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WHAT IS LENT: The season of Lent is a Catholic liturgical season consisting of forty days of fasting, prayer, and penitence beginning at Ash Wednesday and concluding at sundown on Holy Thursday. The official liturgical color for the season of Lent is violet. Lent begins Feb. 10

WHY FASTING: But how did fasting become such an important means of preparing for the Eucharist and of learning virtue through self-discipline? Christian fasting is revealed as interdependence between two events in the Bible: the "breaking of the fast" by Adam and Eve; and the "keeping of the fast" by Christ at the beginning of his ministry.



Humanity's "Fall" away from God and into sin began with eating. God had proclaimed a fast from the fruit of only one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), and Adam and Eve broke it. Fasting is here connected with the very mystery of life and death, of salvation and damnation. Food perpetuates life in this physical world, which is subject to decay and death. But God "created no death." (Wis. 1:13) Humanity, in Adam and Eve, rejected a life dependent on God alone for one that was dependent rather on "bread alone." (Dt. 8:3; Mt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4) The whole world was given to man as a kind of food, as a means to life, but "life" is meant as communion with God, not as food. ("Their god is their belly." Phil. 3:19) The tragedy is not so much that Adam ate food, but that he ate the food for its own sake, "apart" from God and to be independent of Him. Believing that food had life in itself and thus he could be "like God." And he put his faith in food. This kind of existence seems to be built on the principle that man does indeed live "by bread alone."

Anna, OFS, The whole world!
Tel.: 732-325-7779

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