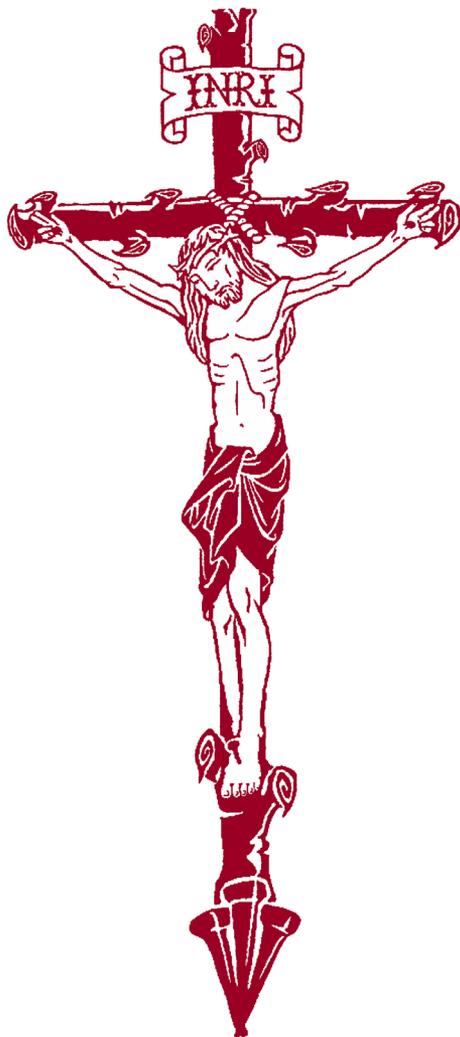


A HANDBOOK FOR LENT



St Matthias' Church

ANGLICAN

DALLAS, TEXAS



A LENTEN PRAYER

LORD, bless to me this Lent.

LORD, let me fast most truly and profitably,
by feeding in prayer on this Spirit:
 reveal me to myself
 in the light of thy holiness.

Suffer me never to think that I have
 knowledge enough to need no teaching,
 wisdom enough to need no correction,
 talents enough to need no grace,
 goodness enough to need no progress,
 humility enough to need no repentance,
 devotion enough to need no quickening,
 strength sufficient without thy Spirit;
 lest, standing still, I fall back for evermore.

Shew me the desires that should be disciplined,
 and sloths to be slain.

Shew me the omissions to be made up
 and the habits to be mended.

And behind these, weaken, humble and annihilate in me
 self-will, self-righteousness, self-satisfaction,
 self-sufficiency, self-assertion, vainglory.

May my whole effort be to return to thee;
 O make it serious and sincere
 persevering and fruitful in result,
 by the help of thy Holy Spirit
 and to thy glory,
 my Lord and my God.

– *Eric Milner-White*

LENT ANNO DOMINI 2018

Lent's origin and purpose is expressed in the Invitation to the Observance of Lent which the Priest addresses to the People on Ash Wednesday:

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

The Book of Common Prayer (1979), pages 264-265

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is one of the “seasons” (time-periods) of the Christian Year. It prepares us for our fifty-days’ celebration of Our Lord’s Resurrection, *Easter Season*. The word *Lent* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* (“lengthen”), which refers to “the time of the lengthening days”... the season we now refer to as Spring. Lent occurs during Spring and extends for forty days.

Since every Sunday is a feast of Our Lord’s Resurrection, Sundays are not counted in Lent’s forty days and are referred to as “in Lent” rather than “of Lent.” Lent’s forty days are the Monday through Saturday of the weeks from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Day.

The forty-day period alludes to a number of events which are important in salvation history:

- The forty years’ sojourn of the Hebrews in the Sinai wilderness, during which God was fashioning them into his People and preparing them for entrance into the Promised Land.

- Moses' forty days on Mount Sinai, receiving from God the Law which was to order the life of his People.
- The forty days' sojourn of our Savior in the desert, during which God the Father prepared him for his public ministry.

