

Why fast before the Nativity?
from OCA.org

Question

I was wondering why we fast before Nativity. The Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity fast?

Answer

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor.

[We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we "ruin our appetite" we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a "must."

In Matthew Christ says, "WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites," not "IF you fast" or "IF YOU CHOOSE to fast."

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at "no cost"] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.



Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific



November 29, 2020
13th Sunday of Luke

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November 29, 2020
13th Sunday of Luke

Commemoration of: Paramonus, Philmenus and their 370 Companion
Martyrs in Bithynia; Dionysios, Bishop of Corinth; Akakios of Sinai



Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

Ex ipsus katilthes (Resurrection Hymn) Tone 8
*Descending from on High, o merciful One, did You for three days burial endure,
that we may be delivered from sufferings, You are our life and resurrection, Lord
glory to You.*

Tu Stavru Su (Hymn of the Church) Tone 8
*Having seen in the sky the form of Your Cross and, like Paul, having received his
calling not from men, Your apostle among Kings, Lord, placed his reigning city in
Your hand, which forever you guard in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos,
for You alone are the lover of mankind.* (Translation as sung by the Choir)

Kontakion

I Parthenos simeron Tone 3
*On this day the Virgin Maid * goes to the grotto to give birth * to the pre-eternal
Word * in an ineffable manner. * Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. *
Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds * Him who willed that He appear
as * a newborn Child, * the pre-eternal God.*

Epistle Reading Ephesians 4:1-7
BRETHREN, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to
which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbear-
ing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs
to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is
above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to
the measure of Christ's gift.

Gospel Reading Luke 18:18-27
At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "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 he
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 it to the poor, and
you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he
became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him 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?" But he said, "What is impossible with
men is possible with God."

Activities & Announcements

- Today, 11/29
*13th Sunday of Luke; Memorial for Theodoros (40 Day) & Ekaterini; No Sunday
School today; No Adult Religious Education today;*
- ✘ MON, 11/30– *St. Andrew the First Called Apostle via Zoom: Orthros 8:30 a.m.,
followed by Liturgy*
 - ✘ WED, 12/2– *Young Adult Fellowship via Zoom: "The Fruit of the Spirit– Joy"
Session 2– 7 p.m.*
 - ✘ THU, 12/3– *Prayer Ministry 11 a.m.*
 - ✘ FRI, 12/4– *St. Barbara the Great Martyr via Zoom: Orthros 8:30 a.m., followed
by Liturgy; Adult Religious Education via Zoom: "Orthodoxy & World
Religions– Buddhism" by Dr. Robert Arakaki 7 p.m.*
 - ✘ SAT, 12/5– *Great Vespers via Zoom 5:30 p.m.*
 - ✘ SUN, 12/6– *10th Sunday of Luke/St. Nicholas of Myra; Adult Religious
Education via Zoom "The Fruit of the Spirit– Patience" Session 1, 1:35 p.m.*

Additional Announcements

- ✘ **Thanksgiving 2020**– Mahalo to Peter Hwu, all the generous donors, volunteers
and cooks who provided for the preparation and distribution of Thanksgiving
Meals this year!
- ✘ **Fall General Assembly**– Due to the pandemic, our Fall General Assembly has
been postponed to and will take place, via Zoom, on **Sunday, January 17, 2021**.
More details will be shared in the coming days.
- ✘ **Parish Council Elections**– Due to the pandemic, our Parish Council Elections
have been postponed to **Sunday, January 29, 2021**. Nominations will take place
at the upcoming General Assembly.