

- ✧ Fast strictly all the time. At a minimum, eat no meat. Suit your fast to your work, but avoid luxury. Again, tell no one. Do not discuss your fasting with anyone and avoid judging others who may not be fasting with you.
- ✧ Pray at home at least at one fixed time each day. Choose a brief rule of prayer, but keep it faithfully.
- ✧ Read the scriptures in the same brief yet regular way. You may wish to follow the Church's calendar, read a chapter of a given book on a daily basis, or simply read and reflect upon passages which you happen upon. In addition, meditate upon the following: 1 John; Romans 12-14; Matthew 5-7, and John 14-17.
- ✧ Be faithful to Christ's Gospel in every word, action, and thought—even the smallest or most insignificant.
- ✧ Participate in all the weekly Lenten services, especially the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Saturday evening Great Vespers, and the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

PEACE AND JOY

If we do these things, not in a spirit of gloomy self-denial or irritated self-pity, we will gain an awareness of genuine peace and joy in communion with God and those around us. This is guaranteed—and our participation in and celebration of the feast of Our Lord's resurrection will be cherished forever.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

OBSERVING GREAT LENT





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Most of us understand that prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the three basic Christian and Lenten necessities. However, we often realize that we cannot keep the strictest Lenten regulations of the Church which are, in fact, monastic rules. We know that we will not make the maximum effort, and so we sometimes feel frustrated, lost, and without guidance.

DO WHAT YOU CAN

When seeking practical advice concerning Lenten practices, the only realistic guideline is to do what you can. You know that the essentials are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Intensify your prayer. Fast as fully as possible. Give to others—asking for nothing in return. Know as well that all of your fasting, praying, and almsgiving must be exercised in secret. The true purpose and goal of Great Lent is to enter into a deeper love for God and those around us.

Another concrete, yet traditional, suggestion is to keep certain Lenten weeks in a stricter and more devoted way than others. For example, the first and third weeks of Great

Lent, in addition to Holy Week, can be set aside for a greater, more concentrated Lenten effort.

Practically speaking, everyone can keep certain weeks, or at least one week, in a very special way. If this is done, there is no doubt that the result will be very positive, and the time spent may prove to be the most inspiring and fruitful time of our entire life.

WHAT TO DO

Here are some concrete guidelines for making Great Lent more fulfilling and spiritually rewarding:

- ✧ Receive Holy Communion regularly.
- ✧ Confess your sins thoroughly and sincerely.
- ✧ Turn off the television, radio, and other media for the entire Lenten season, except for news and serious or educational programs.
- ✧ Do not visit or engage in outside activities for their own sake. Keep useless talking to a minimum. Do only necessary business, good works, and acts of charity.

- ✧ Examine and measure every aspect of your life—family, work, society, politics, economics, values, desires, etc.—against the model set forth by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
- ✧ Question yourself in regard to love, truth, honesty, purity, humility, peace, forgiveness, justice, mercy, hungering and thirsting for God, wisdom, and knowledge.
- ✧ In the name of Jesus Christ, forgive all who have offended you and seek forgiveness from those whom you have offended. If it will not be embarrassing or misinterpreted as an act of self-righteousness, express yourself as concretely as possible.
- ✧ Set aside and give a sizeable portion of your resources to others—the parish, the poor, a social or educational agency. Do not advertise or tell anyone what you have done. Ask no gratitude and forgo requesting a receipt.

