



RT. REV. JOHN RODRIGUES  
BISHOP OF POONA  
8th February 2024

## LENTEN OFFICIAL- 2024

To,  
The Parish Priests, Diocesan Priests &  
Heads of Institutions, Religious Superiors,  
Brothers and Sisters,  
Diocese of Poona

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and the faithful people of God,

Lent is a time of conversion, repentance and reparation. It is a time to grow in our love of Jesus and union with God. Self-examination, self-renewal and deepening our commitment as Christians and as human persons is all to our own advantage. During the Lenten season, through prayer, almsgiving and fasting, let us make efforts to grow in holiness.

Through our Lenten observance let us progress towards the most joyful Feast of Easter: the victory of *Jesus* over evil, suffering, sin and death. The *Risen Jesus* brings us perfect and lasting joy and happiness.

**The Holy Catholic Church wants us to observe the following for a fruitful Lenten Season:**

### **1) FASTING:**

There are only two days of fasting prescribed - **ASH WEDNESDAY** 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and **GOOD FRIDAY** 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

- All those who have completed 18 years and are not yet 60 years are bound by the law of fasting.
- On days of fasting only one full meal is recommended.
- Those who cannot keep the law of fasting without considerable difficulty because of health, work, etc., are excused from the observance of the law. But one should not lightly excuse oneself from this obligation.

### **2) ABSTINENCE:**

The days of Abstinence are **ASH WEDNESDAY** (14th February 2024) and **GOOD FRIDAY** (29<sup>th</sup> March 2024) and **ALL FRIDAYS OF THE YEAR**.

The law of abstinence binds those who have completed 14 years and above.

Following are the guidelines given by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), which are to be observed in the Diocese of Poona regarding the obligation of abstinence. You may choose from the following:

- Attending Mass or making a 15-minute visit to the Blessed Sacrament or doing 15 minutes of reading of the Bible or a 15-minute meditation on the Passion of Our Lord or making the Way of the Cross.
- Abstaining from meat preparations if meat is part of one's regular diet.
- Skipping one meal - breakfast/ lunch/ supper.
- For non-vegetarians, taking strictly vegetarian meals, without even fish and eggs.
- Abstaining from alcohol and smoking, for those who consume these.
- Avoiding all beverages like tea or coffee, or sweet drinks, between meals.
- Avoiding viewing films, television, surfing internet and other forms of recreation on the days of abstinence.
- Giving 10% of one's daily basic wage in charity on days of abstinence.
- There should be some sacrifice in what we do.

### 3) DISPENSATION:

Where the faithful have difficulties with regard to Fasting or Abstinence, the Parish Priest or Confessor should be approached for dispensation.

A dispensation from the law of Fasting and Abstinence is hereby granted to members of the Armed Forces in the Diocese of Poona and to travellers by land, sea or air, but they are encouraged to *observe* Fasting and Abstinence whenever they can.

### 4) EASTER DUTIES

- Once admitted to the Blessed Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year.
- "This precept must be fulfilled during Paschal time, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time during the year." (*Canon 920:1 & 2*).
- "All the faithful who have reached the age of discretion are bound faithfully to confess their *grave* sins at least once a year." (*Canon 989*).

**THE EASTER DUTIES CAN BE FULFILLED BETWEEN ASH WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and PENTECOST 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

This circular is to be placed on the Church Notice Boards and the contents should be brought to the notice of the faithful during the announcements at all Masses. Wishing you all a fruitful Lent !

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*+ J. Rodrigues*

**Rt. Rev. John Rodrigues**  
**Bishop of Poona**

