

Two Important Lenten Groups



Fast and Abstinence

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First The Catechumens



**Catechumens are people
who have chosen to be
baptized at the Easter
Vigil.**

**During Lent they make
their final preparations.**

Second Are The Baptized

The baptized people that are in some way returning to the church.

Some were baptized as babies but never completed the initiation process.

Some fully initiated have “fallen” away but have chosen to return.

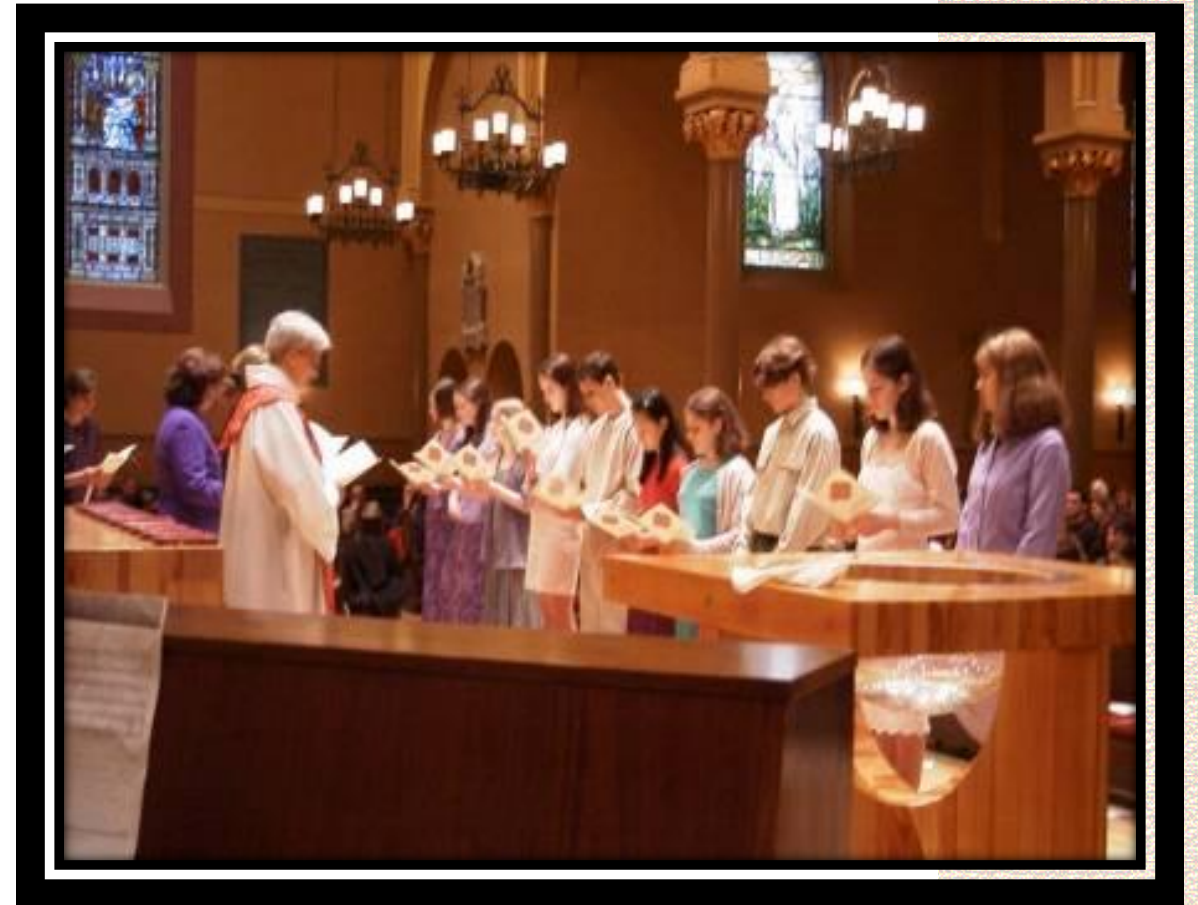


Christians Make 3 Life-long Commitments

Prayer – Communication with God.

Fasting – Self-denial, self control, simple living.

Almsgiving - Giving to those in need. We share our goods, money, talents and time.





Fasting

Fasting is probably the least practiced by the faithful.

Fasting needs to be understood as not just going without food, it can be a significant part of spiritual growth.

The Hebrew Scriptures record the practice of fasting for a variety of purposes:

Hebrew Scriptures



At time of mourning and loss

As readiness for being sent on a mission by God

As a sign of repentance from sin

As a companion to prayer

As preparation for an encounter with God

As an observance of significant events when God delivered the people from calamities

As a source of petition for God's help in difficult times.

Jesus Showed The Importance of Fasting



Jesus fasted in the desert and out of that fast came the zeal for His public ministry (Luke 4:1-5).

Eventually fasting became a regular practice of the Church, becoming more associated with a penitential focus than a preparation or commemoration of events.

The Pharisees Fasted

Jesus condemned the rigid and legalistic fasts prescribed by the Pharisees.

Their fasting was only for “show: for their own ego building” (Mt. 6:¹⁶⁻¹⁸).



Fasting



Fasting needs to include not just the stomach, but also the mind and heart.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that can call our attention to the deeper things of life.

Many can not fast from food.

Diabetes, hypoglycemia and numerous other

physical conditions do not allow for altering the intake of food.

Fasting in a spiritual context means to deliberately deprive ourselves, to choose to go without, to have less of something for the benefit of a greater value.



Something?



This something doesn't have to be food.

