Him who has already emerged victor. If I am to attain that goal, then I must necessarily go to Calvary; I must carry my cross, dying daily, holding fast in the hope that having died to Death I will live to Life. Lent is not an end in itself; rather, a means to an end " Pascha. No; he is a man of the Church. If he makes no mention of what the Church demands it is because he assumes that the disciples are already familiar with it; these voluntary sacrifices are to be additional to what the Church already asks of us. He considers at the same time the communal and individual aspects of our Faith: It was quite sad to learn, upon returning to the Church, that a somewhat voluntaristic attitude has taken hold of many of the faithful " clergy and laity alike " where the only acceptable sacrifices are those I chose; that those imposed on me have no merit. Before father prior became my spiritual father I would set up these outrageous goals for Lent. Obviously, I always failed miserably. When I began corresponding with my spiritual father, I would list things that I thought would be good for Lent and he would only pick out only a few of them. I would take those recommendations on and, lo and behold, father prior was right " they were not overburdening, they were feasible. As of late I have learnt to simply place the whole matter in his experienced hands, letting him decide and then trying to follow his instructions assiduously, with the joy of knowing that I am acting in communion with my monastic family.

7: When is Lent & ? Dates of Lent

Catholic religious holidays are about to begin. While Easter Sunday falls on April 1, Lent observance begins on Wednesday, with Ash Wednesday, and proceeds until Holy Thursday, which is observed.

However, the opening words of this chapter suggest that any time is right for the monastic. How is this possible? Is a perpetual Lent spiritually healthy? Where is the balance? He continues by describing how the community ought to adhere to the strictness of the season during the season. I read two important lessons in this chapter. The Lenten fast includes sacrifice and action. Giving up temporal indulgences and treating oneself to spiritual delights. Perhaps, Benedict realized that we are unable to appreciate the spiritual until we are purged of the temporal. Sister Joan Chittister shares a story of a person who sought to learn wisdom. Visiting the sage, the person kept talking about his own ideas, opinions, and thoughts. Eventually, the wise teacher served tea to his guest. It cannot hold anymore! I cannot teach you unless you first empty your cup. However, when she stopped trying then she was blessed with the unexpected. The things that she desired to see were opened before her. She was able to appreciate being in the moment, rather than attempting to create the environment. Lent offers us the season to turn off some of things that compete with our spiritual awareness. The grief of loss may highlight the appreciation of the gift. For myself, I follow a common routine each Lent. The object of my fast helps me to physically realize my spiritual desires. Each year, I sacrifice coffee. It works this way – for the first week, I physically feel the effects of my fast. Mild headaches and conscious decision to change my routine. I substitute juice or water for my breakfast coffee. I really desire the smell and warmth of the cup. Then I realize that my spiritual desire is to smell the sweet fragrance of heaven and the warm embrace of my Lord. A couple of weeks pass, and I realize that I do not think about coffee so much. The routines of life threaten to drown my relationship with God. I pause, confess, and repent of my wantonness. My desire to be near God begins to burn again. During that final week, Holy Week, I begin to yearn for a cup of coffee. I substitute tea, but it is not satisfying. I realize there is no suitable substitute for my relationship with God. I do not think that I could sustain a perpetual Lent. You Might Also Like.

8: The Rule of Saint Benedict

The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Many Catholics were taught as children to "give up something" for Lent. The sacrifices in Lent are really penance, in the same spirit as the Ninevites that repented at the preaching of Jonah.

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on the day before Easter. The six Sundays of this time-span are not considered part of Lent. Only weekdays are included in Lent. Hence, Lent is the forty weekdays beginning with Ash Wednesday and concluding with the day before Easter. But how is it that the church adopted "forty" as the number of weekdays in Lent? Early Christians celebrated several feasts and observed numerous special days, many of which were inherited from their Jewish forefathers. The celebrations and observances varied from one location to another, depicting much of the history of the different regions. In the days leading up to Easter, it was common for the early Christians to fast in commemoration of the suffering that Jesus endured, but the duration of the fasting varied from one day to several weeks, depending on where the churches were located. The first mention of forty as the number of days of preparation for Easter was at the First General Council of the church assembled in Nicaea in A. Although this council is best known for formulating the Nicene Creed, still recited in many Christian worship services, it also issued twenty important canons regulating church discipline. The first written mention of the preparatory period for Easter lasting for forty days is in the fifth canon. Within one hundred years after that, "forty days" was universally observed throughout the church as the appropriate period of preparation for Easter. But why was the number "forty" selected? For example, Moses was with God for forty day and nights on Mount Sinai in preparation for receiving the Ten Commandments. But the primary focus for Lent is on: Taking into consideration how Jesus prepared for his ministry, "forty" was determined to be the number of days his followers should use in preparing for Easter. The actual word "Lent" came into use sometime during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. It can be traced to Old High German of the early half of the twelfth century. Its ancient German meaning was "springtime. It is often said that the word "Lent" is a derivative of the word "forty," but that is incorrect. Although Lent is ecumenical inasmuch as it is celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church and many Protestant churches, the Catholics are the leaders in determining Lenten observances. As mentioned earlier, the first church council that met in Nicaea in A. This is also true of the Second Vatican Council. The sixteen centuries between the two councils have seen many changes in the ways that Christians observed Lent. The general mood and tone of the observances have changed markedly since the Second Vatican Council. Older readers will remember when many Christian families refrained, for example, from eating desserts or sweets, attending movies and sports events, or participating in parties and dances during Lent. One of the main purposes of the Second Vatican Council was to bring the practices of the Roman Catholic Church into the modern world. And in addressing how Lent is to be observed, celebrating the joy of the Lenten season has replaced the somber and stern tone of earlier years. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. The practice of using ashes in times of penitence is seen in both the Old and New Testaments, where one finds several references to "sackcloth and ashes. During Ash Wednesday services worshippers come forward for the clergy to draw a cross on their foreheads using ashes, serving as a reminder of human immortality and the need for penitence. Hopefully, you will have a better understanding for yourself and for the practices of others as the Lenten season begins this coming Wednesday, March 5, in preparation for Easter, which this year is April. This article deals only with the western church calendar. Space did not provide for also looking at the Lenten practices of Eastern Orthodox churches.

9: Sermon XLIX. On Lent, XI. - Bible Study Tools

CHAPTER XLIX. On the Keeping of Lent. The life of a monk ought always to be a Lenten observance. However, since such virtue is that of few, we advise that during these days of Lent he guard his life with all purity and at the same time wash away during these holy days all the shortcomings of other times.

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