



"Remember, man, that you are dust
And unto dust you shall return."

"Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

"Repent, and hear the good news."



Easter always falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25, roughly corresponding to early spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Ash Wednesday, which may fall anywhere between February 4 and March 10, occurs forty-six days before Easter, but Lent is nevertheless considered to be forty days long, due to the fact that Sundays in this season are not counted among the days of Lent. The traditional reason for this is that fasting was considered inappropriate on Sunday, the day commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus.



Keeping a Holy Lent

There are traditionally forty days in Lent which are marked by fasting, both from foods and festivities, and by other acts of penance. The three traditional practices to be taken up with renewed vigor during Lent are

prayer (justice towards God),
fasting (justice towards self), and
almsgiving (justice towards neighbor).

Today, some people give up something they enjoy, and often give the time or money spent doing that to charitable purposes or organizations.



Keeping a Holy Lent

In the Roman Catholic Mass as well as the Lutheran Divine Service and Anglican Eucharist, the Gloria in Excelsis Deo is not sung during the Lenten season, disappearing on Ash Wednesday and not returning until the moment of the Resurrection during the Easter Vigil. Likewise, the Alleluia is not sung during Lent; it is replaced before the Gospel reading by a seasonal acclamation.

A Prayer for Ash Wednesday

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, the all-holy one, who gives us life and all things. As we go about our lives, the press of our duties and activities often leads us to forget your presence and your love. We fall into sin and fail to live out the responsibilities that you have entrusted to those who were baptized into your Son.

In this holy season, help us to turn our minds and hearts back to you. Lead us into sincere repentance and renew our lives with your grace. Help us to remember that we are sinners, but even more, help us to remember your loving mercy.

As we live through this Ash Wednesday, may the crosses of ashes that mark our foreheads be a reminder to us and to those we meet that we belong to your Son. May our worship and prayer and penitence this day be sustained throughout these 40 days of Lent. Bring us refreshed and renewed to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

- Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In addition, all Catholics 14 years old and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.
- Fasting as explained by the U.S. bishops means partaking of only one full meal. Some food (not equaling another full meal) is permitted at breakfast and around midday or in the evening—depending on when a person chooses to eat the main or full meal.
- Abstinence forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs, milk products or condiments made of animal fat.

- <http://www.franciscanradio.org/SundaySoundbites/sundaysoundbite.asp?LectNum=WL>