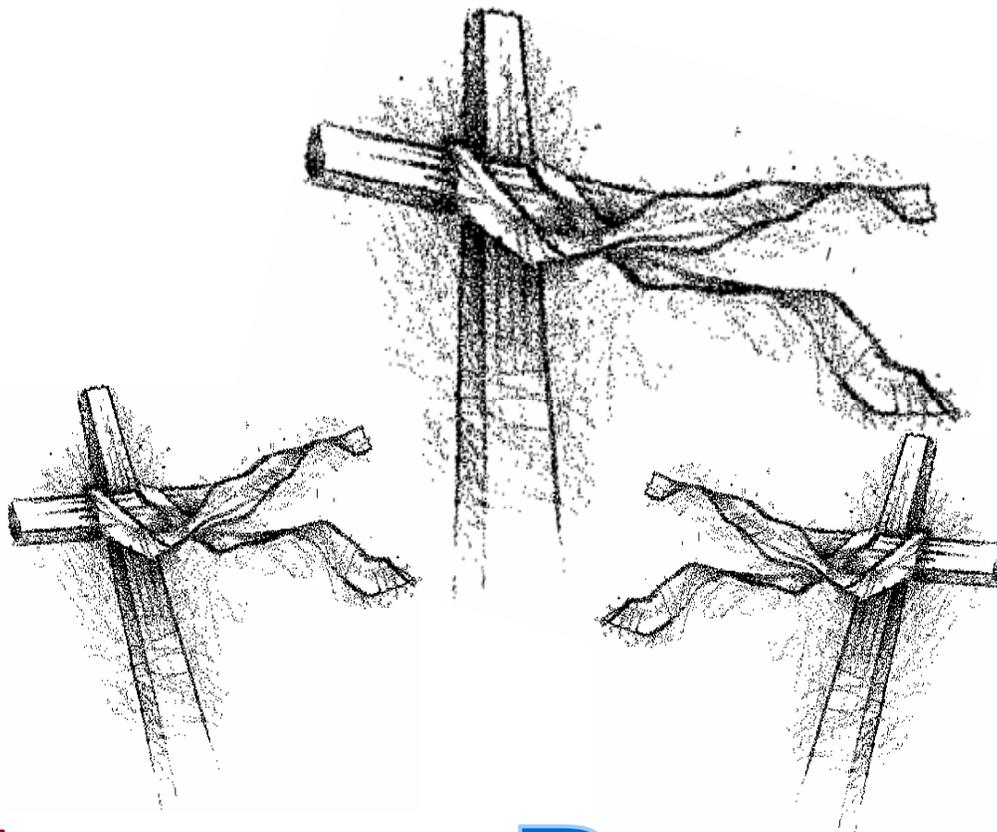


Stewardship



Lenten Prayer Resource



Stewardship & Pastoral Services
PO box 23825
Green Bay, WI 54305-3825
920-272-8310
pastserv@gbdioc.org

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Stewardship a Way of Life

Lenten Prayers and Activities for the Home



As Christians and disciples we hear three give alms. Prayer is a reminder that all we are to an ever-deeper understanding that are challenged to evaluate honestly how we are growing in prayer, service and sharing.

Words of Bishop Robert Morneau in *Paths to Prayer*, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, OH. 1998.

fundamental calls in the gospel: pray, fast and and have comes from the Lord. Prayer leads us stewardship is essentially about self giving. We

† *Meal Prayers*

- ◆ **Bless, O Lord**, this fruit of your good earth and the work of human hands. It comes to us through your grace and the loving care of many people. As we eat this food, make us joyful today. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.
- ◆ **Thank you, Lord**, for the food we have eaten and for all your gifts. Keep us mindful of the needs of people who suffer from hunger. Bring us ever closer to each other and ever nearer to you. In a spirit of thanks and praise. Amen.

☆ *Prayer for Lent* **Merciful God,**

You called us forth from the dust of the earth. You claimed us for Christ in the waters of Baptism. Bless our journey through the desert of Lent to the font of rebirth. May our fasting be a hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; Our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts. All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus, now and forever. Amen

Stewards in Action

- ☆ Read and discuss next Sunday's gospel as a household.
- ☆ Start a prayer journal to record your gratefulness for god's gifts.

- ☆ Plan an outdoor event to take care of our physical need for exercise.
- ☆ Listen prayerfully to some religious (or other) music. Our souls need nourishment too.

- ☆ Get to know the candidates and catechumens in the RCIA process. Invite one to lunch.
- ☆ Consider becoming involved in a ministry at church. Families can serve in hospitality.

- ☆ Sort through clothing and toys. Give some to the poor.
- ☆ Take responsibility to recycle. Preserve the earth's resources.

- ☆ Give a homebound person a ride to church or medical appointment.
- ☆ Pray as a group at meals, morning, and/or evening.

A Steward's Way

The life of a Christian steward models the life of Jesus. It is challenging and even difficult, in many respects, yet intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards. Women and men who seek to live as stewards learn that "all things work for good for those who love God"

(Romans9:28).

USCCB Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

"Change for Lent and
His Life Will Set You Free"

What are you "Giving up" for Lent?

What will you "give up" for Lent? This is one of the ways we think of Lent – a time to give up (or fast from) something. For forty days we fast from food or drink we enjoy, or we fast from swearing or cussing, or speaking badly about others; or we fast an attitude toward another: These are commendable practices which build up discipline – discipline we need to resist temptation in the future. Our "giving up" or fasting should enable us to deepen our relationship with God and with others. We do these things to make room, and make time, for Christ with the growing realization that all we are and have is a gift from God and is dependent upon a loving relationship with the Lord and our neighbor.

The disciplines of Lent, prayer, fasting, sharing talents and almsgiving, should be a genuine response to God's love for you. They are not done to gain favor with God. We are called to help the poor and needy. Why? Because by doing that we are making room for Christ.

