



Parishes of the Resurrection: 40 Days of Synodality

Our commitment is to journey or travel together during the 40 days of this Lent. Since synodality deals with our journeying together, there is no better time for us to come together to pray, fast and give alms as the 40 days of lent. The fact that our journeying together during these 40 days of Lent is marked by no alleluia, no Gloria, no extravagant celebrations, and exhibitions of any kind means that something serious is happening. So, like the Israelites who journeyed together for 40 years to reach the promised land, we too during the period of the 40 days of Lent prepare and expect the second coming of Christ in our midst. Until Easter, we do not sing the Gloria (glory to God in the highest), nor do we sing the Alleluia, which is literally praise the Lord because we are in a period of purification, agony, and repentance until Jesus comes again in glory.

Why We Are Marked with Ashes: On Ash Wednesday we begin our Lenten journey together when we are marked with ashes with the words: *“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”* Ashes is used in the Holy Scriptures as a symbol of repentance, mourning and as a reminder of our death/mortality. The person who receives the Ashes is identified with Jesus Christ. First, Ashes with which we are marked at the beginning of lent symbolize our grief for the things we have done wrong and how we have been separated from God as a result of our sin. Second, the signing with Ashes at the start of this season of grace is intended to remind us that like Christ who died on Good Friday that we too will have to face death one day. Third, when are marked with the Ashes, we are reminded that in order to be raised from the dead like Christ on Easter, we need to use this period to express sorrow and repent of our sins. Ashes remind us of our mortality as we mourn the ways in which we have turned from God and acknowledge that death is the result of our sin. Hence, we are marked with Ashes as a symbol of mourning and repentance like the people who turned to God while fasting and repenting in ashes. The king of Nineveh covered himself with sackcloth and sat in Ashes (Jonah 3: 4-6) as a sign of mourning and to show repentance for his sins. Job, too, repented in dust and Ashes (Job 42: 3-6).

Why Forty Days of Lent: The period of Lent is a moment when we prepare for Easter. The biblical origin of the 40 days of the period of lent is related to different instances when some prominent figures were spiritually tested in the Holy Scriptures. First, there is the 40 years of traveling in the desert referred to as Exodus when the Israelites departed from Egypt to the promised land (Numbers 33: 38, Deuteronomy 1: 3). Second, the 40 days of Lent is also linked to the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness when he spent 40 days fasting and praying (Matthew 4: 1-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 1-13). Third, without eating any food or drinking any water, Moses is said to have stayed on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights as he prepared to receive the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34: 28). Fourth, Moses is also said to have walked for 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb, the mountain of the Lord (I Kgs 19: 8). The 40 days of Lent is also crucial for us. We are asked to be actively involved during these 40 days. Let us try to participate by doing something good.



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What People Do During the 40 Days of Lent: The aim of this period is to repent of our sin, to renew our faith in God and to prepare ourselves to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation. During this time people are generally dedicated to a more intense period of prayer, especially the attendance of weekday mass, public devotional practices like the Stations of the Cross, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament/Holy Hour, daily Scripture reading, meditation, and practice of Sacramental Confession. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast (having only one full meal a day and smaller snacks to keep up one's strength) and abstain from meat. On the other Fridays of Lent, the faithful abstain from meat. People are still encouraged "to give up something" for Lent as a sacrifice.

What we Are Called to do Together in the Parishes of our Cluster: As a family that stay together and pray together, all members of the Parishes of the Resurrection are called upon to journey together with one another. No individual journey rather we are to go through the days of this Lent travelling together as one family. Just like the Israelites who had no choice but to journey together during the 40 years, so do we ourselves. As members of the community of the Parishes of the Resurrection, let us resolve that during these 40 days of Lent:

1. To be more committed to the practice of filling the Rice Bowl (Lenten Box);
2. To make the positive effort to attend the Stations of the Cross every week and to make Sacramental Confession during this period;
3. To attend weekday Masses after the Stations of the Cross at our individual Parishes; and
4. To make the effort on Saturdays and Sundays be in Church 30 minutes before the celebration of Mass so that together we are able to recite the Rosary (as one united family).

These activities have been fixed at a time that will be convenient and accommodating to most people especially workers. The intention is to have everyone to try and attend these so that we can help one another to pray, do penance and confess our sins. Like the Israelites the aim is for us to journey together as a family and not to do things alone.

~ Fr. John William