

**A SELECTION OF ISSUES CONCERNING FRIDAY AS THE DAY
OF PENANCE IN THE ASPECT OF CANON LAW**

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ABSTRACT

As for the days of penance the Church legislator set the minimum which Catholics should obey as common practice. Therefore, the mandatory days of penance have been established in the Roman Catholic Church. Among these, there are all Fridays of the entire liturgical year. The purpose of this study is to present one particular type of sacred time from the perspective of law as well as to take part in the discussion on the sanctifying influence of Friday on Catholics. Friday is of special significance for spirituality of all the faithful, as it is closely related to which concern the penance on Friday, both with other people, in public, as well as individually, in private, is a symbol of cooperation with the universal Church, hence Catholics ought to take acts of mortification and devote themselves to prayer frequently.

Key words: canon law, sacred time, day of penance.

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INTRODUCTION

The canonist literature does not provide complete studies concerning Friday as the day of penance, therefore, the work is not only to present this particular type of sacred time from the perspective of law but also to take part in the discussion on the significance of Friday for Catholics. As for the days of penance, the Church legislator set the minimum which Catholics all over the world should obey as common practice. Hence, the days of penance have been established in the Roman Catholic Church. Among these, there are all Fridays of the entire liturgical year and the season of Lent.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FRIDAY

Friday is the day of penance in the Catholic Church. On that day the Catholic is obliged to consider the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ and is obliged to practice penance¹. Each Friday reminds of the most important of Fridays in the history of the world which Good Friday is. On Friday Catholics should practice penance, taking into account all the constituent parts of it as certain obligations are connected with them and determined in the Canon Law. In order to understand the role and significance of Friday one should consider its influence on Christian penitential practice. God calls man to practise penance and to leave the road of sin, therefore penitential activities are the duty of all people according to

¹ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church/Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, no 1438; cf. *The Code of Canon Law/Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego*, can. 1250 (CIC); Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. In: (Eds. Id.), *Commentary to the Code of Canon Law*. Vol. 3/2. *Book IV. The Sanctifying office of the Church. Part I. The Sacraments. Part II. The Other acts of divine worship. Part III. Sacred places and times/Część III. Miejsca i czasy święte*, w: *Komentarz do Kodeksu Prawa Kanonicznego, T. III/2. Księga IV. Uświęcające zadanie Kościoła. Część I. Sakramenty. Część II. Pozostałe akty kultu Bożego. Część III. Miejsca i czasy święte*. Pallotinum, p. 472-473.

the law of God². The core element of penance and repentance is devoting one's life to the Creator, who is the source of all good³.

Nowadays, there is a noticeable problem with respecting the penitential character of Friday and, as a consequence, there is a phenomenon of neglecting the responsibilities associated with it, which in turn results in serious damage to the spiritual life of Catholics. It is difficult to achieve the spiritual growth without sacrifices and mortification, therefore following the rules of penitential nature of the day on all Fridays is a duty⁴. An exception to this rule are the situations when there is a holy day of obligation on that day or it is Friday of the Octave of Easter. The uniqueness of that day is described in an anthem from Syrian-Maronite liturgy: "Why are you, Friday, worshipped so much in all Churches? Tell me. Because on Friday Adam, forefather of mankind, was created, he entered the paradise on Friday and the angels bowed down to Adam to show due respect. And most importantly, God's First-Born Son, who saved the whole world, was crucified on Friday"⁵.

In bringing up people so as to make them spend Fridays properly the most important are: the duty of prayer, the acts of piety and love as well as mortification through various forms of penitential practice, according to the canonical regulations; moreover, it is also of great importance to receive the sacrament of penance and to participate in the Eucharist, which should enable Catholics to restore their spiritual life⁶. From the very beginning, Christians have believed that penance and prayer must be always inseparable. At present, if Friday is treated as the day of penance by

² Cf. Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. In: P. Hempterek [et al.] (Eds.), *Commentary to the Code of Canon Law of 1983. Vol.3. Book III. The Teaching function of the Church. Book IV. The Sanctifying office of the Church/III. Miejsca i czasy święte*, w: *Komentarz do Kodeksu Prawa Kanonicznego z 1983 r., T. 3, Księga III. Nauczycielskie zadanie Kościoła. Księga IV. Uświęcające zadanie Kościoła*. Lublin, p. 422; Rompa F. (1974). *Repentance as the fundamental attitude of the Christian/Pokuta zasadniczą postawą chrześcijanina. Studia Pelplińskie/The Pelplin Studies*. No 5, p. 198.

³ Cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., p. 472.

