



Lenten Prayer

Greeting

**All: Be with us God of Glory;
assist us as we pray.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Reflection

Excerpts from Pope Francis' Lenten Message 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Once again, the Pasch of the Lord draws near! In our preparation for Easter, God in His providence offers us each year the season of Lent as a “sacramental sign of our conversion”. Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.

With this message, I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth. I will take my cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: “Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold” (24:12)...

...By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well...

...Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life

for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church...I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God Himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of His children. If through me God helps someone today, will He not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God...

...Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. On the one hand, it allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. On the other hand, it expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbor. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger...

...Above all, I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew.

Pope Francis
February 6, 2018

Prayer

All: Gracious and Loving God,

**During the sacred season of Lent,
bring me closer to you.**

**Prepare a place in my home and heart
for silence and solitude,
so that I may re-discover the grace
of a prayer-full life.**

**Help me to fast from those things
that threaten the well-being of body and soul
and remind me of the grace of simplicity.**

**Enlarge my heart
so that I give to those in need
and, in so doing,
re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.**

**May this season be a grace-filled time
to rekindle my love for and faith in you.**

Amen.