

TRADITIONAL LAWS OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

1. **ABSTINENCE** applies to all from their seventh birthday onward, and is of two kinds:
 - Complete Abstinence, which forbids the eating of meat, and soup or gravy made from meat.
 - Partial Abstinence, which permits meat, and soup or gravy made from meat, to be eaten only once a day, at the principal meal.
2. **FASTING** is for those from ages 18 to 59. On days of Fast, one full meal is allowed. Two other small meals without meat, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken in accordance 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 fruit juices, are allowed.
3. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. In doubt concerning fast or abstinence, a parish priest or confessor should be consulted.
4. There is no obligation for FAST or ABSTINENCE on a Holy Day of Obligation, even though it may fall on a Friday.
5. The Traditional Penitential days are:
 - Complete Abstinence on all Fridays, Ash Wednesday, Holy Saturday, the Vigil of the Assumption, and the Vigil of Christmas.
 - Partial Abstinence on Ember Wednesdays, Ember Saturdays, and the Vigil of Pentecost.
 - Fasting is on the weekdays of Lent, Ember Days, the Vigil of Pentecost, the Vigil of the Assumption, and the Vigil of Christmas.
 - The fast and Abstinence for the Vigil of Christmas (Dec. 24) may instead be observed on Dec. 23.

CURRENT LAWS OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

1. **ABSTINENCE** binds all who have celebrated their fourteenth birthday. On days of Abstinence, no meat is allowed.
2. **FASTING** binds all over 18 and under 59 years of age. On days of Fast, one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken in accordance 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 fruit juices, are allowed.
3. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. When in doubt concerning Fast and Abstinence, a parish priest or confessor should be consulted.
4. There is no obligation for FAST or ABSTINENCE on a Holy Day of Obligation or First Class Feast, even though it may fall on a Friday.
5. Current required Penitential days are:
 - **Ash Wednesday** is a day of Fast and Abstinence;
 - **All Fridays of Lent** are days of Abstinence;
 - **Good Friday** is a day of Fast and Abstinence;

These current regulations bind all Catholics of the Latin Rite. However, a Catholic may, if he wishes, observe the traditional regulations in a spirit of penance, mortification, and reparation. But we must always remember that the Church today has granted more freedom to Catholics to choose exactly how they will observe the Lenten season of penance. Although fasting is highly recommended, as it always has been, we must remember that the spirit of Lent is not one of pharisaical observance, but of true penance and reparation for our sins, and that a fast done in a spirit of pride is an abomination to the Lord. (Is. 58:3-9, Mt. 6:16-21)