⁴ Paen, chapter. II, § 3; cf. Szafrowski E. (1976). *Canon Law in the period of the conciliar reform. A coursebook for the clergy/Prawo kanoniczne w okresie odnowy soborowej. Podręcznik dla duchowieństwa*. Vol. 1. Warszawa, p. 172.

⁵ Salij J. (1969). *Theology of fast/Teologia postu. Znak/Sign*, No. 21, p. 393-401.

⁶ Cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 476.

the Catholic, he or she cannot forget about the close relationship between penance and prayer. It is necessary to practice penance not as compulsory but out of love for Christ, who suffered and died on the Cross for every man⁷. Friday, as Sunday, has been the most important day of the week in the Christian tradition, therefore a priest, calling everyone to practice penance, should also encourage them to participate in the Eucharist, a penitential service or a service commemorating the Passion of Jesus as well as to the individual prayer⁸.

If the Catholic wants to avoid spending Friday according to its Christian penitential nature, having a serious reason, he or she should get dispensation from the priest authorised to grant it. It is a duty of the Catholic to obey all rules related to the character of the day of penance that Friday is. If a person cannot do it, the Canon Law provides the person with the possibility of obtaining dispensation. It means complete or partial exemption from the obligation to respect the penitential nature of the day⁹. Dispensation can be granted by the ones who are entitled to do it, as part of their competence, as well as by the ones who clearly or indirectly are entitled to grant dispensation either by law or by delegation to do it.

The Holy See has the right to grant dispensation to all the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church worldwide from the obligation to respect the day of penance as well as to exchange penitential activities for other than the ones¹⁰. However, in the diocese, amongst the other entities, it is the diocesan bishop first of all who is entitled to give dispensation to Catholics according to the Canon Law. He has the right to grant dispensation to the

⁷ Cf. Glapiak J. (2012). *A Practical guide to the law of the Church/Praktyczny przewodnik po przepisach prawa kościelnego*. Poznań, p. 200.

⁸ Cf. CIC, can. 1249; Martin de Agar J. T. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. In: *Comments to the Code of Canon Law. General legislation and particular singular decrees of the Catholic Church. Fundamental administrative acts of the Polish religious law/ Część III. Miejsca i czasy święte*, w: *Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego. Komentarz. Powszechne i partykularne ustawodawstwo Kościoła katolickiego. Podstawowe akty polskiego prawa wyznaniowego*. Eds. P. Majer, Kraków, Pallotinum, p. 925; Sztafrowski, E., *A coursebook of law...*, op. cit., pp. 270-271.

⁹ CIC, can. 85-93, cf. Sztafrowski, E. (1976). *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 156-164.

¹⁰ Cf. Olejnik S. (1989). *Moral theology*. Vol.4. *The Gift. The Call. The Response. Basic foundations of the Christian life/Teologia moralna. T. 4. Dar. Wezwanie. Odpowiedź. Podstawowe ukierunkowanie życia chrześcijańskiego*. Warszawa, p. 222.

faithful of his diocese and the ones who are currently staying in the area of his pastoral care, within his jurisdiction¹¹. Whenever the diocesan bishop recognizes it useful for the spiritual good of the faithful of his diocese, he is allowed to grant dispensation from the obligation to respect the penitential character of Friday and to replace the responsibilities related to the day of penance with other activities¹².

The right to grant dispensation is also given to other ordinaries who are entitled to do it as equal with the diocesan bishop under the Canon Law and who are the general and normal executive authorities. Dispensation can be granted not only to individuals or groups of people, but it might also be given to the entire diocese; however, always and in every case a right cause is required¹³. Higher superiors of clerical institutes of the consecrated life and associations of the apostolic life also belong to the ordinaries under the papal law¹⁴. The right to grant dispensation is given not only to higher superiors but also to superiors of the convent¹⁵. For the right cause, in particular situations, they are entitled to grant dispensation from the obligation to respect the days of penance, or they are allowed to exchange this obligation for other acts of piety whenever they recognize it useful for the spiritual good of the faithful¹⁶.

The diocesan bishop can establish detailed regulations authorizing the parish priest or other priest to grant Catholics dispensation from the obligation to respect the day of penance,¹⁷ therefore, also the parish priest, who does the pastoral work, has the faculty to grant dispensation from obeying

¹¹ Cf. Bakalarz J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., p. 412.

¹² Cf. Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 463.

¹³ CIC, can. 90, § 1; cf. Bakalarz, J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., pp. 412-413.

¹⁴ CIC, can. 1245; cf. Zaborowski M. (2012). *Dispensation in the Church legislation/ Dyspensa w prawodawstwie kościelnym. Annals of Juridical Sciences*. Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 81.

