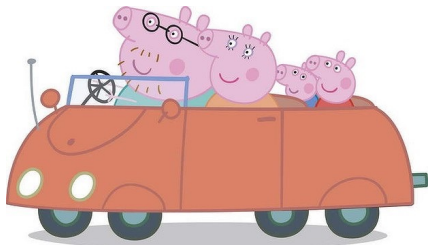


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Sunday, February 4th



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1. How many days is Lent?
2. What important feast do we celebrate after Lent ends?
3. What are two ways we can focus more on Jesus during Lent?

Praying Together:

Lord Jesus,

As we prepare for the start of
Lent, guide us so we can become
closer to You with prayer and
fasting.
Amen.

Feb. 4/18, Meatfare Sunday

1. How many days is Lent?
 1. 40 days
 2. The number 40 shows up a few times in the Gospels. 40 days is the amount of days Jesus fasts in the wilderness after His baptism.¹ 40 days is also the number of days after the Resurrection that Jesus ascends into Heaven.²
 3. According to *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 40 can be interpreted as “a number indicating completion or fulfillment.”³
2. What important feast do we celebrate after Lent ends?
 1. Easter or the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead
 2. Easter is regarded as the most important feast of the church calendar. Through His Resurrection, Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament.
 3. Without the Resurrection, St. Paul says our faith is in vain: “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1 Corinthians 15:14)⁴
3. What are two ways we can focus more on Jesus during Lent?
 1. Prayer and fasting
 2. Lent is a time to focus more of our time and effort on becoming closer to Jesus. By being more deliberate with prayer and restricting the amount and kind of food we eat, we begin to rely more on God.
 3. Decide as a family how you can devote a little more time to prayer and fasting this Lent. You don’t have to make drastic changes, but a little change can go a long way.
 1. For example, if you don’t already fast from meat on Fridays, try doing that during Lent this year. If fasting is already part of your week, try adding an extra day without meat. Check out Orthodox Mom’s Lenten Meal Plan for ideas.⁵
 2. For prayer, try adding prostrations to the start and end of your prayer time. Another suggestion is praying the Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian:
*O Lord and Master of my life, drive from me the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. *Prostration**
*Instead, bestow on me, Your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. *Prostration**
*Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for You are blessed for ever and ever. Amen. *Prostration**⁶

¹ Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:2.

² Acts 1:3.

³ *Orthodox Study Bible*, note on Acts 1:3, p.1469.

⁴ See 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 for more context.

⁵ <http://www.orthodoxmom.com/orthodox-kitchen/>

⁶ *Beneath the Mantle of Your Mercy*, p. 91