

**ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY**

<b><u>DAY</u></b>	<b><u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u></b>	<b><u>ANNIVERSARY</u></b>
18	Issa Qaqish	21
19	Abdallah Petro	38
19	Elaine Nammari	10
20	Frederick Aziz	52
22	Azizeh Qaqish	2
22	Gholamreza Moradi Bakht	7
22	Ferris Frank Haddad	21
22	Aida Salib	16
22	Mary Raines	13
22	Margaret Zakka	11
23	Tawfiq Dahdah	49
24	John Shaheen	54
24	Robert Bechbache	18

**ETERNAL LIGHT**

- **Nov 24:** For the good health of Reem Shami from Adel Shami & family.  
In loving memory of Azizeh Qaqish from Wafa Alchekh.  
For the good health of Issa Bisharat and his family.  
For the good health of Konstantin and family
- **Dec 1:** for the good health of Jean-Paul Shami from Adel Shami & family
- **Dec 8:** in loving memory of Yvonne & Ernest Younes from their family
- **Dec 22:** for the good health of Lyla Rose Ghneim from her grand parents Rose and George Ghneim.
- **A memorial memorial service for Taisir Al Salloum, offered by his son Elie Al Salloum and family. May his memory be eternal.**
- **Ushers Nov 24:** Souheil El-Hajj, Issa Bisharat, William Kakish, and Berj Atikian.
- **Please,** pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Isabelle, Nassar, Valentine, Lucy, Nina, Sonia, Samer, George and Elizabeth. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **The Fast:** starts from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 25<sup>th</sup>. We abstain from meat, poultry, cheese, milk, fish is permitted except on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- **Nativity Paraklesis at 7 PM:** Wednesday November 27, Tuesday December 10, Friday December 13, Tuesday December 17th.
- **Great Vespers** and blessing of the five loaves on **Tuesday December 3rd** for the Feast of St. Barbara.
- **Divine Liturgy, Thursday December 5th at 7 PM** for the Feast of St. Nicholas.
- **Great Vespers on Thursday December 19th at 7 PM** for the Feast of St Ignatius.
- Bible Study will be stopped during the month of December, we will resume in January again.
- December 24th morning at 10 AM the Hours. (Father is deciding on the Christmas services).
- December 31st at 6:30 PM for the Feast of St. Basil, the circumcision, and the beginning of the new year.
- **Bible Study every Friday at 7:30 PM.**
- **Preparation for the Bible Bowl** is starting now. We will meet together each week to study St. John Gospel. Please, contact Peter for more information. Email: [peter.brubacher@pm.me](mailto:peter.brubacher@pm.me)
- **Fr. George resumed blessing homes. Please call Father to schedule**
- **Falafel Luncheons will be hosted by the Knights of St. George on the following Dates: Nov 24<sup>th</sup>, Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, Dec 15<sup>th</sup> (Foul) and Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

- **New Year Celebration:** Please, come and join us to welcome the new Year 2020 at our St. George Centre.
- **Parish Council Meeting:** Tuesday November 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.
- **Christmas Card and Poinsettia :** If you like to put your name on the Christmas card and contribute towards the poinsettia flowers, please see George Ghneim or William Bisharat.
- **FIRE ROUTE & HANDICAPPED PARKING, AND PARKING LINES**

Please make sure not to park on the side of the church or in front of the Fire hydrant, for this is a fire route, also ensure not to park in the spots designated for handicapped parking. Anyone who parks and does not show a handicap permit on the window will be tagged.

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2019  
TONE 6 / EOTHINON 1; TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST &  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

**AFTER-FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS**

CLEMENT, BISHOP OF ROME; HIEROMARTYR PETER, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA;  
HERMOGENES, BISHOP OF AGRIGENTUM; MARTYRS PHILOUMENOS AND CHRISTOPHER;  
MARTYR ALEXANDER OF CORINTH

**Deacon:** For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

الشماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَثْرُوبُولِيَّتِ بُولُسَ وَالْمَطْرَانَ  
يُوحَنَّا وَفَكَ أَسْرِهِمَا وَعَوَدَتِهِمَا سَالِمَيْنِ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ  
نَطْلُبُ.

