



# DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

## Office of Worship

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### *2017 Lenten regulations*

Lent this year begins on **Ash Wednesday, March 1**. Lent prepares the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. It is a time for reflection and spiritual renewal, a time to examine one's relationships with God and with others. The Church also calls Catholics to a spirit of penance, above all to practice the "Acts of Religion": fasting, prayer and almsgiving, "which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos.1969 and 1434).

The faithful are encouraged to take full advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for parishes to offer ample opportunity for them to do so.

#### **I. FASTING AND ABSTINENCE.**

To foster the spirit of penance and of reparation for sin, to encourage self-denial, and to guide us in the footsteps of Jesus, Church law requires the observance of fast and abstinence (CCC, nos. 1249-1253).

**1. Abstinence:** All persons, 14 years and older, are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent, with the exception of Friday, March 17, St Patrick's day. Since St Patrick is a co-patron of this diocese, Bishop Soto has granted a special dispensation from the normal Lenten discipline that day.

**2. Fasting:** Everyone, from ages 18 to 59, is obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Voluntary fasting on other weekdays of Lent, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, is highly recommended. Fasting is generally understood to mean that one full meal may be eaten. Two other small meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be eaten; but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids are allowed. Other forms of fasting, especially from alcoholic beverages, needless television, video games, the internet and social entertainment, is of true spiritual value and is strongly encouraged. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, neither the law of fasting nor the law of abstinence obliges. If in doubt, one's parish priest or confessor may be consulted. Airport workers, travelers, and others while on board ships or airplanes are dispensed from the laws of fast and abstinence for the duration of their journey (except on Good Friday). It is desirable that they perform some other pious act instead.

#### **II. PRAYER.**

In order to deepen one's love for Christ, Catholics are urged to read and pray with sacred Scripture; to study the Catechism of the Catholic Church; to participate in devotions offered by the parish; and to pray more fervently -- individually, as families, and in common with others. The faithful are exhorted to pray the rosary, visit the Blessed Sacrament, pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, world peace, and for an ongoing implementation of the pastoral initiatives of the Third Diocesan Synod.

**1. Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation:** Lent is a privileged time for celebrating this sacrament. Parishes generally make readily available the Sacrament of Penance, including its communal celebration. (In this way, the social and ecclesial aspects of sin and reconciliation, as well as one's personal reconciliation with God may be underscored.) *At communal celebrations of reconciliation, however, general absolution is not permitted.* People should attend also to reconciliation in every aspect of human life -- personal, familial, societal, and ecclesial. During the Lenten and Easter time, Catholics are reminded that they are obliged to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

**2. Lenten Mass Schedule:** Daily Masses during Lent are to be scheduled so as to facilitate the attendance and spiritual growth of the faithful. The faithful are urged to attend Mass on weekdays as often as possible.

**3. The Stations of the Cross** are to be celebrated publicly in each parish on Fridays during the Lenten season. Parishioners are urged to participate.

**4. Day of penance and prayer, Wednesday, March 8, 2017** (second Wednesday of March): According to Diocese Statue no. 123, §3c. “A day of penance for negative attitudes and discrimination toward people of differing cultures, ethnicity and race; and prayer for unity in our diversity, for equality, mutual respect and peace among all peoples” is to be observed.

**5. Wedding Masses** may not be celebrated during the Easter Triduum, on Sundays of Lent, Ash Wednesday, or during Holy Week. Marriages may take place at other times during Lent according to the proper liturgical norms and provisions, but it is contrary to the penitential spirit of the season to have elaborate weddings or lavish receptions.

**6. Funeral Masses** may not be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday, nor on the Sundays of Lent. When pastoral reasons require that a funeral be celebrated on these days, a Liturgy of the Word, with the final commendation and farewell rite, is held.

**7. Mass may not be offered on Holy Saturday, April 15, 2017**

**8. The Easter Vigil** (April 15) is celebrated *after nightfall*, generally understood to be 30 minutes after sunset, which is 7:45 p.m. this year. The Easter Vigil may begin any time **after 8:15 p.m.**

**9. Easter Duty:** All Catholics who have been initiated into the Holy Eucharist are bound to receive Holy Communion worthily at least once during the Easter Season: Easter Sunday, April 16 through Pentecost, June 4 (In the United States, the Easter duty may be fulfilled through Trinity Sunday, June 11) Catholics are encouraged to receive Communion as often as possible, not only during Eastertide, but throughout the liturgical year. However, “Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to Communion.” (CCC, no. 1385)

### **III. ALMSGIVING.**

The act of giving to the poor, in the most ancient tradition of the Church, is an expression of penance, a form of piety, a witness of fraternal charity and an expression of Lenten conversion. Therefore, all Catholics are urged to support generously the charitable works of the Church, including ordinary stewardship to their parish; generous response to the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Appeal which supports the poor and the vulnerable through Catholic Charities, education of seminarians and children in Catholic schools, and local parish social service ministries. People are also encouraged to assist the sick, the aged, the needy and the imprisoned in other ways. Fasting and abstinence together with works of charity help Catholics live in solidarity with the crucified Christ reflected in the image of our brothers and sisters who suffer.