The season of Lent is decidedly penitential. In her worship, the Church expresses this in various ways, both liturgical and visual:

■ Liturgical changes:

- ▶ The ancient Judeo-Christian word of praise of God, Alleluia, is eliminated from all acts of worship.
- ▶ The opening acclamation of the Mass praises God for his mercy:
 - ✠ Bless the Lord who forgiveth all our sins;
His mercy endureth for ever.
- ▶ The Gloria ("Glory be to God on high") is eliminated from the Mass as an opening act of praise. Only the Kyrie ("Lord, have mercy upon us") or the Trisagion ("Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us") is said or sung.
- ▶ At the end of Mass, the people are not blessed; instead a solemn prayer is offered for their keeping of a holy Lent.

At St Matthias', further liturgical changes in the Mass may include:

- ▶ At the beginning of Solemn High Mass, holy water may be sprinkled on the people (*an action called the Asperges [Sprinkling, Washing], from Psalm 51:7 which is sung during the rite: "Thou, O Lord, shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*). This rite is a memorial of our baptismal cleansing from Sin and reminds us to repent of our sins, confess and be cleansed.
- ▶ The Prayers of the People and the Consecration Prayer said over the bread and wine are more penitential in tone.

■ Visual changes:

- ▶ All floral decoration in the church is eliminated.
- ▶ In many parishes of the Anglican and Roman Communion, the color of vestments and hangings changes to purple (a color associated with royalty and mourning), and crosses and other adornments are veiled.

- ▶ At St Matthias, however, ancient English usage is followed, by covering the adornments of the church with the *Lenten Array*. The Array “washes out” vibrant color in the church. All of the focus is directed toward Our Lord’s Passion. The Array is of a tan or ashen color, upon which, in colors of oxblood or black, may be symbols of the objects covered.

Thus, in Lent, the “look” of the interior of St Matthias’ changes dramatically. It becomes rather austere. But then, when Easter Season begins, the return of the rich colors of tapestries and brocades throughout the church proclaim the joy and glory of Our Lord’s Resurrection.

WHAT DOES LENT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

The *Invitation to the Observance of Lent*, quoted previously, teaches us that Lent is a time for the Faithful to engage intentionally in an effort to grow more in the knowledge, love and service of the Lord. This is done through

- *Repentance*: literally, a “turning around” from the direction in which one has been going. Since each of us daily falls into sin, moving us away from God, repentance involves our returning to him by
 - *examining* our consciences so that God can show us how we have been moving away from him; and then
 - *confessing* our sins, asking God to forgive us and grant us the strength we need in our battle against temptation.
- *Prayer*: corporate acts of worship as well as personal times of prayer.
- *Fasting*: from food; and from sins, vices and negative things arising from our personality defects/weaknesses.
- *Self-denial*: denying ourselves the pleasure of “sins” we frequently allow ourselves, as well as denying ourselves various other things which occupy so much of our time and energy.
- *Reading and meditating on God’s holy Word*: reading Holy Scripture or some good theological/devotional work(s), reflecting on their message.

Lent is about **growth** in Christian maturity. It is a time to bend our efforts consciously to this, in an attempt to take some steps forward in our discipleship of Jesus and the reacquisition of our likeness to him. Think of Lent as a Christian’s **spring training**, akin to what baseball players must do every year. A Christian *is* God’s athlete, meant to become a champion in holiness of life. Thus, in Lent, we

renew and strengthen our spiritual lives through **Corporate Acts** of devotion and **Individual Disciplines** of growth. This Handbook is intended to assist you in this enterprise.

I - CORPORATE ACTIVITIES

(1) SHROVE TUESDAY

February 13th

6:30pm - Pancake Supper

Though not part of Lent, since the Middle Ages this day has been a day of preparation for the Lenten Fast, which begins the next day. This preparation has included both making one's confession and getting rid of all meat and meat products in the house.

Confession became associated with this day out of a desire of many of the Faithful to receive the spiritual strength which comes from being freed from the weight of Sin. Such strength enables us to walk the Lenten journey better than we otherwise could. The name of this day, *Shrove Tuesday*, means "forgiven Tuesday": shrove comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *shreve* which means "to absolve, to forgive."