الجوقة: يَا رَبُّ ارْحَمْنَا.

**THE FIRST ANTIPHON**

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised: in the city of our God and in His holy mountain. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.

**Refrain:** Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. **(Refrain)**

Glory... Both now... **(Refrain)**

عَظِيمٌ هُوَ الرَّبُّ وَمُسَبَّحٌ جِدًّا، فِي مَدِينَةِ إِلَهِنَا  
عَلَى جَبَلٍ قُدْسِهِ. فِيكَ قِيلَتْ الْمَفَاخِرُ يَا مَدِينَةَ  
اللَّهِ.

اللازمة: بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ إِلَهِي، يَا مُخَلِّصُ  
خَلِّصْنَا.

اللَّهُ مَعْرُوفٌ فِي قُصُورِهَا بِأَنَّهُ نَصِيرُهَا. مِثْلَمَا  
سَمِعْنَا، كَذَلِكَ رَأَيْنَا فِي مَدِينَةِ رَبِّ الْقُوَاتِ، فِي  
مَدِينَةِ إِلَهِنَا. (اللازمة)

الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ ... (اللازمة)

**THE SECOND ANTIPHON**

The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary.

**Refrain:** Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in thereat. **(Refrain)**

Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness. **(Refrain)**

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

الْعَلِيِّ قَدَّسَ مَسْكَنَهُ. الْحَمْدُ وَالْبَهَاءُ قُدَّامَهُ. الْقَدَّاسَةُ  
وَالْجَلَالُ فِي مَقْدِسِهِ.

اللازمة: خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ  
الْأَمْوَاتِ، إِذْ نُرْتَلُّ لَكَ. هَلِّلُويَا.

هَذَا هُوَ بَابُ الرَّبِّ، وَمِنْهُ يَدْخُلُ الصِّدِّيقُونَ.  
(اللازمة)

مِنْ قَدَّاسَةِ هَيْكَلِكَ، أَنْتَ عَجِيبٌ فِي عَدَالَتِكَ.  
(اللازمة)

الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ ... يَا كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ الْإِبْنَ الْوَحِيدِ ...

### THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. Virgins shall be brought to the King after her: her companions shall be brought unto Thee.

أَغْنِيَاءُ الشُّعُوبِ يَبْتَهِلُونَ إِلَيْكَ. ابْنَةُ الْمَلِكِ كُلَّهَا  
بَهَاءً فِي خَدْرِهَا. مُكْتَسِيَّةٌ بِالْبَيْسَةِ حَوَاشِيهَا مُذَهَّبَةٌ.  
فِي إِثْرِهَا الْعَذَارَى صَوَاحِبُهَا يُؤْتَى بِهِنَّ إِلَيْكَ.

- During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, chant the Apolytikion of the Entrance of the Theotokos. Then, the following:

### THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, **Who art risen from the dead**; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

هَلِّمُوا لِنَسْجُدَ وَنَرْكَعَ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مَلِكِنَا وَإِلَهِنَا. خَلِّصْنَا  
يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ  
لَكَ. هَلِّلُوبِيَا.

### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

إِنَّ الْقُوَاتِ الْمَلَائِكِيَّةَ ظَهَرُوا عَلَى قَبْرِكَ الْمُوقَّرِ،  
وَالْحُرَّاسَ صَارُوا كَالْأَمْوَاتِ، وَمَرْزِيمَ وَقَفَّتْ عِنْدَ  
الْقَبْرِ طَالِبَةً جَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ، فَسَبَيْتَ الْجَحِيمَ وَلَمْ  
تُجَرَّبْ مِنْهَا، وَصَادَفْتَ الْبَتُولَ مَانِحًا الْحَيَاةَ. فِيَا  
مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، يَا رَبُّ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

