

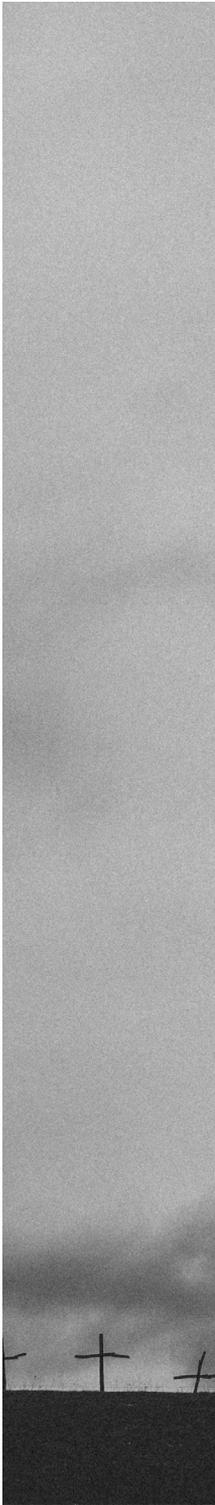


ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
CATHOLIC CHURCH

LENT 2023

Why We Need the Desert





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ASH WEDNESDAY



Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. It marks the beginning of the Lenten season of preparation for Christ's Resurrection on Easter.

The origins of Ash Wednesday date back to the 11th century. However, the tradition of receiving ashes has roots in the Old Testament, where wearing ashes was a common sign of repentance for sins and a sign of one's humility before God.

Why Ashes?

The ashes themselves are made from burning the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday. This symbolically connects the beginning of Lent with the end, connecting our change of heart with Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

We begin the Lenten season by recognizing our own brokenness, mortality, and sin. The ashes serve as a physical reminder that our bodies will turn to dust, but our souls will live on in eternal life.

The Distribution of Ashes

Ashes are distributed on Ash Wednesday, either during Mass or a Word Service or sometimes even through a walk-up distribution of ashes. During a Mass or Word Service, after the homily, those present will process toward the altar, similarly to receiving Communion. The priest (or other minister) will make the Sign of the Cross and say one of two things: "Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return," or "Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

Popular Day in the Catholic Church

Throughout much of the world, Ash Wednesday is one of the most popular days of the year to attend Church- even though it is not a Holy Day of Obligation! The popularity could perhaps be due to the way that Ash Wednesday uniquely speaks to the human person. The ashes express, through a physical sign, a desire for interior conversion. At the core of the human person is this need and desire to acknowledge one's own sinfulness.



WHY WE NEED THE DESERT

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

-Matthew 4:1-4

It is easy to see Lent as a chore. Lent is uncomfortable and it is human nature to avoid discomfort in any form! However, all growth requires a little discomfort!

As modeled by our patron, St. Francis of Assisi, it is necessary to remove distractions and spend time in prayer with Jesus so we can become renewed in the mission Jesus has left for us. St. Francis would sometimes observe up to five "Lents" a year before various feasts to recenter his spiritual life.

During the Great Lent (what we know as simply Lent), Francis would retreat to the hermitages, simple buildings in the hills and mountains away from the cities. He would spend every waking moment in prayer, finding renewed strength and insight in prayer.

At the end of the 40 days, Francis would leave his hermitage and go back down to the valley where he would then dedicate himself to service of the poor, the sick, and others in the community.

Francis' example mirrors Christ's - who spent forty days in the desert before beginning his ministry.

So why do we need the desert? We need it to recenter ourselves and remind ourselves of who the Father is. He is waiting to reveal himself to us - all we have to do is make space in our hearts to let him in.

Embrace the desert this Lent.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reconciliation (or penance, confession) is the sacrament in which sins committed after baptism are confessed after an examination of conscience and forgiven by a priest in the name of Christ.

Lent is a season of reflection on and repentance for sin. Reconciliation, like Lent, is tied into our fidelity to the meaning of baptism in Christ — dying and rising with him.

Weekly Reconciliation Schedule

Regular Weekly Confessions take place in the Chapel.

Wednesday
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Thursday
5:00 pm - 6:15 pm

Friday
9:00 am - 10:00 am

Saturday
9:15 am - 10:45 am

Additional Reconciliation Opportunities

Saturday, March 18
9:00 am - 12:00 pm | Church

Wednesday, March 29
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm | Church

Additional Daily Mass for Lent

During the Lenten Season, we will once again offering the 12:15 pm Friday Mass.