The consuming of meat and meat products on this day comes from the centuries-old discipline of abstinence from these throughout Lent. St Thomas Aquinas summarizes the traditional position well:

"Fasting was instituted by the Church in order to bridle the concupiscences of the flesh, which regard pleasures of touch in connection with food and sex. Wherefore the Church forbade those who fast to partake of those foods which both afford most pleasure to the palate, and besides are a very great incentive to lust. Such are the flesh of animals that take their rest on the earth, and of those that breathe the air and their products, such as milk and eggs." (Summa Theologica II-II, q. 147, a.8)

Thus developed the Shrove Tuesday supper of pancakes and sausage. Thus, by this abstention, the Church reminded people to bear down and get serious about their battle with sin and their growth in holiness. The arrival of Easter occasioned (as still it does!) a fifty-day period of feasting.

The Men's Group will be hosting the Annual "Brit Potter" Memorial Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at St Matthias' on Tuesday, February 13. Dinner will be served beginning at 6:30pm and is free to all (although we will be accepting "free will offerings.") By the way, it's a GREAT opportunity to introduce your family, friends and neighbors who may NOT be members of our parish to the wonderfulness of St Matthias'.

(2) ASH WEDNESDAY

The First Day of Lent - February 14th

A Holy Day of Obligation and Fasting

6:45am – Mattins

7:00am, Noon, 6:30pm – Low Mass & Imposition of Ashes (*nursery at 6:30pm*)

Ash Wednesday takes its name from the ancient custom of placing ashes on the heads of penitents to signify their penitence. These ashes are the residue of the burned palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

The imposition of ashes reminds us that we are sinners and are mortal, on our way to death. As God said to our father-in-sin, Adam, "You are dust. To dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19b) Such a reminder can goad us into God's hands, through repentance.

But we are marked with ashes in the same manner, upon the same spot and with the same sign with which we were marked at Baptism: the Cross of Christ, upon our foreheads. This reminds us of our hope: God has done the work of saving us from eternal death, through his Son, Jesus Christ. And if we will commit our lives into his care, and work with him in remaking us in his likeness, he can, and will, raise our bodies and spirits from dusty death to eternal glory.

Ash Wednesday, therefore, is a *holy day of obligation*: a day whose meaning is so important for us that we have a moral obligation to worship God at his Altar. This is the right way to begin the Lenten journey.

(3) FRIDAYS IN LENT

Friday evenings are one of the most significant additions to our life together in Lent, a wonderful aid to our Lenten journey. Guests are very welcome. These evenings are a great opportunity for low-key evangelism, so invite others to come; indeed, bring them with you. A nursery is available for children five and under *if reservations are made the previous Sunday*.

Our evenings begin at 6:30 with a light, meatless meal. Then we gather in the church at 7:15 to pray the *Stations of the Cross*. These are followed by a brief sermon by a guest preacher. Our devotions end with *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament*, a brief, beautiful service in which we adore Jesus Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament. The evening concludes by 8:15.

We are once more this year featuring priests of our diocese and are blessed to have a superior corps of preachers this Lent. The theme this year is a Meditation on *The Apostles' Creed*.

February 23rd: Fr. Greg Crosthwait, Church Planter, College Station
I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

March 2nd: Fr. Jeff Stubbs, Rector, St. Paul's, Gainesville
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,

March 9th: Fr. Ron Drummond, Rector, St Stephen's, Hurst
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

March 16th: Fr. Cooper Morelock, Curate St. Laurence's, Southlake
He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

March 23rd: Fr. John Kalimi, Associate, St. Vincent's, Bedford
I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

(4) SUNDAY ADULT EDUCATION

Lent is a wonderful time to add to one's discipline of study ... or take it up! So take advantage of the new Sunday morning courses for Lent and Easter Season, which will end our 2017-2018 academic year.

COURSE 4

February 18 - March 18, 2018

WHAT'S LENT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Instructor: Father Christopher Cantrell, Rector

Each year we keep the season of Lent with great devotion. Where did it come from? Does everyone keep it the same way? What are some of the varying Lenten practices throughout Christendom? What is Lent for? We'll take a look at these and other questions surrounding one of the most significant seasons in the Church Year.

COURSE 5

April 8 - May 6, 2018

HEAR, O ISRAEL!

