

# Give God quality time this Lent

As we begin the penitential season of Lent, we are often asked the following question. What are you giving up for Lent? Lent is the season for prayer, penance and almsgiving.

During the 40 days of Lent we make sacrifices. The sacrifices which we make remind us of the Supreme Sacrifice which Jesus made for us on Calvary.

We might decide not to eat desserts, candy, and chocolate, drink alcohol or coffee or snack between meals. Some people quit smoking. All of these sacrifices are good.

There is something else, which we can do for Lent. We can give God more of our time. We can be available to God.

There are 168 hours in each week. How much of that time do we give to God? We are all busy. There is not enough time to do all of the things we want to do.

This Lent, let us make Jesus a priority in our lives. Let us give him more of our time.

A recent survey indicated that Americans, on the average, watch three and a half hours of television a day. That is almost one full day a week.

Many people cannot commit one hour a Sunday to spend with God at mass. We commit our time to many other endeavors. How we use our time reflects our priorities in life.

If God is important to us, we will give him some of our time. God deserves quality time; not what is left over.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16, we read: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." If each of us could do this, we would be blessed.

Prayer is communication with God. When we pray we connect with God and God connects with us. In prayer, we talk to God, and God talks to us. We listen to God, and God listens to us.

Prayer traditionally takes four forms. They are: 1) petition, 2) thanksgiving 3) contrition 4) adoration. All four of these forms of prayer are needed for us to have a proper balance in our prayer life.

In prayer of petition we ask God to grant our requests. In prayer of thanksgiving we express gratitude for all that God has given us. In prayer of contrition we express our sorrow. Going to confession is an excellent way of doing this. In prayer of adoration we praise God.

If we decide to spend more of our time in prayer with God, we will have a Holy Lent. How do we do that?

Attending daily mass is an excellent Lenten practice. We might decide to read a chapter of scripture each day, or to pray the rosary, or to spend time meditating.

Going to the Stations of the Cross on the Fridays of Lent is a special opportunity for us. We walk with Jesus on his way to crucifixion. We gain an appreciation of the enormous suffering he endured for us.

Many parishes offer a mission during Lent. The mission is a week set aside for prayer. The missions are excellent Lenten reflections.

When we face difficult situations, take time to ask for God's help. He is always available to us. God is "Our refuge in times of distress."

If our prayer requests are not granted immediately, keep praying. If our requests were always granted right away, we would not develop the intensity that we need.

Perseverance in prayer is essential. God grants our requests when they are most beneficial for us. Sometimes our requests would not be beneficial for us, so God may deny them.

This is what Jesus said: "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened (Lk 11:9-10)."