



Since the earliest days of the Church the Christian faithful have set apart Friday in remembrance of Our Lord's death on the cross as a day for special penitential observance. This truth, also enshrined in Canon Law, requires every Christian to do some penance on Fridays. Abstinence from meat is suggested for every Friday during the year, as the form of penance, but is required on the Fridays of Lent. This praiseworthy practice allows us to willingly suffer with Christ so that we may one day be glorified with Him. Notwithstanding the privileged place of this penitential practice in the spiritual life, requests for dispensation have not been infrequent when Fridays in Lent have corresponded with traditional days of Christian celebration when prudence seems to indicate remembrance of special feasts.

The faithful of the Diocese of Crookston have long marked each March 17th as the feast of the saintly first bishop of Armagh. Many have been shaped by Irish heritage, indebted to Saint Patrick for the gift of their Catholic faith, including their current bishop.

NOW THEREFORE

Considering that the Memorial of Saint Patrick coincides in 2023 with the third Friday of Lent; and

In thanksgiving for the example of Saint Patrick as a missionary disciple sent to evangelize a rural people in need of the Lord's mercy; and

Recognizing the rich spiritual patrimony handed on to the faithful of this community by the spiritual sons and daughters of Saint Patrick throughout the history of this Diocese; and

Having determined that the prominence of the Memorial in the sensibilities and practice of faithful Catholics of this local Church warrants the relaxation of the penitential spirit normally to be observed on any Friday, most especially a Friday in Lent; with this decree I hereby

DISPENSE FROM THE OBLIGATION OF ABSTINENCE ON MARCH 17, 2023

Those faithful domiciled or physically present in the territory of the Diocese who would ordinarily be bound to observe abstinence from meat on the Fridays of the season of Lent. All, however, who choose to enjoy the favor of the dispensation by partaking in the eating of meat on the Memorial of Saint Patrick this year, are exhorted to undertake a work of charity, an exercise of piety, or an act of comparable penance on some other occasion during the Third Week of Lent.

Through the intercession of Saint Patrick, may Christ be in the heart of everyone who thinks of us, in the mouth of everyone who speaks of us, in every eye that sees us, and in every ear that hears us. Glorious Saint Patrick pray for us! Make us true missionary disciples like you!

Given at Crookston, Minnesota, on this 9th day of March in the Year of Our Lord 2023.

Janele C. Gergen
Chancellor

The Most Reverend Andrew H. Cozzens
Bishop of Crookston