

# Carrying Our Pain: The Work of Transformation

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## Two truths of spirituality

- Surrender to God
- Take responsibility for your own life

## Mystery of paschal transformation: spokes on a wheel that invite active engagement

1. Passion Sunday—take notice of God's presence in our midst
  - Honor the sacred
  - Use symbols wisely
  - Remember the Tradition
2. Holy Thursday--gratitude for life; celebrate life
  - Gather together
  - Give thanks often
  - Live with gratitude
3. Good Friday—life is lost
  - Respect human limitations
  - Honor tragedy, suffering, loss
  - Silence
  - ritual
4. Easter Sunday—reception of new life
  - Worship
  - Share the story
  - Transform your life
5. Forty days—grieving and adjusting to a new reality
  - Reflection
  - Acceptance of what is
  - prayer
6. Ascension—the refusal to cling to the old way of life; letting the old bless us
  - Look for the good, true, beautiful in all things
  - Release (forgive)
  - What needs to change?
7. Pentecost—reception of the new Spirit for a new life one is already living
  - Bless others
  - Live with meaning and purpose
  - Actively love others in compassionate works of peace and justice

- Entrust yourself to God

Salvation—sin, negativity, habitual patterns overcome, not avoided

Therese of Lisieux: whoever is willing to serenely bear the trial of being displeasing to oneself is a pleasant place for Jesus to dwell

Elements of carrying a tragedy, trauma, scandal biblically:

- Name the moment, experience accurately
- Ponder the experience
- Reaffirm the center of your faith
- Create meaningful, transforming rituals

# Celebrating Lent

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Entering the literal level of religion and worship is often the necessary first step

The imaginal world invites us to take the more meaningful second step into the sacred mysteries

God draws us into the third level of consciousness

Lent is a time of transition for us to reflect on the levels of:

- Scriptures
- Signs and symbols
- Liturgical activity
- The story of our life

How are you being invited into the depths of Christ's humanity?

As you follow him you will be lifted up

- Story of new king and the melon with hidden jewels

## ***Where is God inviting you to:***

1. Take notice of his presence?
2. Be grateful?
3. Grieve and mourn your losses?
4. Receive new life?
5. Adjust and transition into something new?
6. Let go of old attachments, undue compensations, or restrictive thoughts?
7. Receive a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

## Prayer Practices

Jesus Prayer  
Praying with Icons/Sacramentals  
Centering Prayer  
Lectio Divina  
Contemplative Walk  
Examine  
Journal  
Dream work  
Art (Mandala), Craft  
Music (Audio Divina)  
Poetry  
Focusing Prayer  
Labyrinth  
Ignation Imaginative prayer  
Wall of prayer  
Healing Prayer-Imagination  
Prayer for the World  
Body prayer/Dance/Movement/Tears  
Images of God in Media  
Desire prayer  
Prayer of gratitude  
Meditation  
Create your own psalm  
Contemplation  
Christian Yoga  
Fasting  
Praying with beads (Rosary, St. Michael's Chaplet)

Divine Office  
Spontaneous prayer/Conversatio  
Spiritual reading & reflection  
Prayer Groups  
Novenas/litanies  
Pilgrimage  
Stations of the Cross  
Repetition of Scripture/Mantra  
Intercession  
Praise & Worship  
Eucharist/Adoration  
Rituals  
Silence/Solitude  
Contrition  
Prayer of Imagination/Fantasy  
Rote prayer  
Praying the mysteries of your Life  
Give Alms  
Taize Prayer  
Creation  
Chanting  
Dialogue/Deep listening  
Service  
Vision Quest  
Sacred space/Altar/Candles  
Sabbath

## Ideas for Lenten Penitential Practices

Each day let go or give away something (e.g. a shirt, an affirmation, resentment)  
Reconnect with someone that you have not talked to in a long time  
Choose to forgive someone that has hurt you  
Make a Forgiveness Novena  
Fast from negative talk or thoughts (e.g. gossiping, putdowns, sarcastic humor)  
Sit in silence for 10 minutes each day  
Fast from unhealthy eating habits  
Give up one meal a day  
Exercise each day for 30 minutes  
Pray a rosary each day for your enemy or someone that you do not like  
Practice a different prayer form or devotion  
Join the community each morning for Office of Readings  
Make a visit each day to the Blessed Sacrament  
Commit to daily personal prayer  
Do a daily Lectio Divina on the Gospel of the day  
Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation  
Pray the Stations of the Cross either singularly or completely  
Meditate on the Psalm response  
Do a nightly examen, reflecting on your day  
Make a list of all the things that you are grateful for  
Write a letter to God each day in your journal  
Practice envisioning holiness or any one of the virtues  
Forgive a debt that someone owes you  
Give money to your favorite charity or to Operation Rice Bowl  
Work in a soup kitchen  
Choose a good book for spiritual reading  
Read the life of a saint each week  
Each day affirm someone in their goodness  
Each week put into practice one of the charitable works of Mt. 24  
Practice custody of the mind  
Take an honest inventory of your drinking patterns, use of computer, T.V.  
Notice your own addictions and compulsions and make some changes  
Write a letter to your congressman about something you really believe in  
Care for the earth by planting a tree, picking up litter, or tending a garden  
Reduce, reuse and recycle your possessions  
Do something kind for someone each day without being noticed  
Tell a friend or family member that you love them  
Be on time for your obligations (liturgies, classes, meetings)  
Go to bed earlier and/or get up earlier  
Re-evaluate your life and discern what needs to be changed or reoriented

## FASTING

This is an embodied form of prayer that connects us to our soul

It is a form of centering and grounding in our humanity

A traditional and transformative means of helping believers focus on what is essential or real

Any type of fasting should flow from two questions:

- What is my deep desire? What am I really focusing on?
- What is out of balance in my life?

Look at the context of your life

This is not about inflating the ego; rather it is about the deflation of ego.  
It's about stripping away false nourishment or unhealthy attachments

Healthy fasting clarifies and humanizes our instinctual energies

Some examples:

- fasting from gossip (story of Catherine Marshall)
- fasting from compulsions (e.g. pornography)
- fasting from food/drink (e.g. my story)
- fasting from Television, computer or other electronic distractions
- fasting from overwork or mindless/excessive activity (vacation, sabbatical)

fasting can be for an hour, a day, 3 days, a week, or a season

it's about awakening deeper meaning in our life and creating new patterns of thought and feeling

Ask the question: What is behind this activity? What is the meaning or what am I really looking for?