

Herbst, Winfrid, 1891-
— Yes or no
ADR 2990

YES or NO

A
LITTLE CATECHISM
ON
FAST AND ABSTINENCE
IN
THREE LESSONS

by Fr. Winfrid Herbst. S.D.S.

808539

YES or NO

A
LITTLE CATECHISM
ON
FAST AND ABSTINENCE
IN
THREE LESSONS

(Revised)



Published by
SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR
(Salvatorian Seminary)
Publishing Department
ST. NAZIANZ, WISCONSIN
1952

Third Edition

Printed in the U. S. A.

IMPRIMI POTES:

Jerome Jacobs, S.D.S.
Provincial Superior

NIHIL OBSTAT:

N. L. Gross
Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ **Stanislaus V. Bona**
Bishop of Green Bay

A LITTLE CATECHISM ON FAST AND ABSTINENCE IN THREE LESSONS

By Way of Introduction

So many discussions come up over fast and abstinence and the Lenten regulations each year that Catholics would appreciate a brief answer to the many questions which arise.

The purpose of this little catechism is to answer many, if not most, of the questions that are usually asked.

No explanations or proofs or distinctions are given, since that usually confuses ordinary people all the more. Each question is simply answered with a "Yes" or a "No."

But much careful reading was done and many authors were studiously consulted before the respective answer to each question was given.

If anything in this booklet is not in accord with the fast and abstinence regulations of the place, the latter prevail.

Contents

Fasting	1
Abstinence	7
Exempt, Excused, Dispensed	11

LESSON I

Fasting

(1) Is it true that the law of fasting obliges only those who have attained the age of twenty-one and who are not yet fully fifty-nine years old? Yes.

(2) Is it true that according to the new formula issued by the Episcopal Committee in 1952 regarding fast and abstinence in the United States the only days of fast are the weekdays of Lent, Ember Days, the Vigils of Pentecost, the Assumption, All Saints and Christmas? Yes.

(3) Is only one full meal allowed on days of fast? Yes.

(4) Is it true that now two other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs on a day of fast, but that together those two other meatless meals should not equal another full meal? Yes.

(5) Is it true that meat may be taken at the principal meal on a day of fast except on Fridays, Ash Wednesday and

the Vigils of the Assumption and Christmas? Yes.

(6) Is eating between meals permitted on a day of fast? No.

(7) Are liquids, including milk and fruit juices, allowed between meals? Yes.

(8) I understand that milk is allowed between meals (and of course at meals also) because in the United States milk is served as a drink and not as a food and that the milk allowed is both ordinary or homogenized (passed through an apparatus to break up the fat globules, etc., increasing digestibility) milk. Am I correct in this? Yes.

(9) Are such combinations as malted milk, milk shakes and the like included in the term "milk," that is to say, may they be taken between meals on a day of fast? No.

(10) Are combinations based on skim milk and a coloring or special flavoring, such as the so-called "chocolate milk," considered a drink rather than a food and therefore allowed between meals on a day of fast? Yes.

(11) Is the usual amount of cream in

tea or coffee, according to each one's taste, permitted on days of fast? Yes.

(12) I understand that the reason why fruit juices may be taken between meals on a fast day is that fruit juices are considered a beverage and not a food. Is that correct? Yes.

(13) If a person has an all-the-year-round practice of eating a minimum breakfast, say orange juice, coffee, and toast, and a very light supper or lunch and takes a really full meal only for dinner, is such a one expected to make the breakfast and supper or lunch any smaller during Lent? No.

(14) If a person has the practice of eating heavier meals also at breakfast and lunch, so that the two equal another full meal, does the Lenten law require that, on days of fasting, he diminish the quantity of food at these meals, not to the extent of hampering him in his daily duties but to the extent that he is conscious of genuine self-denial? Yes.

(15) I understand that in 1949 the Holy Father graciously granted "that on days of both fast and abstinence eggs and milk and everything that is produced from milk may also in the morn-

ing and the evening be lawfully taken everywhere in the world." By this concession the Pope changed the law on the **quality** rather than the quantity of food which may be taken in the morning and evening on days of both fast and abstinence, as I understand it. Also, it seems that we in the United States always did have that privilege by custom or permission. Am I correct in all this? Yes.

(16) May one at will take the collation at noon and the full meal in the evening? Yes.

(17) If one has a **good reason** for doing so, may one take the full meal that is allowed on a fast day even in the morning, at breakfast time? Yes.

(18) Are the following merely drinks that do not break the fast and hence are permissible at any time on a fast day: wine, beer, distilled alcoholic drinks, coffee, tea, lemonade, orangeade? Yes.

(19) Is it allowed to eat fruit, like apples, oranges, bananas, or any other kind of fruit between meals on a fast day? No.

(20) If one is keeping the prescribed fast may one drink coffee or tea or milk

as often as he wishes during the day?
Yes.

(21) May one take any kind of medicine not prescribed by a doctor, during Lent, when one must keep the fast? Yes.