Perhaps this can be a good thought as we enter the season of Lent:

*LENT IS A TIME TO CONSIDER
THE GIVING UP OF WHAT WE ARE,
FOR WHAT WE MAY BECOME.*

A variety of examples to renew prayer life. Share at meetings or insert an idea a week in bulletins.

10 Ways to Pray in 10 Minutes a Day

Prayer isn't about words, it's about relationships. It's about our relationship with God, and God's relationship with us. It's about our relationship with our family and friends and their relationship with us. Prayer is about how we relate and communicate in our relationships with God and God's people. Prayer, like stewardship, can become a way of life for us if we take the time to nurture our relationship with God, even in small ways. The following suggestions may help to keep us aware of God's presence that is with us always, as well as the needs of God's people all around us.

1. When you hear a siren or see a fire truck or ambulance, say a prayer for the person/s who has been hurt or is ill.
2. When you're sitting at a red light, say a short prayer for the person in the car in front of you (and in back of you if it's a long light!).
3. When standing in line at the grocery checkout, say a prayer for those who have no money to buy food.
4. Park at the end of the parking lot, and thank God for your ability to walk as you approach of the door of your destination.
5. Get a small notebook to keep by your bed. Each night before going to sleep, think back on the day and write down one thing you are grateful for.
6. Go out of your way to smile and greet people as you pass them in the halls at work or school, or on the street.
7. Tell your kids, your spouse or your dear friends that you love them!
8. When you say to yourself, "Why me, God?" take the time to listen for an answer.
9. Say a short prayer of thanks before and after every meal.
10. Pick a family member or friend each day and say a short prayer for them as you are brushing your teeth.



BLESS US, O LORD

Meal prayers for the seasons

We are familiar with the traditional meal prayer: "Bless us o Lord..." to emphasize the change in liturgical seasons throughout the year, replace the traditional prayer with one of the prayers listed below:

Lent

Merciful God,
Your children have sinned
against you.
Break the hold of sin in our lives,
And bless the food before us.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.



Advent

God of Peace,
We ask you to look kindly upon us,
To bless our food and unite our hearts
As we await the coming of your Son.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Easter

This is the day the Lord has made!
We rejoice and praise God
Who raised Jesus from the dead!
Let your blessing rest upon us and
this table.
We ask this through Christ, our risen Lord.
Amen



Christmas

Mighty God, Eternal Father,
Unto us your Son has been given.
Bless this food, and help us, your
adopted children to live as the light of
Christ in this world.
We ask this through Jesus, your Son.
Amen.



Summer Ordinary Time

God of all Creation,
You have clothed the land with your bounty
And filled the earth with your goodness.
Bless the food at this table
And those who will partake of it.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen



Winter Ordinary Time

Everlasting God,
In your kindness we ask you to bless
this food.
Give us strength for our journey
And courage to live out your love in the world
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Fall Ordinary Time

Loving God,
You are the source and summit
of all that is.
Bless this food and strengthen us
That we may be good stewards of your creation.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



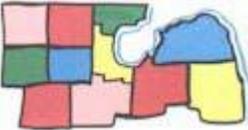
Traditional Grace

Bless us O Lord,
And these our gifts
Which we are about to receive,
From Thy Bounty,
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



The Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw

5800 Weiss, Saginaw, MI 48603-2799

<p><u>Little Blue Book (Advent/Christmas)</u> <u>Little Black Book (Lent)</u> <u>Little White Book (Easter)</u> <u>Children's Lent Book (purple)</u></p>		<p><u>Librito Azul</u> <u>Librito Negro</u> <u>Librito Blanco</u></p>
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Important Information:

- Booklets are available on a limited time basis and may be ordered while supplies last.
- Shipping will begin 4 weeks prior to the beginning date of reflections in each book.
- All sales are final.

Thank you for your interest in the Little Books. Orders can be placed by phone by calling (989)799-7910, **ONLINE** at <https://secure.cnchost.com/saginaw.org/> or if you prefer, orders can be faxed to the Diocese of Saginaw at: (989) 797-6606. The **ONLINE order** will take you to a SECURE SOCKETS LAYER (SSL) for your protection.

Make checks payable to the Diocese of Saginaw.

Price List	
Total Quantity	Price / book
1 - 49	\$4/ book
50 - 99	\$1 / book
100 - 499	\$0.90 / book
500 - 999	\$0.75 / book
1000 - over	\$0.70 / book

Shipping and Handling Costs	
1 - 5 books / \$1.50 per book	501 - 750 books \$70 total
6-10 books / \$1.00 per book	751 - 1000 books \$90 total
11 - 25 books \$10.00 total	1001-1500 books \$110.00 total
26 - 50 books \$15.00 total	1500 - 2000 books \$125 total
51-100 books \$20.00 total	2001 - 2500 books \$150 total
101 - 250 books \$30 total	2501-3000 books \$175.00 total
251 - 500 books \$55 total	over 3000 books at \$0.05 / book

The Little Books should be ordered directly from the Diocese of Saginaw for those parishes using this prayer resource.

DO YOU HAVE A LITTLE BLACK BOOK?

IF NOT, maybe WE CAN help



DO you HAVE 6 MINUTES a day? If so, then you have time to pray! As part of the diocesan stewardship thrust, our parish is offering the “Little Black Book” reflection book to all parishioners for only \$1.00. The little book has a short reflection for each day of lent for us to meditate and pray over. And it only takes 6 minutes a day!!!

You Can Use It:

- † When You Get Up**
- † On your break at work**
- † As a family meal prayer**
- † Before you go to bed**
- † Waiting to pick up the kids**
- † ANYTIME!**

Don't miss out on this Fabulous opportunity to spend a “Little” time with God this Lent!

Sample page from the Lent Little Black Book

February 11, 2008

Who wielded the sword?

All four Gospels report that someone struck the high priest's servant with a sword and cut off his ear.

Matthew, Mark and Luke simply say it was one of those with Jesus.

John says it was Peter.

* * *

John notes that Peter struck the *right* ear of the high priest's servant. (Mark also specifies the right ear.) It is uncertain why they add this detail.

Some creative interpreters have concluded that Peter must have been left-handed.



Monday – The First Week of Lent

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. (Jn 18:10)

Peter's action here fits his "profile" in the Gospels. He comes across as impulsive. Whenever Jesus asked the disciples a question, it was usually Peter who spoke up first. And, after Jesus' resurrection, it was Peter who got out of the boat and swam toward Jesus.

Our profile as a "Christian" is more than simply a matter of intellectually accepting certain doctrines. It's not something cerebral and abstract. It's a relationship with a person who is real, living, loving – namely, Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, it is the quality of our relationship to Jesus that defines our life as Christians. And a relationship involves feelings.

The core distinguishing characteristic as a Christian is this: I love Jesus Christ.

After the resurrection, when Jesus gets Peter aside, he doesn't ask him, "Do you believe in me?" He asks, "Simon, son of John, do you *love* me?" And he repeats the question three times.

I need to take some quiet time and hear Jesus address me by name and ask me the same question: "(*Your name*), do you love me?"

Take it from there.

Spend some quiet time with the Lord



March 18, 2008

Tuesday of Holy Week

A legend or a fable is a story that doesn't pretend to be historical, but simply teaches a lesson. The events surrounding the suffering and death of Christ gave rise to many legends.

Longinus the Centurion

What happened to the soldier who “thrust his lance” into the side of Jesus, a story told only in the Gospel of John?

According to the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, the soldier was named Longinus. He had poor eyesight that was miraculously cured when drops of Jesus' blood fell into his eyes after he lanced Jesus' side. Shortly after this, Longinus converted to Christianity. It is said that he resigned from the military and later died for his faith, martyred by Pontius Pilate in Cappadocia (a region in modern-day Turkey).

Charlemagne was said to have possessed Longinus' lance, and the lance was part of the Legend of the Holy Grail.

* * *

A statue of Longinus can be found in the Basilica of St. Peter at the Vatican. It is located near the tomb of Pope John XXIII.



So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out (Jn 19:32-34)

In describing the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus, John is not giving a medical analysis. He is teaching the deeper meaning of the death of Jesus.

Earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus came to Jerusalem for the Jewish “Feast of Tabernacles.”

On the last and most important day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed: “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: “Rivers of living water will flow from within him,” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (Jn 7:37-39)

Now that Jesus has been lifted up on the cross and given over his life, the hour of his glorification has come. The blood is a sign of his dying – which is his glorification. The water is a sign of his Spirit which he promised to give.

“Let anyone who thirsts come to me.”

Jesus speaks those words personally to each of us. And he promises to give us the gift of his own Spirit.

His own Spirit. The Spirit of *Jesus* given to me. Personally.

I have to think hard about that.

The Changes in the Seasonal Environment of the Church: A Tool to Use for Bulletin Inserts

LENT

From Ash Wednesday morning to Holy Thursday afternoon

Lent is a time to immerse ourselves in the Paschal Mystery of Christ's Passion, death and resurrection. It is a time for serious prayer, penance, fasting and works for charity; a time for understanding and accepting the positive role of suffering in the Christian life. It is also a time for the elect to prepare for baptism and for us to recall our Baptism.



Six Weeks:

From Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday Afternoon

Baptismal and penitential themes

COLOR: **Reddish-purple**

SOUNDS: Simplify music in order to focus on essentials

PASCHAL TRIDUUM

From Holy Thursday sundown to Easter Sunday sundown

The fast and the feast together – Holy Thursday evening, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday – are the Paschal Triduum, meaning “the Three Days of Passover.”

The Triduum is the heart of the church year – the three days of the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Three Days:

From Holy Thursday sundown to Easter Sunday sundown

One continuous celebration of our salvation – the Lord's Supper, the Passion, the Resurrection

Color: Holy Thursday – **White**

Sounds: Gloria is sung with bells ringing; washing of feet

Color: Good Friday - **Red**

Sounds: Solemn intercessions and veneration of the Cross

Color: Easter Vigil - **White**

Sounds: Blessing of fire and water

Gloria sung with bells ringing

Scriptures tell the history of God's people

Many Alleluias

Color: Easter Day - **White**

Sounds: Joyful music

Easter sequence

Renewal of baptismal promises

Many Alleluias



EASTERTIME

From Easter Sunday to Pentecost

Eastertime is the 50 – day celebration that flows from the Triduum, 50 days to sing Alleluia, 50 days to live as if God’s rule of justice and peace were fully with us. It is the church’s most ancient and most beautiful season. On Pentecost the assembly is sent out anew to continue Jesus’ mission.



Eight Weeks

From Easter Sunday to Pentecost
Springtime, new beginnings

Color:Easter - **White**

Sounds:Alleluia!

Color:Pentecost - **Red**

Sounds:Come, Holy Spirit!



SUMMER/FALL ORDINARY TIME

Between Easter time and Advent

There are about 32 weeks outside the five church sessions to focus on mission. These weeks are called “Ordinary time,” from the word “ordinal,” meaning counted. Each week is given a number to help us divide the Scriptures into readings and to place these readings in a book called the Lectionary.

Twenty four to twenty-nine weeks: Pentecost to Advent

Growth in the lessons learned during the festal seasons

Color: **Green**

Sounds: Music expressing many aspects of our faith.

Stewardship ideas for a parish or individual to provide an opportunity for a closer relationship to God.

Specific Instructions on Ways to Use Spirituality of Theology

*“What return can I make to the Lord for all his goodness to me?”
Psalm 116*

*A Lenten Program with Suggestions for 40 Days of Renewal
Ideas from the Sermons of St. Augustine and Pope Leo the Great*

✚ Realizing the goodness of the Lord, turn away from sin by
Fasting: “emptying out to make room for the Lord”

- ★ Consider the portions of food of the poor.
- ★ Practice moderation in personal life and in all activities.
Thank the Lord for food and all good things.



