



# THE SEASON OF LENT, 2011

## MEANING OF LENT

Lent originated in the early centuries of church history as a time of preparation for Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts until Holy Saturday, the Saturday before Easter. The last week of Lent is called Holy Week, which includes both Maundy Thursday (commemorating the institution of the Lord's Supper) and Good Friday (commemorating the crucifixion of our Lord).

Reminiscent of Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness, the Lenten season, not counting Sundays, lasts forty days. Sundays are not included because the Lord's Day, according to church tradition, is never a fast day but always a feast day, a celebration of the resurrection.

Lent is traditionally observed by penitence, almsgiving, self-denial, and, above all, prayer. We humble ourselves before God, coming before him in dust and ashes, confessing our sin and total inadequacy, stripping ourselves bare of all pretense to righteousness. We place our needs, fear, failures, hopes and lives into the hands of God. We confess that our only hope is in Christ, who lived, died, and rose on our behalf.

### A DAILY LENTEN PRAYER

While there are no best ways to observe Lent, you may find the following format for daily prayer and Scripture readings a helpful guide. It can be followed with family, friends, or in solitude. May God renew our repentance and faith this Lenten season!

- Consider who Christ is and who you are: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
- Meditate on the week's psalm of lament and confession.
- Respond to the psalm with your own prayer of lament and confession.
- Meditate on the day's reading from the Gospel of Mark.
- Respond in prayer to the Gospel reading, seeking the presence of Christ.

Sources: Craig Higgins, *On Keeping a Holy Lent* and Dennis Bratcher, *The Season of Lent*

Day	Psalm of Lament	Reading from Mark
Ash Wednesday	Psalm 123	1:1-15
Thursday		1:16-28
Friday		1:29-39
Saturday		1:40-45
<b>First Week of Lent ~ March 14-19</b>		
Monday	Psalm 32	2:1-17
Tuesday		2:18-28
Wednesday		3:1-12
Thursday		3:13-21
Friday		3:22-35
Saturday		4:1-20
<b>Second Week of Lent ~ March 21-26</b>		
Monday	Psalm 38	4:21-34
Tuesday		4:35-41
Wednesday		5:1-20
Thursday		5:21-43
Friday		6:1-13
Saturday		6:14-29
<b>Third Week of Lent ~ March 28 - April 2</b>		
Monday	Psalm 90	6:30-44
Tuesday		6:45-56
Wednesday		7:1-13
Thursday		7:14-23
Friday		7:24-37
Saturday		8:1-13
<b>Fourth Week of Lent ~ April 4-9</b>		
Monday	Psalm 25	8:14-21
Tuesday		8:22-30
Wednesday		8:31-38
Thursday		9:1-13
Friday		9:14-29
Saturday		9:30-37
<b>Fifth Week of Lent ~ April 11-16</b>		
Monday	Psalm 51	9:38-50
Tuesday		10:1-16
Wednesday		10:17-31
Thursday		10:32-34
Friday		10:35-52
Saturday		11:1-11
<b>Holy Week ~ April 18-23</b>		
Monday	Psalm 22	11:12-19
Tuesday		11:20 - 13:37
Wednesday		14:1-11
Maundy Thursday		14:12-72
Good Friday		15:1-41
Holy Saturday		15:42-47
<b>Easter Sunday</b>		