



March 12, 2023

Psalm 95

Lenten Reflection

Why Do Catholics Eat Fish on Friday?

One of the most distinctive practices of Roman Catholics is a preference for eating fish on Fridays, especially during Lent. Now, have you ever wondered why Catholics have this tradition, as well as how and why it developed? Traditionally, Lent is a time for Christians to reflect on the life and works of Jesus. It was on a Friday when Jesus was crucified. Thus, Friday would serve as a day of reflection, to allow for people to ask forgiveness for their sins. For much of history, meat, particularly red meat, was considered a delicacy and a pleasure. As Lent was a time for Christians to show penance, it became a form of personal sacrifice for not eating meat on Fridays. In the United States, American Catholics were obliged to not eat red meat on Fridays. The rules relaxed in 1966, and Catholics started to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent. In lieu of not eating meat on all Fridays of the year, Catholics were instead encouraged to show penance in other ways, such as donating financial support to the needy.

In the 1960s, McDonald's, then a fledgling burger chain in the process of expanding throughout the United States, noticed that profits decreased on Fridays, particularly in areas with large Catholic populations. Ray Kroc, then-CEO of the company, proposed a "burger" known as the Hula Burger, which was a slice of pineapple sandwiched between two buns. Meanwhile, Lou Groen, a McDonald's franchisee from Cincinnati, Ohio, invented a sandwich consisting of a fish fillet between two buns. On Good Friday 1962, McDonald's held a competition for both burgers. Some restaurants would serve the two items side-by-side, with the winner becoming a permanent item on the menu. The fish fillet sandwich easily outsold the Hula Burger. The Hula Burger disappeared from McDonalds and the Filet-O-Fish remained.

Making a small sacrifice even just once a week can make you become aware of the problems of the world and realize how lucky you are as a person. It can allow you to appreciate what you currently have and be thankful for it. In conclusion, avoiding meat on Fridays has a long history among Catholics and while it is no longer as strict as in the past, it remains one of the most distinctive Catholic practices today.

¹ O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise with songs of praise!

³ For the LORD is a great God
and a great Ruler above all gods.

⁴ In whose hands are the depths of the earth;
and also the heights of the mountains.

⁵ **The sea belongs to God who made it,
and the dry land, because God formed it.**

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷ For the Lord is our God,
**we are the people of God's pasture,
the sheep of God's hand.**

Hear the voice of the Lord today!

⁸ Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹ when your forebears tested me
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰ **For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people who err in heart,
and they do not regard my ways."**

¹¹ **Therefore, I swore in my anger
"that they should not enter my rest."**

Exodus 17: 1-7

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.”

So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?”

³ And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”

⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Romans 5: 1-11

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.