Instructor: Father Christopher Cantrell, *Rector*

What if you could walk where Jesus walked? Fr. Chris just experienced what is called a Clergy Familiarization Tour of Israel and got to do just that. This class will be a first-hand look at the Holy Land as it is today. There will be maps, photos, history, pilgrim tales and discussion.

(5) LENTEN BLOOD DRIVE

Every day, close to 800 patients in North, Central and East Texas require timely blood transfusions. YOU can help. St Matthias' will be holding our Lenten blood drive on **Saturday, March 3 from 9:00am to 1:00pm** in the parking lot in front of the Church. It is very quick and convenient (each person has an assigned time).

Chef Larry Magruder will prepare a **sumptuous** breakfast for all donors so you even get a free (terrific) breakfast. (Just ask former donors – the breakfast is GREAT!) Your fellow Parishioners will be soliciting volunteers on Sunday February 18th and February 25th. You can even sign up on-line; we will send around a link that takes you directly to the St Matthias' sign-up area at Carter's website. Please! give. If you have any questions, can't wait to sign-up or want to help, please call Jim Nugent at 972-980-6949 or e-mail him at jimcnugent@outlook.com.

II - PERSONAL DISCIPLINES

(1) A RULE OF LIFE

Prepare your Lenten “rule of life” well before it begins. Lent is not only an annual time of spiritual preparation for our celebration at Easter of Our Lord’s Resurrection. It is also a reminder to us that this life is a time of preparation for an eternal Easter celebration in heaven. This earthly life is a dress rehearsal.

Thus Lent presents us annually with an excellent opportunity to labor – for a limited, concerted period of time – on becoming a healthier, more wholesome person, someone more like Jesus. Lent is a time to choose certain things to work on *in* yourself and *with* yourself.

In developing your Lenten Rule, select things you would like to or should make part of your life which will help you grow into a more wholesome human being. Your work on them during Lent becomes a kind of trial period for incorporating them into your life beyond Lent. Be assured that your priest is happy to assist you in the development of your rule.

If you are a member of a household (two or more Christians living together) also establish a discipline for yourselves together. For example, you might decide to eat no meat during Lent; to spend time visiting with one another rather than watching TV; to have a time of prayer together; to spend some time playing together; to do some charitable activity together.

(2) PRAYER

Every Christian should have the habit of daily personal prayer. If you do not, Lent is an excellent time to begin. In the Prayer Book (pages 136-140), you will find *Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families*, simple rites of prayer for the major points of the day: morning, noonday, early evening, close of day. Each one may be used by an individual or by a family.

You may modify them to suit your tastes. For example, in each of the orders, you could replace the opening psalm with some other psalm or act of praise, the scripture reading printed there with another passage or a devotional reading. Following meditation upon the reading, you could observe a period of intercession, petition, thanksgiving, examination of conscience and confession.

(3) FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

There are two days of *strict fasting* for Christians: **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. Fasting on these days is a way in which we spiritually unite ourselves to Jesus, who himself kept a discipline of fasting and who, at his Passion, was forced to fast.

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Church asks her people to abstain from all food until after Mass and throughout the day. Those unable to keep the fast with such strictness (*e.g.*, the pregnant, aged, very young, those engaged in hard physical labor or who have a medical condition requiring regular eating) are encouraged to eat only one meatless meal and, if necessary, up to two *collations* (a *collation* is an informal meal, something “*thrown together*,” but the two together should not equal one small meal) with nothing eaten in between. The customs concerning fasting and abstinence have varied in strictness at different times and in different parts of the Church. You should do all that you are able to in keeping the fast.

In addition, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (p. 17) and Catholic tradition bid us observe the forty days of Lent with special acts of discipline and self denial. We are bidden to both fast *and* abstain. In terms of food, *fasting* involves a reduction in the quantity of food eaten; *abstinence* is an elimination of certain foods altogether, often those of a “luxury” nature.

Thus, as a *fast*, a Christian might reduce the amount of food eaten at every meal, or eliminate a daily meal entirely. As an *abstinence*, a Christian might give up dessert, alcoholic beverages, etc. By longstanding tradition of the Church, Christians abstain from flesh-meat at least on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent. It is a blessed practice to give away to some worthy cause the money saved by such fasting and abstention.

