

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest
Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

كنيسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية الأنطاكية

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Sunday December 11th, 2016



Saturday Service: Vespers at 6 PM

Sunday Services: Matins 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM

"Not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well. Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness. Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others. You are not eating meat, are you? You should not eat debauchery with your eyes as well. **Let your hearing also fast. The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations.**" St. John Chrysostom, On Fasting.

أحد الأجداد القديسين

Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

Changes in the Liturgy

تغييرات في القداس

الايصوديكون

هلم لنسجد ونركع للمسيح ملكنا والهنا، خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الاموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا!

Entrance Hymn

O 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!

طروبارية القيامة (باللحن الثامن)

انحدرت من العلى أيها المُتَحَيِّن . وقبِلتِ الدفنَ ذا الثلاثةِ الأيام، لكي تعتنقنا من الآلام . فيا حياتنا وقيامتنا ياربُّ المجد لك .

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone Eight)

From the heights, thou didst descend, O compassionate one, and thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that thou might deliver us from passion, thou art our life and our resurrection, O Lord, glory to thee.

طروبارية الأجداد (باللحن الثاني)

لقد زكيت بالإيمان الآباء القدماء، وبهم سبقتَ فحطبتَ البيعة التي من الأمم. فليفتخر القديسون بالمجد، لأن من زرعهم أينع ثمرٌ حسيبٌ. وهو الأمُّ التي ولدتك بغير زرع. فبتوسلاتهم أيها المسيح الإله خُصّ نفوسنا.

Troparion of the Forefathers (Tone Two)

Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Annunciation – Tone 4)

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Wherefore, do we shout with him to the Theotokos, Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee.

(البشارة – باللحن الرابع)

اليوم رأس خلاصنا، وإعلان السر الذي منذ الدهور، لأن ابن الله يصير ابن البتول، وجبرائيل بالنعمة يبشّر، فلذلك ونحن معه لنهتف نحو والدة الإله، إفرحي أيها الممتلئة نعمة الرب معك

(بالحن الثالث) القنداق لتقدمة عيد الميلاد

اليوم العذراء تأتي إلى المغارة، لتلد الكلمة، الذي قبل الدهور، ولادة لا تُفسر ولا يُنطق بها، فافرحي أيتها المسكونة إذا سمعت، ومجدي مع الملائكة والرعاة، الذي سيظهر بمشيئته طفلاً جديداً وهو الإله الذي قبل الدهور.

Kontakion of the Fore-feast of the Nativity (Tone Three)

Today the Virgin cometh unto the cave to give birth to the Word who was born before all ages, begotten in a manner that defies description. Rejoice, therefore, O universe if thou shouldst hear and glorify with the Angels and the shepherds. Glorify Him who by His will shall become a new-born Babe and who is our God before the ages.

الرسالة لأحد الأجداد القديسين

Epistle for the Sunday of the Forefathers

Blessed are thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers!

For Thou are just in all that Thou hast done to us!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Colossians (3:4-11).

Brethren, when Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing

مبارك أنت يارب اله أبائنا!

لأنك عدل في كل ما صنعت بنا!

(3:4-11) فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل كورنثوس.

يا اخوة متى ظهر المسيح الذي هو حياتنا فأنتم أيضاً تظهرون حينئذ معه في المجد* فأميتوا أعضاءكم التي على الأرض الزنى والنجاسة والهوى والشهوة الرديئة والطمع الذي هو عبادة وثن* لأنه لأجل هذه يأتي غضب الله على أبناء العصيان* وفي هذه أنتم أيضاً سلكتُم حيناً إذ كنتم عائشين فيها* أمّا الآن فأنتم أيضاً اطرخوا الكُلَّ الغضب والسخط والخُبث والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم* ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضاً بل اخلعوا الإنسان العتيق مع أعماله* والبسوا الإنسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه* حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي لا ختان ولا قلف لا بربري ولا اسكيثي لا عبد ولا حر بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

الإنجيل للأجداد القديسين

Gospel for the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (14:16-24).

