

# The Second Sunday of Lent



Cetty Images

## Questions and Answers about Lent

*Why do we say that there are forty days of Lent? When you count all the days from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, there are 46.*

It might be more accurate to say that there is the "forty day fast within Lent." Historically, Lent has varied from a week to three weeks to the present configuration of 46 days. The forty day fast, however, has been more stable. The Sundays of Lent are certainly part of the Time of Lent, but they are not prescribed days of fast and abstinence.

*So does that mean that when we give something up for Lent, such as candy, we can have it on Sundays?*

Apart from the prescribed days of fast and abstinence on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and the days of abstinence every Friday of Lent, Catholics have traditionally chosen additional penitential practices for the whole Time of Lent. These practices are disciplinary in nature and often more effective if they are continuous, i.e., kept on Sundays as well. That being said, such practices are not regulated by the Church, but by individual conscience.

*I understand that Catholics ages 18 to 59 should fast on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday, but what exactly are the rules for these fasts?*

Fasting on these days means we can have only one full, meatless meal. Some food can be taken at the other regular meal times if necessary, but combined they should be less than a full meal. Liquids are allowed at any time, but no solid food should be consumed between meals.

*Are there exemptions other than for age from the requirement to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?*

Those that are excused from fast and abstinence outside the age limits include the physically or mentally ill including individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Also excluded are pregnant or nursing women. In all cases, common sense should prevail, and ill persons should not further jeopardize their health by fasting.

*This information first appeared on USCCB.org*

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/len/questions-and-answers-about-lent.cfm>

**On Friday, March 13th, we celebrate the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis' election!**

Let us pray for the Holy Father:

O God, shepherd and ruler of all the faithful,  
look favorably on your servant Francis,  
whom you have set at the head of your  
Church as her shepherd;

Grant, we pray, that by word and example  
he may be of service to those over whom  
he presides

so that, together with the flock entrusted  
to his care,

he may come to everlasting life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the  
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,  
for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

