

Frequently Asked Questions: Lent

Why do we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday? Ash Wednesday liturgies are some of the best attended in the entire year. Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance. 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 theme of Baptism. To prepare well for the day we depart this life, 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 a deeper conversion of our lives during this season of renewal.

How is Lent related to Baptism? Years ago, Lent was all about self-denial, suffering and the death of Christ in bloody agony on the cross. When the Second Vatican Council issued its *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* in 1963, the bishops called for the renewal of the season of Lent: “The season of Lent has a twofold character: primarily by recalling or preparing for Baptism and by penance, it disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery.” The Council’s reference to the baptismal character of Lent seemed strange to most of us at the time. We had not been trained to link Baptism and Lent in our minds or in our devotional practices. Yet Lent is fundamentally baptismal in its origins and its meaning.

Why meatless Fridays? Already by the fourth century, there was a Church law about abstinence (not eating meat on certain days). By the 12th century, this was required only on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays—to remind Christians that Jesus died on this day. The U.S. bishops decided in 1966 to require fasting and abstinence only on Ash Wednesday, the Fridays of Lent, and on Good Friday. Earlier that year, Pope Paul VI allowed conferences of bishops to select days of fast and abstinence. Why meat? People like it and notice its absence. Christian fasting regulations once included milk and eggs. Fasting and abstaining show respect for God’s creation by using it more sparingly at times.

What does the word ‘Lent’ mean? It is from the Anglo-Saxon word *lengten*, which means Spring.

I’ve heard a lot about the Triduum. What is the Triduum all about? Lent comes to an end before the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday. That liturgy begins the Triduum, the great ‘Three Days’ that celebrate the central mystery of our faith. Triduum rituals invite us all to baptismal renewal, what we’ve been preparing for all Lent. Here are some examples:

Washing of Feet: After the homily on Holy Thursday, our Master is imitated in the washing of feet. This ritual reminds us that our baptismal commitment means we are to be servants of one another. In the time of St. Ambrose in Milan, those who were baptized also had their feet washed, because of Jesus’ words to Peter: “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed” (John 13:10). Many scholars have seen a baptismal reference in those words.

Veneration of the Cross: As part of our observance of Good Friday, we venerate the cross on which Christ died. The veneration challenges us to be willing to accept the cross, too, for it is the only way to resurrection. Through Baptism, we shared in Christ’s death that we might come to new life. Every year we are called to prepare during Lent to deepen our identification with his cross and resurrection.

Waters of Baptism: The core of our celebration of the Easter Vigil is the Baptism of the Elect, those preparing during Lent for entrance into the Church. As we share in their joy on this holy night, we are all called to renew our own baptismal promises, to live in the joy of life in the Risen One. Lent comes to its fulfillment around the waters of the font.



St. John the Baptist – Holy Angels Parish
Lent/Triduum/Easter 2011

Daily Eucharist (Mon. – Sat.)

St. John the Baptist, 8am
Adoration with Benediction, Fridays,
8:30am-12:30pm

Stations of the Cross

Friday Evenings, 7:00pm
Holy Angels – March 11, 18, 25
St. John the Baptist – April 1, 8, 15

Lenten Vespers

Sunday Evenings, 6:30pm
Holy Angels – March 13, 20, 27
St. John the Baptist – April 3, 10, 17

Lenten Celebration of Reconciliation

Holy Angels, March 29, 7:00pm

Lenten Morning Prayer

Holy Angels, 10:00am
March 21, 30
April 6, 12, 20

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Procession Commemoration the Lord's
Entrance into Jerusalem, 5pm Mass
8am, 10am, St. John the Baptist
9am, 11am, (1pm Spanish),
Holy Angels

THE EASTER TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday, April 21

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper,
7:30pm, Holy Angels
Prayer during the Night Watch,
10:30pm, Altar of Repose
Eucharistic Adoration until Midnight

Good Friday, April 22

No 8:00am Mass or Adoration,
St. John the Baptist
Prayer during the Morning Watch,
9:00am, St. John the Baptist
Via Crucis (Spanish), 1:00pm,
Holy Angels Grounds
Commemoration of the Lord's Passion,
7:30pm, Holy Angels (English)

Holy Saturday, April 23

No 8:00am Mass or Confessions,
St. John the Baptist
Prayer during the Morning Watch,
9:00am, Holy Angels
Solemn Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection,
8:30pm, Holy Angels

Easter Sunday, April 24

8am, 10am, St. John the Baptist
9am, 11am, Holy Angels