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير، التلميذ الطاهر)14:16-24 .(

قال الرب هذا المثل. إنسان صنع عشاء عظيماً ودعا كثيرين* فأرسل عبده في ساعة العشاء يقول للمدعوين تعالوا فإن كل شيء قد أعد* فطوق كلهم واحد فواحد يستعفون. فقال له الأول قد اشتريت حقلاً ولا بد لي أن أخرج وأنظره فأسألك أن تعفيني* وقال الآخر قد اشتريت خمسة فدادين بقر وأنا ماض لأجربها فأسألك أن تعفيني* وقال الآخر قد تزوجت امرأة فذلك لا أستطيع أن أجيء* فأتى العبد وأخبر سيده بذلك* فحينئذ غضب رب البيت وقال لعبده أخرج سريعاً إلى شوارع المدينة وأزقتها وأدخل المساكين والجدع والعميان والعرج إلى ههنا* فقال العبد يا سيدي قد قضيت ما أمرت به ويبقى أيضاً محل* فقال السيد للعبد أخرج إلى الطرقي والأسبجة واضطررهم إلى الدخول حتى يمتلئ بيوتي* فإني أقول لكم إنه لا يدوق عشاءي أحد من أولئك الرجال المدعوين* لأن المدعوين كثيرين والمختارين قليلين.

quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.’ And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

“Father is calling on everyone to end the divisions and feelings of enmity and groups within the community. Father is calling on repentance from our sins. Father has no sides, but he is the priest of all the members of the Annunciation. How can we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord/Christmas with negative feelings towards our brothers and sisters? What kind of Christmas we will celebrate as we contribute not to peace and unity in our community but division? Let us lay aside all feelings of division and hatred and each one of us will contribute to unity and peace in our church.” Fr. George Dahdouh

From “Let Go” by Fenelon p. 11 **“The True Source of Peace is in the Surrender of the Will: Live in continued peace. But understand that peace does not depend upon the fervor of your devotion. The only thing you need to be concerned about is the direction of your will. Give that up to God without reservation. The important question is not how religious you are, or how devoted, but rather is your will in harmony with God’s? Humbly confess your faults. Learn to be detached from the world and completely abandoned to God. Love Him more than yourself and His glory more than your life. The least you can do is to desire and ask for such a love. God will**

then pour out upon you that special love which only His children know, and He will give you His peace.”

❖ Church Announcements

- **Christmas Play:** the children’s Christmas Play will be on December 18th at the Greek Church from 4 PM to 8 PM. Tickets are currently on sale now for \$10 Each. Please see Khouria Manal.

• **The Nativity of Our Lord Services:** **Friday December 23rd at 9:30 AM the Hours. Saturday December 24th 9:30 AM Great Vespers. Saturday December 24th at 5 PM Festal Orthros and Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of our Lord in the Flesh.**

- A very big THANK YOU to all our ladies and men who worked long hours and tirelessly during the Bake Sale last weekend. May our Lord bless all our ladies and grant them health and many years.
- **December 11th is Choir and Chanter Appreciation Sunday.** Thank you to all those who chant and read during our services with humility, may our Lord reward you with His Heavenly Kingdom.
- **The first step to the Spiritual life, is built on obedience to our Spiritual Father, and humility.**
- **A reminder: we go to confession as we prepare for the Nativity of Christ/Christmas.**
- **Know Your Priest:** Fr. George Dahdouh received his calling to the Priesthood when he was only 8 years old. When he was 14 years old, the Roman Catholic priest in his town became a Muslim and he was carried around town, the Catholics in his town became afraid and doubted in their faith. Fr. Dahdouh gave his first sermon in church at the age of 14 strengthening the faith of the people and reminding them that our faith is not build on priests and popes but on Jesus Christ himself. Fr. George traveled at the age of 15 and 16 with the nuns and missionary priests throughout the Nuba Mountains bringing the Christian Faith to them and baptizing them. Be strong, unite together, your priest is by your side strengthening you in the True Faith.
- **The Nativity Fast: see below for explanation.** Visit www.antiochian.org/nativity.
- **Paraklesis during the Nativity Fast:** Every Wednesday during the Nativity Fast at 7 PM instead of Vespers we will have Paraklesis to the Mother of God.
- **Coffee Hour:** Please, observe the fasting rules when serving refreshments downstairs. Thanks