(22) If one is obliged to fast, may he take fruit juice whenever he wishes between meals? Yes.

(23) Understanding well that I am not speaking of the Eucharistic fast, may liquid medicine or pills, such as aspirins, cold tablets, vitamin tablets, baking soda to aid digestion, be taken at any time without breaking the fast? Yes.

(24) If one is fasting may he take sodas, soft drinks, or beer whenever he wishes at meals or between meals? Yes.

(25) Is it true that it is a greater hardship to fast than to abstain? Yes.

(26) Is it true that one commits only one sin, and not two, if one wilfully breaks the fast on a day that is both an Ember day and a day of Lent? Yes.

(27) Is it true that it would help bring back the spirit of mortification and teach one self-control and help one do penance and be for the good of soul and body if one, whether obliged to fast or

not, would cut out entirely all eating between meals (between-meal nibbling, night snacks, etc.)? Yes.

(28) Is it true that, if we are obliged to fast and abstain, that precept should be observed in the same manner as the precept of hearing Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation and of fulfilling our Easter Duty? Yes.

(29) Is it true that the Catholic Church, instead of being too rigorous, manifests great wisdom in prescribing days of fast? Yes.

(30) Is it true that fasting causes heart disease, deterioration of the blood, digestive trouble of various kinds, particularly stomach trouble? No.

(31) Is it true that fasting has improved blood pressure, increased metabolism, rejuvenated tissues, bettered respiration and circulation, strengthened vision, cured disorders of the stomach ranging all the way from a simple acute gastritis to gastric ulcer, and in general has resulted in better health? Yes.

(32) Is it true that people who are chronically underweight sometimes gain rapidly after a good severe period of fasting? Yes.

(33) Is it true that, generally speaking and granted that the food situation in a given country is normal, people eat too much, and that the Church is not too rigorous but manifests great wisdom in prescribing days of fast, and that it would be good not only for the soul but also for the body if people would fast more or at least keep the prescribed fasts with greater severity? Yes.

LESSON II

Abstinence

(34) Is it true that the law of abstinence binds all who have arrived at the age of seven years, no matter how old they may be, even if they are over fifty-nine? Yes.

(35) Since the use of lard is permitted in a small quantity on an abstinence day to make the food more palatable, may one also eat, together with the food, those minute little pieces of meat that may remain after the fat has been liquefied into lard by the fire? Yes.

(36) May lard and drippings be eaten whole on a day of abstinence, in pieces, as it were? No.

(37) May one take medicines containing meat extracts on days of abstinence? Yes.

(38) May one take meat soup made of soup bone or of meat extract on a day of abstinence? No.

(39) May the food known as pork and beans be eaten on an abstinence day, if the pieces of pork are removed from the beans, as far as sensibly possible? Yes.

(40) Is a Catholic cook allowed to prepare and serve non-abstinence foods on a day of abstinence to non-Catholics who do not think it is forbidden to eat non-abstinence foods on such a day? Yes.

(41) May beef cubes be used to make broths on a day of abstinence? No.

(42) Is it permitted to eat canned soups such as vegetable soups on a day of abstinence containing no meat but of which it is stated on the label that the soup contains beef stock? No.

(43) If juice and fat extracted from meat by cooking are set aside to jell, may the fat which remains at the top

be used to fry eggs or fish on days of abstinence? Yes.

(44) May jello, or "calf's foot jelly," which is made from meat be eaten on days of abstinence? Yes.

(45) Is it all right to eat meat on an abstinence day just because not to do so might embarrass somebody or because one is eating away from home or with a non-Catholic family? No.

(46) May the casings of fish sausage be eaten on a day of abstinence when those casings are not artificial but are made of the intestines of animals? No.

(47) It is true that according to the new formula issued by the Episcopal Committee regarding fast and abstinence in the United States complete abstinence (no meat at all) is to be observed on Fridays, Ash Wednesday, the Vigils of the Assumption and Christmas, and on Holy Saturday morning, and that on days of complete abstinence not only may meat not be eaten but also soup or gravy made from meat may not be used at all? Yes.

(48) Is it true that partial abstinence is to be observed on Ember Wednesdays

and Saturdays and on the Vigils of Pentecost and All Saints, and that on days of partial abstinence meat and soup or gravy made from meat may be taken only **once** a day at the principal meal? Yes.

(49) I gather from the above simplification of the law of abstinence that all may make use of the privileges, whether they be manual laborers, stenographers, white collar workers, students, seminarian, Religious, etc. Is that correct? Yes.

(50) Is it a sin willingly and knowingly to eat a little meat on a day of abstinence if one has a good reason for doing so, for instance, if a cook has to taste (test) meat that he is preparing for non-Catholics on a Friday and does not want to spit it out again, slight though that indecency may be? No.

(51) Are travelers who simply cannot find enough other substantial food like milk or fish or eggs excused on that account from the law of abstinence, provided every effort is made to find such abstinence food and provided they do not thereby scandalize their neighbor? Yes.