Fasting and abstinence are *prohibited* on the Lord’s Day (Sunday) in Lent, since Sunday is always a feast of thanksgiving for Our Lord’s Resurrection. Remember: since our Judeo-Christian reckoning of a “day” is from sunset to sunset, the Lord’s Day runs from sunset Saturday to sunset Sunday.

Why should we fast? Fasting plays an important role in the lives of religious people. It is rooted in our need for nourishment. The ultimate nourishment we need is God, his grace flowing through our soul, giving refreshment and strength for our transformation into the likeness of his Son.

In the Old Testament, individuals and the whole community were called to fast: for **repentance** (I Kings 21.27-29; Joel 1.14-16; 2.12-16; Daniel 9.3-6); for **guidance** (Ezra 8.21-23); in **time of trouble** (Esther 4.15-17).

In the New Testament, **Jesus** himself is the model as he fasts in the wilderness following his Baptism in preparation for his public ministry (St Matthew 4.2; St Luke 4.2). Moreover, Jesus taught that some demonic forces could only be overcome by prayer and fasting (St Matthew 17.21). And finally, Jesus endured his Passion without any benefit of food.

St Paul teaches that fasting grows us in love of self, since it helps us become a master rather than a slave of our passions (I Cors. 6.2; 9:27). Our cravings for food, drink, possessions, status, sexual gratification, etc., are like a river which overflows its banks – fasting from any of these helps us keep them in the proper channel. This Lent, let us grow in mastery of our physical bodies, that God may become master of our souls.

But, of course, there are non-physical things from which we should fast: vices, personality defects, sins. Turn back to the frontispiece of this Handbook and read and reflect on the Lenten Prayer printed there. It is an excellent expression of how we should make use of Lent and the deep things of ourselves upon which we, with God's grace, should work. Lent is a time to choose one or two to work on with God's help, for we never make progress on overcoming such things unless we try.

Consider this list of Lenten Disciplines:

FAST...

- *from judging others;*
- *from fear of illness;*
- *from words that pollute;*
- *from discontent;*
- *from anger acted out;*
- *from pessimism;*
- *from negatives;*
- *from bitterness;*
- *from self-concern;*
- *from suspicion;*
- *from gossip;*
- *from problems that overwhelm;*
- *from worry;*

FEAST...

- on Christ dwelling in them;
- on the healing power of God;
- on speech that purifies;
- on gratitude;
- on patience;
- on optimism;
- on alternatives;
- on forgiveness;
- on compassion;
- on truth;
- on purposeful silence;
- on prayer that sustains;
- on trust in God.

(4) RECONCILIATION

Sins weigh us down and inhibit the flow of God's grace through our soul, thus impeding our growth in holiness and wholeness of life. We need to get rid of them. Our Lord provided a way: Through his Apostles, he gave his Church the power to forgive sins in the words *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained* (St John 20:23). Jesus would not have given this power unless he had meant it to be used. He went to the Cross precisely to make the forgiveness of sins available to us.

Jesus wants to liberate us from everything which tears us down into something less than his Father made us to be and from everything which through us tears down others. As the *Parable of the Forgiving Father and his Prodigal Son* reveal (St Luke 15:24), to be set free, we must:

- ▶ honestly face the specific ways in which we have fallen into sin ... this requires a prayerful *examination of conscience*;
- ▶ offer our awareness of our specific sins to those we have wounded by them: God, the Church and God's world ... this is *confession*;
- ▶ receive the forgiveness of those we have wounded ... this is *absolution*.

It is a great aid in this process of being set free from our sins that we acknowledge them before another Christian who **hears** our confession. By this, we know that *we are known* at our worst. But then, being forgiven in spite of *being known at our worst*, we experience being forgiven and loved.

Further, it is important that our Confession be made in the presence of a priest of Christ (an apostolic minister):

- *By his birth*, he is a fellow human being; as such he represents the whole human community which our sins have wounded and, on its behalf, can grant us that community's forgiveness.
- *By his baptism*, he is a representative of all our brothers and sisters in Christ - past, present, and future - whom our sins have or will wound; as such, he can grant us their forgiveness.
- *By his ordination*, he has been appointed by Christ as His re-presentative, commanded by Him to pass on to us His forgiveness. Further, as a priest, he is under vows never to break the seal of the Confessional.

