

against his friend, and love not a false oath, for all these are the things that I hate" – ... Thus said the Lord of hosts: „The fast ... shall be to the house of Juda joy and gladness, and great solemnities; only love the truth and peace.“»

**Doing Penance**

Fasting shall also be penance for the sins of this world. You will practise this by every now and then renouncing things which are allowed. But restrain yourself from doing penance too severely. Penance that makes you ill, that weakens you, that makes your body suffer and causes hallucinations, will make you a sitting duck for the evil one – swiftly he will swoop down on you and have you in his clutches. Penance should be done with pleasure and certain ease. Anything that is forced and timid takes away the sparkle during the Season of Lent.

Therefore, take advantage of this time of grace! At the Easter Vigil, during the liturgy of Resurrection, I will do everything in my power to ensure that a special Blessing of GOD may descend upon you, and that you may rise newly born to a new life, in which GOD will take delight. Amen!



Schwert-Bischof  
JESU CHRISTI

**Be blessed by GOD TRINITY,  
the + FATHER and the + SON  
and the + HOLY GHOST. Amen!**

Schwert-Bischof  
JESU CHRISTI  
SB.



**About the Right Way to Fast  
and Make Sacrifices**

My beloved, what does fasting mean? – Love GOD more than anything, the whole year long, then you will fast properly and you need not seek a special sacrifice of fasting any longer! Then you will feel how much the Bride of CHRIST, the Church, is currently being abused and violated – how her servants do not know their Lord and Master JESUS any more, treat Him so terribly – how they no longer find love for Him, who is Love Himself. Recognizing all this would be the first and greatest fast.

The Church, however, still observes the so-called days of fasting and abstinence as holy days of obligation. The fast days comprise above all the 40 days before Easter, from Ash Wednesday till Holy Saturday. Good Friday and Ash Wednesday are additional days of fasting and abstinence, on which one ought not to eat any meat and ought not to drink any alcoholic beverages. These days are to remind you with increasing frequency that JESUS CHRIST has given His Flesh and Blood for your salvation.

You can indeed fast the whole year, for it elevates the spirit. The period before Easter, however, is ideal for fasting because no other period of the Ecclesiastical Year is so satiated with grace for a new beginning. Examine yourself to see in what things you have caused the SAVIOUR grief. Then repent and arise anew in the power of CHRIST's Resurrection – as a brand-new person, as a GOD loving person radiating peace, joy and tranquillity.

**How to Fast?**

„And when you fast do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting. Amen I say to you they have received their reward. But you, when you do fast, anoint your head

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and wash your face, so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father, who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.”(Matt. 6,16ff)

There are examples of saints, who practised this convincingly. They hid their fasting so well that their neighbours took offence at it believing they did not observe the commandment of fasting. St Teresa of Avila was known for her devotion to fasting. She had once been invited to a banquet, at which she put away such a fair amount that people questioned her saintliness. Approached about it, she replied spiritedly: „When I eat partridge, I eat partridge, when I fast, I fast!” We know of some other saint who had sweets in store at home, which he offered his visitors in order that nobody should notice that he was fasting.

As a child I wanted to keep the fast heroically according to the custom of those days. A visitor offered me a little chocolate bar. At first I intended to reject it, but I felt this would not be right. I remembered the words of the parish priest: „If you fast, then anoint your head so that no one should notice ...” (see quotation from Holy Scripture above) So I took the chocolate bar and ate it with a face beaming with joy for the visitor’s sake. Then I went to my room and shed tears, deeply grieved, because I had to break the fast only to please the visitor. Though it was a childhood experience, it shows how fasting would be right. It pleased GOD.

## The Gold Mine

Great, conspicuous sacrifices breed pride and delusions of grandeur: „Look at my achievements, what a great saint am I ...”, therefore I warn you against it. On the other hand, little and tiny little acts of love are highly recommendable. About this I once had a vision: In a mine, deep down in a gold mine, some prospectors found a piece of gold as large as a rock. Some of them now started to take this block out. They struggled and went to great lengths until they were totally exhausted and died, yet they had not been able to move this block of gold an inch. Others, however, gathered in this gallery all small and tiny gold nuggets and carried them outside. They would not be kept from doing so by the scorn and derision from those who were grappling with the massive block. Their unearthed gold was piling up rapidly. They are those who thought they had not achieved anything great on earth with their tiny little acts of love, yet in the hereafter they will not believe their eyes seeing the pile of their diligently acquired merits. Those who went for the massive block of gold are the people who thought that only great, conspicuous sacrifices were worth making. They see their

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toil and moil as laudable, yet in the end they have hardly earned any merits, if at all, for Heaven.

According to popular opinion going hungry, chastising oneself, nights of prayer for atonement and praying to breaking point is fasting. In many a monastery or convent they used to hurt themselves or even injure their own bodies through chastisement and sacrifice by wearing penitential robes, using whips, following starvation diets and so on, in order to imitate the Passion of JESUS. It may well have been GOD’s will to some with a calling. But I was taught very differently.

Once a woman came to me at the confessional. She disclosed that she would like to flagellate herself and for this purpose would like to entreat my blessing. „All right”, I replied, „then first you will go into the church, take a file and make a few scratches on the tabernacle with it.” Shocked, the woman argued: „I cannot do that! Look, the SAVIOUR dwells in it ...” – „You see,” I said, „you, too, are a tabernacle, in which GOD dwells. You want to make scratches on this tabernacle with my permission, though it is much more precious as a temple of GOD.

## Fasting with Joy

You shall fast with all senses: If someone offends you, forgive him and give him a smile in return; restrain yourself from gossip and grumbling; make your neighbour happy, especially with those things that will cost you a little trouble; enjoy a good meal, but take only one portion; bridle your curiosity; turn off the television a little earlier than usual; remember, what sufferings the SAVIOUR endures and make Him happy; control your eyes, but see the beauty of creation and praise and glorify GOD for it. If you delight in something GOD has made, and if you return this joy to Him, then you have done a greater thing than when you would have gone hungry for a whole day. Seek only one thing: To please GOD and fill your rucksack with good deeds.

We can read in the prophet Zacharias (Zach 7,4ff; 8,16ff): «And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying: „Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying: ,When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month for these seventy years, did you keep a fast unto me? And when you did eat and drink, did you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Are not these the words which the Lord spoke by the hand of the former prophets, ...” – „These then are the things, which you shall do: Speak the truth everyone to his neighbour: judge the truth and judgement of peace in your gates. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts

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