

Advent 2016

Guidelines for Fasting

As we approach this holy season of Advent, the discipline of fasting is very important to our preparation for Holy Nativity. This tradition has been practiced in the Church since apostolic times and passed down to us through the lives and teachings of the fathers of the Church. Please take this seriously and you will find significant strength to wage the spiritual battles that face you.

Beginning on November 15 and continuing until Christmas Eve, December 24, following the Midnight Divine Liturgy; we will fast from the following:

Meat (beef, chicken, lamb, pork, etc) – Abstain the entire season

Dairy (milk, cheese, butter, eggs, etc) – Abstain the entire season

Fish (any with a backbone not including shellfish, shrimp, scallops) – Abstain the entire season

Wine (some include all alcoholic beverages) – Abstain, but permitted on all Saturdays and Sundays during the season

Oil (Olive oil; some include all oils) – Abstain, but permitted on all Saturdays and Sundays during the season.

***Metropolitan JOSEPH has given his blessing to lift the fast for Thanksgiving Day.**

The **purpose of fasting** is to focus on the things of God's Kingdom and be freed from dependence on worldly things.

Fasting **in itself is not** a means of pleasing God.

Fasting **is not a punishment** for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.

We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation **may bear great fruit in our lives.**

We fast and **turn our eyes toward God** in His Holy Church. **Fasting and Prayer are meant to go together.**

Most of all, it is important that **we do not "eat" each other with our words.** We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

Fasting **is not irrelevant, is not obsolete, is not something for someone else.** Fasting is **from God, for us, right here and right now.**

We fast **faithfully and in secret**, not judging others and not holding ourselves up as an example.

**** Note – From Christmas Day until January 4th, inclusive, there is a general dispensation from all fasting.**