



## What Lenten practices I plan to do this year?

Lent is an opportunity to return to God with all our hearts and to observe the three pillars of the Lenten season: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. We should allow ourselves to feel challenged, to take action and to focus on how we might grow closer to God, by our actions, thoughts, words, and to what sacrifice might be made to achieve this.

When it comes to the three pillars of Lent, almsgiving is a little bit like the middle child, not always getting the attention that prayer and fasting do. People don't talk about it as they might discuss what they are giving up for Lent or how they might be praying more or reading spiritual books during the 40 days before Easter. Almsgiving can be considered as the "under-practiced, under-encouraged Lenten discipline".

Almsgiving is defined as donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes almsgiving as "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God."

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said: "When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others." *But, out of sight in this case should not mean out of mind. Do not blow a trumpet when you give doesn't mean don't give.*

Many Catholics have made the connection that fasting is not just to be pious but should have practical measures: taking the money that would have been spent on clothes, food or drink, for example, and setting that aside to give to a good cause. Your donation of time, treasure, and talents to those in need is always appreciated.

This Lenten Season I would suggest that our parish family creates an almsgiving plan that would allow us to refurbish the hallways of the church (patching and painting the walls, lowering the ceilings...). Let's make almsgiving an encounter with God. The practice of almsgiving is a way to join in the generosity of God and show the love of God for all.

Have a Blessed Lent!

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