



**TASTE Reflection Questions #18**  
**2017-2018**  
**Lenten Retreat**  
Fr. Larry Swink



**Called according To  
HIS Purpose!**

*"Not my will but yours be done." Lk 22:42*

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1. When you consider preparing yourself for the season of Lent, what are your first thoughts? Do you dread a season of sacrifice? Do you fear you will fail? Are you happily anticipating a season of renewal? Please share with your group how you feel entering Lent.
  2. What aspect of Fr. Larry's talk was most challenging to you? How will that help you to have a more holy Lenten season?
  3. Please read the article on page 2. Do any of the three suggestions for prayer resonate with you? If yes, please explain.
  4. Please review the 3 statements on fasting and share your thoughts.
    - "Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity. Enter again into yourself." *St. Augustine*
    - "Fasting is most intimately connected with prayer. For the mind of one who is filled with food and drink is so borne down as not to be able to raise itself to the contemplation of God, or even to understand what prayer means." *Catechism of the Council of Trent*
    - "The ultimate goal of fasting is to help each one of us to make a complete gift of self to God." *Pope Benedict XVI*

## How to Prepare for Lent



There are plenty of ideas for actions and practices during Lent; coming up with ideas usually is not the problem. We don't, however, want to "do" anything simply to be doing it, even if it's a good thing. Likewise, we don't want to make a list of merciful works just so we can place a checkmark beside each one as we accomplish it.

It's good to have a plan for *doing*. It's also good to have a plan for *being*.

How do I want to *be* during Lent this year? More quiet and thoughtful? More open to God's desires? Better able to sit with people who need me? More attentive to sacred readings, whether in church or in private? Do I need to be more

compassionate toward my own fears and failings? Do I need to become more courageous about using the gifts God has given me?

In the days prior to Lent, try one or more of these suggestions.

1. Ask God, every day, "**What does my soul need?**" Just ask, and wait quietly. Because we're very good at fooling ourselves about how we're doing, it might take several days of praying this question before we're truly open and humble enough to know the answer.
2. Ask God, every day, "**What about my life makes you happy?**" Yes, when God looks at your life, some parts of it—perhaps many aspects of it—bring joy to God's heart. Think of how your children or grandchildren or other people close to you make you happy. God is in relationship with you, which means that your sins grieve God's heart, but also that your growth and love and freedom and kindness bring joy to God of the universe. Again, you will probably need to pray this a few times before you are willing to consider that you give God pleasure, that you make God happy in any way. Stick with this little prayer and keep listening.
3. Tell God, and yourself, every day, "**I want to be open to the graces of this Lenten season.**" Maybe you're not open right now, or you're not as open and willing as you'd like to be or think you should be. What else is new? We can always open our lives a bit more, let go of more stuff, listen better, and do more quickly and passionately what we know helps nurture God's kingdom on earth.

This is a beginning: three short and simple prayer starters to ready yourself for the holy season.

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/25341/how-to-prepare-for-lent>