### APOLYTIKION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying, Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

اليَوْمَ الْعَذْرَاءُ الَّتِي هِيَ مُقَدِّمَةٌ مَسْرَّةَ اللَّهِ، وَابْتِدَاءُ  
الْكَرَاةِ بِخَلَاصِ الْبَشَرِ، قَدْ ظَهَرَتْ فِي هَيْكَلِ اللَّهِ  
عَلَانِيَةً، وَسَبَقَتْ مُبَشِّرَةً الْجَمِيعَ بِالْمَسِيحِ. فَلَنْهَتِفُ  
نَحْوَهَا بِصَوْتٍ عَظِيمٍ قَائِلِينَ: إِفْرَحِي يَا كَمَالِ  
تَدْبِيرِ الْخَالِقِ.

- Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.

### KONTAKION OF ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

(\*\*Thou Who wast raised up\*\*)

The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, \* the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, \* the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, \* into the House of the Lord \* on this day is brought forward \* and bringeth with herself the grace \* of the Most Divine Spirit; \* her do God's Angels

اليَوْمَ الْهَيْكَلُ الَّذِي لِلْمُخَلَّصِ، الْكَلْبِيُّ النَّقَاءِ،  
الْعَذْرَاءُ الْخَدْرُ نُو الثَّمَنِ الْجَزِيلِ، وَهِيَ الْكَنْزُ  
الطَّاهِرُ لِمَجْدِ الْإِلَهِ، إِذْ تَدْخُلُ بَيْتَ الرَّبِّ، تَدْخُلُ  
نِعْمَةَ الرُّوحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ مَعَهَا. فَلْتُسَبِّحْهَا مَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ،

hymn with songs of praise, \* for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.

لأنَّهَا الْمِظْلَةُ السَّمَاوِيَّةَ.

### THE EPISTLE

(For the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost)

*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.*

*To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God.*

#### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. (2:4-10)**

Brethren, God, Who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For, we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

خَلِّصْ يَا رَبُّ شَعْبَكَ وَبَارِكْ مِيرَاثَكَ

إِلَيْكَ يَا رَبُّ أَصْرُخُ، إِلَهِي.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى

أَهْلِ أَفَسُسَ (2:4-10)

يَا إِخْوَةٌ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ لِكُونِهِ غَنِيًّا بِالرَّحْمَةِ، وَمِنْ أَجْلِ كَثْرَةِ مَحَبَّتِهِ الَّتِي أَحَبَّنَا بِهَا \* حِينَ كُنَّا أَمْوَاتًا بِالزَّلَّاتِ، أَحْيَانَا مَعَ الْمَسِيحِ. (فَانْتُمْ بِالنِّعْمَةِ مُخَلَّصُونَ) \* وَأَقَامَنَا مَعَهُ، وَأَجَلَسْنَا مَعَهُ فِي السَّمَاوِيَّاتِ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ \* لِيُظْهَرَ فِي الدُّهُورِ الْمُسْتَقْبَلَةِ فَرْطَ غِنَى نِعْمَتِهِ بِاللُّطْفِ بِنَا فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ \* فَانْتُمْ بِالنِّعْمَةِ مُخَلَّصُونَ بِوَاسِطَةِ الْإِيمَانِ. وَذَلِكَ لَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ، إِنَّمَا هُوَ عَطِيَّةُ اللَّهِ \* وَلَيْسَ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ لِيَلَّا يَفْتَخَرَ أَحَدٌ \* لِأَنَّا نَحْنُ صُنْعُهُ، مَخْلُوقِينَ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ لِلْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ الَّتِي سَبَقَ اللَّهُ فَأَعَدَّهَا لِنَسْلُكَ فِيهَا.

