



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

LENTEN INSTRUCTIONS—2007

So that the Church of Metuchen may be spiritually one in a common observance of Lent, the following days of fast and abstinence are to be observed by all Catholics of the Diocese who enjoy the blessings of good health:

1. The days of fast and abstinence are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
2. All other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
3. From the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday until the celebration of the Easter Vigil on the evening of Holy Saturday, the Easter fast should be observed so that, with uplifted and welcoming hearts, we may be ready to celebrate the joys of the Resurrection. This ancient tradition, intimately connected with the *Rites of Holy Week* and the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*, is encouraged, especially in those places baptizing catechumens at the Easter Vigil.

The obligation to fast applies only to Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59. To fast in the Catholic tradition means to limit oneself to one full meal during the day so as to experience hunger.

The obligation of abstinence affects all Catholics who have reached the age of 14. Abstinence in the Catholic tradition means to abstain from meat and all meat products.

The obligation of fast and abstinence, as a whole, is a serious obligation. While failure to observe any penitential day in itself may **not be considered serious**, the failure to observe any penitential days at all, or a **substantial number** of them **without good cause**, would be considered a **grave matter**. Those unable to abstain for a valid reason on any given Friday of Lent are asked to perform **some other penitential act**, or to **abstain on another day**.

May all our Lenten prayers, fasting and works of mercy help prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord with renewed minds and hearts.

+Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski
Bishop of Metuchen

(If you would like these instructions emailed to your parish, please send a request to jlynch@diometuchen.org)