

PENANCE AND ABSTINENCE

Uhhh... it's Eastertime, so what's this about?

Did you know that, even outside of Lent, the Church asks us to commit ourselves to penance and abstinence every Friday of the year? It's considered part of the "power of the keys", the power the Apostles were given to loose also can bind, when it is good for us. Regular penance and abstinence are one such case, as they help remind us of our need for God's Mercy. Especially in these days, where we are praying for the repose of Pope Francis, Friday is an appropriate time for acts of penance and abstinence!



So you're telling me not to eat meat?



Abstinence from meat is the only thing specifically prescribed in Canon Law, but because it is now commonplace, the USCCB does not say abstaining from meat is the only way one should make penance. They also recommend abstaining from coffee or alcohol as a substitute for meat. In lieu of abstinence, the USCCB also recommends practicing a work of mercy, such as volunteering at a food bank, hospital or prison as a way to practice penance.

You mean every Friday?

No, actually. Whenever a **Solemnity** falls on Friday, no one is obliged to penance and abstinence, as these days, like **Sunday**, should be celebrated like "mini **Easters**" just as normal **Fridays** should be celebrated as "mini **Lents**". One example that happens on Friday every year is the **Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**. The **Holy Days of Obligation**, as well as your **Parish Patron's feast day** count too! There's a simple rule: Don't fast on a feast day, don't feast on a fast day!



I hope you have a fruitful, prayerful, and penitential Friday!



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