

February 20, 2023

Good Morning!

Federal Holiday - Presidents Day! School is closed today.

1. Today's Readings: [Monday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: We fast during Lent, but every Friday in the year is also a day of fasting. Why keep Friday as a fast day? Through this self-denial we identify with the death of the Lord. However, there are some other good reasons for keeping Friday as a fast day. We function best when we are observing a regular routine. We keep Sundays special through the celebration of Mass, and making it a special day of relaxation. But more emphasis is placed on this practice during Lent. Today, Fr. Longenecker gives us "Practical Practice of Fasting".

3. Quotes of the Day:

~"Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity. Enter again into yourself." St. Augustine

~'Fasting is directed to two things, the deletion of sin, and the raising of the mind to heavenly things." St. Thomas Aquinas

~"Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins." St. John Chrysostom

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Practical Practice of Fasting



This is the main fast: to discipline our physical appetites in order to concentrate on the spiritual realm. Rather than being satiated and dull as the result of too much food and drink, fasting makes our senses sharper and we become more aware of the spiritual realm.

Put very simply--Jesus commands us to fast and pray. The saints take fasting seriously and the church commands us to make fasting part of our life. Why not take up this discipline with a new intention. The amazing thing you will discover is not only does it help you physically, mentally and spiritually, but eventually it will bring you added vigor and real spiritual joy.

When Dr Eben Alexander was in a coma for seven days, he went through a dramatic near-death experience. In his book Proof of Heaven, he explains how he believes our brains interact with our consciousness. Rather than the brain producing consciousness he suggests the brain functions like a filter for our consciousness. As such he says the brain is usually so busy with all our mundane tasks that it has little time to contemplate the spiritual dimension. We are so caught up in the physical realm that we have little time or energy to concentrate on the spiritual.

Suddenly I understood why the monastic tradition in every religion insists on asceticism. To concentrate on the spiritual, the monks and nuns strictly discipline their physical lives. They narrow their lives down by staying in one place. They take vows of poverty, so they are unconcerned about the accumulation of wealth. They take vows of obedience so they can be unworried about personal choices. They discipline their bodies through fasting so their minds can open up the realities of the spiritual realm.

This is the main reason why we are expected to fast: to discipline our physical appetites in order to concentrate on the spiritual realm. Rather than being satiated

and dull as the result of too much food and drink, fasting makes our senses sharper and we become more aware of the spiritual realm.

We fast during Lent, but every Friday in the year is also a day of fasting. Why keep Friday as a fast day? Through this self-denial we identify with the death of the Lord. However, there are some other good reasons for keeping Friday as a fast day. We function best when we are observing a regular routine. We keep Sundays special through the celebration of Mass, and making it a special day of relaxation.

Keeping Friday as a fast day balances the feast day of Sunday. Within the cycle of the week, if we keep Friday as a fast day, something mysterious starts to happen. As Sunday is a special day, Friday becomes a serious day. We remember the Lord's death on Friday and so Friday can become a day when we work through the darker side of our lives, a day when we allow the Holy Spirit to take us into the shadow areas and allow Christ's healing light to do its work.

There are other notable benefits to fasting. The first is that through fasting we gain self-mastery. Limiting our intake of food means we are more self-controlled in other areas of our life. You can't take fasting seriously and be enslaved to other addictions for long. Self-control in one area helps with self-control in other excessive behaviors.

Fasting also brings real physical benefits. Fasting one day a week de-toxifies the body and helps it re-adjust. A day on just water or pure fruit or vegetable juice cleanses and renews our whole system, and after just a few weeks the body adapts. The hunger pangs on Fridays disappear and on that day the body kicks into high gear--almost as if it is ready and enthusiastic about its weekly de-tox. As part of this benefit our appetites are cleansed. Food and drink taste better. Complex and rich foods do not appeal, and we appreciate simple and whole foods more.

The third practical benefit of fasting is that we reassess our attachment to physical pleasures of all kinds. Not only does it help us control other addictive or excessive behaviors, but an amazing side effect is that it also changes our mind about other worldly aspects of our lives. I've known people overcome extreme materialism and vanity by regular fasting. Others have overcome worries about money and status. Others have overcome self-image obsessions or sexual obsessions while others have been able to take control of bad personal relationships, insecurities and fears.

Fasting combined with prayer is a powerful force in our lives because through it we combine physical discipline with spiritual discipline. God made us to be physical-spiritual hybrids, and we combine the spiritual and the physical--as we do in the sacraments and in prayer and fasting it means we are operating at full capacity.

What's the best way to fast? A full day fast means nothing to eat from Thursday after supper until Friday evening. It is difficult to begin with a full day fast. Better to break yourself in gradually. Start by skipping lunch on Friday, then after a week or two skip breakfast as well. Start at first on just bread and water. After a few weeks of bread and water, shift to just water and fruit or vegetable juice or light broth. Then eventually fast on just water for that full day.

Remember fasting is for those who are basically well and physically fit. People with eating disorders or physical or emotional conditions should only fast under supervision from their doctors. Also, while fasting is healthy and good for you, it should be done in a balanced and thoughtful way. It's not a bad idea to read up on the subject. The New Life Fasting Guide by Helmutt Luetzner and The Beginner's Guide to Fasting by Elmer Towns are good practical guides.

Put very simply--Jesus commands us to fast and pray. The saints take fasting seriously and the church commands us to make fasting part of our life. Why not take up this discipline with a new intention. The amazing thing you will discover is not only does it help you physically, mentally and spiritually, but eventually it will bring you added vigor and real spiritual joy.

Source: catholic.org