

# Fast, Abstinence Regulations For Lent

## ABSTINENCE

1. Everyone over seven years of age is bound to observe the law of abstinence.
2. a) Complete abstinence is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Fridays.  
b) Partial abstinence is to be observed on the Ember Wednesday and Ember Saturday of Lent. On days of partial abstinence, meat and soup or gravy made from meat may be taken only at the principal meal.

## FAST

1. Everyone over 21 and under 59 years of age is bound to observe the law of fasting in addition to the law of abstinence.

2. a) Every weekday of Lent, including Holy Saturday until midnight, is a day of fast.  
b) On days of fast, only one full meal is allowed. Two other meals may be taken to maintain strength, but together they should not equal another full meal. The law of fast permits the use of meat at the principal (full) meal only. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed.

## APPLICATION OF THE LAWS

Age groups 7-21, and over 59, may have their usual three meals a day even during Lent. They may also eat between meals. These groups must observe complete abstinence from meat at all meals and snacks on Ash Wednesday and Fridays. They must observe partial abstinence on Ember Wednesday and Ember Saturday, when they may eat meat

only at the principal meal. On all other days of Lent they may eat meat at all meals and snacks.

Age group 21-59 must combine the laws of fast and abstinence. Thus: On Ash Wednesday and Fridays, they are not permitted meat at all. They may have only one full meal on these days. Eating between meals is not permitted. Liquids may be taken between meals.

On all other weekdays of Lent, including Ember Wednesday and Ember Saturday, they are permitted meat at their principal (full) meal only. The other meals must be meatless. Eating between meals is not permitted. Liquids may be taken between meals.

There is no law of fast and abstinence on the Sundays of Lent.

When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. In doubt concerning fast or abstinence, a parish priest or confessor should be consulted.



## THE GREATEST COMMAND

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL

Our Lord's last supper was the world's first Mass. On the Thursday evening before He died, Jesus sat at table with His twelve apostles. At the end of the dinner, Jesus took bread and wine, blessed it, gave it to His apostles telling them, "This is My Body. This is My Blood." Jesus then said to them, "Do this in memory of Me." That was the greatest, the most sacred, the most far-reaching command ever given.

**LENTEEN FEATURE**  
This is the first in a series of articles explaining the history and the ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In caves and cathedrals, in concentration camps and quiet chapels, in parish churches and on battlefields, across a hundred thousand altars wherever Christians gather to worship God, there they "do this" in memory of their Master. What is the significance of this rite known today as the Mass? Why is it so important in the devotional life of Christians throughout the world? To answer these questions, we need to learn why the Mass was so important to Christ Himself, why He chose to make it the climax of His life of love.

DESPITE ALL He had done to console the weary hearts of men, all the miracles in which He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, cures for the crippled, despite His words of counsel and instruction, despite all this, Jesus saw the hatred of the ruling classes grow more intense day by day. At every turn, the cross loomed before Him, casting its shadow on His every word and action.

Jesus knew that His hour was at hand, that He was about to mount the cross to offer the great sacrifice of atonement for which the world was waiting. So on the night before He died, Jesus would find a way to remain with His chosen ones no matter what His enemies might do against Him.

Spring, as in every country, is especially beautiful in the Holy Land. While northern lands like ours are still snow-shrouded, Palestine is warmed by the sun and scented by "the lilies of the field" which once served the Lord as an example in His preaching. The great Jewish feast of springtime is the Passover with its ritual banquet recalling the galling bondage of Israel in Egypt, the march to freedom led by Moses and God's loving care sending manna, food from heaven, to lead the Jews finally to their Promised Land.

According to precise directions outlined in the Book of Exodus, the Passover table would be spread with special foods—bitter herbs to recall the tears of Israel in slavery, unleavened bread, cracker like, to symbolize the manna, and one special cup of wine, "the cup of benediction," a sign of the promised land with its abundant joy in freedom. EARLY ON the feast day morning, Jesus instructed Peter and John to arrange for the Passover dinner. He wanted His apostles to be His guests that night for what He knew would be His last supper. He knew next day He would be dead, His body hung by piercing nails against the gaunt cross on Golgotha.

WHEN EVENING came that first great Holy Thursday, Jesus entered the large upper room prepared so carefully by Peter and John for the festive Passover rite. The twelve apostles took their places around our Lord, heard Him read the ancient story of the Jewish deliverance from bondage, the story of the manna, and then sang their hymn of thanks, the hundred and sixteenth psalm. According to oriental custom, our Lord and the apostles probably reclined instead of sat as we do at the table. The table for a group of thirteen would most likely be U shaped with the guests along the outer side, leaving the center free for waiters to serve the meal. The table was about a foot and a half high from the floor and the guests were made comfortable on cushions.

Oil lamps flickered in the warm spring breeze making shadows dance along the walls. The chant of other nearby Passover dinners echoed across

Next week: "We speak to God"—the ceremonies from the start of the Mass to the Epistle.



FATHER HALTON don't downgrade

FATHER GANNON no complacency

## Let's Stop Our Breast-Beating

Two of America's best known educators took up cudgels this week to answer the much reported charge that Catholic colleges are falling down on the job.

"No such thing," asserted Father Robert I. Gannon, noted Jesuit and former president of Fordham University.

HE BLUNTLY TOOK ISSUE with the widely quoted statements of Monsignor John Tracey Ellis of Catholic University, Washington, Rev. Gustave Weigel, S.J., of Woodstock College and Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, C.S.C., former head of Notre Dame University.

In substance these three priests have given the impression in their speeches that education obtained in Catholic colleges is "distinctly inferior" to that gained in secular colleges, Father Gannon said.

He also said daily newspapers gave extensive publicity to these priests. "Understandably it was news. The man was biting the dog," he said. But he characterized the statements these priests made as "unfortunate."