¹⁵ CIC, can. 1245; cf. Martin de Agar J.T., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 922; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 415.

¹⁶ CIC, can. 87, § 1; cf. can. 1245; can. 93; Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 463; Pawluk T. (1986). *Canon Law according to The Code of John Paul II. God's People, their teaching and sanctifying/Prawo kanoniczne według Kodeksu Jana Pawła II, T. II, Lud Boży jego nauczanie i uświęcanie*. Vol. 2. Olsztyn, p. 477.

¹⁷ Cf. *The First Synod of the Diocese of Elk*, art. 897; Pawluk T., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 474.

the days of penance that Fridays are¹⁸. He can grant dispensation for the right cause, following rules and regulations of the Canon Law¹⁹. The parish priest can exercise his right to grant dispensation towards his parishioners and people staying in the parish only in particular cases,²⁰ hence, he cannot exercise this entitlement with one act for an indefinite period of time and with reference to the entire congregation of parishioners. The faithful can make use of the dispensation given by the parish priest wherever they are.

Dispensation can be granted also by the ones who are equal with the parish priest by virtue of law, e.g. the administrator of the parish,²¹ the vicar temporarily stewarding the parish,²² the priest stewarding the temporary parish,²³ the chaplain,²⁴ the rector of a theological seminary and his delegate,²⁵ the priest managing pastoral activity of the parish where the diocesan bishop allowed the deacon or another person without the holy orders but sent to the community to participate in the pastoral work²⁶. In accordance with the Canon Law, if somebody has the right to grant dispensation, he has the right to give it to his subordinates even if he is outside the territory of his pastoral ministry and to the travellers staying currently in the area of his jurisdiction, as well as to himself²⁷. Dispensation from the obligation to fast does not mean dispensation from practising penance in general when other penitential practice is possible²⁸. The priest cannot grant dispensation to the faithful on Good Friday as well as on

¹⁸ CIC, can. 523.

¹⁹ Dzierżoń G. (2005). *The Dispensation from the duty to observe rules established by the Church related to the holiday and the day of penance*/Dyspensowanie od obowiązków zachowania dnia świątecznego oraz dnia pokuty wynikających z przykazań kościelnych. *Prawo Kanoniczne/The Canon Law*, No. 1-2 (48), p. 126.

²⁰ CIC, can. 1245; cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 464; Pawluk T., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 477.

²¹ CIC, can. 540, § 1; cf. Dzierżoń G., *The Dispensation from the...*, op. cit., p. 126.

²² CIC, can. 517, § 2.

²³ CIC, can. 516, § 1; cf. Dzierżoń G., *The Dispensation from the...*, op. cit., p. 126.

²⁴ Cf. Dzierżoń G. *The Dispensation from the...*, op. cit., p. 126.

²⁵ CIC, can. 262; cf. Dzierżoń G., *The Dispensation from the...*, op. cit., p. 126.

²⁶ CIC, can. 517, § 2; cf. Dzierżoń G., *The Dispensation from the...*, op. cit., p. 126.

²⁷ CIC, can. 91; cf. Szafrowski E., *A coursebook of law...*, op. cit., p. 261; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., p. 415.

²⁸ Cf. Olejnik S. (1989). *Moral theology...*, op. cit., p. 222-223.

Ash Wednesday²⁹. With the consent of the diocesan bishop the same right to grant dispensation can be given to the confessor, who then is allowed to give it to penitents during the sacrament of penance; moreover, other priest entitled by the diocesan bishop may have the same right to grant dispensation. Dispensation is valid until the obstacle which caused the request for granting it disappears³⁰.

FRIDAY AS THE DAY OF PENANCE

Friday, since the beginning of Christianity, has been perceived as the day of penance³¹. On Friday the faithful consider the agony and death of Christ, which took place on the Friday later celebrated in the liturgical year as Good Friday. The liturgical regulations and orders of the Roman Catholic Church established the necessity to fast regularly every Friday,³² because in the Christian tradition Friday was devoted to practise penance and, at the same time, it expressed the Paschal Mystery in a special way³³. In the first centuries Christians used to fast, they treated fasting as a form of participation in the Paschal Mystery of the Saviour. On these days they abstained from eating and drinking until 3 p.m. - that is till the moment of death of Jesus³⁴. In the 3rd century the penitential practice on Friday became compulsory and common in the entire Church³⁵.

