

arms, and makes ready his steed for the battle... So too, when the fast makes its appearance, like a kind of spiritual summer, let us as soldiers burnish our weapons... and order our thoughts against the waves of extravagant desires...; and let us set a journey toward heaven...

8. ...Real fasting is not merely an abstinence from meats but also from sins. For the nature of a fast is such, that it does not suffice to deliver those who practice it, unless it be done according to a suitable law... To that end, when we have gone through the labor of fasting, we forfeit not the crown of fasting, we should understand how, and after what manner, it is necessary to conduct this business; since that Pharisee also fasted. While the Publican who had not fasted; was accepted in preference to him who had fasted; in order that we may learn that fasting is unprofitable, except if all other duties follow it... Fasting is a medicine and it is necessary to know the time it should be applied, and the requisite quantity of it; the temperament of body that emits it; the nature of the country, the season of the year, the corresponding diet as well as various other particulars...; Now if, when the body needs healing, such exactness is required on our part, much more ought we, when our care is about the soul, and we seek to heal the distempers of the mind, to look, and to search into every particular with the utmost accuracy.

9. ...These things are said for the honor of fasting because it consists not in the abstinence of food, but in the withdrawing from sinful practices; since he who limits his fasting only to an abstinence from meats, is one who especially disparages it. The proof of fasting is in the works. What kind of works? If you see a poor man, take pity on him! If you see an enemy, be reconciled to him! If you see a friend gaining honor do not be envious of him!... ** (excerpted from: www.fisheaters.com)

Aside from the mandatory laws of fast, all true Catholics should regularly want to practice fasting along with prayer, as a means of penance. To avoid fasting during the year is not Catholic!

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Fasting and Abstinence



***If you see a poor man,
take pity on him!***

Fasting and Abstinence

*According to a Catholic Dictionary, 1951 the definition of:

1. Fasting: is concerned with the quantity of food eaten and so must be distinguished from abstinence. The law is that on fast days only one full meal may be taken. Fasting is imposed on those over 21 and under 59, but severe work, whether manual or mental, sickness or debility excuse from obligation (see your parish priest for dispensations). Collations may normally be taken on fast days if they do not add up to a second meal.
2. Abstinence: refers to the refraining from eating flesh-meat or soup made from meat, and is to be distinguished from fasting, with which it may be combined. Abstinence is normally obligatory for all who have completed their seventh year, on specific days of the church year.

There are many references in Scripture to fasting and abstinences. Several examples are: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasure of gold..." (Tobias 12:8-9); "And when you fast..." (Matthew 6:16-18); and "And as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting..." (Acts 13:2-3). Other examples in Scripture can be found in: 2 Esdras 1:4; Acts 14:22; Matthew 4:1-2; and Matthew 17:17-20.

*(excerpted from: catholicessentials.net)

**In the time of Christ's Incarnation, practitioners of the Old Testament religion fasted or abstained on Mondays and Thursdays, but Christians opted to take Wednesdays (the day Our Lord was betrayed) and Fridays (the day Our Lord was crucified) as their penitential days. Wednesdays and Fridays are still days of penance in most Eastern Catholic Churches (and among the Orthodox), but in the Roman Church, only Fridays, as memorials to the day Our Lord was crucified, remains as a weekly penitential day on which abstinence from meat and other forms of penance are expected as the norm. The rules governing fasting and abstinence are found in the 1983 Code of Canon Law (# 1249 to # 1253). For those who want to keep the older practices given for the Universal Church for use with the traditional calendar as it was in 1962, please visit www.fisheaters.com/fasting.html pg. 3-4, for a complete listing of both traditional and Novus Ordo

calendar discussing when fast and abstinence is required. Always remember, that the priest can give a dispensation for medical reasons and that true charity trumps all law, and law exists to serve true charity!

Why Should We Fast?

There are many reasons why we should fast. Even if there were no other reasons to fast, we fast out of obedience: Our Lord and His Apostles tell us to do so. We also fast to discipline the body so that we can focus more intently on the spiritual. And we fast to do penance. This last reason is described by Pope Clement XIII in his "Appetente Sacro," written in 1759. In this document, he exhorts his Bishops to explain to their flocks the reason for fasting:

"... penance for the Christian man is not satisfied by withdrawing from sin, by detesting a past life badly lived, or by the sacramental confession of these same sins. Rather, penance also demands that we satisfy divine justice with fasting, almsgiving, prayer, and other works of the spiritual life. Every wrongdoing— be it large or small— is fittingly punished, either by the penitent or by a vengeful God. Therefore we cannot avoid God's punishment in any other way than by punishing ourselves. If this teaching is constantly implanted in the minds of the faithful, and if they drink deeply of it, there will be very little cause to fear that those who have discarded their degraded habits and washed their sins clean through sacramental confession would not want to expiate the same sins through fasting, to eliminate the concupiscence of the flesh..."

The Proper Attitude When Fasting

St. John Chrysostom, in this excerpt from Homily III of his "Homilies on the Statues," summed it up well:

7. ...We have to fast too as an ally, and as an assistant in this good intercession. Therefore, as when the winter is over and the summer is appearing...the soldier burnishes his