

Why is Friday the day we cannot eat meat?

In Catholic tradition, Friday is observed as a day of penance because it commemorates the day of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion. The Church calls the faithful to unite with the suffering of Jesus by making small sacrifices, such as abstaining from meat.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) explains this in paragraph 1438:

"The 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."

The Code of Canon Law also provides guidance on this discipline:

"Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday" (Canon 1251).

This practice serves as a form of spiritual discipline, reminding Catholics of Christ's sacrifice and encouraging personal conversion. It's not that meat itself is sinful, but that voluntarily giving it up is a symbolic act of penance and solidarity with Christ's suffering.