

## **FASTING FOR HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION**

Regular meals and solid food or liquid may be taken up to one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water may be taken at any time; it never breaks the fast. These regulations apply at all times, whether Holy Communion is received at Mass in the morning, afternoon or evening, or at midnight. The elderly and those who are suffering from some illness, as well as those who care for them, may receive the Blessed Eucharist even if within the preceding hour they have consumed something.



## **RULES OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE**

- Everyone over 14 years of age is bound to observe the law of abstinence. Abstinence from meat is to be observed on all Fridays within the season of Lent and Passiontide and on Ash Wednesday.
- On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, everyone over 18 and up to the beginning of their 60th year is also bound to observe the law of fast. On these two days, only one full meatless meal is allowed. Two other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs; but together they should not equal another full meal. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, therefore, are the only days of both fast and abstinence.
- It should be noted also that "the Fridays of the year outside of Lent remain days of penance, but each individual may substitute for the traditional abstinence from meat some other practice of voluntary self-denial or personal penance: this may be physical mortification or temperance or acts of religion, charity or Christian witness."
- With regard to the seriousness of the matter, the teaching of the pope may be simply paraphrased: the obligation to do penance is a serious one; the obligation to observe, as a whole or "substantially," the penitential days specified by the Church is also serious.
- No one should be scrupulous in this regard; failure to observe individual days of penance is not considered serious; rather it is the failure to observe any penitential days at all or a substantial number of days which must be considered serious.
- People should seek to do more rather than less. Fast and abstinence on the days prescribed and works of religion and charity on the Fridays outside Lent should be considered a minimal response to the Lord's call to penance and conversion of life.