

Fast and Abstinence Guidelines for the Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018, and Good Friday, March 30, 2018, are days of fast and abstinence. Fridays of Lent are also days of abstinence.

Fasting is to be observed by all Catholics 18 years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their 60th birthday. On a fast day one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and juices, are allowed.

Abstinence is observed by all 14 years of age and older. On days of abstinence no meat or poultry are allowed. Note that when health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige.

When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the parish priest should be consulted. Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. (See, for example, Matthew 6:1-18.) The faithful and catechumens should undertake these practices seriously in a spirit of penance and of preparation for Baptism, or of renewal of Baptism, at Easter. (Code of Canon Law, 1249-1252).