

Preparation for Fasting

PRAY AND ASK FOR MARY'S HELP..

SAY TO YOURSELF, 'TODAY I AM FASTING FOR GOD!'

PREPARE THE PROPER FOODS TO EAT – BREAD, SOUP, ETC.

GET RID OF JUNK FOOD IN THE HOUSE!

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER WAYS TO PREPARE?????

Fruits of Fasting

- ***Growth in Obedience to the Word of God (Matthew Ch. 6 & 9) Obedience, along w/prayer and fasting builds confident trust in God.***
- ***Spiritual Awareness of our dependency to come Closer to God***
- ***Purification of the Soul (Our excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures increases in disregard of spiritual matters, irreverent frivolity and forgetfulness of our deeper aspiration; HEAVEN)***
- ***Grow in the Wisdom of God***
- ***Spiritual Nourishment (Only God can remove the veil to allow us to see what is clear to the enlightened soul.)***
- ***Decreases the desire of the flesh***
- ***Fasting melts our pride and self-confidence (shows our dependence on God; reminds us of our mortality) Man does not live by bread alone....***
- ***Rids us of ingrained habits (Among the acts of worship which God accepts, fasting is perhaps the most difficult to perform on a regular basis. It is difficult because it requires the body to forgo one of its most basic sources of pleasure, eating.)***
- ***Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.***
- ***Fasting backs up our prayer w/action. It is even more powerful if we offer it in combination with the holy merits of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection, along with the merits of the Holy Family and all the saints!***
- ***Benefits of Fasting. In fact, one of the many benefits of fasting is that it strengthens the will, conditioning it for future frays against shortsightedness and weak resolve.***
- ***Charity is the mirror image of fasting. When you fast, you prevent physical and mental intrusions from blotting your spirit. When you give, you cast off excess impurities congesting your soul. One cannot be sincerely charitable while being a sensuous glutton. We reveal our gluttony and sensuality in hoarding and greed, both of which separate us from the Creator. Charity requires that we share the superfluous, and fasting facilitates the process. In both situations, excessive burdens on the spirit are being discarded.***
- ***Fasting atones for sin and makes reparation through charity and love of neighbor.***
- ***Can help release the souls in purgatory!***
- ***Brings about interior conversion!***
- ***Clearer enlightenment on God's will in my own Life.***

My own personal growth...

WAYS to FAST!

- **Fast from Food**
- **From TV**
- **Wait 10 minutes before drinking a glass of water, putting salt on a potato, using pepper**
- **Fast your tongue from gossiping, criticizing, being judgmental of others!**
- **Fast from your self-will; always doing things your way; thinking you know more than God!**
(There is only one God. Stop applying for His position!)
- **Fast from buying something you really want.**
- **Fast from getting angry or showing impatience or complaining.**
- **Fast from procrastinating... start changing bad habits..**

Other ways I can fast.

The "acceptable fast" is discussed in the biblical Book of [Isaiah](#), chapter 58:6–7. In this chapter, the nation of Israel is rebuked for their fasting, and given this exhortation:

(verse 6) "Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

(7) Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

This passage indicates that the acceptable fast is not merely abstinence from food or water, but a decision to fully obey God's commands to care for the poor and oppressed. [Zechariah](#), chapter 7:5–10, also repeats this message. The opening chapter of the [Book of Daniel](#), vv. 8–16, describes a partial [Daniel Fast](#) and its effects on the health of its observers.

(verse 8) "Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

(9) Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I."

(Isaiah 58:8–9)

JOY AND FASTING

We can also experience joy from growth in the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting. Before Jesus started his public ministry, the Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted and prayed. There, he grew in power and wisdom. Jesus fasted in preparation for his ministry. We, too, should fast in preparation for the ministry that God has for us. It should be an important part of our prayer life. It should be done in preparation for receiving the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and for discerning God's will.

When we fast, it helps to decrease the desires of the flesh by denying our passions. It detaches us from worldly things and helps us grow in the knowledge of God. It atones for sins and helps nourish an unselfish love for our neighbor. It increases our faith and shows God that we are willing to back up our prayers with action.

We cannot earn God's love, but we can earn His blessings and favor through fasting. Fasting also helps us grow in humility of spirit. Jesus told His disciples,

"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you." (Matthew 6:16-18)

God sees all our actions, and when we do things with humility, instead of seeking praise, we will be honoring the Father who created us. We will be imitating Jesus. God loves the humble of heart. In James 4:6, the Scriptures also say,

*"God resists the proud,
but gives grace to the humble."*

The more we are in communion with God through fasting, the more we become in touch with God's perfect will for our life. And the more we obey God's will, the more *peace* and *joy* we will have. God has a perfect plan for each of us, but we must seek him with all our heart.