- **World Food Day 2016: Canned Food Drive** requested by the Archdiocese from October to December. Please bring a nonperishable food and body hygiene items to donate to Inn from the Cold and other needy people. Here are some of the items that the Mustard Seed request: **Thermal/wool socks, underwear (new), Toques and scarves, Gloves, hand and toe warmers, travel mugs, tissues, hygiene items, canned food for the holiday.**
- **Calendars for 2017:** please, take one calendar for 2017 from the table, it has all the church readings, feasts and fasting days.
- **Church School this Saturday December 10th at 3:00 PM.**
- **Giving back to God:** Our church depends on your generous giving back to God for all His blessings in your life. **Please, give generously and regularly and God will bless you back a 100 times.** **Give a percentage of your income.** Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.
- **University Students:** We have 3 priests available on the University of Calgary Campus, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Please, go to the Spiritual Center to meet them.
- **Don't forget to visit:** www.ancientfaith.com www.myocf.net

+++The Lionheart: COMING SOON TO A CHURCH NEAR YOUR HEART! "The Lionheart"

The challenges of Fatherhood and becoming a great role-model to your children are immense. What about the value of being a loving and caring husband to your wife? Sickness OR health, remember that? Men, you will gain appreciation from your family, by engaging in a most meaningful course as the "Lionheart". This is a "Pursuit of God" put together by the Orthodox faith. For ages 18+, as you may be a husband or father, so prepare for it. Society is at times, suffocating with social problems: drugs, depression and lack of Leadership in our homes and place of worship. Within a short 4 week term, you will likely find many problem-solving techniques to becoming a better man. We can learn from the DVD or from each others experiences, hopefully in confidence. We can communicate our feeling, or we can just listen and learn. After this program you will thank our Lord for the experience! **Lou Salloum** is assisting Father in forming a Christian men group. Please, signup with Lou Salloum.

- **Missing Sunday Liturgy:** Attending Sunday Liturgy should be part of our regular life as a family, we should not miss church unless we are really sick. Make attending church every Sunday an important part of your family life. **The family that worships together, stays together.**

Knowing Oneself : We must know who we really are



We are all surrounded by fictional characters, persons who are the invention of filmmakers, promoters, and even self-inventors. The original meaning of the word “hypocrite” was “actor”, and it is ignorance of our true nature as children of God that keeps us living as fictional characters, unaware of our own true purpose, the one God has chosen for us. When we stop relying on our own goodness, and stop deluding ourselves into thinking we do not need God, we can cast our entire focus on discovering our true self.

It is an ignorance of our true nature that is the base cause of so many living as though they were actors on a stage, afraid of what they might see if they were honest about themselves. True self-awareness can only come when we are open to letting Christ into our lives, totally. Continuing to live comfortably behind the mask of self-delusion, we are content to live in a carnal world, where we think happiness has its base in partying, making money, having sex, eating and drinking, living in the best house, and “looking good”.

We become a Hollywood promoter, living behind the mask of our own invention, fearing we will be less interesting to others if we are outwardly religious. We fail to realize it is not enforced austerity and deprivation that is required, but a submission in love to Christ that brings us new found freedom to be true to ourselves. Our new path leads to unspeakable joy and enduring peace.

“Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased (C. S. Lewis).” **With love in Christ,**
Abbot Tryphon

The Jesus Prayer: Taste the presence of Christ beside you

We all need silent prayer every day, and finding the perfect place in our home that can become our cave, or prayer closet, affords us that sacred space where we can go deep into our heart and connect with God. That place where we can close off our family, our worries, our job, our distractions, and find the peace that comes from Christ.

The Jesus Prayer is the perfect prayer to recite in that house cave, for it is a prayer of adoration and praise, and a prayer that proclaims that Jesus is Lord, and as God, can bestow His mercy upon us. The simple prayer which invokes the Holy Name of Jesus can transform our life, and take us into the very Heart of God. This prayer is known as the Prayer of the Heart for the very reason that it takes place in the heart.

