

## LENT.

Men and women sometimes ask, "Why should I keep Lent?" "Can I not at any time draw nearer to my Saviour?" "Can I not at any time make new resolves to be more watchful over myself?" "Can I not at any time resolve to serve Him more devotedly?"

The answer to these three last questions (which spring out of the first) is that you can do these things at any time. But because you *can* do them at any time, you will probably never do them at all. That which we can do any day, we generally put off until to-morrow; that which we put off until to-morrow, we generally put off altogether.

And therefore, the Church, in her wisdom and love for her children, has marked off and set apart certain days and seasons, which are to be spent solemnly and devotedly to the spiritual profit of those children who are dutiful and obedient to her commands.

There are three chief reasons for observing Lent with strictness:

I. It is a perpetual memorial of our Blessed Lord's forty days' fast in the wilderness.

II. It is an evidence that Christ's disciples are willing to be partakers of His sufferings, that they may be found worthy to share in His glory.

III. It is by a deeper knowledge of self, and human sin and weakness, that our sense of the need of an atonement is quickened; and by the fuller realization of the fact of Christ's Atonement, our faith (and joy) in the Gospel of the Resurrection is, year by year, increased.

Our Blessed Lord prescribes three duties as aids to the spiritual life: *Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving*--S. Matt. vi. 1-19.

*Fasting*--To fast is to mortify the flesh by abstinence from meat, from delicacies, luxuries, or particular varieties of food and drink for which we have a special liking. It includes also the surrender of other things, innocent in themselves, and at other times right and proper: e. g., social amusements, recreation, novel reading. It includes also, such special discipline as a regular, fixed hour for retiring at night, and a regular, fixed hour (in some cases an earlier hour) for rising in the morning. And all this with an object in view. Fasting is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. The end in view is the subjection of the body to the spirit. The end to be gained is the triumph of the spirit and the will over the desires of the flesh,