



# What's What

*A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.*

## The 40 Days of Lent

Early in Christianity the discipline of fasting became associated with the number forty. This gradually determined the length of Lent. Fasting by catechumens (those studying to become Catholic), and then by other Christians, was done in imitation of Jesus' forty-day fast in the desert (Mat 4:2), Moses' forty days on Mount Sinai (Ex 34:28), Elijah's forty-day fast on his journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), and the forty years the Israelites

spent in the desert. To this day the church's official title for Lent, *Quadragesima*, is Latin for "forty."

These forty days of fasting were originally counted from the beginning of the Easter Triduum (Latin, "three days") that began on Holy Thursday evening. This determined the date of the First Sunday of Lent. Fasting, however, was never done on Sundays, which was always considered weekly memorials of

Jesus' resurrection, and therefore as "little Easters." By the 7th century, the six-week season of Lent was anticipated on Ash Wednesday and included Good Friday and Holy Saturday to keep the days of fasting at forty. The Eastern church excluded both Saturdays and Sundays from fasting, and its Lent begins a week earlier.

*From Catholic Customs & Traditions, Greg Dues, Twenty-Third Publications, 2003, pg 72*

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Lent

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### *Things to talk about:*

- What do you remember about other Lents?
- What are some of the things you are going to do during Lent this year?

## 40 Ways to Keep Lent

1. Apologize to someone to whom you owe it.
2. Start some seeds in a pot that can be planted outside when spring arrives.
3. Make someone smile or laugh today.
4. Read the book, "The Little Prince" and think about your own life journey.
5. Pick up trash around your neighborhood.
6. Find an old friend or family member you haven't talked with in a while and send them a card or letter.
7. Pray for guidance about a person in your life who annoys or irritates you.
8. Find someone you trust and share with them how you pray.
9. Do something for a friend that shows that you are truly a friend.
10. Do your best to keep from wasting things (wrappers, food, paper)
11. Find someone who is lonely and spend time with them.
12. Help a coworker or parent without being asked.
13. Step back from the spotlight and let someone else be the focus of attention.
14. Try to tune in to someone who may need a shoulder to cry on and be that for them.
15. See an independent movie, attend a speech or lecture, or see a band that you've never heard of.
16. Practice patience.
17. Don't spread any rumors.
18. Don't whine or complain.
19. Forgive someone.
20. Find a quiet place to sit and reflect.
21. Examine your beliefs and give money to an organization that reflects them.
22. If you love someone, tell them so.
23. Be an advocate about a social problem that you would like to help fix.
24. Thank God for the gift of life.
25. Pray for a friend.
26. Pray for a someone who is struggling.
27. Donate to a charity that feeds the poor.
28. Visit a nursing home or help at a soup kitchen.
29. Donate your gently used clothes to worthy organizations.
30. Listen to other people's points of view with an open mind.
31. Enjoy the architecture and design of buildings you pass every day.
32. Examine your conscience and your conception of right and wrong.
33. Be a peacemaker.
34. Turn off music and TV to enjoy the silence.
35. Tell a friend or coworker what a great job they have done with something.
36. Examine how you judge other people.
37. Be a symbol of hope for those around you.
38. Examine who you are to others and who you are when no one else is around.
39. Imagine peace.
40. Talk with a Gen-Xer, a Baby Boomer, or someone even older and ask them about their worldview.

*Based on Good Ground Press  
"40 Ways to Keep Lent for Teens"*



## Saint in the Spotlight — Saint Scholastica (480-542?)

February 10 is the memorial of St. Scholastica.

Twins often share the same interests and ideas with an equal intensity. Therefore, it is no surprise that Scholastica and her twin brother, Benedict, both established religious communities within a few miles from each other.

Born in 480 of wealthy parents, Scholastica and Benedict were brought up together until he left for Rome to continue his studies.

Little is known of Scholastica's early life. She founded a religious community for women near Monte Cassino at Plombariola, five miles from where her brother governed a monastery.

The twins visited each other once a year in a farmhouse because Scholastica was not permitted inside the monastery. They spent these times discussing spiritual matters.

According to the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, the brother and sister spent their last day together in prayer and conversation. Scholastica sensed her death was close at hand and she begged Benedict to stay with her until

the next day.

He refused her request because he did not want to spend a night outside the monastery, thus breaking his own Rule. Scholastica asked God to let her brother remain and a severe thunderstorm broke out, preventing Benedict and his monks from returning to the abbey.

Benedict cried out, "God forgive you, Sister. What have you done?" Scholastica replied, "I asked a favor of you and you refused. I asked it of God and he granted it."

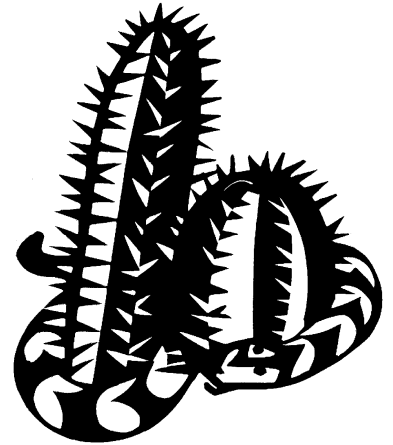
Brother and sister parted the next morning after their long discussion. Three days later, Benedict was praying in his monastery and saw the soul of his sister rising heavenward in the form of a white dove. Benedict then announced the death of his sister to the monks and later buried her in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

### Comment:

Scholastica and Benedict gave themselves totally to God and gave top priority to deepening their friendship with

him through prayer. They sacrificed some of the opportunities they would have had to be together as brother and sister in order better to fulfill their vocation to the religious life. In coming closer to Christ, however, they found they were also closer to each other. In joining a religious community, they did not forget or forsake their family but rather found more brothers and sisters..

[www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay)



## Connections to Doctrine & Tradition

- Lent is a time for us to turn back to God (SC 109-110; CIC 1249-1255; CCC 540, 1095, 1438)
- It is a fact that we sin. We are called constantly to conversion to return to God (DeV31, 46; LG 8; CCC 1426, 1433, 1846-169, 1886-1889, 2608).
- We must return to our true purpose, which is to reveal Christ to the world (GS 24-25; CCC 1877).

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; GS: *Gaudium et Spes*; NDC: *National Directory for Catechesis*; DeV: *Deei Verbum*; LG: *Lumen Gentium*; SC: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. These documents can be found online at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) or [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement [Draft]:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.

## Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about Lent? Check out the following books or websites for more information:

- Catholic Customs & Traditions, Greg Dues, Twenty-Third Publications, 2003
- <http://www.americancatholic.org/features/lent/>
- <http://www.catholic.org/clife/lent/>

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