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” Said with the aid of a Prayer Rope (thus bringing your body into the action of the prayer), this prayer accomplishes Saint Paul’s admonition that we should “pray always”. It is a prayer that takes you out of yourself and into communion with Christ. It is a prayer that can change your life because through this prayer you can taste the presence of Christ beside you. **Love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon**

The Winter Pascha, Chapter 14: The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

*The following is an excerpt from **The Winter Pascha**, by Fr. Thomas Hopko*

Two Sundays before the celebration of Christmas, the Orthodox Church rejoices in the festival of the Holy Forefathers of the Old Covenant, including those who came before the giving of the Law. They foretold the coming of the Messiah and are redeemed by his saving Pascha. Together with the Canon of the Nativity of Christ, the following hymns are sung at the services of the day.

Let us offer praise to the fathers
Who shone forth before and during the Law;
With righteous minds they served the Lord and Master
Who shone forth from the Virgin,
And now they delight in the unending Light.

Let us honor Adam, the first-formed man and forefather of us all,
Who was honored by the hands of the creator.
He rests in the heavenly mansions with all the elect.

...

With his whole mouth, tongue and heart,
The wondrous Enoch hoped that in the Spirit
He might call with godly mind upon God, the Master of all.
Having lived on earth in a well-pleasing manner,
He has been taken up in glory.

Let us hear the divine words of those who cry aloud,
Telling of the coming of Christ.
For behold, He is born in a cave of an unwedded Maiden,
And his awesome birth is foretold to the Wise Men
By the suddenly appearing star.

...

There is a great difference between *existing* and *living*. Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live" (Ps 69:32, LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

"See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut 30:15-20)

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For "Christ who is our life" has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have "beheld His glory" (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the "form of a slave" (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who "have loved His appearing" and "live in Him" (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

You shone as heaven's lights upon the earth
Enkindling the light of piety.
You called forth the choir of all creation
As you sang to the Master who saves all from temptation,
"Bless Him, O children! Exalt Him, O priests!
Praise Christ, all people, throughout all the ages!"

الصَّوْمُ، للعديد من الناس، هو وقت صعب. فلا يجد معظم الناس الفرحة في الصَّوْمِ. أهنأك من فرحة في الصَّوْمِ؟ وأين يكمن هذا الفرحة؟ الصَّوْمُ لا يعنى الإمتناع عن أمور وأشياء معينة، بقدر ما هو تحرر من أعباء غير ضرورية يتحملها كل إنسان، فهو يحزرننا من الأحمال التي تأسر النفس وتكبلها بسبب الخطيئة.

الصَّوْمُ هو الفترة المناسبة لخلصنا، هو وقت نُولي فيه انتباهًا فائقًا لحياتنا الروحية. فعندما نتحرر من ثقل الجسد، حينها تبدأ النفس البشرية الجهاد الروحي الحقيقي.

لدينا الفرصة لتطهير نفوسنا في كل موسم صيامي؛ ولكن، للأسف، الصَّوْمُ يهمله الكثيرون، خاصةً في أيامنا هذه، التي نستعد فيها ليولد الرب في مغارة قلوبنا الموحشة.

لن يتمكن البعيدون عن جوهر الإيمان والجاهلون له أن يعرفوا معنى الصَّوْمِ ولذته، حتى ولو كانوا من رؤاد الكنيسة الدائمين. بالصَّوْمِ نحن نقدم للرب كل ما هو في العالم "التي لك، ممَّا لك، ونحن نقدمها لك..."; وكذلك "نودع أنفسنا وبعضنا بعضًا..." قائلين أنت ^[SEF] أوَّلًا يا رب، أن نعمل ما يرضيك هو أولويتنا والأكل والشرب وكل ما نحتاج له يأتي ثانيًا، ونحن نقدم لك كل شيء أنت الذي خلقت كل شيء وأرسلت ابنك الوحيد ليموت من أجلنا لأتلك محب لنا نحن البشر .