There are many ways we can fast. The Blessed Mother told the children in Medjugorje that the best way to fast is by fasting your tongue. This is hard for most people to do. We are all tempted to speak out when offended or gossip when we shouldn't. We can also fast by abstaining from a favorite TV show, from drinking a cup of coffee, by waiting ten minutes for a glass of water, or by simply not using salt. We can also make small sacrifices by giving of our time without complaining, in order to help someone else. The most important thing to remember is that we must perform all our actions with great love in our hearts for Jesus and our neighbor.

Before beginning a fast, ask the Blessed Mother to give you the grace and desire to fast, in imitation of her Son, Jesus. She will do so pleasingly, and you will find the strength to fast more easily.

St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop, wrote that prayer, fasting, and mercy are inseparable. In a sermon entitled, **Prayer Knocks, Fasting Obtains, and Mercy Receives**, he says,

"There are three things by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are prayer, fasting, and mercy. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy, and fasting; these three are one, and they give life to each other."

"Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray fast, if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God's ear to yourself."

Prayer, fasting, and mercy together obtain for us what we ask for from God in faith, if it is His holy will, and this can be the cause of great joy! Through fasting, we also can obtain a partial indulgence.

A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful, who in a spirit of penitence, voluntarily abstain from something, which is licit for or pleasing to them. This third type of grant intends to urge the Christian faithful to hold their appetites in check and thus learn to obtain mastery over their bodies and conform themselves to the poor and suffering Christ.... Thus through the abstinence of the fasting person, relief may come to the poor. (Taken from the Handbook of Indulgences).

What a joy it is to know that we can bring relief to the poor and suffering through our abstinence. Each time we perform a small fast, we can offer it up for the hungry and needy. We can have a small share in their suffering and thus be more closely united to Christ in the paschal mystery of His church. We can also perform spiritual works of mercy through fasting and praying for the holy souls.

CATHOLIC CATECHISM

- **Paragraph 1755 - II. Good Acts and Evil Acts**
An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself (such as praying and fasting “in order to be seen by men”).
- **Paragraph 1434 - V. The Many Forms of Penance in Christian Life**
Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, 31 which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one’s neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one’s neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity “which covers a multitude of sins.”³² (1969)...
- **Paragraph 801 - III. The Church Is the Temple of the Holy Spirit**
... “Their office [is] not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good,” 254 so that all the diverse and complementary ...
- **Paragraph 2043 - II. The Precepts of the Church**
2043 The fourth precept (“You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church”) ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.⁸⁵ (2177, 1387, 1438, 1351)
- **VI. The Paschal Banquet**
1387 To prepare for worthy reception of this sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in their Church.²²⁰ Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest. (2043)
- **Paragraph 1969 - III. The New Law or the Law of the Gospel**
1969 The New Law *practices the acts of religion*: almsgiving, prayer and fasting, directing them to the “Father who sees in secret,” in contrast with the desire to “be seen by men.”²⁴ Its prayer is the Our Father.²⁵ (1434)
- **Paragraph 575 - ARTICLE 4 “JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED”**
Many of Jesus’ deeds and words constituted a “sign of contradiction,”³²¹ but more so for the religious authorities in Jerusalem, whom the Gospel according to John often calls simply “the Jews,”³²² than for the ordinary People of God.³²³ To be sure, Christ’s relations with the Pharisees were not exclusively polemical. Some Pharisees warned him of the danger he was courting,³²⁴ Jesus praises some of them, like the scribe of *Mark* 12:34, and dines several times at their homes.³²⁵ Jesus endorses some of the teachings imparted by this religious elite of God’s people: the resurrection of the dead,³²⁶ certain forms of piety (almsgiving, fasting, and prayer),³²⁷ the custom of addressing God as Father, and the centrality of the commandment to love God and neighbor.³²⁸(993)
- **Paragraph 1430 - IV. Interior Penance**
Jesus’ call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, “sackcloth and ashes,” fasting and mortification, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.²³ (1098)
- **The Many Forms of Penance in Christian Life**
The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church’s penitential practice.³⁶ These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works). (540, 2043)
- **Paragraph 2668 - ARTICLE 2 THE WAY OF PRAYER**
When the holy name is repeated often by a humbly attentive heart, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases, 19 but holds fast to the word ...
- **Paragraph 2733 - II. Humble Vigilance of Heart**
Another temptation, to which presumption opens the gate, is *acedia*. The spiritual writers understand by this a form of depression due to lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, carelessness of heart. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”²¹ The greater the height, the harder the fall. Painful as discouragement is, it is the reverse of presumption. The humble are not surprised by their distress; it leads them to trust more, to hold fast in constancy. (2094, 2559)