



2026 Lenten Regulations for the Diocese of Santa Rosa

"The Lenten Season has a double character, namely to prepare both catechumens and faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. The **catechumens**, both with the Rite of Election and Scrutinies, and by catechesis, are prepared for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation; the **faithful**, ever more attentive to the Word of God and prayer, prepare themselves by penance for the renewal of their baptismal promises" (*The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist*).

The current discipline is as follows:

- Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of **fast** and **abstinence**, that is, limited to a single, full meal and abstinence from meat.
- The other Fridays of Lent are days of **abstinence** from meat.
- The law of **fasting** permits only one full meal a day, but it does allow the taking of some food in the morning and a second light meal at noon or in the evening, as you prefer. Persons who have completed their eighteenth year to the beginning of their sixtieth year are obligated to fast.
- The law of **abstinence** from meat applies to all persons who have completed their fourteenth year of age. However, it is highly recommended that children from ages seven to fourteen years also follow the law of **abstinence**.
- All Catholics are encouraged to receive Holy Eucharist frequently during Lent and to receive the Sacrament of Penance so that all may be prepared to celebrate more fully the paschal mystery. Those who have received their First Holy Communion are to receive Holy Communion during the Easter season.
- The determination of these days of obligatory penance, as listed above, should not be understood as limiting the occasions for Christian penance. This penance is to help us see and shorten the distance between our present lives and the life God wants for each of us. "Penance should not be only internal and individual but external and social" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 110).
- **Marriages** may be celebrated with Mass, and the nuptial blessing should always be given. It is, however, contrary to the spirit of penance during Lent to plan an elaborate wedding with lavish decorations.

Confirmation at the Easter Vigil: Canon Law grants pastors and parochial vicars the faculty to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation—within their proper parish—to any adult or child over the age of seven years on the occasion of his or her baptism or reception into full communion with the Church.