



OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

MEMORANDUM

To: Brother Priests and Permanent Deacons
From: Father LaMorte 
Date: January 27, 2023
Subject: Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum

Ash Wednesday is a day that offers a valuable opportunity to set a tone for the entire season of Lent, as well as to reach out to people, some of whom are usually not often found in our churches. Aware of the considerable interest of the faithful in receiving ashes, every effort must be made through the reading of scripture and the offering of prayers to catechize them on the penitential character of Lent and the value of their Lenten practices. Refer to the 2023 Paulist *Ordo* for Lenten directives [pages 68-70] and those for Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter [pages 99-115].

LENTEN FAST AND ABSTINENCE During the season of Lent, the Church urges the faithful to reflect a spirit of penance in their daily lives through performing acts of fast and abstinence.

- Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22 and ends on Holy Thursday, April 6.
- Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. This is a serious matter within Church law.
- Fasting means only one full meal a day may be taken. Two smaller meals may be eaten to maintain physical strength but together they should not equal another full meal in quantity. Snacking between meals is not permitted. Catholics ages 18-59 are obligated to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those who are not specifically obliged to fast are encouraged to join in the discipline of fasting to the extent that they are able.
- Abstinence forbids the eating of meat or poultry. Those who have reached the age of 14 and older are obligated to abstain on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent. Those who are not specifically obliged to abstain from eating meat are urged to join in the discipline of abstaining to the extent that they are able.

- All Fridays of the year are designated as days of penance during which we are encouraged to practice self-denial out of gratitude for the suffering and death Jesus accepted for us.
- Friday, March 17 is the solemnity of St. Patrick, the patron of the archdiocese. His Eminence has granted a dispensation from the obligation to abstain from meat to all Roman Catholics. However, the faithful are urged to choose another day of penance during the week as part of the Lenten observances or to creatively make a gift to one of our food pantries or soup kitchens to ensure the poor will eat.
- The time for fulfilling the Easter Duty extends from the First Sunday of Lent [February 26] to Holy Trinity Sunday [June 4].

DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES should only take place in a church or chapel and during Mass or a Liturgy of the Word. Classrooms, cafeterias, and gymnasias ought not be used when a nearby sacred setting is available.

FIRST SUNDAY OF PASSIONTIDE During the last two weeks of Lent in the dioceses of the United States, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from the Fifth Sunday of Lent [March 26] may be observed. Crosses remain veiled in Lenten violet until the celebration of Good Friday of the Lord's Passion [April 7], but images remain veiled in Lenten violet until the beginning of the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night [April 8].

TIME OF THE EASTER VIGIL The season of Lent culminates with the celebration of the Sacred Triduum of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, celebrated on Holy Saturday evening, is not to be scheduled before dusk (*Missale Romanum*, Easter Vigil, No. 3, i.e., at least half an hour after sunset). In the northeast, nightfall in 2023 will occur at 7:56.

MISCELLANY Other things to note:

- A parish should set a good example for Lenten penance by refraining from socials. Gala dinners ought not be scheduled on Fridays of Lent.
- Extended hours for confession, as well as devotions such as the stations of the cross, are encouraged.
- The *Lenten Day of Recollection for Priests* will be Wednesday, March 8 at 1:00 PM at Dunwoodie.
- *Reconciliation Monday* will be held on April 3 from 2:00 to 4:00 and 6:00 to 9:00 PM in cooperation with the dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre, with confessions available throughout the day.
- *The Mass of the Chrism Mass* will be Tuesday, April 4 at 4:00 PM at the cathedral.
- Volume II of the *Liturgy of the Hours* is used from Ash Wednesday, February 22 through Pentecost Sunday, May 28, the completion of Paschaltide.



OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

MEMORANDUM

To: Pastors/Administrators
From: Joseph P. LaMorte
Date: January 27, 2023
Subject: St. Patrick's Day 2023

Fasting and abstinence from meat on Fridays are important Lenten obligations for every Catholic bound by age and health. As pastors, we need to strongly encourage our people to follow these directives. As a rule, the church makes laws and expects us to abide by them. But sometimes there are circumstances that make it possible to obtain a dispensation from obeying a law.

This year, the Solemnity of St. Patrick, our patron, falls on a Friday, and His Eminence has dispensed all Roman Catholics in the Archdiocese of New York from abstaining from meat on March 17, 2023.

Generally, when an archbishop on such an occasion lifts the obligation of abstinence, he stipulates that those of proper age and circumstance should choose some other penitential practice instead by making an equivalent sacrifice on the day itself or to abstain from meat on a weekday during the third week of Lent. Or, creatively, there is the option for a person to offer a decade of the rosary for some particular intention. As we rejoice with a festive meal, it would be appropriate to make a gift to one of our food pantries or soup kitchens to be sure that the poor will eat.

It is good to remember that abstinence on Fridays is not just a Lenten practice. Back in the 1960s, the requirement of not eating meat was a common practice, but was lifted, except during Lent, when the penitential practice of abstaining specifically from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent remains to this day.