

THE BIG 3: PRAYER, FASTING, AND ALMSGIVING

***NOTE: THE BIG 3 SHOULD BE A REGULAR PART OF EVERY CATHOLIC'S LIFE – NOT JUST SOMETHING DONE DURING LENT.**

1. PRAYER

Prayer is vital to the soul, yet in our go-go-go culture we rarely get around to it (“You will never have time for prayer; You must make time.”). Lent is a time to learn better prayer habits and spend extra time with the Lord. Here are a few examples of prayer-focused things you can do this Lent:

1. **Pray more** (By yourself, with your family, with a friend, at home, in the adoration chapel, in the morning, at night, Thursday Morning Rosary, etc.)
2. **Read the Bible** (For a minute a day, a chapter a day, a verse a day, whatever!)
3. Go to **Confession**
4. Go to **daily Mass** (Every day, or simply pick one non-Sunday a week to go)
5. **Journal** (Write down things you're thankful for, write about how you're feeling, write about what's going on in your life, write out your prayers, etc.)
6. Go to the **Stations of the Cross**

2. FASTING

Fasting usually refers to not eating (either nothing at all, or less than usual, or one thing in particular), though it can also be applied to other things you enjoy (TV, the Internet, etc.).



Fasting is not easy. It can even be physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually painful at times. But purposefully saying “No” to things we enjoy helps us build spiritual muscles and learn self-control. A person who is “spiritually ripped” will be able to say “No” to Satan and his temptations because he has trained himself to be able to say “No” to other attractive things many times before.

Fasting also helps us remember that *God* is the only thing that can truly fill the “hole in our souls”. Too often we think delicious food or the latest and coolest techie gadget, video game, TV show, or outfit will make us happy. But in the end, they can't. And they don't. Only God can completely fill an empty heart.

Just like prayer, fasting can be done for specific intentions. Want to help out your friend, or pray for your future husband or wife? Then do some kind of a fast (from food, TV, whatever) for them without telling them (or anyone else). Need some inspiration? Check out www.E5men.org and see what some men already do out of love for Christ.

3. ALMSGIVING

When a person gives “alms” they are giving something important to one who is poor or needy. Most people think this only refers to giving money and food, but one can also give of their own *time* through acts of service and love (sometimes this is tougher than just giving money or food).

It is also important to note that the “poor” and “needy” doesn't always mean the materially poor and needy. As Mother Teresa noted, there are more *spiritually* poor people in America than in any other nation in the world. God may be calling you to spend time with someone who lacks a good friend, is emotionally hurting or lonely, or doesn't have a relationship with Jesus.