

# Tridentine Community News

February 25, 2007

## *Traditional Fasting & Abstinence Regulations*

Like the rules for fasting before reception of Holy Communion, rules for Lenten Fasting and Abstinence are matters of Canon Law, not liturgical law. The same regulations apply to those who attend the Tridentine as well as the Novus Ordo Mass. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of Fast (only one full meal) and Abstinence (no meat). The other Fridays of Lent are days of Abstinence.

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for people to choose to follow the older, stricter, regulations on these matters as a penitential exercise. So let's examine what they are. First, some definitions are in order:

### *Ember Days*

The notion of "Ember Days" no longer applies in the Novus Ordo calendar, and because our local Tridentine Mass sites currently do not offer Daily Mass, we do not experience or think about Ember Days. But that term comes up repeatedly in Traditional Calendars and Hand Missals.

Ember Days are special days of Fasting. The Ember Days of Lent are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the First Sunday of Lent. Outside of Lent, there are Ember Days on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after Pentecost Sunday; during the third week of September; and after the Third Sunday of Advent.

### *Partial vs. Complete Abstinence*

The old rules distinguish between Partial Abstinence, which permits the consumption of meat at only the principal meal of the day; and Complete Abstinence, which forbids meat all day. The current rules only recognize [Complete] Abstinence; the notion of Partial Abstinence no longer exists.

### *The Old Rules*

Ash Wednesday, Lenten Fridays, Ember Fridays, and the Vigils of the Immaculate Conception (December 7) and Christmas (December 24) were days of Fast and Complete Abstinence.

Ember Wednesdays, Ember Saturdays, and the Vigil of Pentecost were days of Fast and Partial Abstinence.

Lenten Fridays and Ember Fridays were days of Fast and Complete Abstinence.

Other Fridays of the year were days of Complete Abstinence.

Other Lenten weekdays and Holy Saturday were days of Fast only.

### *"Fish on Friday"*

Even today, Canon 1251 states that Fridays outside of Lent are to be days of Abstinence according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops, unless those Fridays are Solemnities. The

U.S. Bishops' "Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence", issued in 1966 and republished in 1983, removed the pain of sin from this obligation, "...in the hope that the Catholic community will ordinarily continue to abstain from meat by free choice as formerly we did in obedience to Church law."

Similarly, the Canadian Bishops' document, "Keeping Friday", published in 1985 and republished in 2006, states that "Fridays are days of abstinence, but Catholics can substitute special acts of charity or piety on this day."

### *Ferias*

As long as we are on the topic of the Tridentine Calendar, you may have noticed the term "Feria" to describe certain weekdays that are not dedicated to a certain feast. Most weekdays during Lent are Ferias.

On a Feria, the Mass said is the one of the previous Sunday, without the Gloria and Credo, except during Christmastide and

Paschaltide, during which the Gloria is said. Up to two additional Collects may be added *ad libitum* ("ad lib", at the discretion of the celebrant), at least one of which is often for that of a saint whom the calendar specifies to be commemorated. Yes, the celebrant does have some leeway in the Tridentine Mass!

### *Videos Now On-Line*

Thanks to intrepid webmaster Chris Stuckey, there are now several short video snippets of the St. Josaphat Tridentine Mass on-line at [www.detroitlatinmass.org](http://www.detroitlatinmass.org). Go to the Video section, and you will see some links to recordings made at Masses in January. The audio of our choir is particularly impressive.

You may see Chris in the aisles during Mass making more recordings from better vantage points. Please understand that this exercise is being undertaken to expose our beautiful Traditional Mass to a wider set of people who may not otherwise attend. Part of our responsibility is to expose this liturgy to others.