### THE GOSPEL

(For the Thirteenth Sunday of Luke)

#### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (18:18-27)**

At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.’” And the man said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor,

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِي

الْبَشِيرِ وَالتِّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ \*

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، دَنَا إِلَى يَسُوعَ إِنْسَانٌ مُجَرَّبًا لَهُ وَقَائِلًا: "أَيُّهَا الْمُعَلِّمُ الصَّالِحُ، مَاذَا أَعْمَلُ لِأُرِثَ الْحَيَاةَ الْأَبَدِيَّةَ؟" \* فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "لِمَاذَا تَدْعُونِي صَالِحًا؟ وَمَا صَالِحٌ إِلَّا وَاحِدٌ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ \* إِنَّكَ تَعْرِفُ الْوَصَايَا: لَا تَزْنِ. لَا تَقْتُلْ. لَا تَسْرِقْ. لَا تَشْهَدْ بِالزُّورِ. أَكْرِمِ أَبَاكَ وَأُمَّكَ" \* فَقَالَ: "كُلُّ هَذَا قَدْ حَفِظْتُهُ مُنْذُ صِبَائِي" \* فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ يَسُوعُ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ لَهُ: "وَاحِدَةٌ تَعْوِزُكَ بَعْدُ. بِعْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَكَ

and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

وَوَزَّعَهُ عَلَى الْمَسَاكِينِ، فَيَكُونُ لَكَ كَنْزٌ فِي السَّمَاءِ، وَتَعَالَ اتَّبِعْنِي” \* فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ ذَلِكَ، حَزِنَ لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ غَنِيًّا جِدًّا \* فَلَمَّا رَأَى يَسُوعُ قَدْ حَزِنَ، قَالَ: "مَا أَعْسَرَ عَلَى ذَوِي الْأَمْوَالِ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوا مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ \* إِنَّهُ لِأَسْهَلُ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَمَلُ فِي ثَقَبِ الْإِبْرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ غَنِيٌّ مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ" \* فَقَالَ السَّامِعُونَ: "فَمَنْ يَسْتَطِيعُ إِذْنًا أَنْ يَخْلُصَ؟" \* فَقَالَ: "مَا لَا يُسْتَطَاعُ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ، مُسْتَطَاعٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ."

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

### THE DISMISSAL

**Priest:** May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother—**whose Entrance into the Holy of Holies we now celebrate**—by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; **of our father among the saints Clement, bishop of Rome; Hieromartyr Peter, bishop of Alexandria; Hermogenes, bishop of Agrigentum; Martyrs Philoumenos and Christopher; and Martyr Alexander of Corinth, whose**

**الكاهن:** أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِي، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْكَلِيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ وَالْبَرِيَّةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ - الَّتِي نَحْتَفِلُ الْيَوْمَ بِدُخُولِهَا إِلَى قُدْسِ الْأَقْدَاسِ - وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُخَيِّ؛ وَبِطِبَابَاتِ الثَّقَاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكْرَّمَةِ الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُشْرَفِينَ الرَّسُلِ الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوْحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ، كَاتِبُ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ، وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (فُلَانِ)، صَاحِبِ وَشَفِيعِ هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ يُوَاكِمَ وَحَنَّةَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِ؛ وَأَبُونَا الْقَدِيسِينَ الشُّهِيدِينَ إِكْلِيمَنْضُوسَ بَابَا رُومَةَ، وَبَطْرُسَ بَطْرِيْرِكَ الْإِسْكََنْدَرِيَّةِ؛ هِيرَمُوجَنْسَ أَسْقَفِ أَعْرِيغَنْتِيَّةِ؛ الشُّهَدَاءِ فِيلُومِينُوسَ وَخَرِيْسْتُوفُورُوسَ؛ وَالشُّهِيدَ اسْكََنْدَرَ الْكُورِنْثِيَّ؛

