



KEEPING A HOLY LENT

PRACTICES: PRAYER, FASTING, SELF-DENIAL



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OPENING PRAYER – COLLECT FOR FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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WARM-UP CONVERSATION

- How are your disciplines/devotions going?
 - Any struggles?
 - Any insights gained?

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RECAP

- Lent is not a standalone goal (a.k.a. self-help season)
- It is a preparation for Easter
 - Season of Penance and Discipline
 - Preparation for the Renewal of our own Baptismal Covenant
- Practices help us in our preparation

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PRACTICES: PRAYER

Prayer and Worship – BCP p. 856

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

Q. What is Christian Prayer?

A. Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What are the principal kinds of prayer?

A. The principal kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

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PRACTICES: PRAYER

Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

- *The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. - John 4:23*

We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.

- *Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age. Psalm 100:3-4*

Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

- *O give thanks to the Lord, and call upon his Name; make known his deeds among the peoples. - Psalm 105:1*

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PRACTICES: PRAYER

In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.

- *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:8, 9*

Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

- *I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. - Romans 12:1*

Intercession brings before God the needs of others.

- *While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. – Acts 12:5*

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PRACTICES: PRAYER

In petition, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

- *For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him. – 1 Samuel 1:27*

In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.

- *And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Hebrews 10:24-25*
- *“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” – Matthew 18:20*
- *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. – Acts 2:42*

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PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 17

- Fasts: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
- 4. Days of Special Devotion: The following days are observed by special acts of discipline and self-denial: Ash Wednesday and the other weekdays of Lent and of Holy Week, except the feast of the Annunciation. Good Friday and all other Fridays of the year, in commemoration of the Lord's crucifixion, except for Fridays in the Christmas and Easter seasons, and any Feasts of our Lord which occur on a Friday.

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PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

1928 Book of Common Prayer

- A Table Of Fasts: Ash Wednesday Good Friday
- Other days of fasting, on which the church requires such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion.
 - I. The Forty Days of Lent.
 - II. The Ember Days at the Four Seasons, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, September 14, and December 13.
 - III. All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas Day, and The Epiphany, or any Friday which may intervene between these Feasts.

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PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

1662 Book of Common Prayer

- There should be fasting on the Evens and Vigils before the following feasts:
 - The Nativity of our Lord; The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary; The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin; Easter Day; Ascension Day; Pentecost; S. Matthias; S. John the Baptist; S. Peter; S. James; S. Bartholomew; S. Matthew; S. Simon and S. Jude; S. Andrew; S. Thomas; All Saints
- Additionally, the full Days of Fasting, or Abstinence are:
 - I. The Forty Days of Lent
 - II. The Ember Days at the Four Season, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after: The first Sunday in Lent; The Feast of Pentecost; September 14; December 13.
 - III. The three Rogation days, being the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, or the Ascension of our Lord.
 - IV. All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas Day.

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PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

What is a Fast?

- Absolute Fast = No food or water
 - Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9; 10:10); Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
- Solid Food Fast = No food; Juice and water only
 - Jesus (Matthew 4:2)
- Partial Fast = Abstain from certain foods and/or drinks
 - Daniel (Daniel 10:3)

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PRACTICES: FASTING AND SELF-DENIAL

What is the purpose of a Fast?

- Humility (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)
- Penitence (Jonah 3:8)
- Stir our hearts towards rightly ordered love of God and of neighbor rather than love of food, drink, etc. (Isaiah 58:1-12)
- Make room for prayer, almsgiving, reading of Scripture, service
- Prepare for the feast
 - Easter
 - Holy Days
 - Communion

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COMING UP

- Weekly: Touch base on Lenten disciplines and devotions
- March 24 – Practices: Reading and Meditating on God's holy Word.

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CLOSING PRAYER – COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen