

LENT GUIDELINES

THE LENTEN SEASON

A distinction is to be made between Lent and the Easter Triduum. Strictly speaking, Lent ends with the beginning of the Triduum on Holy Thursday. The Ordo notes: “Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord’s Supper exclusive on Holy Thursday.”

FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound to fast may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to each one’s needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years or older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and on all Fridays of Lent. The determination of certain days as obligatory days of penance should not be understood as limiting the occasions for Christian penance.

MAINTAINING THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON OF LENT

The Spirit of the season of Lent should be maintained throughout the weeks of Lent. The obligation to observe penitential days of the Church is a very important part of our spiritual life. Individual circumstances must be taken into account, but in general, people should seek to do more rather than less, since fast and abstinence on the days prescribed should be considered a minimal response to the Lord’s call to penance and conversion of life.