Penance: “practicing self-discipline for the strength to do good”

- ★ Celebrate forgiveness with the Sacrament of Penance.
- ★ Reach out to help the poor, the sick or the suffering people.

✚ Walking in God’s presence, grow in the Christian Life with
Spiritual Exercises: “taking on practices that draw us closer to God”

- ★ Study and pray with the Scriptures, the Creed and the Our Father
- ★ Join in devotions: The Way of the Cross, Holy Hour, Spiritual Reading, Rosary, etc.
- ★ Reflect with daily readings from : “The Little Black Book”
(Stewardship Resource Manual)

Liturgical Prayer: “gathering for public prayer with the community”

- ★ Pray Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer with a grateful heart.
- ★ Participate in Sunday Mass and daily Mass if possible.
- ★ Use additional Prayers from the Stewardship Resource Manual

✚ Following 40 Days of Lent, Celebrate with the Triduum

Holy Thursday: **Accepting the Holy Oils, Washing of Feet, Stripping of the Altar**

Good Friday: **Hearing the Passion, Praying for the World, Venerating the Cross**

Easter Vigil: **Blessing the Fire, Hearing the Bible Stories, Blessing the Water, Initiating the Catechumens, Singing Alleluia, Celebrating Easter Eucharist**

THE CROSS

“Lord, by thy Cross and Resurrection thou has redeemed the world”

SCRIPTURES:

Take up your Cross and come follow me.

No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple.

The message of the cross is fully for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God.

In the symbol of the Cross we can see the magnitude of the human tragedy, the ravages of original sin, and the infinite love of God. Lent is a particularly appropriate time to attempt to penetrate the true meaning of this sacred image represented through prayerful contemplation; and to study the traditions surrounding the Christian symbol of the Cross.

History of the Cross: This Christian sign is a very ancient one, mentioned by the early Fathers of the Church as being a habitual practice by the second century. Tertullian recounts that “in all our travels in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.” This sign or mark on the forehead of consecration to Christ has an antecedent in Ezekiel’s prophetic vision of judgment, in which the Lord commands that a “mark be set upon the foreheads” of the Israelites who cry out against the evil which surrounds them, so that by this mark God’s people were identified as belonging to Him and saved from annihilation [Ezekiel: 9:4-6]. Other biblical references to “sealing” god’s people with a sign on their heads are found in the Apocalypse (or Revelation 7:4, 9:4).

Sacramental Mark of the Cross: This sacramental “mark” is important to Catholic people to this day. We are anointed, at baptism and at confirmation, by the priest making the sign of the cross on our foreheads with the Oil of Chrism (the oil blessed by bishops at the Mass of Chrism on Holy Thursday). The sign and the chrism are also used at the ordination of a priest or bishop. In administering the sacrament of the sick the priest anoints the person with the sign of the cross made with blessed oil. Also, on Ash Wednesday, our foreheads are marked by the priest with the sign of the cross made with blessed palm ashes.

Mass and Absolution Use of Cross: Another form of the sign of the cross is made by the priest several times during the celebration of Mass and when he grants absolution and gives other priestly blessings, by making an invisible cross with the first two fingers and thumb of his right hand extended. A similar gesture of blessing is made when a priest blesses religious objects (these objects used in worship are also called sacramentals), such as rosaries, medals, vestments and articles used in connection with mass.

The Great Sign of the Cross: (This is the one most people think of, and the one people use most often). A cross is traced with the right hand, touching the forehead, the chest, then the left and right shoulder. [In Orthodox churches, from right to left.] The Doxology is said aloud or silently as the sign is made.

The season of Lent is a most appropriate time for all ages to learn more about one of the most distinctive Catholic prayers: the **sign of the cross**. It is a visible sign (sacramental) of one’s belief in Christ and of one’s hope in the redemption which flows from His Cross. Accompanied by the invocation of the Trinity (Doxology), “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit”, making a sign of the cross is a simple and beautiful form of Christian devotion. By making this sign both in public and in private we affirm our faith in Christ crucified and ask for His blessing and protection. It is also a gesture of reverence to the Blessed Sacrament



The Little Sign of the Cross: A cross is made on the forehead with the thumb or index finger (this form is used by the priest when anointing or administering ashes). Or a cross is traced with the thumb on one’s own head, lips and heart, a gesture which asks Christ to instruct our minds, aid us in our witness, and renew our hearts. (This sign is made at the reading of the Gospel by both priest and people.)

Prayer service to be used a meetings.

CROSS REFLECTION

During this Lenten season we reflect on the powerful symbol of the Cross. It has great meaning in our lives as a Christian people. We will take a few moments to meditate on the Sign of the Cross. To prepare us for this reflection, I invite you to center yourself by focusing your attention to a certain spot or to close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Slowly inhale and exhale.

Take in new life with each breath.
Enable darkness and fear.
Inhale brightness and light.
Exhale anxiety and worry.
Hold your hopes for this day.

Take your right hand and place it in the center of your forehead as we begin in the name of our Creator God,
 In the name of the Father,
 In the name of the Mother,
In the name of the God who loves us and sustains us,
 The God of mystery and surprise,
The God who is always somehow beyond us,
 Who calls us to be saints.
And we ask that all the function of our mind,
Our memory, our intellect, our will, our imagination,
 Might be wholly directed
 To this all holy God.

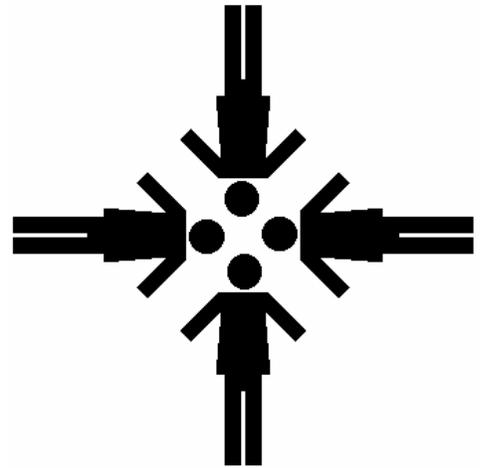
LOWER your hand to the center of your chest, in a place near your heart
As we pray in the name of your Son
As we pray in the name of that Sacred Heart that was
We pray that the wounds of our own hearts might be channels of peace.

