

# A Digital Lent Guide

*Social Media Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving*



## PRAYER IDEAS

### Daily Friend Prayer

Go through your tweets or friends and pray daily for one or more followers/friends. During that day, write something special on their page or share a link that they would appreciate (including links to prayers or other spiritual sites). Each day, invite whatever friend you're praying for to reconnect – either online or in person.

### Share Prayerful Content

Take a few moments, find a spiritual website or link, pray with it for a few moments, and then share that link on your page, inviting others to pray, too.

### Facebook Rosary

Take a break from your day for this digital devotional: find 50 friends from your Facebook list; then pray a decade of the rosary and, during the *Hail Mary*, insert each of those 50 names in each of the prayers during the line, "Hail Mary, mother of God, pray for \_\_\_\_\_, now and at the hour of their death. Amen."

### Status Update Prayers

Go through the status updates, links, birthdays, and other shared information on your friends' pages, mark down both the good and bad events, news, and occasions – and go to pray with those intentions in your heart. As a follow-up, you might consider letting those friends know that you have prayed for them today.

### Check-In Prayer

Each time you see one of your friends check-in on social media, say a prayer of thanksgiving for their arrival in a new place – and pray that their experience there will be a good one. And when you check-in, pray for the others who are there or visited there today (including the "mayor" of that location).

### Prayerful Tweets

Tweet your favorite prayers, Scripture passages, or inspirational quotes in 140-character increments. Continue tweeting throughout the day until you have written out the entire prayer, passage, or quote.

### Ask, Receive, Share

Go to a spiritual website, blog, a Twitter or Facebook group/page, and ask for prayers from the others visiting the site. Allow others to give you their prayers for whatever you're asking (good or bad). And when others come to the same site, offer up prayers for their requests.

### Mobile Prayer

Get un-chained from the desk or whatever you're stationed. Mobile devices allow us to travel, so find a favorite prayer app (perhaps the Bible, Liturgy of the Hours, a mobile rosary, Spiritual Exercises, the 3-minute retreat, etc.) and take a moment to walk around and pray with your mobile device in hand.

### Calming Preparation Prayer

Before getting online, say a silent calming prayer, asking for God to be with you, to act through you, and to give you patience, courage, hope, inspiration, and selfless love while you're engaged in social media that day.

## **FASTING IDEAS**

### **Fast from Time Wasters**

Make a point to spend your social media time wisely instead of wasting it on unnecessary experiences. Work on the discipline of fasting from things that are non-productive or hurtful of your time online.

### **Fast from Cell Phone Isolation**

When in the company of others, fast from using your cell phone – so you can give your undivided attention to the people around you. Don't become isolated in a crowded room.

### **Fast from Superficiality**

Instead of simply browsing through tweets or status updates (or skipping past seemingly-unimportant friends on the way to find out what's happening with others), make it a point to spend a few moments more looking and praying for all your friends' and their status updates. Make your online connections count.

### **Fast from Gossip, Inappropriate Content, and Negativity**

Blogs and comment sections on websites and social media can lead us into the temptations of gossip or inappropriate actions online – as well as negative and hurtful language. Fast from these experiences whenever possible – avoid gossip and steer clear of conversations, images, and sites that promote immoral behavior.

### **Fast for Offline Experiences**

Instead of abandoning the social media world altogether, simply fast from making social networking the only interaction you have with others. If you fast from social media, make it a point to continue those relationships offline instead. Fast with care and concern for all the people on your list and never abandon them.

## **GIVING IDEAS**

### **Contribute to Causes**

Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites make it easier for you to get connected to causes or to donate money or resources. Don't avoid these, but be intentional about participating in the giving process. Do not shy away from the "DONATE NOW" button, but think seriously about selflessly giving of yourself.

### **Connect with Social Action**

Various charities, action groups, and justice programs are more available now than ever before. Search out social action opportunities, follow them on Twitter, like them on Facebook, and research what is already going on through websites, blogs, and other online sites; but most importantly, resolve to get more involved with at least one aspect or principle of Catholic social teaching.

### **Start a Campaign**

If you feel compelled to action for a certain issue, make a stand and start an online campaign: get others involved in your passions and interests; organize off-line opportunities to affect change; share content on the issues on your pages... the key thing is starting something – and the web is a great tool for making it viral.

### **Share with the World**

Much of the globe is still disconnected. The Gospel challenges us to offer a preferential option for the poor. Work towards helping those in third-world countries and disadvantaged parts of the United States have access to the Internet, to social media, and to the opportunities we often take for granted in the digital world.