

Lent guidelines for fasting and abstinence

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

As we enter into the season of Lent, it is helpful to recall the discipline of the Church with regards to fast, abstinence and other forms of penance.

1. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. The law of fasting allows one full meal and two smaller ones. The law of abstinence prohibits the eating of meat.
2. The Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence in the United States.
3. The obligation of abstinence begins at age 14. The law of fasting obliges all between the ages of 18-59.
4. Pastors and parents are to see to it that minors, though not bound by the law of fast and abstinence, are educated in the authentic sense of penance and encouraged to do acts of penance suitable to their age.
5. All members of the Christian faithful are encouraged to do acts of penance and charity beyond what is prescribed by the law.