



Lenten Disciplines: Fasting and Almsgiving

For these Forty Days we are conscious of how we must sharpen our senses and focus mind and heart on the Reign of God. We are, above all, aware of those waters in we were baptized into Christ's death. We died to sin and evil and began a new life in Christ. The waters of Baptism wait at Lent's end for the catechumens, but we are called to renew our Baptism as well.

The Church asks us to give ourselves to prayer and to the reading of Scriptures, to fasting and to giving alms. The fasting that all do together on Fridays is but a sign of the daily Lenten discipline of individuals and households: fasting for certain periods of time, fasting from certain foods, but also fasting from other things and activities. Likewise, the giving of alms is some effort to share this world equally-not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.

We Hunger and Thirst for Holiness

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation: you
make us hunger and thirst for holiness. Blessed
are you, Lord, of all God creation: you call us to
true fasting:
to set free the oppressed,
to share our bread with the hungry,

to shelter the homeless and to clothe the naked.

Psalm 102: 5-8, 10, 13

Withered and dried up like grass is my heart; I

forget to eat my bread.

Because of my insistent sighing

I am reduced to skin and bone.

I am like a desert owl;

I have become like an owl among the ruins.

I am sleepless, and I moan;

I am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

For I eat ashes like bread Before Deeds of Charity

And mingle my drink wit tears.

But you, O Lord, abide forever,

And your name through all generations.

Before a Time of Solitude

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:

you manifest yourself when we are silent.

Before Deeds of Charity

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:

for all the earth is yours.