

Q: What is Lent?

A: Lent is the forty day period before Easter, excluding Sundays. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). In order to give special prominence to the Sacred Triduum (Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday, Easter Vigil) the current calendar counts Lent from Ash Wednesday to the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Lenten practices are properly maintained up to the Easter Vigil.

Q: Why are Sundays excluded from the forty days?

A: Sunday is the day Christ rose, making it an inappropriate day to fast and mourn our sins. On Sunday we must celebrate Christ's resurrection for our salvation. It is Friday on which we commemorate his death for our sins. The Sundays of the year are days of celebration and the Fridays of the year are days of penance.

Q: Since Sundays are not counted in the forty days of Lent, does giving up something apply to them?

A: Customarily, no. However, since the giving up of something is voluntary to begin with, there is no official rule concerning this aspect of it. Nevertheless, since Sundays are days of celebration, it is appropriate to suspend the Lenten selfdenial on them that, in a spiritual and non-excessive way, we may celebrate the day of Our Lord's resurrection so that that day and that event may be contrasted with the rest of the days of Lent and the rest of the events of history. This heightened contrast deepens the spiritual lessons taught by the rest of Lent.

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