

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR  
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

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To: All Pastors and Administrators  
From: Very Rev. Peter J. Purpura, JCL  
Re: Lenten Regulations 2019  
Date: February 22, 2019

Once again, the celebration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection draws near. In our preparation for Easter, the Church invites us to observe the penitential and grace—filled season of Lent which commences on March 6, 2019 with the observance of Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of renewal for the entire Catholic community. It is also a time of spiritual accompaniment as we assist the catechumens and candidates who will be welcomed into communion with the Church during the Easter Season. In order to assist the faithful of the Diocese of Brooklyn to take full advantage of the Lenten season, our Bishop, Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio wishes to draw attention to the following:

**Abstinence** – All the faithful who have reached 14 years of age are required to abstain totally from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent.

**Fasting** – All the faithful between the ages of 18 and 59 inclusive are bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This practice involves limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance may also be taken on two other occasions during the day.

**Easter Duty**– After they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, all the faithful are bound by the obligation of receiving Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time of the year. By special indult, in the United States, the period for fulfilling this precept has been extended to include the period beginning the First Sunday of Lent (March 10, 2019) to the celebration of Pentecost (June 9, 2019).

**The Solemnity of Saint Joseph:** The solemnity of Saint Joseph should be observed with proper solemnity even though it falls within the season of Lent.

**Reconciliation Monday:** Our diocese will once again celebrate Reconciliation Monday on April 15, 2019, the Monday of Holy Week. As in recent years, this initiative provides generous opportunity for the faithful to experience God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After having reached the age of discretion, members of the faithful are bound to confess once a year grave sins which have not already been absolved.

**Easter Vigil:** Sunset on Holy Saturday, April 20, 2019 will be at 7:40 p.m. in Brooklyn, NY. The Easter Vigil may begin at 8 p.m. (or later) and must end before dawn on Easter Sunday.

**The following should also be noted:**

**Music:** The “Alleluia” is not sung or said from the beginning of Lent until the Easter Vigil. Musical instruments may only be used during Lent and the Paschal Triduum to give necessary support to the singing.

**Decorations:** The church should not be decorated with flowers during Lent.

**Holy Water:** Holy Water is not removed from the fountains during the season of Lent. Holy Water is removed from all fountains immediately before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. They are refilled with water blessed at the Easter Vigil.

**Funeral Masses:** Funeral Masses are not permitted during the Sacred Triduum. Funeral Rites during these days may make use of a Liturgy of the Word, concluding with the Rite of Farewell.

The obligation to observe, as a whole or substantially, the penitential days specified by the Church, is a serious one. Days of penance are not merely individual exercises — they are observed by the whole Church, as the Body of Christ.

The faithful are encouraged to celebrate the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance frequently during the Lenten season. Additionally, reading the Word of God, praying the Stations of the Cross, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and showing generosity toward the poor are all means of intensifying our spiritual lives during the Lenten season.

Pastors and parents are responsible to see that young persons, who are not bound to the above requirements, are educated in an authentic sense of penance.

All other Fridays of the year remain as days of penance in prayerful remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ. The Bishops of the United States have recommended abstinence from meat as a penance for all Fridays of the year, although each person may substitute that tradition for some other practice of voluntary self-denial or personal penance. This may involve acts of self-denial, prayer or charity.

In prayerful pilgrimage with the catechumens and candidates for full initiation, let us accompany our Lord on his way to the cross and to the empty tomb. May we use this time of Lent to be more closely united with Christ in His Death and Resurrection.