



LENTEN TRIVIA



LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Did you know the season of Lent can be traced back to the earliest centuries of Christianity? Initially, Lent developed from the practices that took place concerning those entering the Church, the catechumens. They underwent a period of intense instruction and even penance before they were received into the Church at the Easter Vigil. This period of time eventually ended up being 40 days. The significance of the 40 days is drawn from both the Old and New Testaments. In the bible, the number 40 often symbolized a period of testing, purification, and renewal. Here are a few examples: the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai, the 40 days and nights of the Great Flood, and the 40 days that Jesus fasted in the desert. By the 4th century, these biblical connections influenced the Church to have a special period of fasting and penance before Easter.

You might also wonder why we use the color purple in the church during the Lenten season. Traditionally, this color symbolized penance, humility, and mourning. Besides being a color for repentance, it is also one of preparation. We, as Catholics, are called to reflect on our sins, seek forgiveness and prepare our hearts for the great celebration of Easter, the Resurrection. It also serves as a reminder of the suffering and great sacrifice our Lord has made for us. Thus, the use of purple during Lent has a dual purpose: it reflects the somber and penitential nature of the season while also pointing to the future joy of Christ's ultimate victory over sin and death.

In our world today, we have many distractions like noise and materialism to name a couple. Perhaps the three tools of Lent - prayer, fasting and almsgiving - can help us open our hearts and minds to others and to make room in our lives for God.

Have a blessed, prayerful, and peaceful week ahead!