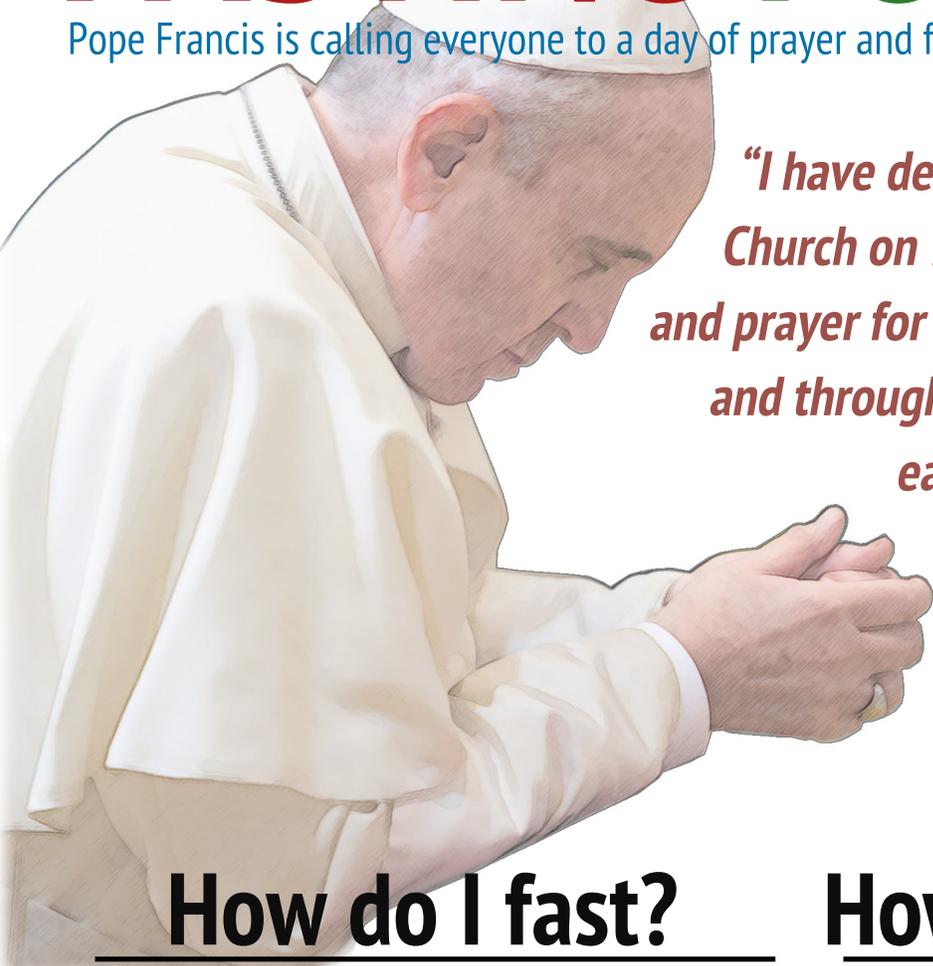


# FASTING FOR SYRIA

Pope Francis is calling everyone to a day of prayer and fasting for peace Saturday, September 7.



*“I have decided to proclaim for the whole Church on 7 September. . . a day of fasting and prayer for peace in Syria, the Middle East, and throughout the world, and I also invite each person, including our fellow Christians, followers of other religions and all men of good will, to participate, in whatever way they can, in this initiative.”*

## How do I fast?

- Fasting means “minimally sustaining one’s self.” Catholics fast by eating only one full meal and then only minimally eating (if need be) smaller portions of food for the rest of the day.
- While you are fasting, pray for peace in Syria, the Middle East, and around the world. You can also pray for those who don’t have the same access to food that you have.
- Alternatives: Commit to only eating things in your home and not buying any food items, thus depending only on what you already have, mindful of those who can’t choose what they eat. If you have health issues preventing you from fasting, consider fasting from a bad habit or something you’d like to change. Can you fast from smoking if you’re a smoker? Can you fast from TV? How about a technology fast and spending the time you’re usually online in prayer?

## How does this help?

- Fasting changes us -- and makes us realize our dependence on God. As we pray and seek peace in Syria, we turn to God for comfort, guidance, and assurance.
- Fasting for peace is a witness to those around us of our dedication to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria.
- Fasting is a sign of solidarity for the plight of the men, women, and children in Syria who are suffering the devastation of the country’s brutal Civil War.
- In every culture and religion in history, fasting has been an instinctive and essential language in our communicating with the Divine. As a religious act it increases our sensitivity to the mystery of God, always and everywhere present to us. It is a passageway into the world of spirit that enables us to explore its territory and return with a wisdom necessary for living a fulfilled life.