

Tonight: Ashes distributed
after the 5:10 Mass; in
Dillon at 6:30 and 7:30.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
February 19, 1958

Tomorrow: Adoration for
Morrissey, Breen-Phillips
and St. Edward's Halls.

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What Does the Law Say?

During Lent, Catholic people throughout the world are directed by the Church to do penance in specific ways. They are to fast, or abstain, or increase their prayers, or make additional contributions to charity, as the Church specifies. These good works are all mentioned in the Bible. And so are the words of Our Lord: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish!"

As a good mother looking out for the welfare of her children, the Church wants none of her children to perish in eternity. Therefore, she seizes upon the season of Lent to have her children do the penance that will insure their eternal safety. And that makes good sense.

During Lent, all Catholics in good health who have reached the age of 21, and have not completed their 59th year, come under the law of the Church which specifies that they are to eat one full meal a day. Meat is permitted only at this meal. In addition to the one full meal, they are permitted two lighter meals without meat; but these two meals should not equal another full meal. On certain other days, all Catholics who have reached their 7th year are obliged to abstain from meat.

That's the general program for Lent that you will be expected to follow the rest of your life until you reach 59, if you remain a practicing Catholic. The Church prescribes this rule of fast and abstinence under pain of mortal sin, unless your health or work would be seriously impaired. In doubt, consult your parish priest or confessor -- he will tell you whether or not the law continues to bind you.

The Notre Dame Dispensation

Here at Notre Dame, lest the fasting and abstinence impair your health or work, the Most Reverend Bishop declares that we are dispensed from this particular form of penance -- but only while we are here on the campus. This dispensation extends to the faculty, to residents, to visitors, to employees -- when they eat on campus (which includes Vetville and the Morris Inn). For Off-Campus students, this dispensation becomes a personal one -- it follows them off-campus likewise, provided they do not give scandal in using it elsewhere. That's why the Bishop makes our dispensation a local one -- to avoid scandal downtown where other Catholics are obliged to observe the laws of fast and abstinence. Those who take weekends, for example, are obliged to observe the general laws of fast and abstinence; they forfeit their dispensation.

This Is Very Important

But remember that no one can exempt you from doing penance. If you do not fast and abstain, you must do something else -- some real penance -- if you want to play the game of Lent as a practical Catholic. You must take Lent seriously if you hope to save your soul. This is the season set aside by the Church to make sure we don't perish for eternity. This is a game in which we play for big stakes. If we're smart, we'll play the game to the hilt with our prayers, our self-denial, our charity. And we start today. The Bishop suggests daily Mass, the Lenten Series, and daily acts of self-denial, especially regarding food and drink.

Beginning tonight at 7:15, Radio Station WNDU will present the "Way of the Cross" every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evening during Lent. Father Hesburgh will be the narrator, and music will be supplied by the Mathes Choral Society under the direction of Father McAuliffe. We recommend this devotion to the crowd at the Students' Infirmary and to the other "Shut-Ins" of the neighborhood.