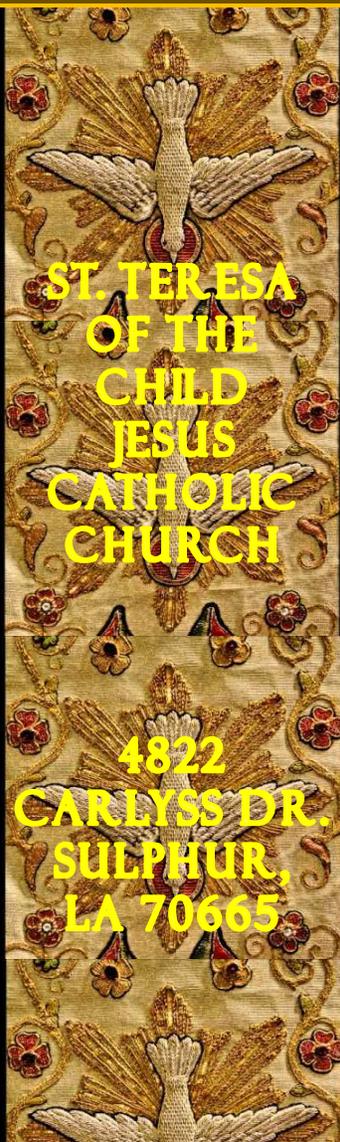


Ember Saturday Mass of Pentecost



Ember Days of 2019 +A.D.+

March 13th, 15th, 16th
June 12th, 14th, 15th
Sept, 18th, 20th, 21st
Dec. 18th, 20th, 21st

This Mass is an excellent opportunity to observe the days of prayer and penance, known as Ember Days, that Bishop Provost has recently established by particular law for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

This Mass is specifically offered for reparation for sins and the increased sanctification of our clergy.



Diocese of Lake Charles, Louisiana
Most Reverend Glen John Provost, M.A., D.D.



WHAT ARE EMBER DAYS AND WHAT IS THEIR PURPOSE?

By an ancient and immemorial practice of the Roman Church, each of the seasons in the yearly circle of the Earth around its star is sanctified by the Church on what are known as Ember Days, or in Latin *quattuor tempora*, meaning “the four times”.

On the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of these four weeks, which were spread out roughly at the change of each season, both the clergy and the lay faithful would offer to God the tribute of prayer and fasting for three purposes: **first**, to thank Him for the blessings of the season just past and to ask for blessings on the season to come; **second**, in reparation for sins and asking grace to reform life going forward; and **third**, for the sanctification of the clergy.

HISTORY OF THE EMBER DAYS

The origins of the Ember Days are ancient and venerable. The great liturgical historian Dom Prosper Guéranger notes that the Apostles probably took these times of prayer and fasting over from the Jews (The Liturgical Year, vol. 1, 218).

The Didache notes that early Christians fasted each and every Wednesday (the Betrayal of Our Lord), Friday (the Death of Our Lord), and Saturday (Our Lord in the Tomb), the day Our Lady mourned Her Son's Death. Indeed, there is ample historical evidence affirming the observance of the Ember Days in the Roman Rite at least *since the third century*.

As noted above, placing *special emphasis on praying for the sanctification of the clergy* became an essential part of the Ember observance. Over time, and in Rome, the custom developed of ordaining priests on the Saturdays of Ember Weeks. This was both reasonable and appropriate given that Roman Catholics throughout the world were engaged in prayer and penance for the clergy.

And does not the present crisis call out for a similar observance? It was none other than St. John Vianney, the patron saint of priests, who once taught:

“One ought to pray earnestly, especially at the Ember Seasons, that God will give us good priests. If they are saints, what great good they can do!”

Regrettably, since 1969 the observance of the Ember Days in the universal Church is no longer fixed in the calendar; however, **Bishop Provost has made the observance of prayer and penance on Ember Days particular law in the Diocese of Lake Charles**. In doing this he has joined a number of other Bishops who have either encouraged or mandated some form of Ember observance in their dioceses.

Accordingly, Catholics in the Diocese of Lake Charles are urged to observe prayer and penance on the Ember Days.

HOW SHOULD I OBSERVE THE EMBER DAYS?

Prayer and the observance of penance is necessary on Ember days. In accordance with the guidelines provided by the Office of Liturgy of the Diocese of Lake Charles, these recommendations are made for your consideration for each of the Ember Days:

Prayer

1. Attend Holy Mass.
2. Make a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, or at least a brief visit.
3. Pray the Rosary, preferably as a family.
4. Make prayers of reparation for the sins of the clergy, for the clergy's sanctification, for the conversion of sinners, for the strengthening of faith for all Christians, and for the healing of victims of abuse.

Penance

1. Observe **partial** abstinence each Ember **Wednesday** and **Saturday**.
Partial abstinence: meat and soup or gravy cooked with meat permitted once a day at the principal meal.
2. Observe **complete** abstinence each Ember **Friday**.
Complete abstinence: the total abstinence from meat and soup or gravy cooked with meat by those 14 years of age and older.
3. Fasting from food.
Ages 18-59 - one full meal and, if needed, two collations (“snacks”), which when combined, do not exceed a full meal on each Ember Day.
4. Fasting from media.
Other than for work, make a complete and total fast from all electronic media on each Ember Day.