LIFT your hand and place it on your left shoulder
As we pray in the name of the holy and claim our past,
 The deeds that we are proud of,
And the deeds that we are ashamed of.
We stand in the knowledge
 That God makes all things work to the good,
All of our lives can be redeemed and made holy.

LIFT your hand once again and place it on your right shoulder
As we pray in the name of the Spirit.
We look forward to the future unafraid;
Confident that whatever lies ahead of us,
A long life or a short life, riches or poverty,
We will never be orphaned.
 God's spirit will abide.

PLACE your hands together;
Your fingers pointing to the sky to Unity that is blessed,
That is e and feminine,
 Who is beyond us, among us, and within us.
In the name of the One God who is revealed
As Mother, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 In prayer we begin this time together.

Amen



Church Documents

Fast and Abstinence

Good Friday and **Ash Wednesday** are the major days for fasting in general for those who have reached the age 18 and are not yet 60. Abstinence means no meat on those days for those who are age 14 [or over]. General canon law says that **all Fridays** are days of abstinence -- no meat -- but if you want to eat meat, you should substitute some other form of penance.

The US rules for abstinence from meat includes all Fridays during Lent; **Fast** (small meals, no snacks) + **Abstinence** (as in universal rules -- no meat) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Since the Council, the US bishops have never specified a particular penance for the **other Fridays** of the year; but the universal law still applies -- therefore it is left to the individual to choose the form this penance takes. Since abstinence from meat is traditional (and pretty straightforward), many Catholics observe still this as their form of penance that is required of Catholics on all Fridays (Canon 1250). Many, however, entirely ignore the law of penance on Fridays.

The practice of "giving up something" for Lent is part of this same requirement in the penitential season of Lent, though what you have to give up is not specified.

Canon 1250 All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the entire Church.

Canon 1251 Abstinence from eating meat or another food according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year unless (*nisi*) they are solemnities; abstinence and fast are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and on the Friday of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Canon 1252 All persons who have completed their fourteenth year are bound by the law of abstinence; all adults are bound by the law of fast up to the beginning of their sixtieth year. Nevertheless, pastors and parents are to see to it that minors who are not bound by the law of fast and abstinence are educated in an authentic sense of penance.

Canon 1253 It is for the conference of bishops to determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence and to substitute in whole or in part for fast and abstinence other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1387 To prepare for worthy reception of this sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in their Church.²²⁰ Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest.

1434 The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, *fasting*, *prayer*, and *almsgiving*,³¹ which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: effort at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins."³²

1438 *The seasons and days of penance* in the course of the liturgical year (**Lent** and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.³⁶ These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

1969 The New Law *practices the acts of religion*: almsgiving, prayer and fasting, directing them to the "Father who sees in secret," in contrast with the desire to "be seen by men."²⁴ Its prayer is the Our Father.²⁵

2043 The fourth precept ("You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church") ensures the times of ascesis and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.⁸⁵

The fifth precept ("You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church") means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability.⁸⁶

The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own abilities.⁸⁷

USCCB "[Penitential Practices for Today's Catholics](#)" Committee on Pastoral Practices National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 12, 2000.

History - Code of Canon Law 1917 edition

The laws regarding abstinence and fast were codified in the old (1917) Code of Canon Law, which are abrogated by the 1983 Code; however this is where one finds the PRECISE definitions of fast and abstinence that are now retained as "traditional". - hhh

Here are the relevant 1917 Canons:

Canon 1250 The law of abstinence prohibits meat and soups made of meat but not of eggs, milks, and other condiments, even if taken from animals.

1. The law of fast prescribes that there be only one meal a day; but it does not forbid that a little bit [of food] be taken in the morning and the evening, observing, nevertheless, the approved custom of places concerning the quantity and the quality of the food.
2. It is not forbidden to mix meat and fish in the same meal; or to exchange the evening meal with lunch.

Canon 1252.

1. The law of abstinence only must be observed every Friday.
2. The law of abstinence together with fast must be observed every Ash Wed, every Friday and Saturday of Lent, each of the Ember Days, and the vigils of the Pentecost, the Assumption of the God-bearer into heaven, All Saints, and the Nativity of the Lord.
3. The law of fast only is to be observed on all the other days of Lent.

4. On Sundays or feasts of precept, the law of abstinence or of abstinence and fast or a fast only ceases, except during Lent, nor is the vigil anticipated; likewise it ceases on Holy Saturday afternoon.

Canon 1254.

1. The law of abstinence binds all those who have completed seven years of age.
 2. All those are bound by the law of fast from the completion of the twenty-first year of age until the beginning of the sixtieth.
-

Additional notes:

A Conference of Bishops may alter the forms of fasting and abstinence.

In 1966, following Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution, *Paenitemini*, which stated that the Holy See "intends to ratify with its prescriptions other forms of penitence as well, provided that it seems opportune to Episcopal conferences to replace the observance of fast and abstinence with exercises of prayer and works of charity" (P Ch III.C) and said the Conferences of Bishops could "substitute for fast and abstinence other forms of penance, especially works of charity and devotional practices" (P , Ch III,VI.1.B) the US bishops directed that:

"Catholics in the United States are obliged to abstain from the eating of meat on Ash Wednesday and on all Fridays during the season of Lent. They are also obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. Self-imposed observance of fasting on all weekdays of Lent is strongly recommended. Abstinence from flesh meat on all Fridays of the year [excluding solemnities like Christmas which may fall on Friday] is especially recommended to individuals and to the Catholic community as a whole."

The relevant Canons are 1249-1253 in the 1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC) (As on our web page.)

The "or other food" clause in CIC 1249, is effectively supplanted by CIC 1253, which says, "It is for the conference of bishops to determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence and to substitute in whole or in part for fast and abstinence other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety". (Emphasis added.)

