

Gracious God,
you created us in love and for love.
We are the pure light of your love, given flesh.
Your Spirit is our life; your breath is our breath.
Your love shines in us, the image of Christ,
and we are all being transformed into this image,
from one degree of glory to another.

But we deny your light and obscure your image.
Help us to see all that impedes your perfect love in us,
and to remove it, so that we may truly shine with your light.

In this Lenten season, help us to see, to repent,
and to be perfected in love,
in the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.



An Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way we are reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

In the name of the Church, you are invited to observe a holy Lent:

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

Prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent.

Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sin may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God for ever and ever. Amen.