تذكروا يا إخوة أنه حين خلق الله الإنسان جعله سيداً على كل الخليقة. أما في يومنا هذا فنرى كم أصبح الإنسان عبداً لشهوته، وتتسلط عليه كل الخليقة.

الجدير بنا، نحن الذين دُعينا باسم المسيح، أن نعد أنفسنا لميلاد ربنا وإلهنا ومخلصنا يسوع المسيح، بالصَّوْمِ، الصلاة، والتوبة أوَّلًا، وكل زينة وبهجة خارجيتين تأتيان لاحقاً. هكذا نصبح مسيحيين بشكل أفضل، من خلال تحوُّلنا من الإنسان العتيق عبد الشهوة وكل ما هو عالمي إلى الإنسان السيد على العالم وشهوته أجمع.

هكذا خلقنا الله؛ هذا ما أراده منَّا؛ هنا يكمن الفرحة: أن نجاهد، أن ننتصر، وهكذا نكون مخلوقين على صورته أسياً، وهو نفسه الذي أرانا طريق الخلاص والفرحة هذه، الذي تجسد في آخر الأزمنة أخذاً صورة عبد ليؤله هذه الصورة.

When Bad Things Happen: Where is God when bad things happen?



We often wonder why God allows bad things to happen, sometimes even questioning if God cares at all about the evil things that happen to good people. Yet we forget that our God created us in such a way that we can freely return His love for us, and that in this freedom, we can even love others. We have all been given the freedom to do what we want, and to live our lives the way we please. The Lord lets us do drugs. He lets us be disrespectful to our parents, or cruel to those we decide are beneath us. He lets us avoid paying our taxes, or commit fraud for our own gain. God lets us avoid going to the services in our temples, while allowing us to choose partying with our friends on a Saturday night, over communing with our Creator God.

Our God allows us to spend all our time pursuing entertainment, and mindlessly focusing on social networking, to the exclusion of communing with Him. He lets us speed and cross the centerline into oncoming traffic, and although He doesn't like it when we do, He refrains from forcing Himself on us. He lets us make bad decisions, but is sad because He knows what will come of it.

Our God, Who is ever loving, caring, and compassionate, watches over each and every one of us. God even has hopes and plans for us just like our families do. But just like our earthly parents, He allows us to make our own choices on what we want to do, and, like our friends and families, is saddened when we make bad choices. Bad things happen, not because God doesn't care, but because, in our free will, we, His creatures, make bad things happen by choosing to do what we want, regardless of the consequences.

Finally, we live in a fallen world. This is not God's doing, but our own. God did not create evil, we did, and the end result was that death entered our world. Christ came to destroy the power of death by His own death, and holy resurrection. **Love and blessings, Abbot Tryphon**

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast (November 15 through December 24)

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. **This is a joyous fast** in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat	Dairy	Fish	Wine	Oil
beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth	milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth	fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood.	(some include all types of alcohol in this category)	(some include all types of oil in this category)
Abstain.	Abstain.	Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, &	Permitted onl y on Tuesdays, Thursdays,

		December 20. (some permit fish Tuesdays and Thursdays also)	Sundays before December 20.	Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.
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Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

- 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 fruit in us.
- We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.
- Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.
- **Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to “set a watch and keep the door of our lips.”**

Do Not Fast

- between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);
- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- **according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.**

What is Christian Stewardship? Christian Stewardship is : learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ’s Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God. ...our active commitment to use all our **time, talent and treasure** for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ’s redeeming love. ...caring for the needs of others. ...offering one’s self to God as He offered Himself to us. ...what a person does after saying “I believe...”, as proof of that belief. ...devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as diocese, as national Church and as Church universal. (Williams & McKibben in Oriented Leadership) Christian Stewardship is about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. God has given each of us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that what we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that one day He will ask us to give a detailed accounting of what we have done with the gifts He has given us. Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has noted that “we find ourselves by offering ourselves.” Have we learned the blessedness of generously giving to others of all we have? Everything we have is temporal. We don’t know for how long we have it. The fundamental question, though, is how will we use all that we have for the glory of God?

