

The Paulus Institute

On the Vigil of the Assumption Traditional Discipline

According to the traditional discipline, prior to Vatican II, this entire day, August 14th, the Vigil of the Assumption, [is] a day of fast and complete abstinence. On Traditional Latin Mass fast days, such as today . . . only one full meal [is] allowed. Two other meals [are] permitted to maintain one's health, but together should not equal a full meal. The complete abstinence that [is] required on the Vigil of the Assumption [forbids] the eating of meat, or of soups and gravies made of meat. Eating between meals [is] prohibited, but liquids, including fruit juices and milk, [are] allowed. Where health or the ability to perform one's work would be negatively impacted, the laws did not apply. The law of fast [is] binding between the ages of 21 to 59, inclusive. Everyone over 7 years of age [is] bound by the law of abstinence

To remind us that today is a penitential day, the Traditional Latin Mass priest wears purple (violet) vestments for the Vigil of the Assumption. In the classic work, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* by Rev. Dr. Nicholas Gehr, he writes:

“Violet is a fitting emblem of that holy sadness pleasing to God, which produces a spirit of penance steadfast unto salvation (II Cor. 7:10), and also of that laudable sorrow felt by the soul in being obliged to remain far from the Lord in a world foreign to her, which daily, even hourly, endangers her salvation.”

He continues,

“...violet reminds the faithful that they should be intent upon appeasing the justice of God by penance and by cleansing their hearts from sin; they should implore God to free them from famine and tribulation and turn away from them calamities and divine judgments.”

[Today's] Vigil Mass is a preparation for the worthy celebration of tomorrow's Feast of the Assumption. Please note that “Vigils” of the Traditional Latin Mass traditionally [do] NOT fulfill your obligation to attend the next day's required Mass. In other words, [today's] Vigil Mass is not the Mass of the Assumption— you . . . have to attend the Mass of the Assumption tomorrow.

Fr. Ladis J. Cizik

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Ecce Nunc Tempus Acceptabile