

Mini-Meditations for Lent

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Prayerful meditation for a few minutes each day on one of the main themes of Lent can make all the difference between vaguely acknowledging Lent as special and actually making it so.

Try reading the few verses here offered from each day's Mass—*slowly*. Then pause for some minutes (as many as you can spare!) to let those words of the Lord speak to you. Finally, respond to the Lord in simple prayer.

Each Scripture reading presented here may easily be expanded by locating the verse in its context and reading the entire section. The brief, prayerful reflection may serve as a springboard for your own personal prayer.

Ash Wednesday

Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God (Joel 2:13).

Lord, during these days of Lent, I want to open my mind and heart to you so that I can be intimately touched by your grace.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps (Luke 9:23).

Lord, help me not to be afraid of self-denial and the cross; give me the grace to follow you today.

Friday after Ash Wednesday

*Do you call this a fast, a day
acceptable to the LORD?
(Isaiah 58:5)*

Lord, I want to fast and abstain during Lent, but I also want to heed the warning of your prophet Isaiah, that my fast and abstinence be not an end in themselves but a spur to greater love and justice in my life.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

I have not come to invite the self-righteous to a change of heart, but sinners (Luke 5:32).

Lord, I freely acknowledge that I am a sinner and in need of a change of heart; help me to accept your invitation today.

Sunday, First Week of Lent

Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1).

Lord, I am aware of many temptations in my life, but today I draw new courage from your example of fidelity in rejecting the devil and all his works and all his empty promises.

Monday, First Week of Lent

Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy (Leviticus 19:2).

Though I do not always act like it, Lord, I really do want to be holy; I ask your grace to imitate your holiness in my life.

Tuesday, First Week of Lent

This is how you are to pray:

Our Father in heaven

(Matthew 6:9).

Thank you, Lord, for teaching us the way to pray; as I now slowly pray the prayer you taught us, let the truth of it strike deep roots in my heart.

Wednesday, First Week of Lent

At the judgment, the citizens of Nineveh will rise along with the present generation, and they will condemn it (Luke 11:32).

Lord, the citizens of Nineveh, unlike “the present generation,” had the humility and wisdom to repent; grant me, during this Lent, the same humility and wisdom.

Thursday, First Week of Lent

Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).

Your promises, Lord, are music to my ears; I desire today to have absolute confidence that you will hear and answer my prayers.

Friday, First Week of Lent

If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24).