



**THE OBSERVANCE OF THE MEMORIAL OF SAINT PATRICK
AND THE LENTEN OBLIGATION TO ABSTAIN FROM MEAT
ON FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017**

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, in accord with the *Code of Canon Law* (canon 87), grants a dispensation to all Roman Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia from the obligation to abstain from meat on the Memorial of Saint Patrick on Friday, March 17, 2017.

The United States Bishops prescribe as a *minimal obligation* that all persons who are fourteen years of age and older are bound to abstain from eating meat on the Fridays of Lent. This is a corporate gesture of penance observed by all the members of the Church in the United States.

In certain circumstances, such as the coincidence of Saint Patrick's Day and a Friday of Lent, the Diocesan Bishop may grant such a dispensation from the observance of the corporate gesture of penance on a penitential day. However, as with every Friday of the Church Year outside of Lent, if a Catholic makes the choice not to abstain from meat, then some other penance of choice is to be observed in honor of the passion and death of our Lord on the cross.

On Saint Patrick's Day, the memory of this missionary apostle to Ireland recalls his preaching of the Faith and encouragement to live authentic Christian lives. Lent does not disappear with the festive celebration of Saint Patrick. Rather, in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Roman Catholics may fittingly observe March 17, 2017 with another choice of penance rather than abstaining from meat.