

# Lenten Observances 2022

The Most Reverend Bishops Gregory J. Mansour and A. Elias Zaidan have issued the following Lenten guidelines for the Maronites of the United States.

## Fasting and Abstinence

- + All Maronites who are physically capable are to **abstain** from meat on **Ash Monday** (28 February 2022) and all **Fridays of Lent**. This year an exception is made for Friday, 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation. Meat may be eaten on this feast.
- + **Ash Monday** and the **Great Friday of the Crucifixion** (15 April 2022) are also days of **fasting**. Fasting in the Maronite Church involves **eating and drinking nothing** at all (except water and medicine) from **midnight until noon**. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken, but without meat. All Maronites who are physically capable should fast on these two days.

## Distribution of Ashes

All parish priests are to bless and distribute ashes on **Ash Monday** during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy as indicated in our liturgical books. This ceremony may **not** be celebrated on the vigil of Ash Monday (Cana Sunday). For the convenience of some faithful of the Latin Church who may come to Mass at a Maronite Church on their Ash Wednesday, ashes that were blessed on Monday may be given to them after the Mass. However, ashes are **not** to be blessed again on this day.

## Lenten Services

All parish priests are to celebrate the **Benediction with the Cross** every **Friday of Lent** except for the Great Friday of the Crucifixion. This service may be preceded by **Evening Prayer (Ramsho)**, **Stations of the Cross**, or even the **Divine Liturgy**. Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament should **not** take place on the Fridays of Lent.

## Traditional Fasting Discipline

Clergy, religious and laity who wish to observe the more **traditional** Maronite practice of fasting and abstinence are **encouraged** to do so. That practice is summarized in the following, taken from **current Maronite Particular Law**:

Every weekday of Lent (Monday through Friday) is a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products (eggs, butter, milk, etc.). Fasting involves eating and drinking nothing at all (except water and medicine) from midnight until noon. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken, but without meat or dairy products. Dairy products are excluded because they are animal byproducts. Saturdays and Sundays are exempt from fasting and abstaining, as are the following feast days: St. Joseph – 19 March, and the Annunciation– 25 March.