

DID YOU KNOW?

40 Days of Lent



Lent is a time of prayer, penance, and preparation. The 40-day season begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on March 6, and continues through Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday—which we will celebrate on Sunday, April 21, 2019.

During Lent, we prepare for Easter by walking symbolically with Jesus who went into the desert for 40 days to fast and pray (Matthew 4:1–2, Mark 1:12–13, Luke 4:1–2). We may also recall the ancient Israelites who, with Moses, wandered in the desert for 40 years on their journey from the slavery of worldly power into the freedom of God’s Promised Land (Numbers 14:33).

The word “Lent” derives from Old English and Dutch roots that refer to “spring season” and “lengthening days.” In other languages, particularly those derived from Latin roots, the name for the season simply means “fortieth,” such as *Quadragesima* (Latin) and *Cuaresma* (Spanish).

With all the emphasis on “the 40 days of Lent,” one might be surprised by a look at the calendar—the number of days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday is actually 46! That’s because we do not count the six Sundays that occur during Lent. Every Sunday Mass throughout the year is a renewal of and direct participation in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter.