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Lenten Regulations

Frequently asked questions about Lent

What is Lent?

Lent is the premier season for penance within the Catholic Church's liturgical year. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Lent has six Sunday's with the sixth Sunday being that of Palm (Passion) Sunday which marks the beginning of Holy Week. Lent is a forty-day period of time dedicated to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in imitation of Jesus forty days in the desert before His saving Passion and Death.

What is the Easter Triduum?

The Easter Triduum is the three days immediately prior to the Easter Sunday. The Easter Triduum begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening; it continues through Jesus' Passion and Death on Good Friday; and culminates with His Resurrection which is celebrated from the Easter Vigil right up and through Vespers (Evening Prayer) of Easter Sunday itself. The Easter Triduum is followed by a glorious period of fifty days of celebrating (this fifty days of celebration is called the Easter Season).

What are the Lenten Regulations?

Fast and Abstinence are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, On ALL of the Friday's of Lent we are to abstain from eating meat. Additionally, every Friday throughout the entire year remain days of penance on which we are obliged to offer some form of penance. Therefore, many Catholics, even today, continue to abstain from eating meat on all Fridays of the year which has been the long-standing, customary practice within the Catholic Church.

What are the regulations regarding Fasting?

To fast means to eat no more than one full meal on those days in which fasting is required. Therefore, ALL normally healthy Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (inclusive) are to limit their food intake to only one full meal on those days specified as days of fasting.

What are the regulations regarding Abstinence? All Catholics who have reached their 14th year (meaning they have attained their 13th birthday which thereby begins their 14th year) are bound to abstain from meat on those days specified.

What is our "Easter Duty?"

All Catholics, after having received their First Holy Communion, are bound by the obligation of receiving Our Lord and Savior in Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season. Additionally, all Catholics are bound to confess all mortal sins, in both kind and number (meaning you must confess the specific sin that was committed and how many times it was committed) as soon as possible after having committed the first mortal sin. Catholics are not bound to confess their sins during the Easter Season as they are encouraged to do so frequently, and are even encouraged to confess their venial sins on a regular basis. The "Easter Duty" has, however, come to be associated with the reception of Holy Communion and the Confession of sins, during the Easter Season.