



## DIocese OF GRAND RAPIDS

### ***Lent***

#### ***Fasting and Abstinence***

***Lenten regulations for this year are as follows:***

1. ***Abstinence*** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who have completed their 14th year on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent.
2. ***Fasting*** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 60. Those who are bound by this may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to one's needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted. "The season of Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. The liturgy prepares the catechumens for the celebration of the paschal mystery by the several stages of Christian initiation; it also prepares the faithful, who recall their baptism and do penance in preparation for Easter."  
(*General Norms for the Liturgical Year, #27*)

By the threefold discipline of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, the Church keeps Lent from Ash Wednesday until the evening of Holy Thursday. All of the faithful and the catechumens should undertake serious practice of these three traditions. Failure to observe individual days of penance is not considered serious, but failure to observe any penitential days at all or a substantial number of such days must be considered serious.

"(On) weekdays of Lent, we strongly recommend participation in daily Mass and a self-imposed observance of fasting. In the light of grave human needs which weigh on the Christian conscience in all seasons we urge, particularly during Lent, generosity to local, national and world programs of sharing of all things needed to translate our duty to penance into a means of implementing the right of the poor to their part of our abundance." (*U.S. Bishops' Statement on Penitential observances, 1966*)

#### **Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday**

Lent ends on Holy Thursday as we begin the evening liturgy. From that evening until Easter Sunday afternoon the Church observes the Easter Triduum ("Easter Three Days"). On Good Friday all Catholics 14 years old and older are to abstain from meat and those who are 18 years of age but not yet 59 are to fast (taking no more than one full meal; two smaller meals are permitted to maintain strength but no solid foods between meals). The Church strongly encourages that the fast and abstinence be kept also on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil. Catechumens are likewise urged to fast in preparation for their baptism.

This is not the penitential Lenten fast that we keep on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. It is called the “Easter fast” or “Paschal fast.” It is to be a joyful fast of anticipation as we look forward to the celebration of Easter and most especially to the baptisms at the Easter Vigil. The fasting of Friday and Saturday, by tradition, include also a “fasting” from normal work and from entertainment. Prayer, reading of Scripture, reflection, attention to the needs of others: these should fill our lives and prepare us for the great Vigil and Eastertime.

“On Good Friday and, if possible, also on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil, the Easter fast is observed everywhere.” (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year*, #20)

Thus, we fast on Good Friday and Holy Saturday in whatever way we can “so that the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear minds.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* #110)