<p><b>memory we celebrate today</b>, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.</p>	<p>الذِينَ نُقِيمُ تَذَكَارَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ، وَجَمِيعِ قَدِيسِيكَ، اَرْحَمْنَا وَخَلَّصْنَا بِمَا اَنْتَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.</p>
<p><b>Priest:</b> Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.</p>	<p>الكَاهِنُ: بِصَلَوَاتِ اَبَائِنَا الْقَدِيسِيْنَ، اَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ اِلَهِنَا، اَرْحَمْنَا وَخَلَّصْنَا.</p>
<p><b>Choir:</b> Amen.</p>	<p>الجوق: آمين.</p>
<p><i>These texts have been prepared by the Department of Liturgics of the Antiochian Archdiocese</i> Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from The Menaion, The Great Horologion, The Pentecostarion, The Octoechos, and The Psalter of the Seventy, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.</p>	

# “For the Healing of Soul and Body: Let us Pray to the Lord”

By Bishop THOMAS (Joseph) and Subdeacon David Hyatt

*“Fasting possesses great power and it works glorious things.  
To fast is to banquet with angels.”*

St. Athanasius the Great

Fasting is an important spiritual struggle that carries us into the Kingdom of God. Combined with increased prayer and almsgiving, fasting helps us to say ‘no’ to the bodily desires in order to say ‘yes’ to the spiritual riches of the virtues of Christ. St. Seraphim of Sarov writes,

“Fasting, prayer, alms, and every other good Christian deed is good in itself, but the purpose of the Christian life consists not only in the fulfillment of one or another of them. The true purpose of our Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.”<sup>1</sup>

There are two basic categories of fasting within the Church: the Ascetical Fast and the Eucharistic Fast. The Ascetical Fast refers to the prescribed days and seasons during the year in which we refrain from consuming all meat, meat products, dairy products, fish, olive oil and alcoholic beverages. The Eucharistic or Communion Fast refers to the period of time in which we abstain from all food and drink after midnight before receiving Holy Communion the next day. It is very important that all fasting rules be developed and followed under the direction of an Orthodox physician or dietician that is blessed by the parish priest. In certain circumstances, he may relax the traditional fasting guidelines at his discretion due to health concerns, very young children, pregnant women, or nursing mothers. (*Please refer to the Antiochian Archdiocese website for the current fasting calendar and guidelines.*) In this way, fasting can be a spiritually fruitful practice for everyone for the healing of both soul and body.

St. John Cassian (+435), a monastic saint known for his writings on the monastic life, described the difference between eating to provide for the needs of life and self-indulgence. While his writings were specifically for monks, they are also helpful for the faithful in all walks of life. He writes,

“A clear rule for self-control handed down by the Fathers is this: stop eating while still hungry and do not continue until you are satisfied.

When the Apostle said, ‘Make no provision to fulfill the desires of the flesh’ (Rom. 13:14), he was not forbidding us to provide for the needs of life; he was warning us against self-indulgence. Moreover, by itself abstinence from food does not contribute to perfect purity of soul unless the other virtues are active as well. Humility, for example, practiced through obedience in our work and through bodily hardship, is a great help.

If we avoid avarice not only by having no money, but also by not wanting to have any, this leads us towards purity of soul. Freedom from anger, from dejection, self-esteem and pride also contributes to purity of soul in general, while self-control and fasting are especially important for bringing about that specific purity of soul which comes through restraint and moderation.

No one whose stomach is full can fight mentally against the demon of unchastity. Our initial struggle therefore must be to gain control of our stomach and to bring our body into subjection

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<sup>1</sup> St. Seraphim of Sarov, *Conversation on the Goal of the Christian Life*



not only through fasting but also through vigils, labors and spiritual reading, and through concentrating our heart on fear of Gehenna and on longing for the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

St. John offers us a vision of a rightly ordered relationship to food.

- Consume enough food to sustain a healthy life.
- Practice self-control so as not to overeat and become physically and spiritually lethargic.
- Combine fasting with prayer, almsgiving, spiritual reading, remembrance of death and the coming judgment, and a desire for the kingdom of heaven!

