

## Instruction Fasting & Abstinence

1) Abstinence on all the Fridays of Lent, and on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

- No meat may be eaten on days of abstinence.
- Catholics 14 years and older are bound to abstain from meat. Invalids, pregnant and nursing mothers are exempt.

2) Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

- Fasting means having only one full meal to maintain one's strength. Two smaller, meatless and penitential meals are permitted according to one's needs, but they should not together equal the one full meal. Eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.
- Catholics from age 18 through age 59 are bound to fast. Again, invalids, pregnant and nursing mothers are exempt.
- If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection. (USCCB)

3) Friday Abstinence Outside of Lent.

It should be noted that Fridays throughout the year are *designated days of penance*. The *Code of Canon Law* states that Friday is a day of abstinence from meat throughout the year. The American Bishops have allowed us to choose a different form of penance rather than abstaining from meat, but there must be some form of penance, for this is the day we commemorate Christ's suffering and death. The bishops stress that "[a]mong the works of voluntary self-denial and personal penance...we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat".

Source: *Pastoral Statement on Fasting and Abstinence*