



## Prayer, Abstinence and Almsgiving

The holy season of Lent provides us a special time of grace and spiritual renewal so that we may become better instruments in sharing the Gospel message. This year Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, falls on February 14. The present laws of the church regarding fast and abstinence during the season of Lent are as follows:

Ash Wednesday (February 14) and Good Friday (March 30) are days of fast. On days of fast, one full meal is allowed. Two lesser 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. Catholics who have completed their 18th year are bound by this law until the beginning of their 60th year.

Ash Wednesday and all Fridays in Lent are also days of abstinence. On days of abstinence, meats should not be taken at any meal. The law of abstinence applies to all Catholics aged 14 years old and up.

Nevertheless, pastors and parents are to see to it that children who are not bound by law of fast and abstinence are educated in an authentic sense of penance (Canon 1251)

The Fridays of the year, outside of Lent, are designated as days of penance, but each individual may substitute for the traditional abstinence from meat some other practice of voluntary self-denial as penance.

The obligation to observe is a serious obligation. The Code of Canon Law states on these days of penance:

*"... the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing the fast and abstinence..."*

All the faithful, after they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, are bound by the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year. The time for fulfilling the Paschal Precept (Easter Duty) this year extends from the First Sunday of Lent, February 18th, 2018 to The Solemnity of the

Most Holy Trinity, May 27th, 2018.