Christians practised penance by limiting the intake of food. This form of penance was sanctioned and practised by Christ Himself³⁶. The Saviour

²⁹ Cf. Nadolski B. (2006). *Fast/Post*. In: (Ed. Id.), *Lexicon of the liturgy*. Pallotinum, Poznań, p. 1208; Głapiak J. (2012). *A Practical guide...*, op. cit., p. 200.

³⁰ CIC, can. 87, § 1; cf. can. 1245; Olejnik S. (1989). *Moral theology...*, op. cit., p. 43.

³¹ Act 13, 2; cf. 14, 23; Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 473.

³² Cf. Richter, K. (1998). *Fast. Christianity*. In: A. T. Khoury (Ed.), *Lexicon of basic religious concepts*. Warszawa, p. 763.

³³ Cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., p. 473.

³⁴ Cf. Leszczyński B. (2014). *Significance and symbolism of the fast/Znaczenie i symbolika postu*. *Studia Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeskie/The Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Studies*, No. 21, p. 140.

³⁵ Cf. Nadolski B. (2006). *Fast*. op. cit., p. 63.

³⁶ Mt 4, 2; cf. Szafrowski E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 168.

teaches that fasting cannot be treated only as a form of external manifestation, but must also contribute to hallowing the man, making the man better,³⁷ therefore the privileged form of the Christian penance has always been the practice of fasting on certain days of the year³⁸. Reading the Bible, we can draw a conclusion that fast was common practice before a meeting with God,³⁹ as well as before performing a difficult task or before making an important decision and, as such, it was a form of preparation before various events and religious feasts.

Fasting means refraining from something voluntarily, for some time, with a spiritual purpose expressed by prayer and mourning. A decision to help other people, especially those who are in need, should be made in order to complement every penitential act, also the ones which are performed on all Fridays. The Roman Catholic Church from very beginning has been trying to implement the Saviour's idea of fasting⁴⁰. It helps to rectify behaviour, to get rid of bad habits, and it strengthens the man, it helps to overcome temptations⁴¹. The reason for fasting is the need to apologise to God for the sins committed by the man, the will to worship the Creator and to express our love as well as the wish to get united with suffering Christ. For Christians it also means opening to God in order to be open to another man as a result⁴².

One of the ways to practise penance on Friday is refraining from eating or reducing the amount of food⁴³. A traditional form of fasting practice from the beginning of Christianity has been moderation in eating, which is also called abstinence, fasting in terms of quality. Abstinence means abstaining from dishes of meat, or other foods established for Catholics by

³⁷ Mt 6, 16–nn; cf. Sztafrowski E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 168–169.

³⁸ Cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., p. 471.

³⁹ Dn 9, 3; cf. Rosik M. (2012). *Fast in the Bible/Post w Biblii*. In: E. Gigilewicz (Ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol.14, Lublin, p. 61.

⁴⁰ Mt 4, 2; cf. Lk 4, 2; Rosik M. (2012). *Fast in the Bible*, op. cit., p. 62.

⁴¹ Cf. Mojżeszko A. (2011). *Fast/Post. Materiały Homiletyczne/Homiletic Materials*, No. 264, p. 11–12.

⁴² Cf. Grabner-Haider A. (1994). *Lent/Post* In: T. Mieszkowski, P. Pachciarek (Eds.), *The Practical Bible dictionary*. Warszawa, p. 1007.

⁴³ Cf. Rosik M. (2012). *Fast in the Bible*, op. cit., p. 61–62.

the conference of bishops in the area where the faithful live⁴⁴. The rule of moderation in eating must be observed on all Fridays of the entire liturgical year, except for Holy Days of Obligation which happen on Friday or the Octave of Easter. However, on Good Friday abstinence (fasting in terms of quality) is connected with refraining from eating that is fasting in terms of quantity, thus Good Friday is the day of the strict universal fast⁴⁵.

Norms concerning abstinence (the quality fast), established in the Code from 1917, set the obligation to refrain from meat every Friday⁴⁶. However, according to the later legislation, the Canon Law forbade to eat meat dishes, but it did not forbid to eat eggs, dairy products, various dishes even those containing fat of animal origin⁴⁷. Under the new Canon Law the practice of penance is tremendously flexible, as it can be adapted to particular living conditions of Catholics, yet at the same time the conference of bishops is competent to establish the object of abstinence in their area⁴⁸. In various regions of the world abstinence may refer to different dishes, as well as different forms of penitential practice. This replacement means a binding change of the subject of obligation without infringement of the duty to practise penance on Friday⁴⁹.

