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40 Ways to Get the Most Out of Lent!



By: [Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio](#), Catholic theologian and speaker

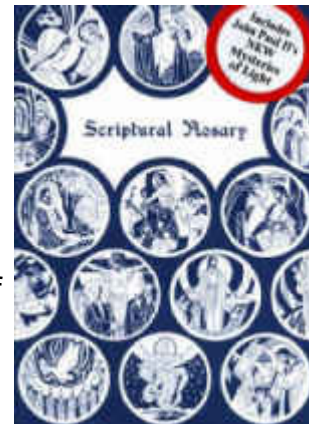
This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of Lenten ideas, activities and devotions. But it's a start! Many of the Lenten resources mention here are available on our website at www.dritaly.com or can be found by visiting our [links page](#).

1. Take 30 minutes to pray, ask the Holy Spirit's guidance, look over this list, and make a few practical Lenten resolutions. Be careful. If you try to do too much, you may not succeed in anything. If you need to get up early or stay up late to get the 30 minutes of quiet, do it. Turn off your phone and computer. Don't put it off and don't allow interruptions.
2. Get up earlier than anyone else in your house and spend your first 15 minutes of the day thanking God for the gift of life and offering your day to Him.
3. Get to daily Mass.
4. If you can't do Mass daily, go to Mass on Fridays in addition to Sunday and thank Him for laying his life down for you. Maybe you can go another time or two as well.
5. Spend at least 30 minutes in Eucharistic adoration at least one time during the week.
6. Recover the Catholic tradition of making frequent visits to the Blessed sacrament throughout the week, even if it is only for 5 minutes.
7. Get to confession at least once during Lent after making a good examination of conscience. If you are not sure why confession is important, get my CD "[Who Needs Confession.](#)"
8. In addition to the penance assigned by the priest, fulfill the conditions necessary for a plenary indulgence. You can learn about plenary indulgences from the official [Handbook of Indulgences](#).



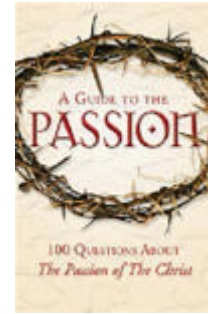
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9. Make a decision to read at least some Scripture every day. [Starting with Today's!](#)
10. Even if you can't get to daily Mass, get a daily Catholic Missal or go online to get a list of the readings used each day in Mass, and read these readings daily. During special seasons such as Lent, the Mass readings are thematically coordinated and make for a fantastic Bible study!
11. Pray the [Liturgy of the Hours](#). You can buy a [one volume edition](#) or a [full four volume edition](#). Or you can get it day by day online for free at www.universalis.com. Or you can subscribe to a monthly publication called the Magnificat that provides a few things from the liturgy of the hours together with the Mass readings of the day. The Magnificat is a great way to start learning the [Liturgy of the Hours](#).
12. Get to know the Fathers of the Church and read selections from them along with Scripture. Short selections from the Fathers writing on Lenten themes can be downloaded for free from the [Lenten Library](#) of our website at www.crossroadsinitiative.com
13. Make the Stations of the Cross each Friday either with a group or by yourself. If you have kids, bring them.
14. Pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary often during Lent, especially on Friday and Wednesday. The glorious mysteries are especially appropriate on Sundays. Joyful and Luminous mysteries are great on other days.
15. [Purchase the Scriptural Rosary](#), which supplies you with a scripture verse to recite between each Hail Mary. This makes it easier to meditate on the mysteries. Another resource to deepen your understanding of the Rosary is my CD set ["How Mary and the Rosary can Change Your Life."](#)
16. If you've never done a family rosary, begin doing it. If starting with once a week, try Friday or Sunday. If it's tough to start with a full five decades, try starting with one. Use the [Scriptural Rosary](#) and have a different person read each of the Scriptures between the Hail Marys. This gets everyone more involved.
17. Make it a habit to stop at least five times a day, raise your heart and mind to God, and say a short prayer such as "Jesus, I love you," or "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," or "Lord, I offer it up for you."
18. Pray each day for the intentions and health of the Holy Father.
19. Pray each day for your bishop and all the bishops of the Catholic Church.
20. Pray for your priests and deacons and for all priests and deacons.
21. Pray for the millions of Christians suffering under persecution in various Muslim and Communist countries around the world such as the Sudan, Pakistan, Indonesia, China, Viet Nam, and North Korea.
22. Pray for Christian unity, that there would be one flock and one shepherd.



