



# Third Sunday of Lent

## *Fasting, Because Adam Didn't*

Fasting, which is required of Catholics on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, has biblical roots. Our fall from grace happened when Adam and Eve broke the fast, and a key moment in our restoration to grace occurred when Christ fasted for 40 days in the desert.

Humanity's first sin involved eating. God had proclaimed a fast from the fruit of only one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and Adam and Eve broke it. All of us, in Adam and Eve, rejected a life dependent on God alone for one that was dependent on "bread alone" instead. The tragedy is not so much that Adam and Eve ate food, but that they ate the food for its own sake, apart from God and to gain independence from him. They believed the deceiving serpent's message that food had life in itself and that by eating of that one tree they could be "like God" and thus rid of him. They put their faith in food, believing that their existence depended on bread alone.

Fasting in Lent recalls our dependence on God alone: his Word and his Word made flesh. The truest of all foods is the Eucharist. Before this food, we break our fast every time, because this is not food for this world, but the Bread of Heaven. Fasting empties us, making us ready to receive the food of grace.

## *Prayer of Giving*

Loving and gracious God,  
I have given gold,  
But there is only so much gold.

I have given blood,  
But I have only so much blood to give.

I have given my time,  
But days have only so many hours.

I have given my strength,  
But even that has its limits.

So I give my love.  
Because love is gold, and love is blood.  
And love is time, and love is strength.  
But love is also so much more.  
Because love is God.  
And God is love.

And only you, God, have no limits.  
Amen

—A prayer from Catholic Relief Services

*"Jesus said to his disciples . . .  
'When you fast, do not look  
gloomy like the hypocrites.'"*

*(Matthew 6:16, Lectionary)*



*"Fasting, Because Adam Didn't" is an excerpt of an article written by Fr. Daniel Merz, former associate director of the Secretariat for Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

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