(52) I have heard that only that is

forbidden on a day of abstinence which is with certainty known to be meat. When in doubt, then, as to whether a thing is meat or fish, provided one cannot solve the doubt, is it allowed to eat it? Yes.

(53) Is one permitted to eat margarine on an abstinence day just like butter? Yes.

(54) Is it allowed on a day of abstinence to partake of food of which you have a doubt whether little particles of meat are in it? Yes.

LESSON III

Exempt, Excused, Dispensed

(55) Is it true that those are exempt from fasting for whom the law was not made or intended, that is, all under 21 years of age and all over 59 years of age? Yes.

(56) May one who is exempt from fasting, e.g., who is not yet twenty-one years old or over fifty-nine, fast if he wishes to do so? Yes.

(57) Would it be a good thing for one who is not yet twenty-one to fast on certain days of Lent, say on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays, just to see what it is like to keep the strict fast? Yes.

(58) Is it true that when one has reached the age of twenty-one and one's first Lent comes along and one is really excused from fasting, it would be a good thing to keep the strict fast anyhow for a while or from time to time, in order to get the spirit of Lent? Yes.

(59) If one does not have to fast, be it that he is exempt or excused or dispensed, does that mean that one may eat meat as often as he wishes on a fast day which is not also a day of complete or partial abstinence? Yes.

(60) Is it true that those are excused from fasting for whom the legislator, the Church, indeed made the law but now excuses for some reason, because they are sick, convalescent, or in delicate health, because they are women who are about to become mothers or who are nursing a child, because they must work hard, etc? Yes.

(61) Is one excused from fasting when one makes a trip by car or train or air-

plane, as one usually travels nowadays?
No.

(62) When doing a hard day's work, such as scrubbing or housecleaning or any hard farm work, would one be excused from fasting on that day without asking one's pastor or confessor? **Yes.**

(63) Are farmers who actually work a great part of the day excused from fasting, even if they could on a day of fasting omit their work or are so strong that they could do their work and fast at the same time, and also on the odd days when they rest? **Yes.**

(64) Are teachers, not only in higher branches but also in lower grades, and all students who spend most of the day in diligently attending lectures or in preparing their lessons, excused from fasting, if they cannot otherwise fulfill their duties? **Yes.**

(65) Are cooks who have to cook for many persons and are working during almost the whole day excused from fasting? **Yes.**

(66) Does a cook who is keeping the fast and who has often to taste a little food between times all day long, have

such a sufficiently good reason for taking more food than would ordinarily be allowed that she may swallow such morsels without violating the fast? Yes.

(67) Take the case of a person who is not **exempt** but who thinks that he is **excused** but is not sure of it and does not wish to act in so serious a matter without consultation. He has a reason which makes the observance of the law rather difficult. So he submits his reason or reasons to a priest. If the priest thinks the reason sufficient and declares that the person in question is excused from fasting, can that person with a good conscience consider himself excused? Yes.

(68) Would it perhaps be better to ask for a **dispensation** in such a case as in the above question, if the priest has the power to dispense? Yes.

(69) Does a dispensation from the law of fasting carry with it a dispensation from abstinence? No.

(70) I understand that there is no longer anything like the Workingmen's Indult, of which we heard so often in former Lenten regulations, in the new regulations regarding abstinence. Is that correct? Yes.

(71) Does one have to have as good a reason for dispensation from fasting or from fasting and abstinence as one has to have in order to be excused? No.

(72) Is it true that a priest who has the power to grant a dispensation from fasting can grant that dispensation privately to the individual faithful not only in the confessional but also outside the confessional, provided the power granted him was not expressly restricted to the sacramental forum? Yes.

(73) If one has a dispensation and nevertheless keeps the strict fast on certain days, does he lose his dispensation? No.

(74) Do those who are really excused from fasting need a dispensation? No.

(75) Is it true that when visiting in another diocese one should follow the Lenten regulation of that other diocese instead of those of one's own diocese? Yes.

(76) If one has a personal dispensation, does it hold good outside one's diocese, anywhere? Yes.

(77) Is it true that religious (Sisters) who get up at four or five in the morning and are busy with work and prayer

all the day long until nine or ten o'clock at night have less need of this particular austerity than others, because of their constant religious observance and because of their regularity, which makes them feel more keenly the change brought about by fasting, and is it true that they are ordinarily excused because fasting is not obligatory when it involves extraordinary difficulty? Yes.

(78) Is it true that a dispensation is the best of all means for setting one's mind at rest regarding the obligation of fasting? Yes.

(79) I understand the following exhortation as an integral part of the formula: "We earnestly exhort the faithful during the periods of fast and abstinence to attend daily Mass; to receive Holy Communion often; to take part more frequently in exercises of piety; to give generously to works of religion and charity; to perform acts of kindness toward the sick, the aged and the poor; to practice voluntary self-denial especially regarding alcoholic drink and worldly amusements; and to pray more fervently, particularly for the intentions of the Holy Father." Is that true? Yes.

