

Lent 2024

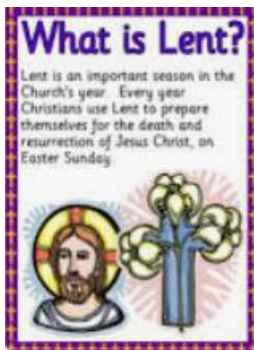
Lent is an important season in the **Christian Liturgical Calendar**** . The name Lent comes from an old English word meaning “*Spring Season*”.

When is Lent?

There are 40 days in Lent, which begins on **Ash Wednesday** (14th February this year) and ends on **Holy Saturday**, the day before **Easter Sunday** (31st March this year). Ash Wednesday is a **Fast Day**, when we are asked to have only one main meal and two smaller ones---“snacks” and not to eat meat. Lent is observed by most Christian denominations---- Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, etc.



What is Lent?



Lent is the time in the liturgical year when we recall that Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert and, although he was tempted when he was hungry, he did not give in to the temptations. During these 40 days, we are asked to **PRAY, FAST** and give to those less well off than ourselves. (**ALMSGIVING**).

In the past, all 40 days of Lent were **FAST DAYS and DAYS of ABSTINENCE** (people were asked not to eat meat on these days). Nowadays, it is more common for people to “give up” something they enjoy for the 40 days of Lent. Some people give up sweets, chocolate, cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, not using our phones as much, watching too much TV, cutting back on social media time, etc. Whatever we decide to give up, it should be a challenge and should help us reflect on all the people, who have so much less than we have. Many people give a donation to Trocaire, an Irish Catholic church-based charity, which helps poorer people in Third World Countries.



Facts about Lent

*The day before **Ash Wednesday** is called **Shrove Tuesday**. In past times, people used up all their sweet foods to prepare for the **FAST DAYS** of Lent, which lay ahead. As a celebration, the people made pancakes on this day, hence the name “Pancake Tuesday”.

* The colour PURPLE is worn by the priest during Masses in Lent. This is the colour worn during ADVENT too. It is a sign of repentance--- showing we are sorry for the wrongs we have committed and for the times we haven't done our best.



*The colour purple also represents the sufferings of Jesus on the crucifix, while also celebrating His resurrection with the colours of royalty.

*Many people visit the church during the 40 days of Lent and pray the **Stations of the Cross**. These represent Jesus' journey carrying his cross on Good Friday.



*The last week of Lent is called **Holy Week** and **Holy Thursday**, **Good Friday** and **Holy Saturday** are called the **Triduum**---the final 3 days of Jesus life on earth.

The dates for Lent, Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday are not fixed. The ancient Irish monks are said to be the ones who set the date for Easter back in the 7th century. Easter Sunday (March 31st this year) is always celebrated on the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the Spring Equinox. (20th March in 2024).

** Check the diocesan website www.tuamarchdiocese.org for a copy of, and information on, **the Christian Liturgical Calendar**. (Resources section)

