

Fast and Abstinence Explained

Ash Wednesday and all of the Fridays in Lent are days of fast and abstinence.

Abstinence forbids the eating of meat. Abstinence obliges from the 14th birthday on.

Fasting prescribes that only one full meal a day be taken. Two smaller may be taken but together should not equal another full meal. Fasting obliges from the 18th to 59th birthday. There is a serious obligation to observe these penitential practices in a substantial way. Those who work or whose health would be impaired are excused from fast and/or abstinence. Individual conscience should decide proper cause for excuse.

For seven weeks we walk with Christ in response to His invitation “Let us go up to Jerusalem”. The penances, the fasting, and all the other aspects of Lent are the hardships of the journey.

Acts of Voluntary Practices during Lent may include, in addition to fasting: daily Mass attendance, spiritual studies, Lenten devotions, reciting the Rosary, deeds of Mercy and Kindness, contributing to the Poor Box, Food Pantry, etc.