At present, under regulations of the Canon Law, Catholics aged over fourteen are obliged to observe abstinence from eating meat (fasting in terms of quality) till the end of their lives⁵⁰. Yet, people aged over fourteen who have not reached the use of reason, who do not use their mind properly, are not obliged to observe any form of fasting or any other penitential

⁴⁴ CIC, can. 1251; cf. Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 473; Bakalarz, J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 425.

⁴⁵ CIC, can. 1251; cf. Martín de Agar J.T., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 926.

⁴⁶ CIC/17, can. 1252, § 1; cf. Szafrowski, E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 169; Bączkiewicz F, Baron J., Stawinoga W., (1958). *Canon Law. A coursebook for clergy/ Prawo kanoniczne. Podręcznik dla duchowieństwa*. Vol. 3, Opole, s. 422.

⁴⁷ *Paen*, chapter. III, §§ 1–2; cf. Szafrowski E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 173.

⁴⁸ *Paen*, chapter. VI, § 1; cf. CIC, can. 1253; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 426.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 426.

⁵⁰ CIC, can. 1252; cf. *Paen*, chapter. IV; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 428.

practice. In the previous Code the rule of abstinence was applicable to all Catholics aged over seven⁵¹. The aim of the change of the age in the current legislation was to enable Catholics to start their practice of penance consciously, voluntarily and responsibly⁵².

In some cases the duty to observe abstinence (fasting in terms of quality) is set aside temporarily. Illness and the period of convalescence are recognised as such cases, when sick people must eat meals of meat according to the doctor's orders, as well as during a long-lasting travel or while working hard⁵³. The rule of abstinence from eating meat is also invalid if a Holy Day of Obligation is on Friday, according to liturgical regulations, because feasts abolish the duty of any fasting whatsoever⁵⁴. Furthermore, if abstinence from eating meat causes damage to the health, it is not penance, and the person who consciously damages his/her health commits a grave, mortal sin⁵⁵. The Catholic also commits a sin if he/she does not observe abstinence (the quality fast) with the intention to demonstrate contempt for God and the Roman Catholic Church⁵⁶.

Another penitential form is strict universal fast. It is a combination of abstinence from eating meat and fasting in terms of quantity – reducing the intake of food⁵⁷. This form is one of the strictest forms of fasting in the Roman Catholic Church nowadays and it is applied for the most important days of penance in the liturgical year⁵⁸. According to the Code from 1917 the strict universal fast was binding for Catholics who have attained their majority (aged over twenty one), until the beginning of their sixti-

⁵¹ CIC/17, can. 1254, § 1; cf. Szafronowski E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 173; Bączkiewicz F, Baron J., Stawinoga W., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 423.

⁵² Cf. Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 474.

⁵³ Cf. Martín de Agar J.T., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 926; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 425.

⁵⁴ CIC, can. 1251; cf. Martín de Agar J.T., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 926; Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 473.

⁵⁵ Cf. Szafronowski E., *Sacred places and sacred times...*, op. cit., p. 172.

⁵⁶ Cf. Olejnik S. (1989). *Moral theology...*, op. cit., p. 222.

⁵⁷ Cf. Pawluk T., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 478; Bakalarz, J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places...*, op. cit., p. 426.

⁵⁸ Cf. Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 425.

eth year (under sixty)⁵⁹. It was applicable on Friday in the period of Lent as well as Saturdays and on Ash Wednesday. The obligation of such fasting applied for Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at the beginning of every quarter, when prayer and strict universal fast were particularly important for people⁶⁰.

Currently in the Canon Law the rule of strict universal fast is applicable to all Catholics who are aged over eighteen and under sixty⁶¹, on condition that they have reached the use of reason, they are able to use their minds. The duty of strict universal fast does not apply to the underaged. However, priests and parents should take care of children and encourage them to start practising this penitential form provided that it does not have negative effects on their health⁶². If the Catholic is aged over sixty, he/she is obliged only to abstinence from meat whereas he/she does not have to obey the rule concerning the second part of strict universal fasting: the fast in terms of quantity, limiting the amount of food they have. The reason why people aged over sixty do not have to respect the quantity fast is concern for the elderly⁶³. Therefore, on the days of strict universal fasting such people can eat more than one meal which makes them have the feeling of satiation but they have to avoid any meat or another dish forbidden by the conference of bishops.

All in all, strict universal fast is bound with a penitential form that fasting in terms of quantity is, as its constituent part⁶⁴. As the name indicates, it regards the amount of food and means limiting the intake of food to a specific number of meals on the day of penance. Currently, the quantity fast is not a separate entity in the Canon Law but it is always combined

⁵⁹ CIC/17, can. 1254, § 2; cf. Bączkowicz F., Baron J., Stawinoga W., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 424; Olejnik, S. (1989). *Moral theology...*, op. cit., p. 221.

