



**CATHOLIC**  
and **LIVING IT!**

February 21st, 2022

Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada Spiritual Development Standing Committee Directive#13

To: Diocesan Spiritual Development Standing Chairpersons

From: Emma Rose Rayburn, Ontario Provincial Council, Spiritual Development Chairperson

Sub-Committee: Lisa Fillingham, Anne Vincelli

cc: Archbishop Damphousse, Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Officers, Diocesan Spiritual Development Chairpersons, Sub-committee chairperson

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**Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore, he will rise up to show you compassion.**

**For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! Isaiah 30:18**



Lent is fast approaching and no time like the present to start preparing. Lent or any penitential season, like Advent can be fully taken advantage of by performing three practices: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

## **PRAYER**

If your prayer life is already healthy and robust, that's great! Keep it up! But during Lent, find ways to increase your daily prayers, even if only by a few minutes each day. Perhaps by praying certain novenas for people in your life and an extra decade of the rosary.

## **FASTING AND ABSTINENCE**

This one can be confusing for some people. Fasting isn't about giving something up, it's actually about depriving yourself of food, specifically. On all Fridays throughout the year, Catholics are highly recommended to abstain from meat. However, if that isn't possible or you elect not to, then the abstinence must be replaced by extra prayers and/or good works. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (with exceptions for expectant women, for example) are required to fast. We do this by having only one full meal that day and two smaller meals that, added together, do not amount to a full meal.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, fasting serves three purposes, which are of particular importance during Lent:

1. To conquer lust: First, in order to bridle the lusts of the flesh, wherefore the Apostle says (2 Corinthians 6:5-6): "In fasting, in chastity," since fasting is the guardian of chastity. For...lust is cooled by abstinence in meat and drink. So, this act of denial helps us to gain temperance in all areas of our life.

2. To help our minds rise above material things and contemplate heavenly realities: Secondly, we have recourse to fasting in order that the mind may arise more freely to the contemplation of heavenly things: hence it is related of Daniel (Daniel 10) that he received a revelation from God after fasting for three weeks.

So, when we are not concerned or preoccupied with material things like food or drink, we can more easily turn our attention and focus towards God.

3. To atone for our sins: wherefore it is written (Joel 2:12): "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in mourning." The same is declared by Augustine in a sermon: "Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, kindles the true light of chastity."

So, by putting ourselves through some bodily pains and discomforts, we can make effective acts of penance and reparations for our sins.

## **ALMSGIVING**

Almsgiving is not the same as your regular weekly tithing. It is going above and beyond the minimum to the point where it may sting a bit. It should be seen as a tangible sacrifice. If there isn't some personal discomfort in doing it, then what are you actually meriting? Sacrifice is meant to be uncomfortable. It's through this discomfort, yet open willingness and joy of doing it for the sake of God, that we reap the benefits.

Please find attached a calendar with suggestions for prayers, fasting and almsgiving.