As the Holy Orthodox Church recognizes our human person as an integrated being of soul and body, made in the image and for the likeness of our Creator, it should come as no surprise that fasting is not only a spiritually profitable exercise but also a physically fruitful one. Conversely, neglecting ascetical practices prescribed by the Church cannot only take a spiritual toll, but a physical one as well. Choosing healthy ingredients for our meals that serve to sustain life, and limiting our food intake, so as not to put us at further risk for obesity, heart disease and even cancer, are all important ways that we maintain a healthy body to serve the Lord.

In 2003, a study of one hundred and twenty Eastern Orthodox adults was conducted for one year. Sixty regularly fasted (Fasters) according to the guidelines of the Orthodox Church, and the other sixty did not fast (Controls) at all throughout the year.

#### **Results**

Statistically significant end-fasting total and LDL cholesterol differences were found in fasters. Fasters compared to controls presented 12.5% lower end-total cholesterol ( $p < 0.001$ ), 15.9% lower end-LDL cholesterol ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 1.5% lower end-BMI ( $p < 0.001$ ). The end- LDL/HDL ratio was lower in fasters (6.5%,  $p < 0.05$ ) while the change in end- HDL cholesterol in fasters (4.6% decline) was not significant. Similar results were found when the pre- and end-fasting values of fasters were compared. No change was found in control subjects.

#### **Conclusions**

Adherence to Eastern Orthodox fasting periods contributes to a reduction in the blood lipid profile including a non-significant reduction in HDL cholesterol and possible impact on obesity.<sup>3</sup>

Further recognizing the natural integration of all spheres of the human person, we should be aware that a neglected body, often manifest as high-caloric or ill-advised product consumption, may not only contribute to physical ailments, but that related health issues have been associated with psychological distress and depression. Though these relationships are not well understood, they do seem to exist. While the complex interaction of human conditions arising at the fall seem elusive to man, we must remember that the Church remains the hospital in which eternal cure can be found. This said, improper understanding and application of Her ascetical practices can also be damaging.

One temptation that frequently arises during fasting seasons is to eat highly processed foods which, while adhering to the fasting guidelines, are full of unhealthy ingredients. It is important to remember that when we fast, we do so by eating less and more simply in ingredients. When we spend so much

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<sup>2</sup> St. John Cassian, *On the Eight Vices: On the Demon of Unchastity and the Desire of the Flesh*

<sup>3</sup> [BMC Public Health](https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-3-16). 2003; 3: 16. Published online 2003 May 16. doi: [10.1186/1471-2458-3-16](https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-3-16)

time inventing substitute meals that are so tasty that our stomachs do not realize we are fasting, we are sabotaging our fast and robbing ourselves of the spiritual fruit of our labors.

Rita Madden, an Orthodox Christian and Registered Dietician and Nutritionist (RDN) and author of *Food, Faith and Fasting*, writes,

“Many highly processed foods contain artificial ingredients such as: food dyes, sweeteners, and additives/preservatives. These artificial foods can be harmful to one’s health. It can be an easy out to choose many of these food-like substances when we are not fasting, but even more so when we are fasting. We need to stick to the real, basic foods that the church outlines as our fasting food options because as Saint Paisios cautions, “Today people make illicit and deceitful businesses. However, they should not falsify food substances, because they become the cause of harming people’s health.”

