

FASTING: AN HONORABLE PRACTICE OF OUR FAITH

*“Jesus returned from the Jordan filled with the Holy Spirit,
and She led him into the desert for forty days, where he was tempted by the Evil One.
He ate nothing during that time,
at the end of which he was famished” (Luke 4:1-2).*

The simplest and best path to peace and happiness leading to a greater sense of wholeness is to keep the traditional Lenten fast. This consists in eating two very light meals each day, plus one really full meal “with all the trimmings.” This usually means meat only once a day and no meat on Fridays. Some form of abstinence on all the Fridays of the year is also traditional.

The most common interpretation of the Friday abstinence is abstinence from meat, and it may be extended to include Wednesdays during Lent. Don't eat between meals, and don't eat at all on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, or have little food. Of course, none of this should be observed by persons whose health or regular duties make it inadvisable, and it should be modified for children, but it is applicable to most Christians.



Using the traditional fast is inconspicuous and modest. It tends to keep us from the dubious satisfaction of thinking up our own, individual, ascetic practices. Staying away from large, festive social affairs is a natural accompaniment to this fast and need not give offense in any important way, if explanations are made with sincerity and gentleness.

*“But when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face.
Don't let anyone know you're fasting except your Abba God,
who sees all that is done in secret.
And Abba God—who sees everything that is done in secret—
will reward you” (Matthew 6:17-18).*

LENT: A SEASON FOR FASTING AND FEASTING

Fast from judging others; *feast on the Christ dwelling within them.*

Fast from emphasis on differences; *feast on the unity of all life.*

Fast from apparent darkness; *feast on the reality of light.*

Fast from words that pollute; *feast on phrases that purify.*

Fast from discontent; *feast on gratitude.*

Fast from anger; *feast on patience.*

Fast from pessimism; *feast on optimism.*

Fast from worry; *feast on trust.*

Fast from complaining; *feast on appreciation.*

Fast from negatives; *feast on affirmatives.*

Fast from unrelenting pressures; *feast on unceasing prayer.*

Fast from hostility; *feast on nonviolence.*

Fast from bitterness; *feast on forgiveness.*

Fast from self-concern; *feast on compassion for others.*

Fast from personal anxiety; *feast on eternal truth.*

Fast from discouragement; *feast on hope.*

Fast from facts that depress; *feast on truths that uplift.*

Fast from lethargy; *feast on enthusiasm.*

Fast from suspicion; *feast on truth.*

Fast from thoughts that weaken; *feast on promises that inspire.*

Fast from idle gossip; *feast on purposeful silence.*

Gentle God,
during this season of fasting and feasting,
gift us with Your Presence,
so we can be gift to others
in carrying out your work. Amen.

