

# Reclaiming Catholic Identity, England and Wales Bring Back Meatless Fridays

I've written before that I think a return to mandatory meatless Fridays is a great idea.

The Catholic Church of England and Wales has officially returned to the practice:

*The practice of abstaining from eating meat on Fridays has returned to the Catholic Church in England and Wales after an absence of 27 years.*

*... "Over the past 20 to 30 years we've perhaps lost touch with some of the more grounded Catholic practices and that, in turn, has chipped away at belief in more fundamental things too. So the restoration of this ancient Catholic tradition can help reverse that trend," Schofield said.*

*The decision to reinstate the custom was announced by the bishops of England and Wales in May. September 16 was chosen as the reintroduction date because it marks the first anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's arrival in the United Kingdom.*

*The practice of abstaining from meat on Fridays was traditionally a way of remembering that Jesus Christ died on that day of the week. However, the Church in England and Wales abandoned the centuries-old custom back in 1984.*

*At the time, the bishops stressed that other forms of Friday penances were also acceptable. The result, though, seemed to be that the practice of Friday penance fell away altogether.*

[\[CNA\]](#)



A good anecdote about how meatless Fridays support Catholic identity and represent an easy manner of quiet (yet effective) Catholic witness:

*The bishops also hope the custom will help draw others to the Catholic Church. In a statement earlier this month, they observed that "traditional Catholic devotions such as making the sign of the cross with care and reverence, praying the Angelus, saying a prayer before and after our meals, to name only a few," can be "a powerful call to faith."*

*"I'd agree," says Dominic Schofield, "the decision by the bishops will have great apostolic value.*

*"For example, when somebody now asks 'Do you have any special dietary requirements?' we can now say, 'Yes, I can't eat meat on a Friday. I'm a Catholic!"*

In solidarity with our Brit Catholic friends, I'm not having meat this Friday. I invite you to do the same!