In 1978, Paul VI in an address on Lent said:

"What remains of the Lenten obligation of abstinence and fast? Is nothing left of that season that once was so demanding, so strict, and so...ritualized? Except for the two fast days still obligatory for those capable [Ash Wed. and Good Friday], the strict obligation of former years has been abolished by the Church in its sensitivity to changed conditions and the demands of modern life. Yet for strong and faithful spirits what does remain is all the more worthy of being kept carefully in mind. Two elements supply for the former fast: personal austerity in regard to food, amusements, and work and love of neighbor -... All of this is left, along with the obligation of abstaining from meat on Friday during Lent. ..." (DOL 461 §3876 – Feb 8, 1978,)

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Plan a Parish Lenten retreat on Prayer and Thanksgiving for the gift of Christ on the cross.

What is a retreat? Most of us know about vacations, a time for relaxation, reenergizing the spirit, and letting go of problems and struggles in life.

When you go on a vacation, you go to a place where you can be refreshed.

A retreat operates in the same manner; the only difference is the focus is on *spiritual renewal*: **A Vacation for the Soul.**

KINDS OF RETREATS



Preached or conference-type retreats: For larger groups the retreating experience usually centers around a central theme: prayer, sacred scripture, the life of Jesus, holiness and marriage, women's/men's spirituality. A presenter or retreat leader provides intervals of talks and periods of reflection or of optional personal sharing. You will be gone from Friday to Sunday afternoon, and you'll feel like you have been away for a week's vacation.

Married Couples retreats: From time to time many retreat centers provide a program focused on the needs of married couples. The format is similar to the conference retreat, but the experience provides opportunity for the couple to reflect on their gift of married life to each other, and an occasion to talk together about it.

Guided retreats: In this form, smaller groups (five or more persons) gather for a daily conference together, and then are on their own the remainder of the day. They meet individually with a director for personal consultation.

Directed retreats: For those seeking a more extended retreat experience there is the option of a retreat period as long as 30 days. The daily time of prayer is measured by the person's personal need and experience. The retreatant meets daily with a director who facilitates the experience of prayer and personal growth.

Retreat in daily life: In this format, the retreatant remains engaged in ordinary daily activities at home or at work, but makes a commitment to an hour of daily prayer usually based on sacred scripture. The retreatant meets with a director every other week for an hour. The retreat may last as long as six to eight months.

Retreats for younger people: Retreat centers have a great reputation for providing an exciting place for programs for young adults. Many parishes and schools design their own programs for a healthy occasion to affirm, challenge and celebrate with young people. Arrangements should be made early to assure the dates of your choice.

Focused topics for retreat: the variety of retreat or seminar topics is almost endless. Personal growth programs include such topics as dealing with loss, gender issues, retreats for those with addictions, seminars focused on ecology, peace and justice issues, aging, single parenting, personality types, coping with stress. Contact a center near you for the topic of your interest. A few centers even have family retreats!

Bring your group to a retreat center: If you are looking for a quiet setting for parish meetings, workshops, seminars or renewal programs, you will find the reflective environment of a retreat center most suitable for adult education and organizational development work. Midweek dates and evening programs will be hosted in a relaxed setting both convenient and productive.

What does it cost? Each center has a suggested offering for the different kinds of retreats. Of course, the length of your stay at the retreat center, the number of meals included, and the personal meetings with a director all affect the cost. We suggest that you ask the center when you make your choice of the kind of retreat you will be making. Some centers suggest a specific fee, others ask for an appropriate donation.

Location: Most large metropolitan areas have a retreat center within driving distance. In the United States and Canada there are over 600 centers. Each location has its unique characteristics and a rich heritage and style of spirituality.

<http://www.retreatsintl.org/experience.htm>

Retreat Centers Diocese of Green Bay

The Bridge Between Retreat Center

4471 Flaherty Dr
Denmark, WI 54208-8627
(920) 864-7230
Director: Sr. Caroline Sullivan, OP
Admin. Asst.: Ms Diane Eparvier
A Dominican Spirituality Center for men and women of all faiths and beliefs.

Mount Tabor Center

522 Second St
Menasha WI 54952-3112
(920) 722-8918
Administrator: Edon Foord
Youth Minister: Catherine Foord
Residential community, spiritual formation, retreats, programs for the young adult.

Holy Name Retreat House

Chambers Island (Door County)
PO Box 23823
Green Bay WI 54305-3825
(920) 437-7531
Administrators: Ben & Char Duran
Conducted by the Diocese of Green Bay

Jesuit Retreat House

4800 Fahrwald Rd., Hwy 45
Oshkosh, WI 54902-7598
(920) 231-9060
SOCIETY OF JESUS
Dir: Rev. John A. Schwantes, SJ
Center for Spiritual Growth.

Monte Alverno Retreat Center

1000 N Ballard Rd
Appleton WI 54911-5198
(920) 733-8526
CAPUCHIN FRIARS
Dir: Rev. Keith Clark OFM Cap
(Men & Women)

Norbertine Center for Spirituality

St. Norbert Abbey
1016 N Broadway
De Pere WI 54115-2610
(920) 337-4315
Dir: Rev. Conrad Kratz

St. Anthony Retreat Center

300 E 4th St
Marathon WI 54448
(715) 443-2236
Sponsored by the Capuchin-Franciscans
We welcome all who seek God, spiritual growth and religious experience.

St. Joseph Retreat Center

3035 O'Brien Rd
Bailey's Harbor WI 54202-9132
(920) 839-2391
PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART
Admin: Br. Raymond Kozuch SCJ
Retreat Dir: Rev. Mark Fortner SCJ, Rev. Joseph Dean SCJ, Sr. Lorraine Aspenleiter, SSSF
We are a Catholic center that extends hospitality to all who seek God.

