

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON
LENTEN REGULATIONS 2011

ABSTINENCE: Catholics over 14 years of age are bound to the obligations of abstinence. Abstinence is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent. On days of abstinence, meat may not be used at all.

FAST: Catholics over 18 and up to the beginning of their sixtieth year are bound to the obligation of fasting. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are the days of fasting. On these days, only one full meal is allowed. Two other meatless 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, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices are allowed.

Lent is a period of special penitential observance. Following the instructions of the Holy See, the Bishops of the United States have declared that the obligation to fast and to abstain from meat still binds on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In this matter, the faithful enjoy freedom in conscience to excuse themselves but, as the Bishops state, "no Catholic Christian will lightly excuse himself from so hallowed an obligation" on these days. In addition, the tradition of abstinence from meat on the other Fridays of Lent is preserved. Again, the Bishops express their confidence that "no Catholic Christian will lightly hold himself excused from this penitential practice".

Regarding all the other weekdays of Lent, we strongly recommend participation in daily Mass and the voluntary observance of fasting. Commendable, particularly during Lent, is generosity to local, national, and world programs of sharing our abundance, the traditional Lenten Devotions, and all the self-denial summed up in Christian concept of 'mortification'.

"Let us witness to our love and imitation of Christ by special solicitude for the sick, the poor, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the bed-ridden, the discouraged, the stranger, the lonely, and persons of other color, nationalities, or background than our own. A catalogue of not merely suggested but required good works under these headings is provided by our Blessed Lord Himself in His description of the Last Judgment." (cf. Matt 25, 24-40) "This salutary word of the Lord is necessary for all the year, but should be heeded with double care during Lent." (Bishops' Statement)