

Fasting and Abstaining

During Lent, Catholics are required to fast and abstain on certain days, in imitation of Jesus' fast in the desert. Church law defines "fasting" as eating one regular-sized meal and two smaller meals. "Abstaining" is refraining from eating animal flesh. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of both fasting and abstinence and all Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

Of course, Church laws are designed to guide a broad range of people in various states of life. We are always welcome to go beyond the minimum by perhaps engaging in a more vigorous fast, abstaining from another food if you are a vegetarian, or fasting an extra day during the week. Wednesday, for example, has been another traditional fasting day for Christians throughout history.

Traditionally the observances of Lent have been structured around 3 practices: - **Fasting** - **Praying** - **Almsgiving**.

Christians throughout history have found these to be the building blocks of Lenten spiritual growth. They work in two ways: they help cleanse our lives of what distracts us from God, and that new space gives God's grace more room to take root and flourish. Our Lenten hope and prayer is that in imitating Jesus' sacrifice, we become more like Him in every way.