



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

February 23, 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are not to be taken lightly. By these disciplines, and other works of penance, we accompany and support the Catechumens on their way to the Easter Sacraments and we cooperate in our own conversion of heart as we prepare to renew our baptismal promises.

In addition, the Church's law calls the faithful to specific acts of fasting and abstinence during this holy season:

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast. On days of fast, one full meal and two lesser meals are allowed. Eating between meals is not permitted. Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are bound to fast.

Ash Wednesday and all of the Fridays of Lent are also days of abstinence. On days of abstinence, meat may not be taken. The law of abstinence binds all Catholics fourteen years of age or older.

If members of the Faithful are unable to observe the fast and abstinence regulations because of ill health or other reasons, they are urged to practice other forms of penance and self-denial suitable to their condition.

Ignoring the laws of fast and abstinence is a serious matter.

This year, the Commemoration of St. Patrick falls on the Friday of the Second Week of Lent. I have heard from a number of the Faithful of the Diocese who have requested to be dispensed from the law of abstinence on that day, in order to observe the Saint's feast in the traditional manner. This is especially true for various associations and communities within our Diocese.

Therefore, for those who wish to observe the Commemoration of St. Patrick in this manner, I commute the observance of the law of abstinence to another day of the Second Week of Lent, exclusive of Sunday. That is, any of the Faithful in the Diocese of Davenport who wish to take meat on Friday, March 17, may do so as long as they abstain from meat on some other day of that week (March 13-18).

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Martin Amos  
Bishop of Davenport