Suggested Bulletin Ideas for Lent

Lent is 40 days of responding in responding God's love and care. During Lent we keep asking ourselves this question: How much does the Lord's Spirit within me affect and shape my life? Come join us on Ash Wednesday, February 6, 2008 and begin the journey into a deeper interior life with God.

Seven steps to guide us through Lent: Take time to plan the journey. Take fasting seriously. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Increase service to the poor, the sick and the suffering. Take time for prayer. Reflect on your journey and take time to be with God. Participate in the three days of Triduum on March 20, 21 & 22, 2008.

Lent is not mission impossible. And it isn't a mystery season to be solved. The prescription for observing Lent is simple and clear: give alms without fanfare, pray privately, serve the poor and fast cheerfully. Most of us take these words of Jesus to heart and do what we can during these forty days to make a return for God's goodness to us. Lent begins on February 6, 2008 and continues to Holy Thursday on March 20, 2008.

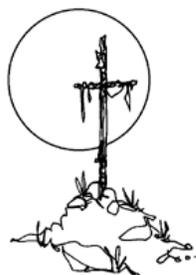
Lent actually ends on Holy Thursday evening. We then enter into the Triduum. We get ready for it on Palm Sunday and walk with the Lord as he enters Jerusalem. Christians walk with the Lord through Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. On Easter, we die and rise with him to a new way of living. Come celebrate the great mystery with us during Lent and for the three days of Triduum, March 20, 21 & 22, 2008.



Suggested Bulletin Ideas for Triduum

The Triduum is the high point of the liturgical year and the central Christian mystery of the triumph of life over death. The 40 days of Lent have been leading us to the three days where Christians gather to celebrate the mystery of passion, death and Resurrection. With prayer and dramatic ritual we move into Easter, coming forward to place our hand in the baptismal waters and renew our response to the Lord. Welcome to our services on **Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil on March 20, 21 & 22, 2008**

The Triduum is the Church's endless reflection on a way of life that leads through the cross to the Resurrection. You are invited to com to the Triduum: **Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.**



HOLY THURSDAY:

Celebrate the joy of ministry that is the fabric of service to others. In the washing of the feet we come to a profound humility rooted in the example of Christ. On this same Holy Thursday night, we celebrate the arrival of the Holy Oils to our community: the Oil of Chrism, the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens. Welcome to our **Holy Thursday celebration on March 20, 2008**

GOOD FRIDAY:

Celebrate the ultimate mystery of the triumph of the cross. Unite your sufferings and those of the world with the Lord of the Cross. Venerate the cross, our sign of victory beyond pain and death. Good Friday is the birth of hope and peace. Welcome to our prayer on **Good Friday, March 20, 2008.**

THE EASTER VIGIL: Celebrate darkness broken by light. Relive new life given in the waters of Baptism. Welcome new Christians and join us in the proclamation of the Resurrection and the refreshment of the Eucharist. Welcome on **Holy Saturday, March 22, 2008.**

THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM: The central celebration of the core Christian message and the high point of the entire Christian year is the three day celebration of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. By dying the Lord destroyed our death, by rising He restored our life. The Easter Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ is the celebration of the Paschal Mystery, our salvation. Welcome to the **Paschal Triduum celebrated on March 20, 21 & 22, 2008.**

THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM: The Triduum is one single liturgical action that continues over three days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. The Triduum is not a part of Lent, but in its entirety, celebrates the Easter event. The spirit of the fast during the three days is not a Lenten Fast but the Paschal Fast. The entire focus of the Triduum is on the Triumph of the Cross and the Resurrection.

Therefore every Catholic is greatly encouraged and invited to join in the drama and action of **The Three Great Days of Triduum, March 20, 21, & 22, 2008.** For Every Catholic this is more than the story of Christ, it is the story of our own life, passion, death and resurrection.

DID YOU KNOW > > >

Catholicism is filled with so much history and tradition that it is virtually impossible to know it all. These “tidbits” are designed to be used as short bulletin quotes, newsletter fillers, or any other way you may choose to use them.

The word **Lent** comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for springtime, *lencten*. It describes the gradual *lengthening of daylight* after the winter solstice. A holy season of Lenten preparation didn't exist until the early fourth century.

Sin is a thought or action that is contrary to the love and will of God. If these thoughts or actions aren't corrected, then they can become a real problem! But, **reconciliation** helps to uncover and correct these patterns.

Don't be afraid when you hear the phrase “**Fear of the Lord.**” This is a gift of the Holy spirit, and it refers to the Old Testament idea of trembling in awe at the wonder of God. So, when we hear it today, we mean that God is great and awesome, not a God to be afraid of!

Grace is God's life and love at work in our soul.

In the early church, sin meant excommunication from the rest of the community. The sinner did penance in public, including wearing sackcloth and ashes, and had to be absolved by the bishop. **Penance** didn't become private until around 700 C.E.

Tradition is a two-letter word. *Tradition* refers to the material of scriptures, doctrines, writings and liturgies handed down through the centuries. *Tradition* refers to everyday customs and practices.

Hocus-Pocus really comes from the most sacred moment in our catholic ritual: the consecration of the bread and wine. When Christ said “This is my

Ah-Choo! “God bless you,” St. Gregory replied. During a severe pestilence in which a sneeze was a deathly symptom, St. Gregory originated this blessing by recommending it's prayerful use when someone sneezed.

When is Easter? The date of Easter is based on the resurrection of Jesus. While there has been much debate, the council of Nicea placed Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon after march 20 (vernal equinox, also spring). Easter may be as early as March 22 and as late as April 25.

While she is the patroness of prostitutes, there is nothing in the scriptures that portray **Mary Magdalene** as a prostitute. Stories began confusing her with other women who were prostitutes around the fourth century. She has been called the “Apostle to the Apostles,” and her feast day is July 22.