Modern-day science demonstrates that many of these artificially created food-like items are taking a toll on our health. St. Seraphim of Sarov taught that: “Every day one should partake of just enough food to permit the body, being fortified, to be a friend and helper to the soul in performing the virtues. Otherwise, with the body exhausted the soul may also weaken.” A key word in this teaching—and especially when it comes to our fasting days—is fortified. When we fast, we should choose real quality foods that provide us the nourishment we need and that fall into the guidelines of our Holy Orthodox Tradition. The prescribed foods have nutrients our body needs but are free of the harmful synthetic ingredients. To illustrate: butter is out when we fast, so we choose margarine instead, and half-n-half is not consumed so we choose Coffee Mate. But both margarine and Coffee Mate are harmful to our health; whereas when butter and half-n-half are consumed as a part of a balanced diet they can be food choices that provide the body some of the nutrition it needs. In addition, we do not want to miss the purpose of the fast because we always have a replacement. This downplays the essence of the fast as what happens is during the fasting period, we just choose other satisfying options versus allowing ourselves to feel a physical hunger. This physical hunger is pertinent in reminding us that our true food is Christ and our real hunger is for Him. When we choose to say no to certain foods and let go of the “replacement game” we choose to renounce our own will and utilize the discipline of fasting to put God’s will first in our life.

The church has always provided dispensations from fasting when it comes to: specific illnesses, the very young and old, pregnant women and nursing mothers. Yes, children are growing but can do some level of fasting. Where your family is at in the fasting discipline is what needs to be determined with your parish priest (or spiritual father). We live in a land of plenty and when the right food choices are made, both children and adults can attain the nutrients they need while letting go of the non-fasting foods for a period of time.”

Children are able to fast as a regular part of the life of the Church with their family, under the guidance of an Orthodox physician or dietician that is blessed by the parish priest. In many parishes, children begin to observe the Eucharistic or Communion Fast between the ages of 6 and 8 years old. With the loving instruction and nurture of their parents, children can both understand why we fast and learn to embrace fasting with their family and parish community. It is most important that the parents are good role models for their children in joyfully fasting out of love for God and a desire to grow into His

likeness. Reading examples from the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the Saints are also important ways to help children understand and embrace the fast.

St. Porphyrios, in *Wounded by Love*, describes the important role of parents in the formation of their children's love for God and the formation of ascetical practices. He writes,

“What saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home. The parents need to devote themselves to the love of God. They need to become saints in their relation to their children through their mildness, prayer and love. They need to make a new start every day, with a fresh outlook, renewed enthusiasm and love for their children. And the joy that will come to them, the holiness that will visit them, will shower grace on their children.”<sup>4</sup>

In this way, children come to understand the full life of the Church and their participation in it, motivated by a loving desire to become saints. St. Basil writes,

“Fasting protects children, chastens the young, makes seniors venerable.... If all were to take fasting as the counselor for their actions, nothing would prevent a profound peace from spreading throughout the entire world.”<sup>5</sup>

Whether we be a child or an adult, we should not neglect, under the guidance of our priest or spiritual father, the fasting practices of the Church. As St. Anthony the Great reminds us,

“Do not neglect the Fast; it constitutes an imitation of Christ's way of life.”

This life in Christ is indeed the path back to union with God that was tragically lost at the fall. In this regard, we should not approach our fasting with a frown. As we recall what was lost at the fall, the very wholeness of man, we can both look back upon it and forward to the restored fullness of life that awaits those who seek it. Fasting is thus not only a taste of what once was, but a foretaste of what is again to come. This practice reminds us that while all things are possible, only One is necessary. It is in this context that we heed the following words of St. Theophan the Recluse, wherein he instructs,

“Fasting appears gloomy until one steps into its arena. But begin and you will see what light it brings after darkness, what freedom from bonds, what release after a burdensome life.”

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This article was written in cooperation with and approved by Dr. James Rossetti and Rita Madden.

**Rita Madden (MPH, RDN)**, a Registered Dietician and Nutritionist, MPH, RDN conducts workshops that utilize the Holy Eastern Orthodox tradition as the foundation to guide us in caring for health. In these workshops she also explores fasting healthfully, for both body and soul alike, for the entire family. It is also quite humbling to see how the outline of eating that the church provides us is also a healthy approach to prevent and manage many chronic diseases as well as a way to care for the environment.

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<sup>4</sup> St. Porphyrios, *Wounded by Love* (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey Publisher, 2015), 196.

<sup>5</sup> St. Basil the Great, *On Fasting and Feasts* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013), 77.