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3 Apps for Lent...and Beyond

Sarah Reinhard

According to OpenBible.info, school, chocolate, and Twitter are the top three things people on Twitter are giving up this Lent. Taking a look at the top ten, I can't help but note there are two themes: food and technology, with food taking the HUGE lead.

Interestingly, according to an email that caught my eye the other day (quite by accident, because it was obviously a commercial sort of sent-to-a-million-other-people thing):

Computer malware infections in the US drop during the Lenten season as millions of Americans give up porn, shopping, social media, and other online activity. That's according to data released today by EnigmaSoftware.com, makers of the Spy Hunter anti-malware program. EnigmaSoftware.com analyzed more than three million infections on its customers' computers in the days before, during, and after Lent in 2014. From March 5 through Easter 2014, the average number of daily infections dropped 9.5% from the month before.

"A drop that significant means that there were a lot fewer people engaging in online activities that usually lead to infections," said Patrick Morganelli, Senior Vice President of Technology at EnigmaSoftware.com. "Infections generally happen when people click on links sent to them via hacked social media accounts, when people visit web sites that show up in common Google searches when they are looking for deals, and when people visit adult web sites that may be infected with viruses and malware. All of those activities are things many people talk about giving up for Lent."

I was unable to verify this information or reach the person who emailed me for comment in the time I had to craft this blog post. However, it's an interesting thing, isn't it?

This Lent, I am being more intentional with my use of technology this Lent, but I'll be honest: I'm not giving it up. For one thing, it's integral to my work. For another, I find it can really help me in my spiritual journey.

Here are three apps that aren't just for Lent, but which I am finding myself using to strengthen my prayer practice and my Lent overall.

iBreviary

Free; Available online and on iOS and Android

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours remains a goal of mine, but I have to start very, very, VERY small. This app makes that possible. I find that the daytime prayers and night prayers are the

EWTN NewsLink

0:00

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Sarah Reinhard is a Catholic wife, mom, writer, and marketing professional coffee drinker. You're likely to find her hiding back with a book as you are to discover playing in the yard with a few farm animals wait — are those her kids?) She is the author of many books, the most recent of which she co-edited with Lisa Hendey: *The Catholic Mom's Prayer Companion: A Book of Daily Reflections*. She blogs at SnoringScholar and writes online regularly at CatholicMom.com and Integrated Catholic. Reinhard holds a master's degree in education and communications and has worked for many years in corporate and nonprofit organizations. She lives in central Ohio with her husband and three children.

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ones I'm most likely to be able to do and the simplicity and beauty of these prayers never fails to stir me.

This app also makes it possible for me to read the Mass readings, which is something I've committed to doing each morning. Though I get them in my inbox too, and I have a book of the year's Mass readings, every day ends up being different.

You can download just the day or as many days as you need (for example, if you're traveling or won't be in wifi for a while). You can use iBreviary during Mass, too, and for different rites: Christ Mass, Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, and The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday) are the top three in my menu right now.

There are also quite a few other prayers included in this app that bear exploring. I've never gotten as far as that, though they look interesting. Some of them are the "Commons" that are included in the books priests and religious have (Vesting Prayers, Common of Holy Men/Women/Virgins/etc), others are regular prayers (Acts of Contrition, Prayers before Work or Meetings, Blessing before and after meals, etc.).

DGems

Free; Available on [iOS](#) and [Android](#)

This app has grown on me in the months since I started using it. It's very, very simple: you open it and you get a screen with a reflection on the day's Gospel reading, the Gospel reading itself, and then some Gospel pointers.

That's it.

And yet, in my morning reflections on the Mass readings, I have been finding myself floundering a bit of late. Though this app focuses only on the Gospel, it often gives me a jolt in just the right way.

I've also used it when I'm in an odd waiting moment, as a way of reminding myself of the day's Gospel and inserting it into the rest of my day (instead of forgetting all about it in the busyness of life).

[Confession: A Roman Catholic App](#)

\$1.99; Available on [iOS](#) and [Android](#)

I've had this app for ages, and though I've tried other Confession apps, both on iOS (back when I had an Apple device) and Android, I still come back to this one.

Though I try not to go into Confession with a laundry list (if my list is that long, my confessor points out, I've waited WAY too long!), sometimes it's helpful to focus on where I need to draw closer to God and the many ways I can step away into sin. I've never found a great examination of conscience that works perfectly for me, but I like that this app lets you personalize and add things.

Also, I find it helpful to use the app to help remind me of the details: when IS the last time I went to Confession? What IS the Act of Contrition again? What happens next?

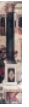
If you're an iOS user, you can set it to remind you to go to Confession (I have hope that this will come soon to Android).

You can also set it up for more than one user, so my ten-year-old can use it on my phone, too, and she'll have a completely different set of examination of conscience prompts than I have (her state in life being much different than mine).

As a bonus, the app has an imprimatur. And you know this already, but using the app doesn't take the place of going to the Sacrament of Confession. It's an aid and a preparation tool.

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