Act of Contrition

After confession, it is customary to recite an “Act of Contrition.” This, or something similar can be used. The idea is to remind ourselves how important it is to not offend God, and to try to not repeat our sins.

O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. (Rite of Penance, no. 45)

5 STEPS TO EMBRACING LENT THIS YEAR



1. Discern How God Wants You to Grow

The best thing for us is not what we consider best, but what the Lord wants of us. - St. Josephine Bakhita

It is natural to use Lent as a time to improve ourselves. However, to truly turn the focus from ourselves to the Lord, try spending time discerning how God wants you to grow closer to him.

2. Embrace Silence

We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls. -St. Teresa of Calcutta

There are so many options nowadays to fill any spare moments we have. We can play music, podcasts, TV, etc., instead of enduring silence. Learning to be okay in the silent and empty moments once in a while gives Jesus room to speak to us.

3. Go to Confession

Confession is an act of honesty and courage – an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God. -St. John Paul II

What a gift the sacrament of penance is to us! It is a concrete way for us to tangibly show our repentance before God. Confession is a beautiful sacrament that humbles us and will help us avoid future sin.

4. Prepare for Sunday Mass

Man should tremble, the world should quake, all Heaven should be deeply moved when the Son of God appears on the altar in the hands of the priest. -St. Francis of Assisi

Consider reading the Sunday Gospel before you attend Mass each week in

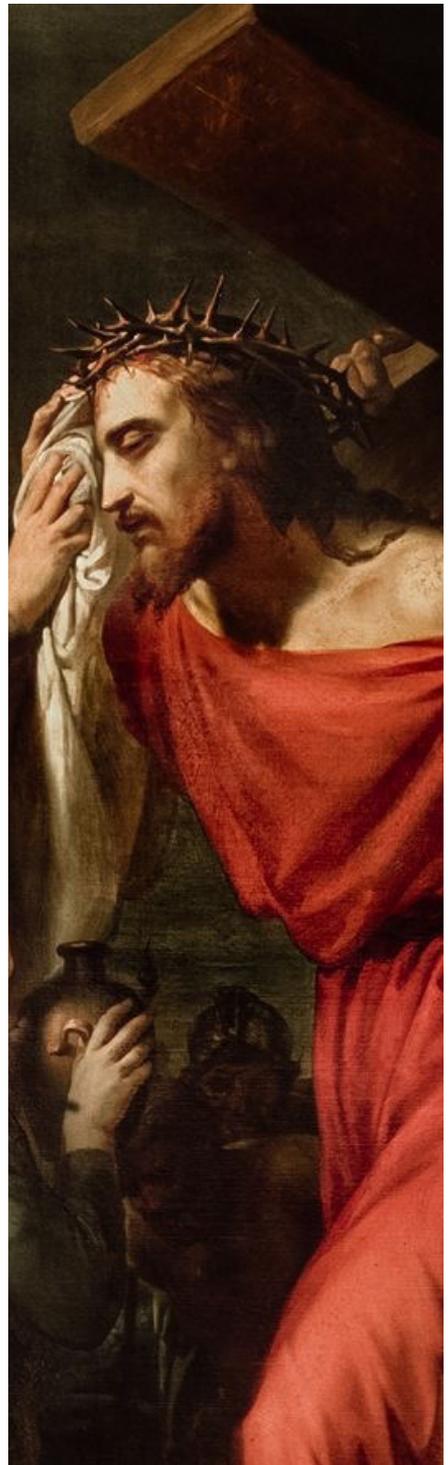
order to enter more fully into the Mass. It is also helpful to reflect on the readings, especially the Gospel and the homily after Mass as well. Families may consider talking about what stood out most to them in the readings or homily on the way home or at a meal. Familiarity with the Gospels can help transform your hearing of the Gospel. Sunday Mass is the highlight of the week and a beautiful opportunity for us to worship our Lord with all our hearts.

5. Focus on Personal Prayer

Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. -St. Augustine

Last, but not least, daily prayer is vital for growing in relationship with God. Personal prayer can look different for everyone! The important thing to remember is that a relationship cannot grow without communication - this is certainly true for our relationship with the Lord. Make space in your schedule each day to spend time in conversation with Jesus.

