

Lent 2017: Chance of a Lifetime

When we look at the long tradition of Lent, we see that it offers us three great ideas: prayer, penance and alms-giving.

Every Christian is asked to see how these ideas can be better integrated in his or her life. My suggestion is that we first look at the concept of penance. Let us put aside the baggage of childish notions of *not eating candy, etc.*

Use this notion of penance to tackle the better use of time and also, bad habits. Time is the great commodity that God gives us. How do we use it? Lent is a wonderful time to establish a schedule that optimizes time

Bad habits are companions that can cause us great grief. Use Lent to wean yourself from bad habits. Lent is the time to establish a plan and to tackle the problem, armed with the grace of God.

As mentioned, Lent also suggests that we do something about prayer and alms-giving.

In the realm of prayer, why not learn to pray the *Our Father* in another language. As you are doing the learning, think about the multitude of people of both languages involved who are praying while you are learning.

Under this heading take up the habit of attending Mass during the week; it is a great way to solidify the presence of Jesus in your life.

What about alms-giving? Support your parish and local charities. Often curbing expensive bad habits frees up the cash to do good.

Have a memorable Lent!

Msgr Peter Schonenbach
National Spiritual Advisor