

Lent as a Season of the Holy Spirit (Unlock the Power): Friday before Ash Wednesday

The 40 days of Lent come from the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert before starting his public ministry. After Jesus' baptism by John, Luke's Gospel says, "*Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil*" (Luke 4:1-2).

An important part of the Holy Spirit's work is to bring inner transformation in our lives. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism, but he did not begin his ministry in the power of the Spirit until he first let the Holy Spirit overcome the devil's temptations to use his power for self-centered purposes.

In Lent, we allow the Spirit to work in us overcoming our self-centered temptations (the world, the flesh, and the devil). Galatians 5:13-26 describes this process of inner transformation in which we overcome the works of the flesh (*immorality, impurity, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, etc.*) and put on the fruit of the Spirit (*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*).

In overcoming these temptations, we learn in a deeper way to "live by the Spirit" (v.16); be "guided by the Spirit" (v.18); "live in the Spirit" and "follow the Spirit" (v.25).

On the Friday before Ash Wednesday, let us intercede (with prayer and fasting) for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Charismatic Renewal and the whole Church. Let us especially pray that we, and all the Church, are open to the Spirit's work of inner transformation, overcoming temptations and the influence of the flesh, so that we can live more fully in the Holy Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit.

O Lord unlock the power of the Spirit for your people!