⁶⁰ Cf. Bączkowicz F., Baron J., Stawinoga W., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 414.

⁶¹ CIC, can. 1252; cf. can. 97, § 1; Misiurek J. (2012). *Fast in Catholic theology/Post w teologii katolickiej*. In: E. Gigilewicz (Ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 14, Lublin, p. 64; Krukowski J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*. op. cit., pp. 475-476.

⁶² CIC, can. 1252; cf. Martín de Agar J.T., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 927.

⁶³ Cf. Krukowski J., *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 475.

⁶⁴ Cf. Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 425.

with abstinence from eating meat or other type of food⁶⁵. It can be used by individual Catholics in their private penitential practices when they want to practice penance in this way, consciously and according to their own free will⁶⁶. Finally, it must be emphasized that the obligation of strict universal fasting does not have to be observed by those who are ill and people during the period of convalescence who should eat meat, which is recommended by the doctor, even on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday

PENITENTIAL PRACTICE CONNECTED WITH FRIDAY

Spiritual renewal days are special days in the life of Catholics. Among such days there are the first Fridays of each month and Good Friday. The Roman Catholic Church encourages to receive the sacrament of penance and Holy Communion on these special days. The sense of Friday penance and spiritual renewal closely related to it is not only bound with disciplinary mortifying practice but also with motivation, the reason why we start the practice. The unique nature of that day is closely connected with renewal of the spiritual life⁶⁷. Friday, with its symbol - the Cross, where Jesus Christ gave His life to save the man, is an appeal for real penance, as repentance means following the Saviour. Therefore, there is the need to remind Catholics that Friday is the day of agony and death of Messiah⁶⁸.

When considering the issues related to Friday as the day of penance, one should reflect on the exceptional day which Good Friday is in particular. It is a special, significant day. This day calls for practising penance as well as for prayer, adoration and spiritual renewal. The Roman Catholic

⁶⁵ Cf. Pawluk T., *Canon Law...*, op. cit., p. 478; Bakalarz J. (1986). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 426.

⁶⁶ Cf. Nadolski B. (2006). *Fast*, op. cit., p. 1208; Glapiak J. (2012). *A Practical guide...*, op. cit., p. 200.

⁶⁷ Cf. *The First Synod of the Diocese of Warszawa-Praga*, art. 423; *The Second Synod of the ArchDiocese of Gniezno*, art. 97.

⁶⁸ Cf. Salij J. (1969). *Theology of fast*, op. cit., p. 73-74.

Church, by priests, shows the faithful the Cross as the sign of salvation⁶⁹. Every Friday is an exceptional day, especially Good Friday, due to the connection of Christian penance with Jesus' death on the Cross.

As for Good Friday, forms of penance and services which are held in the Roman Catholic Church on this special day are also worth discussing. The types of fasting which are commonly practised by Catholics on this exceptional day should be enumerated and discussed according to current rules of the Canon Law. Special significance was attributed to Good Friday amongst all Fridays of the year at the very beginning of Christianity. On that day people recalled and considered the agony and death of Christ on the Cross, which is commemorated every Friday, therefore Friday is celebrated as the day of penance in order to get united with suffering Messiah. Good Friday, in the current Code of Canon Law, is part of the liturgy of the Paschal Triduum⁷⁰ and Catholics must observe the rule of strict universal fasting on that day⁷¹. Refraining from eating or limiting the amount of food for religious reasons is the way to demonstrate Christian practice of penance⁷². Abstinence, or quality fast, connected with quantity fast on Good Friday, is one of forms of penance and it constitutes strict universal fast⁷³.

Friday is particularly related to the service exercised during Holy Week, a Lenten devotion called the Way of the Cross/Stations of the Cross (Via Crucis)⁷⁴. It is one of the most common services in the Church all over

⁶⁹ Cf. Di Sante C., (1988). *Lettura teologia della liturgia del Venerdì santo. Vita Monastica* 174-175, p. 47-60.

⁷⁰ Cf. Misiurek J. (2012). *Fast in Catholic theology*, op. cit., p. 64; Sroka J. (2001). *The Liturgy of Good Friday of the Lord's Passion/Liturgia Wielkiego Piątku Męki Pańskiej. Anamnesis*, No. 25(8), p. 20-32.

⁷¹ CIC, can. 1251; cf. Misiurek J. (2012). *Fast in Catholic theology*. op. cit., p. 64; Richter K. (1998). *Fast. Christianity/Post. Chrzęścijaństwo*. In: A. T. Khoury (Ed.), *Lexicon of basic religious concepts*. Warszawa, p. 764; Krukowski, J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., p. 474.