23. Pray for the evangelization of all those who have not yet heard and accepted the Good News about Jesus.
24. Pray for your enemies. In fact, think of the person who has most hurt you or who most annoys you and spend several minutes each day thanking God for that person and asking God to bless him or her.
25. Pray for an end to abortion on demand in the United States. Pray for pregnant women contemplating abortion.
26. Pray for a just peace in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Holy Land and elsewhere. Pray for our troops and for others in harm's way.
27. Pray for an end to capital punishment. Pray for those on death row, and for the families of murder victims.
28. Find a form of fasting that is appropriate for you, given your age, state of health, and state of life. Some fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays. Some fast from sweets or alcohol throughout Lent. Some fast on one or more days per week from breakfast all the way to dinner, spending lunch hour in prayer or at noon Mass. Some cut out all snacks between meals. The money saved from not buying various things should be given to an apostolate or ministry serving the physically or spiritually poor.
29. Prayer is like breathing – you have to do it continually. But sometimes you need to pause and take a very deep breath. That's what a retreat is. Plan a retreat this Lent. It could be simply a half day, out in nature, or in a Church. Or it could be a full day. Or an overnight. You can certainly read lots of things during your retreat or listen to lots of talks. But try sticking to Scripture, the liturgy, and quiet as much as you can. During or at the end of the retreat, write down what the Holy Spirit seems to be saying.
30. Find a written biography of a Saint that particularly appeals to you, and read it during Lent.
31. Instead of secular videos for weekend entertainment, try some videos that will enrich your spiritual life. Suggestions: *Jesus of Nazareth*, by Franco Zeffirelli, [The Scarlet and the Black](#), the *Assisi Underground*.
32. While driving, turn off the secular radio for awhile and use commute time to listen to some teaching on audiocassette or CD. Some great resources can be purchased [through this site](#) or from other Catholic apostolates and publishers that you can find on [our links page](#).
33. Find a local homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or crisis pregnancy center, and volunteer some time there throughout Lent. Serve the people there with the understanding that in so doing, you are serving Jesus. Try to see Jesus in each person there.
34. Visit someone at a nursing home or in the hospital or sick at home. Again, love Jesus in and through the suffering person.
35. Is there a widow or divorced person living in your neighborhood? If so, invite that person to your home for dinner, coffee, etc.
36. View Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ during Lent* on VHS or DVD, if you feel you can handle the violence. Get a copy of [The Guide to the Passion](#) to help you get the most out of the movie.

37. Invite folks to view *The Passion of the Christ* with you, especially people whose faith is rather nominal, or who do not practice their faith, or who do not profess Christian faith at all. Give them a copy of [The Guide to the Passion](#).
38. Spend some focused time with your spouse, strengthening your marriage. Start praying together, or make praying together a more frequent occurrence.
39. Spend some focused time together with each of your children. Listen. Pray. Maybe even have fun.
40. When Easter comes, don't drop the new practice you've begun during Lent! Make a permanent feature of a deeper Christian life!

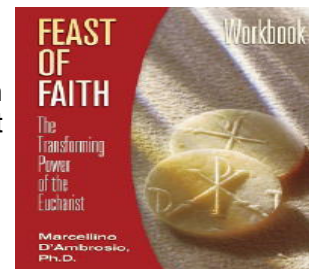


Be sure to check out [40 Days of New Life](#), my commentary on Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (gospel for the First Sunday in Lent).

For other great Catholic Resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter, visit the [Prayer & Spirituality](#), [Easter Season](#), and the [Lent & Holy Week](#) sections of [The Crossroads Initiative Library](#).

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