Fasting could be redirecting of a certain amount of time, or depriving ourselves of specific behaviors and actions, money, or harmful thoughts and words, or

anything that influences the way we give our hearts to God.

Fasting Can Free Us



**Fasting can free us so
from our weaknesses,
addictions, prejudices
and illusions.**

**Deliberately depriving
ourselves of judgmental,
negative thoughts about
self or others can allow
room to heal.**

**Fasting can free us from
materialism and
busyness.**

**Choose to spend less time
shopping, buying less,
reduce or stop devoting
time to our passions.**

**Use the extra time to pray
and attend liturgies.**

Freedom



Fasting can free us from our need to always be right or the best or the most successful.

If we have a tendency to dominate or to be arrogant, fasting from “getting our way” can humble us by allowing the needs of others to take precedence over our own.

Fasting can increase self-control.

Fasting can resist something that we desire.

Fasting can help us rearrange our priorities.

Fasting can help us give thanks for what we already have.

Fasting Regulations

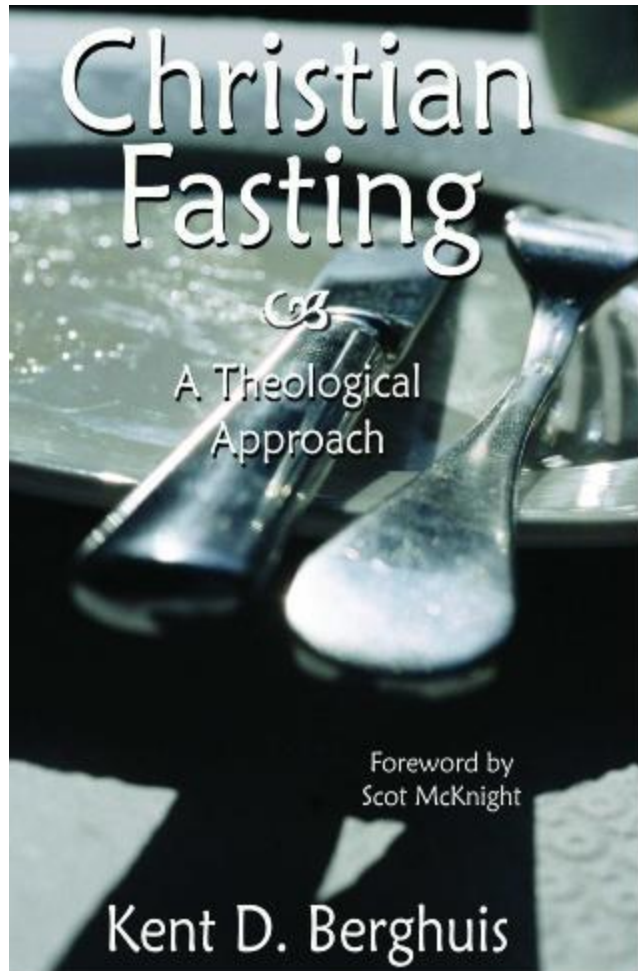
Refraining from food and drink as an expression of interior penance, in imitation of the fast of Jesus' for forty days in the desert.

Fast and abstinence [no meat] are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and on [Good Friday] the Friday of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Under current canon law in the Western Rite of the Church, a day of fast is one on which Catholics who are eighteen to sixty years old are required to keep a limited fast.

While fasting one may eat a single, normal meal and have *two smaller meals* and no food in-between.

Choosing the Right Fast for You



What would help me to be more at peace?

Whom do I most need to love better?

What is lacking in my relationship with God?

How and when do I give service to others?

What am I doing to help alleviate the world's sufferings?

Pray Everyday

**Ask God's help in carrying
out your intention to
fast.**

**We do not do our spiritual
growing alone.**

**It is through the grace of
God that we spiritually
grow.**

Pray for His help!





Abstinence

A day of abstinence is a day on which Catholics fourteen years or older are required to abstain from eating meat. All Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence.

In America, fish, eggs, milk products, and condiments or foods made using animal fat are permitted in the Western Rite of the Church, though not in the Eastern Rites.

Again, persons with special dietary needs can easily be dispensed by their pastor.

Why Are Fridays During Lent Days of Abstinence.



**This is because Jesus died for our sins on Friday,
making it an especially appropriate day of mourning
our sins.**

**Sunday, the day on which he rose for our salvation is
an especially appropriate day to rejoice and not fast.**

**Sundays are holy days on which we are required to
worship and celebrate God's great gift of salvation.**

Why is giving up something for Lent such a good custom?

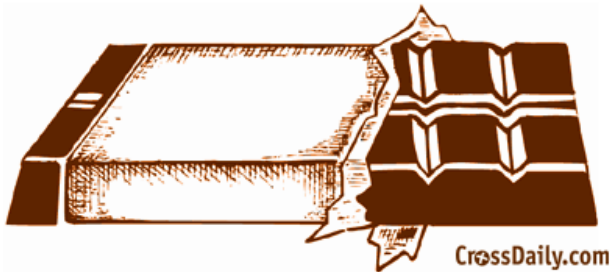
By denying ourselves something we like, we discipline our wills so that we are not slaves to our pleasures.

When the demands of morality require us to sacrifice something pleasurable we have already prepared ourselves by Lenten fasting.



Is the custom of giving up something for Lent mandatory?

I'm giving up
Chocolate
this Lent



No. However, it is a custom, and parents or caretakers may choose to require it of their children to encourage their spiritual training, which is their prime responsibility in the raising of their children.

What about Sundays? It's up to you but don't you think it would be good to continue your offering on that day also?