THE SEASON OF LENT

is the Church's "springtime." Out of the darkness of sin's winter emerges a people—the Church—reborn through baptism into their Lord's death and resurrection from the grave.

Today Lent calls us to look back on the impact of our baptism on our lives. How are we doing, we who have died to sin and come alive to a new life in Christ? In repentance we ask our Lord to clear our lives of sin and renew a right spirit within us.

Lent

What season—observed since 200 A.D. and running from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday—is named for the time of year when the days begin to **lengthen**?

What 40 days precede the Holy Week observance of Jesus' suffering and death for us?

Which season of the Church Year focuses on **giving—giving up sin-driven behavior, giving more generously of ourselves, giving over our lives to our Lord—as he gave himself for us?**

40 days

How long was Jesus' "desert period" when he determined to live his life his Father's way, in spite of Satan's tempting offers?

How long did early Christian converts prepare to enter the Christian community through life-changing baptism on Easter eve?

How long do Christians today observe Lent as a time for self-examination and repentance, personal housecleaning and commitment to the new life in Christ entered at baptism?

Ash Wednesday

This day, traced back to 600 A.D., marked the start of the Christian Lenten season. Many worshipers receive a cross of ashes on the forehead as a sign of humility and repentance on this day.

"A Lenten smudge on the brow is a reality check to bring us back to earth in the presence of God. The grim but honest ashes are a solemn reminder of our limits and our Lord's call for his people's repentance."

THE COLORS OF LENT are:
violet which signals repentance;
black on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday;
white on Easter for joyous celebration.

Paschal

A word taken from **pascha** for the Jewish festival of **Passover**; (1) refers to Jesus as the paschal Lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world; (2) in a larger sense, refers to the whole season from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost.

The paschal season reminds us of our own **passover** and **exodus** from death to life through baptism.

"The paschal season does not exist in books or on calendars. It lives only in people. It is not art or therapy but a real-life struggle with the evil within and without that works against the way we have chosen—the life into which we have been baptized."

Holy Week

A name given to the days immediately concluding the season of Lent, leading to Easter Day. It may include the following days and worship activities:

Palm or Passion Sunday
(palms and processions)

Maundy Thursday
(foot washing & Lord's Supper)

Good Friday
(meditations on the suffering and death of Jesus)

Saturday Easter Vigil
(candlelight, baptism, Lord's Supper)

THE SUNDAY SCRIPTURE LESSONS

for Lent revisit the ancient covenant agreement made by the Lord with his people. The covenant includes us today who believe because of the sacrifice for the sin of the world made by the Lord's suffering servant, his Son.

Week by week we will hear:

- The Lord's eternal covenant means that nothing shall separate us, who are baptized into his Son's death and resurrection, from him.
- This covenant is a blessing prepared for those who are righteous through faith in the promises of God.
- Life in this covenant involves obedience to God's Law from our hearts and respect for his presence in our everyday lives.
- The Lord of the covenant shows us his grace by bringing us from darkness and despair into the light of Christ.
- Jesus, the Father's obedient Son, is the offering that makes the new covenant and thereby saves us.

Easter

The Day: Easter is the earliest Christian festival, celebrating Jesus' resurrection from the grave in triumph over sin and death. The name is first mentioned in 130 A.D.

The Season: Easter lasts 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost.

"The Easter season is the honeymoon of our union with God...time to explore the meaning of our new life...days for discovering how the mystery of salvation now becomes part of our daily lives."

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