⁷² Cf. Rosik M. (2012). *Fast in the Bible*, op. cit, p. 61-62.

⁷³ CIC, can. 1251; cf. Krukowski, J. (2011). *Part III. Sacred places and sacred times*, op. cit., pp. 476-478.

⁷⁴ Cf. *The First Synod of the Diocese of Drohiczyn*, art. 137; Salij J. (1969). *Theology of fast*. op. cit., p. 73.

the world⁷⁵. During this service people contemplate the Passion of Christ at fourteen crosses raised on purpose to symbolize the events which took place on the Way of the Cross that Jesus followed⁷⁶. The Passion is contemplated at the stations which depict how Jesus suffered, which are supposed to facilitate and stimulate awareness and reflection⁷⁷. It is celebrated not only in churches, chapels or places called Golgotha but also in streets of towns or cities, with a growing number of participants every year⁷⁸. The Way of the Cross celebrated in streets of villages and cities always means giving testimony of faith in public.

The Way of the Cross is celebrated not only on Good Friday but it is also recommended to celebrate it every Friday of the liturgical year. It might be done individually or with a party of people⁷⁹. It should be celebrated also on other weekdays. Death of Jesus on the Cross, which is the climax of the Way of the Cross, ought to give hope to Christians and strengthen their faith.

The Cross is the symbol of Christ's victory, therefore the service of the Stations of the Cross should not be finished with the act of mourning but it ought to lead to the real union with the Saviour⁸⁰. It is also recommended to finish the service of the Way of the Cross with proper deliberation in order to prepare the faithful to expect the Paschal Triduum and Lord's Resurrection with faith and hope⁸¹. All things considered, in the view of

⁷⁵ Cf. Smereka W. (1981). *The Stations of the Cross. An outline of the history and the text. A Study of the Passion/Drogi Krzyżowe. Rys historyczny i tekst. Studium pasyjne*. Kraków, p.13.

⁷⁶ Cf. Langkammer H. (1989). *The Way of the Cross/Droga Krzyżowa*. In: R. Łukaszyk, L. Bieńkowski, F. Gryglewicz (Eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4, Lublin, p. 215.

⁷⁷ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *The Directory of popular piety and liturgy. Rules and indications/Dyrektorium o pobożności ludowej i liturgii. Zasady i wskazania*. Pallotinum 2003. No. 132-134 (DPL).

⁷⁸ Cf. Szlaga J.B. (2009). *Your sins are forgiven. The Lenten letter of The Bishop of Pelplin AD 2009 (22 March, 2009)/Odpuszczają ci się twoje grzechy. Wielkopostny list Biskupa Pelplińskiego AD 2009 (22.03.2009)*. *Miesięcznik Diecezji Pelplińskiej/The monthly magazine of the Diocese of Pelplin XVIII*, No. 1(185), p. 52.

⁷⁹ DPL, No. 133; cf. Czaja A.M. (2015). *Lent. A theological-canonical study/Post. Studium teologiczno-kanoniczne*. Brodnica – Torun, p. 51.

⁸⁰ Cf. Smereka W. (1981). *The Stations of the Cross...*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁸¹ DPL, No. 133-134; cf. Smereka W. (1981). *The Stations of the Cross...*, op. cit., p. 14; Czaja A.M. (2015). *Lent...*, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

this service of the Passion, human suffering seems to make sense, as it helps the person on the way to holiness, and when done for the sake of other people it helps them to become better.

When considering significance and the form of penitential practice of Friday, we must not forget about another service of the Passion which is also celebrated on Good Friday, namely Lenten Lamentations.

The service is connected with adoration of the Holy Eucharist at the Christ's Tomb. It is a particularly valuable service as it makes people contemplate the suffering and the Redemption achieved by Jesus Christ. Lenten Lamentations service originated from the Polish popular piety and is firmly rooted in the piety of Catholics in other countries too. The Lamentations consist of three parts, which are performed as a whole or in parts. The structure of the service was based on the prayer of Lauds of the Roman Breviary, maintaining characteristics of the Passion Play with the use of Lenten songs that had already existed. Every Sunday of Lent one part of the service is performed. The first part is performed on the first and the fourth Sunday of Lent; the second part – on the second and the fifth Sunday of Lent whereas the third part – on the third Sunday of Lent and the Palm Sunday. The Lamentations as a whole are performed only on Good Friday at the Christ's Tomb.