## Lenten Calendar – March & April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>The three pillars of lent</b> <b>Prayer, fasting and almsgiving</b>			<b>2</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b> Say the Rosary everyday for Lent and wear your ashes with pride	<b>3</b> Skip your morning coffee or tea. Drink water and be grateful for having the option to choose	<b>4</b> A smile warms the heart. So does a wave. Wave to people who cannot see your smile	<b>5</b> Pray for those who have had abortions
<b>6</b> Give up a favorite treat for the week	<b>7</b> Let someone behind you in line go ahead of you	<b>8</b> Pray for Pope Francis	<b>9</b> Give your time and thoughts to wildlife. Feed the birds and squirrels	<b>10</b> Give a g/c like Tim Hortons to a person in need	<b>11</b> Pray to St. Rita to help the lonely	<b>12</b> Fast from social media today
<b>13</b> Remember to donate to St. Vincent de Paul	<b>14</b> Pray for our priests	<b>15</b> Fast from TV today	<b>16</b> Bring food to your local food bank	<b>17</b> Pray to St. Patrick	<b>18</b> Fast from anger and forgive someone	<b>19</b> Bake for a neighbour
<b>20</b> Pray for Truth and Reconciliation	<b>21</b> Give up your car and walk today	<b>22</b> Offer your delivery worker (post or paper, etc) a drink when they come by	<b>23</b> Pray for seminarians	<b>24</b> Make homeless kits up to give out when you see those in need	<b>25</b> Give to yourself. Do something for yourself that you normally don't do	<b>26</b> Pray for Catholic Education
<b>27</b> Encourage a younger person to help someone out everyday for this week	<b>28</b> Give your patience to someone you know needs it	<b>29</b> Pray for our Catholic students and teachers	<b>30</b> Clean out your spring and summer clothes now and donate to a homeless shelter	<b>31</b> Do something to help our earth. Recycle always	<b>April 1</b> Pray for COVID/Omicron to end	<b>2</b> Go through your collection of vases and trinkets and donate to a nursing home
<b>3</b> Help the earth, plan to plant flowers that attract bees	<b>4</b> Pray for peace	<b>5</b> Laudato Si' Use cold water and quick cycles for laundry	<b>6</b> Take the time to thank someone for all they do	<b>7</b> Pray for those who have lost their faith	<b>8</b> Become Meals on Wheels and bring someone you know who is alone a home cooked meal	<b>9</b> Give your family a special day

<p><b>10</b></p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>Reflect on what today symbolizes</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>What more can you give? There is always more to give. Think and you will realize what you have still to offer</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Drop cat or dog food off at the Humane Society</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Pray for peace for yourself, your family, friends, and the world</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>Holy Thursday</b></p> <p>Pray – prayer can solve so much</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>Good Friday</b></p> <p>Attend the Passion of Christ</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Holy Saturday</b></p> <p>Prayer for our Dear Lord who died for us and will rise tomorrow</p>
<p><b>17</b></p> <p><b>Easter – Jesus Christ has risen</b></p>						

Here are more links of wonderful sources that can help us prepare for Lent.

<https://thefriar.org/preparing-for-lent-novena-2022-welcome-the-king/>

<https://leaders.formed.org/lent-2022/>

<https://thefriar.org/preparing-for-lent-novena-2022-welcome-the-king/>

You can even download this apt to pray with during Lent <https://hallow.com/lent/>

Found some great resources on the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops – these are older publications from previous years but still very relevant.

<https://en.archoc.ca/journey-through-lent-video-series> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhAQTyb7Ua0&t=298s>

<https://www.cccb.ca/document/living-lent/>



I love this idea – perfect for a family activity or for school children and grandchildren.

#### HOW TO MAKE A LENTEN PRAYER JAR

To help direct your thoughts and prayers this Lent, create a prayer jar.

First, you will need a clean, empty jar – preferably one with a wide mouth. Have an adult help you remove the label from the jar. Mason jars work well and don't have labels.

Once you have your clean jar, the fun begins. You can decorate your jar using paper, paint, ribbon, yarn, string or any fabric scraps you have on hand.

Depending on how you choose to decorate your jar, you may need glue & scissors. You may even want to use some acrylic paint to paint the glass before you start or to add your embellishments.

Once you have finished decorating your jar you will need to fill it with prayers! You can print this page and cut out the intentions, or simply write your own various intentions on strips of paper, fold the strips and place them in the jar.

This activity helps with prayer, reflecting and understanding the blessings that God has given us.

#### **Prayer jar intention ideas**

- Pray for a family member in need
- Pray for those who are sick
- Pray for those who are alone
- Pray for a sibling or cousin
- Pray for someone who you think needs help
- Pray for those who have no one to pray for them
- Prayer: Jesus, let me be more like you today in my thoughts, actions and words.
- Prayer: God, make me someone who works for peace
- Prayer: Jesus, you tell me to love you and others. Help me to do both well today
- Prayer: Jesus, help me to be more compassionate and see others through Your eyes today

Your sister in Christ

Emma Rose Rayburn

Ontario Provincial Spiritual Development Chair

The Catholic Women's League of Canada