



## **Vox Populi**

08 February 2024

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, next week on 14 February, and runs until 28 March, the day before Good Friday.

It is a solemn Christian religious observance in the liturgical year commemorating the 40 days Jesus Christ spent fasting in the desert and enduring temptation.

The Lenten Season is also a time of prayer and preparation; an annual pilgrimage of grace and mercy; a time for conversion, repentance, and renewal.

The practice of fasting from food for spiritual reasons is found in the three largest Abrahamic faiths: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

In all three, refraining from eating is intimately connected with an additional focus on prayer, and the practice of assisting the poor by giving alms or donating food.

In the Gospels, Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness to fast and pray. This event was one of the factors that inspired the final length of Lent.

In his Lenten Penance Letter, Bishop Anthony Randazzo writes, "In imitation of Jesus our teacher and master, we also fast (cf. Matthew 4:1-11). Like Our Lord, we will journey into the desert places of our life. Where the Lord has gone, we hope to follow, and so we must expect some challenges and temptations because the Gospel reminds us that this too was the plight of Jesus. Christians are people of hope, so during these moments of vulnerability, let us take shelter in God's mercy and compassion.

"My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, I pray in these weeks ahead that our community of the Church of Broken Bay will be open to encounter new life in Christ. This Lent, may we humbly confess our sins, prayerfully perform our penance, and joyfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ through words and deeds of charity, mercy, and compassion."

Bishop Anthony's Lenten Penance Letter can be found in full at <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/about/bishop>