The Lamentations service is connected with the Fraternity of Saint Roch that exists at the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw. It is there that the prototypical service was performed for the first time in 1697, on the first Sunday of Lent⁸². This service received the approval of the Holy See, which also granted a plenary and fragmentary indulgence to the participants for their pious practices⁸³. Monks who are Missionaries of Saint Vincent de Paul contributed to spreading this form of prayer too, through

⁸² Cf. Bańbuła M., Bartkowski B. (1989). *Lenten Lamentations/Gorzkie Żale*. In: L. Bieńkowski [et al.] (Eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 5, Lublin, p. 1309; Nadolski B. (2006). *Lenten Lamentations/Gorzkie Żale*. In: (Ed. Id.), *Lexicon of the liturgy*. Pallotinum, Poznań, p. 499; Chorzępa M. (1960). *Lenten Lamentations, the origins and the evolution in time/Gorzkie Żale, ich geneza i rozwój historyczny. Nasza przyszłość/ Our Future*, No. 12, p. 221-258.

⁸³ Cf. Nadolski B. (2006). *Lenten Lamentations...*, p. 499; Sochoń J. (2015). *A Bundle of myrrh, or Lenten Lamentations today/Snopek mirry, czyli Gorzkie Żale na dzisiaj. Pielgrzymi/Pilgrim*. Vol.26, No. 4(658), p. 27.

the so-called „popular missions” and theological seminaries run by them. The service of Lenten Lamentations has not changed much as for the text and the structure. The Fraternity of Saint Roch has the right to perform the service of Lamentations in a period of time different from Lent, by virtue of the privilege, on all Fridays all over the year, together with the Holy Mass for the deceased members of the association⁸⁴.

The first Friday of the month is another special day of the spiritual renewal. The significance of penance and practising it on first Fridays of the month might be also considered in view of the Canon Law, which allows to take an overall perspective on this special Friday of the month. The first Friday of the month is connected with the celebration of the Eucharist, receiving the sacrament of penance and participation in the Holy Mass. It is devoted to the worship of the Holiest Heart of Jesus the Lord in particular and related to receiving the Holy Communion with intention to expiate and apologise for our and other people’s sins. Jesus Christ showed Himself to Saint Margaret of Maria Alacoque, in Paray-le Monial in 1675, revealing the secrets of His Divine Heart, which is the treasury of love and mercy for people. He promised His worshippers that all these who, in their lives, take part in the first nine Fridays in a row will obtain the grace of complete repentance of sins at the hour of death⁸⁵.

The first Friday of the month is a special day to receive the sacrament of penance, since it is associated with the entire tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, according to which the day of agony and death of Christ has always been a unique day in the practice of penance. It is necessary to encourage Catholics to participate in great numbers in the holy sacraments on first Fridays of the month⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ Cf. Nadolski B. (2006). *Lenten Lamentations...*, p. 499; Czaja A.M. (2015). *Lent...*, op. cit., p. 49.

⁸⁵ Cf. Hojnowski J. (2000). *St. Margaret Maria Alacoque/Św. Małgorzata Maria Alacoque*. In: (Ed. Id.), *The cult of the Heart of Jesus dictionary*. Krakow, p. 140-142.

⁸⁶ Cf. Salij J. (1971). *The opportunity to restore Friday as the day of penance/Możliwość odnowy piątku jako dnia pokuty*. *Collectanea Theologica* 41 (2), pp. 73-74.

CONCLUSIONS

Friday, penitential in its nature, is part of the sacred time in the Roman Catholic Church. On Friday Catholics are obliged to practise penance, which means they should spend more time praying, doing good deeds towards other people, performing works of piety and charity, taking acts of mortifying and fulfilling other obligations of penitential practice. Obeying the rules of Canon Law which concern the penance on Friday, both with other people, in public, as well as individually, in private, is a symbol of cooperation with the entire Church. Each Friday people should particularly worship and contemplate the agony and death of Jesus on the Cross. The first Fridays in the season of Lent and the first Fridays of the month, when plenty of people take part in penitential services and services of the Passion, should remind Catholics of the true meaning of Friday as the day of penance especially important in their spiritual life. Priests ought to make use of it to remind the faithful that all Fridays of the year are a reflection of the agony and death of Jesus Christ for our redemption. Catholics must not forget about this close relation. The Way of the Cross, a form of prayer practised every Friday of the year, is one of the most popular services recommended by the Church worldwide. People should participate in it individually or with others. It is allowed to perform the service on other days of the week, too. Apart from the Stations of the Cross, Lenten Lamentations is another penitential and Passion service of special importance, exercised on Sundays during Lent and also on Good Friday.

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