One great way to improve your personal prayer during lent is to try to attend Daily Mass. Even if you cannot attend every day during the week, just one or two days can really make a difference in your spiritual life. Another special way to devote to personal prayer is to attend Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. For Daily Mass and Adoration schedule, check out the St. Francis website or scan the QR code on the back cover of this Lent Guide.



Lenten Events

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Join us each Friday of Lent (excluding Good Friday, April 7) to enter into the season with our community.

**Vespers (Evening Prayer)
and Stations of the Cross**
English 6:00 pm | Church

Stations of the Cross
Spanish 7:00 pm |
Chapel following 6:30 pm Mass

Children's Live Stations of the Cross
Friday, March 31
Bilingual 7:00 pm | Church

FISH FRY

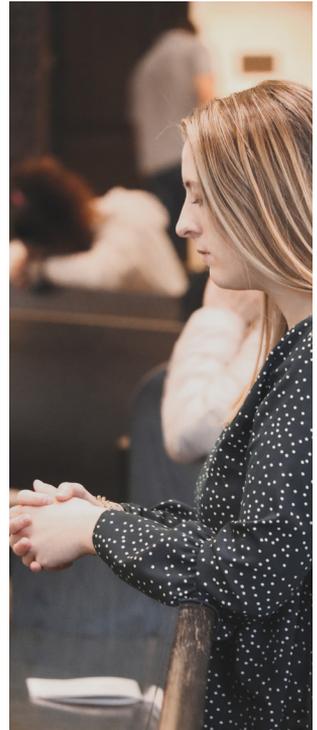
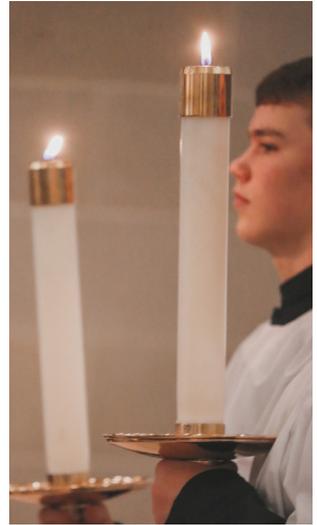
February 24, March 10, March 17, March 31
hosted by the Knights of Columbus
6:00 pm | Great Hall

LENTEN MISSION 2023

Save the Date

English
Friday, March 24
Saturday, March 25
Sunday, March 26
Monday, March 27

Spanish
Thursday, March 2
Friday, March 3
Saturday, March 4



Lenten Fasting & Abstinence



Fasting and abstinence are Church-imposed penitential practices that deny us food and drink during certain seasons and on certain days. These acts of self-denial dispose us to free ourselves from worldly distractions. They help us to express our longing for Jesus and enable us in a small way to connect to His suffering.

Days of Fasting

Ash Wednesday
Good Friday

Ages 18-59

Days of Abstinence

Ash Wednesday
Every Friday during Lent

Ages 14+

How do we fast?

When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal.

Abstaining refers to abstaining from meat.

Am I excused from fasting and abstinence?

Those that are excused from fasting and abstinence outside the age limits include the physically or mentally ill including individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Also excluded are pregnant or nursing women.



Holy Week Schedule

The Parish Office and Parish Center will be closed Thursday, April 6 through Monday, April 10.

Holy Thursday, April 6

Morning Prayer | English 8:30 am | Chapel

Mass of the Lord's Supper | Bilingual 7:00 pm | Church

Good Friday, April 7

Morning Prayer | English 8:30 am | Chapel

Passion of the Lord Liturgy | Spanish 3:00 pm | Church

Passion of the Lord Liturgy | English 7:00 pm | Church

Holy Saturday, April 8

Morning Prayer | English 8:30 am | Chapel

Blessing of Easter Baskets | 9:00 am in the Courtyard

Easter Vigil | Bilingual 8:30 pm | Church

Please note no confessions offered on Holy Saturday.



Easter Mass Times

Sunday, April 9, 2023

6:30 am Spanish | Church

8:00 am English | Church

8:00 am English | Great Hall

9:30 am English | Church

9:30 am English | Great Hall

11:00 am English | Church

11:00 am English | Great Hall

12:30 pm Spanish | Church

12:30 pm Spanish | Great Hall



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For Mass Times, Confession Times,
Registration Information, and more visit
our website by scanning the QR code or
visiting stfoafrisco.org.



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