

# FRIDAY PENANCE

For an outpouring of God's mercy and  
the Holy Spirit's gifts of holiness and  
strength upon the Church

**I**NOW INVITE ALL OF YOU TO DEVOTE  
your Friday penances ... to this  
intention. I ask you to offer up your  
fasting, your prayer, your reading of  
Scripture and your works of mercy in  
order to obtain the grace of healing  
and renewal for the Church in Ireland.  
I encourage you to discover anew the  
sacrament of Reconciliation and to  
avail yourselves more frequently of the  
transforming power of its grace.

*POPE BENEDICT XVI,  
PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND*



IRISH CATHOLIC  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF IRELAND



**C**HRI<sup>S</sup>T, 'HOLY, INNOCENT, AND UNDEFI<sup>E</sup>LED,' knew nothing of sin, but came only to expiate the sins of the people. The Church ... at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal. All members of the Church, including her ministers, must acknowledge that they are sinners. ... the Church gathers sinners already caught up in Christ's salvation but still on the way to holiness.

*CATECHISM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH 827*

- ⊕ Penance is an essential part of the lives of all Christ's faithful.
- ⊕ It arises from the Lord's call to conversion and repentance.
- ⊕ We do penance
  - ❖ in memory of the passion and death of the Lord,
  - ❖ as a sharing in Christ's suffering,
  - ❖ as an expression of inner conversion,
  - ❖ as a form of reparation for sin.

**T**HE SEASONS AND DAYS OF PENANCE IN THE course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

*CATECHISM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH 1438*

- ⊕ Declaring some days throughout the year (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) as days of 'fast and abstinence' is meant to intensify penances of the Christian, not to isolate them.
- ⊕ Lent is the traditional season for renewal and penance. In addition to the season of Lent, Catholics observe each Friday of the whole year as days of penance.
- ⊕ The link between Friday and penance is extremely ancient and is even reflected in the Irish word for 'Friday', *An Aoine* (the fast).



## Forms of Friday Penance

The following are suggested as ways of fulfilling Friday penance:

- ⊕ Abstaining from meat or some other food
- ⊕ Abstaining from alcoholic drink or smoking
- ⊕ Making a special effort at involvement in family prayer
- ⊕ Making a special effort to participate in Mass on Fridays
- ⊕ Visiting the Blessed Sacrament
- ⊕ Making the Stations of the Cross
- ⊕ Fasting from all food for a longer period than usual and perhaps giving what is saved to the needy
- ⊕ Helping the poor, sick, old, or lonely.

The following are suggested tweets which could be tweeted each Friday



**Friday Penance:**  
Make a special effort at family prayer. Make the Stations of the Cross. Do something to help the poor, sick or lonely.



**Friday Penance:**  
Make a special effort to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Abstain from meat or some other food.