It is the ongoing experience of being both known at our worst and still loved which increasingly sets us free, free *from* the power of sin and free *to grow* in godly living. This occurs because we are no longer trying to *earn* love. Instead, knowing ourselves truly loved, we are free to try to live lovingly and to keep at this attempt, in spite of our failures. We know that it is not our failures which keep us from God but our unwillingness to turn back to him after we have failed.

In *Sacramental Confession*, we may speak honestly and openly about our lives in a way that we cannot elsewhere. The transaction is between God, the priest and yourself, and is absolutely confidential. While we **may** speak of our Confession to whomever we wish, the priest may **not** and will not. So we **should not** either.

During Lent, as in the rest of the year, the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Private Confession) will be administered from Noon to 12:30pm each Saturday except the third Saturday in each month. Confessions may also be heard by appointment, just call the parish office or Fr. Cantrell. Additional opportunities to make your Confession will be available in Holy Week, because the Church counsels that if we make our Confession at no other time of the year, we should do so before the great feast of our redemption, Easter Day.

Enclosed in this Handbook is a manual to assist you with your examination of conscience in preparation for Confession.



**I INVITE YOU, THEREFORE, IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH,
TO THE OBSERVANCE OF A HOLY LENT,**

- ✠ by self examination and repentance;
- ✠ by prayer, fasting and self denial;
- ✠ by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

A good Lenten Rule includes all these areas, with both corporate and personal disciplines. On the final pages of this Handbook are check-lists to assist youth and adults in the construction of their Lenten Rule.

LENTEN CHECK-LIST FOR YOUTH

Remember: the purpose of doing extra things during Lent, or giving things up, is to help us come to know Jesus better, and to become more like him.

Things We Do Together

I will

- attend Ash Wednesday Mass
- attend Mass each Sunday
- attend weekday Masses on _____
- attend Friday evening Stations of the Cross and Benediction
- attend Christian Education classes on Sundays
- other: _____

Things I Do On My Own

I will

- pray each night before going to sleep, saying the Our Father, the Hail Mary, followed by my own personal prayers
- make my Confession to a priest
- once a week, make a list of things I have done wrong during the week and tell God I am sorry
- read a story from the Bible on these days of the week: _____
- read a book about a saint
- to remind myself that I want Jesus to be more important than anything else in my life, I will give up this one food item that is really important to me _____ (*such as, candy, cookies, soda, dessert, snacks*)
- earn some money and give it to the Church for the needy, using the Lenten Self-Denial Offering Folder
- once a day, I will do something nice for someone in my family (*for example, set the table, take out the trash, read a book to a brother or sister*);
- each day at school, I will look for something I can compliment in someone I don't like and give them that compliment
- other: _____

LENTEN CHECK-LIST FOR ADULTS

Corporate Activities

I will

- attend Ash Wednesday Mass
- attend Mass each Sunday
- attend weekday Masses on _____
- attend Friday evening Stations of the Cross and Benediction
- attend the Sunday Adult Class
- give blood at our Lenten Blood Drive
- attend the First Saturday of the Month Corporate Rosary

Personal Disciplines

Taking on:

- make an appointment for spiritual direction with a priest
- develop a rule of life
- read Holy Scripture, according to this plan (*establish the day/s on which you will do this, at which time, for how long & what amount of Scripture and which book/s*)

- read this devotional book for Lent _____
- keep daily a time of prayer from (time) to (time)
- engage in regular self-examination
- make my confession before the Easter feast
- do something special for a friend or neighbor
- work on overcoming this particular personality defect: _____

_____ and in this way: _____

- other: _____

Giving up:

- abstain from flesh-meat on Wednesdays and Fridays
- give up: _____ [e.g. coffee, smoking, alcohol, meat, sweets, favorite food(s)]
- give up these regular amusements: _____
- give alms to those in need by giving up this thing(s) _____ upon which I regularly spend money. Use the Lenten Self-Denial Offering
- other: _____

LENT 2018