



15, 15, 15
A Lenten challenge
15 minutes, \$15, or 15 days.

During the season of Lent we are called to Pray, Fast and Give Alms over and above what we typically do in order to help us realize God is the center of our life and not things. Challenge yourself, to take on **one or all three** of these during the season of Lent.

15 Minutes. Carve out of your day an additional 15 minutes for meditative prayer. Whether you already pray an hour or more, or if you haven't been in the practice of daily prayer, commit to adding 15 minutes. Think of it as giving yourself a fifteen minute break with the Lord every day, a little extra down time with Jesus! Don't make it just about devotional prayers though either. Devotional prayers are important and I would say even necessary. Things like the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, a prayer for vocations, the seven Sorrows of Mary, the Morning offering, etc. They are all important prayers. But allow these 15 minutes to be about you speaking with Jesus and allowing Him, more importantly, the opportunity to speak to you. Use a small paragraph or a sentence from one of the four Gospels to be a guide for you. This way, when you get distracted you can go back, read it again and refocus. Meditative prayer is a discipline and takes practice, and experience will produce growth so don't get too frustrated with yourself. Give it time, and more importantly, give Jesus the time. Insert yourself in your imagination into the story line from the Gospels. St. Ignatius, a spiritual genius, encourages this. Imagine yourself as the one Jesus is speaking to, or about, or that you are simply there watching what is happening. If you seem overwhelmed with all that you have to do or your mind keeps going back to something that is bothering you or won't leave your thoughts, invite the Lord Jesus into that moment. You deserve a 15 minute break! Take it with Jesus!

15 Days. Mark out on your calendar 15 extra days during the season of Lent where you will fast in addition to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those are the two days we are required to fast unless you are of a certain age, but even then we should be following it unless health concerns don't permit us to do so. There are 6 ½ weeks of Lent so if you chose just over 2 days a week that would get you to 15. It used to be required to fast every single day of Lent, imagine what they went through doing that. Without cars! Fasting means, at a minimum, eating two small meals and one regular meal, where the two small meals don't add up to the size of one regular meal. (With no snacks during the day). Some people will eat only bread and water on fasting days. Use your prudential judgement and make sure you aren't negatively affecting your health. (Remember, Fridays during Lent we are required to abstain from meat).

\$15.00. This challenge is to give \$15 more a week or a month (depending on your financial situation) to the Parish or to some ministry of the Church that particularly serves the poor. This may seem easy for some people and difficult for others. If \$15 a week or a month isn't much of a challenge for you then you should definitely take on one of the other challenges in addition to this one. I would guess for some, maybe even for many, this would be a difficulty. Remember, it can help us also grow in our trust of the Lord, who can never be out done in generosity.

We have 3 days to prepare for this challenge!