The Jesuit priest said the three critics of Catholic colleges alleged that a "vast complacency in responsible places" was the basic cause of the supposed inferior education.

"I can only say that if such a vast complacency exists, I never encountered it in my 28 years of educational administration," Father Gannon stated.

That "28 years" Father Gannon referred to included not only his 13 years as head of Fordham but teaching posts at other Jesuit colleges and a three year term as president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of the State of New York, a group including Catholic, secular, and denominational schools.

He deplored the "excessive self-abasement" voiced by other Catholic educators and journalists following the recent statements of Fathers Ellis, Weigel and Cavanaugh.

FATHER HUGH HALTON, chaplain for Catholic students at Princeton University, took the same stand as Father Gannon.

"Our Catholic colleges and universities are the power and glory of the Church in America," he said. "I deplore a tendency to downgrade their standards and achievements."

Father Hugh Halton, you recall, is the Dominican priest recently banned from Princeton University campus for his charge that the Catholic faith was "intellectually misrepresented" by faculty members there.

In his talk this week, Father Halton defended the caliber of Catholic college education.

"By the grace of God we shall continue to develop true Catholic intellectuals and leaders in our Catholic colleges and universities. They will set their sights," he said, "not so much on Who's Who in America but rather on Who's Who in Heaven."

Father Cavanaugh in his statement had claimed Catholic colleges were obviously falling down on the job because so few of their graduates are listed in the annual publication "Who's Who."

IT SEEMS TO US that breast-beating is an easy and a somewhat immature way to win a little publicity.

The three critics who took Catholic colleges to task probably sincerely intended a mere examination of conscience for college administrators but their criticisms boomeranged to leave enduring scars and widespread misunderstanding.

That's why we are glad to hear the strong voices of Jesuit Father Gannon and Dominican Father Halton speaking in defense of our Catholic colleges and universities across the country.



## The Bell Tower

A Texas lad rushed home from kinder-garten and insisted that his mother buy him a set of pistols, holsters, and gun belt.

"Why, whatever for, dear?" mother asked. "You're not going to tell me you need them for school?"

"Yes, I do," he asserted. "Teacher said tomorrow she's going to teach us to draw."

In one parish Sister was preparing her Confirmation class for the great day.

"You do exactly what the bishop tells you. If he says 'Stand,' when you've practiced kneeling, then do what he says, stand. Pay attention to His Excellency, and do what he says."

The ceremony proceeded flawlessly to the point where the bishop said, "Now, if you will kneel down, I will give you all my blessing." They knelt. He raised his hand and began, "Sit nomen Domini—" As one man, they sat.

A poor little rich boy sat at his bedroom window, gazing out sadly as he considered how impossible parents can be. Finally, he stood up, a look of determination on his face, and rang for a servant.

"Yes, sir?" the servant asked, appearing at the door. "Pack my bag, Ferguson," the little boy ordered sharply. "I've decided to run away."

## Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, February 16 — Quinquagesima Sunday (purple), Creed, Trinity Preface.

Monday and Tuesday, February 17 and 18 — Mass at Sunday, except no Creed, common preface; Tuesday, 2nd prayer\* of St. Simeon, VR.

Ash Wednesday, February 19 — Mass as in missal.

Thursday and Friday, February 20 and 21 — Lenten Masses as in missal.

Saturday, February 22 — St. Peter at Antioch (white), Gloria, 2nd prayer of Lenten Mass St. Paul, 3rd prayer of Lenten Mass, Creed, Preface of Apostles; or Lenten Mass (purple) as in missal.

\*Omitted at High Mass. VR—Votive or Requiem permitted.

Each day during Lent has its own special Mass. It is a feast also occurs, the priest may choose either the Lenten or feast day Mass unless otherwise noted.

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REMEMBER, YOU ARE DUST — this stern message and the cross of ashes will introduce Catholics this Wednesday to Lent's forty days of prayer and penance, as typified in picture of John W. Hari family kneeling at altar rail of St. John's Church, where Father Donald E. Lux is pastor.

## Why The Ashes?

Why do Catholics jam their churches on Ash Wednesday?

What's the reason for having a smudge of black ashes smeared on people's foreheads?

How can ashes help somebody lead a better Christian life?

THESE QUESTIONS come up every year as Catholics go about their routine duties on the first day of Lent marked with the familiar cross of ashes.

All over the world this coming Wednesday, Catholics will kneel at the altar rail to receive from the priest a cross of ashes bestowed with the reminder, "Remember man that you are dust and to dust you will return."

With that sobering and serious thought the Church calls its members to forty days of penance and increased devotion as a preparation for the graces of Holy Week and Easter.

The ashes symbolize the frailty and transience of all things earthly. They also symbolize repentance for sin.

At the end of the 11th century, Pope Urban II decreed that all Catholics should receive the ashes. Since that date this ancient sign of humiliation serves as an emphatic reminder that all of us are to atone for our sins by means of the Lenten fast.

THIS RITE certainly has no magic effect. It does not automatically change a person from a life of sin to a life of virtue.

It does teach in dramatic simplicity the ultimate destiny of every human—death, judgment, heaven, or hell.

The words of warning spoken by the priest recall the first day of creation when God said the same words to Adam and Eve, "You are dust and to dust you will return." Banned from paradise and faced with sorrow and death, such was the penalty for their original sin.

Stern thoughts as these surround the bestowal of ashes this coming Wednesday. If the Church's lessons are heeded, the result is bound to be better Christian lives by the end of Lent's forty days.



THE ALTAR IN DORMITION CONVENT, N. Y., HAS BEEN CONSIDERED THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN THE WORLD. IT WAS BUILT BY THE NUNNERY OF ST. PETER'S PENNY TRUST IN 1850.