

Fasting Regulations – 2019

Abstinence

The law of abstinence forbids the use of meat or meat by-products, permitting the use of eggs and dairy products.

Abstinence is to be observed on all Wednesdays and Fridays during the Holy Season of the Great Fast and on Holy Saturday.

Strict Abstinence

The law of strict abstinence (fast) forbids the use of meat, eggs and dairy products or any of their by-products.

All of the adult faithful of the Eparchy who receive Holy Communion are obliged to observe Strict Abstinence. Those with valid medical reasons; pregnant or nursing mothers are not bound to the fast.

Strict Fast and Abstinence is to be observed on the First Day of the Great Fast, Monday, March 4th and on Great and Holy Friday, April 19th.

Dispensation

Pastors and administrators may, for a just cause, grant to the individual faithful and to individual families, dispensations or commutations of abstinence and strict abstinence into other pious practices.

Liturgical Directives

Pre-sanctified Liturgy

The Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great are not to be celebrated on the weekdays of Great Lent – not even for funerals. In compliance with the liturgical prescriptions of the Byzantine Catholic Church pastors and administrators should celebrate the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts during the Great Fast, that is, on Wednesdays and Fridays if possible, and at least one of the first three days of Great and Holy Week. A stipend may be accepted for this Liturgy and it is to be the only Liturgy celebrated on that particular day.

Funerals

A funeral may be served during weekdays of Great Lent without the Eucharist. However, if there is a real pastoral need, a Pre-sanctified form is to be observed. Feel free to contact me if you're not familiar with this.

Vestment Color

Color of vestments worn on Sundays during the Great Fast is to be bright or white; red or an appropriate Lenten color is to be worn only on the 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast (the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross and on weekdays). This rule applies to Liturgies celebrated in anticipation of Sunday as well.

FASTING

The Savior began the work of our salvation with fasting. In the same way all those, who follow in the footsteps of the Savior, build on this foundation the beginning of their endeavor, since fasting is a weapon established by God. Who will escape blame if he neglects this? If the Lawgiver Himself fasts, how can any of those, who have to obey the law, be exempt from fasting? This is why the human race knew no victory before fasting, and the devil was never defeated by our nature as it is: but this weapon has indeed deprived the devil of strength from the outset. Our Lord was the Leader and the first example of this victory, in order to place the first crown of victory on the head of our nature. As soon as the devil sees someone possessed of this weapon, fear straightway falls on this adversary and tormentor of ours, who remembers and thinks of his defeat by the Savior in the wilderness; his strength is at once destroyed and the sight of the weapon, given us by our Supreme Leader, burns him up. A man armed with the weapon of fasting is always afire with zeal. He who remains therein, keeps his mind steadfast and ready to meet and repel all violent passions. Feeling tired and weak, I think I know what to do: eat something. How odd it is, then to fast during Lent in order to become stronger. How does that work exactly? Well, it seems that when I fast during Lent, I'm not just giving up. I'm giving up something of mine and inviting God to fill that space. I try to develop the habit of praying whenever I feel a pang of desire for what I've sacrificed. I must even say "Thank you, Lord." In my physical weakness, I discover how strong God is and what He can do within when I let Him feed my hunger.

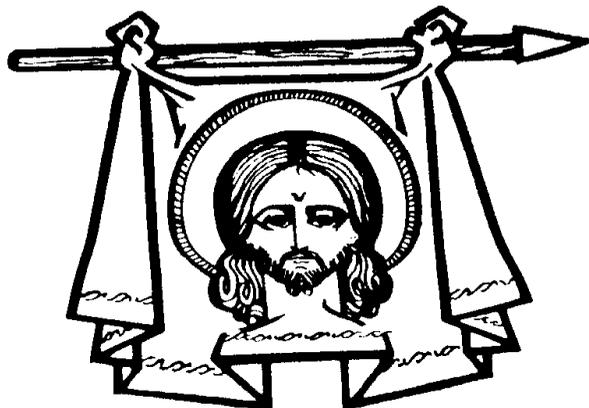
THE GIVING OF ALMS DURING GREAT LENT



A number of the prayers that are said during Lent refer to giving alms. In our day, when we contribute to the church all year long are these prayers really necessary?

The reason for these prayers is very simple. It is very important that we make some personal contribution to help out those who are less fortunate than us. The giving of alms is a very worthwhile thing to do. The giving of alms, in the form of money, food, etc. during the Lenten season forces me to recognize that I have been particularly blessed by God if I am in a position to help others. It

is not because of my own deeds that I was born in a family where I had everything that I needed. Whenever I help others, I realize that they are just like me; except I happen to have something they do not. It may be giving someone some money, or it may be changing a flat tire or shoveling the snow off the steps, but whenever I do something for someone else, it helps me see more clearly that we are all in the same position in the eyes of God. There are also many people whom the welfare system does not help. No one person can do all that needs to be done, but everyone can help out just a little bit. In many ways the best "alms" we can give is our time. For example, people who are able should be regular donors of blood, which is an important service to the community. And how many organizations need volunteers? Some of these things can be challenging, but it is a challenge that makes our faith something living and dynamic. In most of these programs it is possible to put in just a few hours each week. I should also add that most of our parishes could use a hand as well in the little things here and there. For those who think it is better to give to recognized charitable organizations, there are many of them who do excellent work in the United States and overseas. Some of them are religiously affiliated and others are not.



LITURGY OF

SANCTIFIED GIFTS

THE PRE-



When the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy became part of the liturgical life of the Church is not exactly known. But by the year 364 the Council of Laodicea says: *"It is not permitted during the Great Fast to offer up the Bread except on Saturday and Sunday."* (Rule 49). In 691 the Council of Trullo (Rule 52) states: *"On the days of the Great Fast, with the exception of Saturday and Sunday, and the Feast of the Annunciation, the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts must be celebrated."* It does not say "might" or "could" but "must" be celebrated. This is a directive that goes back at least 1300 years, conceivably 1600 years, probably even a bit longer ago than that. It refers to a very special service, specific to the tenor of the Great Fast of Lent; part of the public prayer of the Church; and a valuable resource for any Christian who wishes to know, love and practice the Faith in a manner beyond the superficial.

If we ignore the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts we lose a vast treasure house of spiritual formation. If we supplant it with some private devotion, we deprive ourselves of the power of the whole Church praying. (Private devotion--even if thousands are praying in unison--is just that: PRIVATE. "Liturgy" is prayer which calls upon the strength of all members of the Mystical Body together as a public act of worship). [C.f. Pius XII]

Would you read the first two chapters of a mystery novel and the last two chapters--skipping the two in the middle, probably not. Sure, you'd know the placement of the action and the outcome of the events. You might even make some sense out of the conclusion by filling in missing information through your imagination. But you'd miss the underlying element of the development of details. How much more satisfying to have it unfold before you in the pattern the author desired. So it is with our spiritual life. We know the rudiments of the Faith concerning the Nativity of Christ--and are aware of the effects of the Resurrection. But it is the unifying element of how He lived out His Mission to mankind that makes it make sense. The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is those linking chapters. It captures the Mystery of the Incarnation and places it before our eyes in a way no other service of the Church does. And it leads us directly to the Resurrection. Both ends can make sense. But the middle provides us with all the rationale, innuendo, nuance and genius of the entire tale of our Salvation. Use this tool wisely, as a vehicle for carrying your soul to the loftiness of God's Kingdom.