

40 days free of a Media Habit—television watching, facebook, internet surfing, text messaging, etc.

What to do

Simply unplug that television set(s) sets or turn off that browser on Ash Wednesday and leave it that way until Easter Sunday. Believe it or not people use to live without these things and many still do. You will know just how addicted to these activities are when you give one up. Sundays are not traditionally counted as days of Lent and you could play catch up with facebook friends on that day. You might be surprised at how much time and attention these activities are silently siphoning away.

Some tips to keep in mind

If you are habitual about television watching you may find yourself at a loss as to what you are going to do in its place. To make the most out of this experience, it is important to *be very conscientious about how you use the time you would have spent gazing at a screen*. Beware that you don't find some other substitute for numbing your mind. If you just give up watching television for surfing mindlessly on the internet or vice versa, then you probably will experience little benefit.

Redeem the time for something spiritually noteworthy.

Some possibilities are:

- ❖ Connect with real people instead of virtual ones. Call a family member or friend. Write an honest to goodness card or letter instead of an e-mail, or invite someone to visit.
- ❖ Tackle tasks that you keep avoiding. Think of things that you have perennially wanted to address, but always opted out because "you didn't have the time."
- ❖ Reflect and journal.
- ❖ Take on a different Lenten challenge, such as, Reading Luke in 40 days, eliminating 40 bags in 40 days or 40 days of thanks.
- ❖ Connect with God through a prayer discipline or a devotional reading.

Benefits

Scripture frequently asserts the wisdom and virtue of self-discipline and control. Fasting from anything strengthens your ability to be self-disciplined. Fasting, whether it is from media, food, or a common activity sharpens your self-awareness. It helps you become mindful of how you utilize your time and attention. It also brings you in touch with proper priorities. Blessings to you on your Lenten journey.

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