

As most of you know, tomorrow marks the beginning of Lent. As we prepare ourselves to embark on this journey, we are to be reminded that Lent can sometimes faintly tempt us to act falsely and then feel good about it. Like telling ourselves that if we measure ourselves by eating and drinking moderately during Lent, then maybe we don't really have to measure ourselves in the same way at other times; if we avoid getting into arguments with a certain person during Lent, then maybe it doesn't matter what we say to that person at other times; or that if we help the needy during Lent, then maybe we don't really have to service others the rest of the time. Because after all, we did the right thing during Lent. If we're not careful and let this happen, Lent could sometimes lead us not toward but away from God. Let's make sure that during this Lent season our prayer, fasting and works of mercy are genuine. And pray that these genuine acts that come from the heart become a constant practice in our lives.

I wanted to wish you all a fruitful Lenten journey, and leave you with this prayer I read recently:

Lenten Prayer for Spiritual Renewal
God, heavenly Father,
look upon me and hear my prayer
during this holy Season of Lent.
By the good works You inspire,
help me to discipline my body
and to be renewed in spirit.
Without You I can do nothing.
By Your Spirit help me to know what is right
and to be eager in doing Your will.
Teach me to find new life through penance.
Keep me from sin, and help me live
by Your commandment of love.
God of love, bring me back to You.
Send Your Spirit to make me strong
in faith and active in good works.
May my acts of penance bring me Your forgiveness,
open my heart to Your love,
and prepare me for the coming feast
of the Resurrection of Jesus.
Lord, during this Lenten Season,
nourish me with Your Word of life
and make me one
with You in love and prayer.
Fill my heart with Your love
and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ.
Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness.
Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the Mass.
Father, our source of life,
I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand;
let me walk more readily in Your ways.
Guide me in Your gentle mercy,
for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.
Father of love, source of all blessings,
help me to pass from my old life of sin
to the new life of grace.
Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom.
I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.
Amen.

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