

# God's Grace and God's Calling During Lent

by Fr. Edward Smith

Lent always seems to catch us suddenly, so soon after Christmas. And this year we need Lent more than ever, because in so many ways our world seems to have gone haywire. ***If we want to change the world, we must begin with improving ourselves, which ultimately only occurs with God's grace.***

**How do we go about it?** Below are some suggestions, which could perhaps even extend beyond Lent and become lasting habits:

1. Attend Mass several days a week, either arriving early or staying late to pray for your special intentions before the Blessed Sacrament, Who will listen as you speak to Him from your heart.
2. Pray the Rosary daily on your way to or from work, offering particularly the Sorrowful Mysteries for your sins, and those of our society (such as the sin of abortion).
3. Sacrifice one meal a day for religious liberty in our country and also for Christians suffering persecution in the Middle East.
4. Talk to one or two friends about becoming Catholic, and to one or two lukewarm or fallen-away Catholics, about going to Confession or returning to the Church – and back up your initiative with prayer.
5. Consider making a general confession during Lent – not out of scruples over past confessions but as a means of spiritual growth. You will feel like a new person, ready to win the world for the Lord.
6. Make a special effort to ask your spouse about how you can better help him/her, and do the same with your children.
7. Give up television and/or all movies for Lent, and instead read the scriptures or a spiritual book.
8. Make a generous donation – one that hurts – to your parish, food bank, homeless shelter, or pro-life pregnancy center.
9. Reconcile with relatives or estranged/former friends, or at least make the attempt.
10. Pray the Stations of the Cross once a week, in any forms you choose, whether praying them at Church or privately at home. Pick up a guide to the Stations by such “spiritual giants” as St. Josemaria Escriva, or Pope St. John Paul II, or Pope Benedict XVI, or Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman.

***And pay attention in prayer: you may just hear God calling you to still other paths He would like you to follow.***

***Rev. Edward J. Smith***