“New Titles.”
BULLETIN INSERT

The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

This brief document is a summary of the United States bishops’ reflection

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (www.faithfulcitizenship.org). *It complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.* Our nation faces political challenges that demand urgent moral choices. We are a nation at war, with all of its human costs; a country often divided by race and ethnicity; a nation of immigrants struggling with immigration. We are an affluent society where too many live in poverty; part of a global community confronting terrorism and facing urgent threats to our environment; a culture built on families, where some now question the value of marriage and family life. We pride ourselves on supporting human rights, but we fail even to protect the fundamental right to life, especially for unborn children. We bishops seek to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with the truth, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges. We do not tell Catholics how to vote. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH TEACH ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING PUBLIC POLICY?

The Church’s obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. Faith helps us see more clearly the truth about human life and dignity that we also understand through human reason. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ’s commandment to “love one another” (Jn 13:34). According to Pope Benedict XVI, “charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as ‘social charity’” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29). The United States Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to participate and speak out without government interference, favoritism, or

discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church’s right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning our central moral convictions. Our nation’s tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to the political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

WHO IN THE CHURCH SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL LIFE?

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. In today’s environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church’s moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good.

HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP CATHOLICS TO ADDRESS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS?

A Well-Formed Conscience

The Church equips her members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church. The Virtue of Prudence The Church also

encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us “to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. A good end does not justify an immoral means. At times Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build through moral means a more just and peaceful world.

Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed. Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life. As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support. Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to

recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential. As Pope John Paul II said, “the fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life to do good indicated by the positive commandment” (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52). The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, 1 For more on the moral challenge of voting, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 34-39. Visit www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

Health care, education, and meaningful work.

The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. Making Moral Choices Difficult political decisions require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. “Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good” (*Catholics in Political Life*, 2004). When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73). Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When Church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE?—SEVEN KEY THEMES

A consistent ethic of life should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God. Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens "to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life. Issued by USCCB, November 14, 2007 Copyright © 2007, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.



Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized in economics and politics, in law and public policy affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

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The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and destruction of human embryos for research. These intrinsic evils must always be opposed. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war, and these themes are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). For more information on these seven themes, see www.faithfulcitizenship.org. For information on how we bishops of the United States have applied Catholic social teaching to policy issues, see www.faithfulcitizenship.org. the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.

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Solidarity

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

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Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity.

Issued by USCCB, November 14, 2007

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Caring for God's Creation

Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

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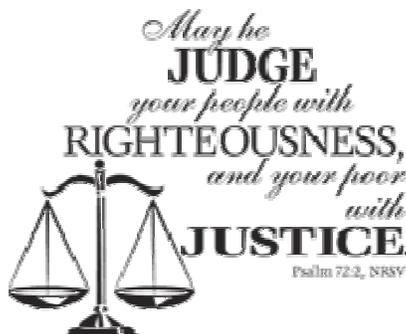


Rights and Responsibilities

Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity, as well as a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding

to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

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Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized. *Issued by USCCB, November 14, 2007 Copyright © 2007, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.*

CONCLUSION

In light of Catholic teaching, as bishops we vigorously repeat our call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

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Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1995);



Veritatis Splendor (The Splendor of Truth) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1993).



USCCB, *Catholics in Political Life* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2004); *Living the Gospel of Life* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998).



The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship was developed by the chairmen, in consultation with the membership, of the Committees on Domestic Policy, International Policy, Pro-Life Activities, Communications, Doctrine, Education, and Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved for publication by the full body of bishops at its November 2007 General Meeting and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.



Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD



General Secretary, USCCB



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Special prayer intentions to keep in mind during the season of Lent:

The parishes of the Diocese of Green Bay will participate in the Collection for the World's Poor at Masses the weekend of March 1, 2, 2008. This annual second collection benefits three organizations, Peter's Pence, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Peter's Pence is the Holy Father's emergency relief fund. Since the end of the 8th century, Catholics throughout the world have been sending proceeds to the Holy Father for him to apply to emergency relief causes to benefit the world's poorest people. The Holy Father is particularly prone to apply these funds to natural disasters that strike the developing world.

Catholic Relief Services is the United States Catholic Church's international relief organization. It serves 99 of the poorest countries in the world by providing disaster relief and medical, educational, social, and agricultural programming to the developing world. Catholic Relief Services depends on partnerships with locally born to run most of their local programs, after they have been trained by CRS staff.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development is the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops domestic poverty fighting arm. It provides funding to organizations led by low income people that increase the political and social status of poor people and/or increase the economic development of such persons. It is also charged with helping to educate the non-poor on the state of poverty in the United States.

Person are invited to pray for these very important causes during Lent.

Peter's Pence Prayer

Loving God, open our hearts and minds to the needs of the poorest in our midst; it is in giving that we receive. Bless our Holy Father, that he may be a good steward of our gifts to the Peter's Pence collection. May our gifts help alleviate the discomfort experienced by our suffering brothers and sisters in every corner of the world. AMEN

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Peter's pence

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Catholic Relief Services

God of our longing,
Remember those who wait and hope for peace.
Hear our prayers and our lament
For our brothers and sisters in Israel and Palestine.
With them we share a common story, set in a common homeland.

Make common also a will to forgive, to reconcile,
To make a just peace for the sake of the ancestors,
For the sake of the children.
Open ears, eyes, and hearts
And make a way toward justice in our war-torn world.

God all merciful, you dwell in human hearts
And the Holy Land is wherever you make your home.
Heal those broken places where prophets preached,
Where Moses and Jesus and Muhammad kept faith with you.
Be a sure support for those who work toward reconciliation
And make us all, however far away, steadfast in their cause. ^[1]

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

God of Justice,
Open our eyes
To see you in the face of the poor.
Open our ears
To hear you in the cries of the exploited.
Open our mouths
To defend you in public squares
As well as in public deeds.
Remind us that what we do
To the least ones,
We do to you.
AMEN. ^[2]

^[1] Catholic Relief Services. See *Prayer Without Borders: Celebrating Global Wisdom*. Baltimore, Maryland: Catholic Relief Services, 2004, p. 9.

^[2] "Prayer for the Poor," in Hogan, John P. *Credible Signs of Christ Alive: Case Studies from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2003, p. 124.