



24 Feb – 2 Mar, 2019

Lent, part 1

Fast from instant gratifications; feast on self denial

Fast from worry; feast on divine order

Trust in God

Finally, fast from sin; feast on the abundance of God's mercy

The Great Lent

- † **The Great Lent is a Joyful journey towards the Cross which cannot be separated from the glory of the Resurrection**
- † **The journey involves our spiritual life which in turn cannot be separated from our physical life**

Christ in Lent

- † **Lent is a period when the Church unites itself to the mystery of Jesus Christ in the desert, where He fasted and overcame every temptation before embarking on His work of salvation *(Mat 4:1-11)***
- † **In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *'When you fast'*, and not *'If you fast'* *(Mat 6:16,17)***
- † **Therefore fasting is a command from Jesus**
- † **Furthermore, in more than one reference in the New Testament, it is said that evil passions are overcome through prayer and fasting**

The Great Lent and the Church

- † **Over time, fasting has become a practice of the Church**
- † **As members of the body of Christ, we are required to follow the Church's directives, each according to his/her rite**
- † **It is an act of humility to follow the laws of the Church and Jesus indeed asked us to be humble *(Mat 23:12)***
- † **Let us never forget that the Church has always been and continues to be guided by the Holy Spirit**

Abstinence

The Eastern Church designates the Lenten period as abstinence from animal and dairy products so as to live the state of Paradise on earth

- **In the very beginning, God gave Adam and Eve all the seed-bearing plants and trees as food *(Gen 1:28)* and they did not consume any animals**
- **After their disobedience to the Word of God, they were sent out of paradise lest they eat from the tree of life *(Gen 3)***

- In His Incarnation and His Passion, Jesus Christ reopened the door of Paradise on the first Easter, restoring us to live eternally with Him in perfect reconciliation (*Luk 23:39-43*)

This does not imply that we should be overzealous about abstaining from animal products all year through

- ✚ After the flood and God's reconciliation with humankind, God told Noah: *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything'* (*Gen 9:3*)
- ✚ In the New Testament, an instance is also related in *Acts 10: 11-16* which supports the idea that God did not prohibit the consumption of animals or their products. Peter had a vision and saw Heaven opened; a large sheet came down to earth containing every sort of animal and bird. The Lord commanded Peter to *'kill and eat'*, but Peter refrained from doing so. Then the voice of the Lord told Peter that what God has made clean, we have no right to call profane.

What is the purpose of Lent?

- ✚ Fasting and abstaining from food is meant to help us to
 - dwell more closely with Jesus Christ
 - to become like Him
- ✚ Lent bonds us to His Word and to His Church
- ✚ Lent is a profound representation of the Christian journey
 - It is a time of faith and longing, hope and expectation
 - With the world behind us and the cross before us, we go repenting and rejoicing one step at a time
 - *'And everything sad is coming untrue'* The Lord of the Rings

 refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

'The kind of fasting I want is this: ...Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor' Isaiah 58:6a-7a

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

- 1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon**
- 2. for CrossTalk to find a locale**
- 3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim**
- 4. to become more of saints and less of sinners**
- 5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think**
- 6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth**
- 7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him**
- 8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor**
- 9. to all the sick**
- 10. to all those in prison**
- 11. to the unity of the Christians**
- 12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity**
- 13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management**
- 14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them**
- 15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights**
- 16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region**

During this coming week, we will lift the Church and its unity in prayer

الصلاة الربانية
أبانا الذي في السموات
ليتقدس اسمك
ليأت ملكوتك
لتكن مشيئتك
كما في السماء
كذلك على الأرض
خبزنا الضروري للحياة
أعطنا اليوم
واغفر لنا ذنوبنا
كما تغفر نحن أيضاً
للمذنبين إلينا
ولا تدخلنا في تجربة
لكن نجنا من الشرير
لأن لك الملك والقدرة والمجد
إلى الأبد
أمين

قانون الايمان
نؤمن بالله واحد، الأب ضابط الكل
خالق السماء والأرض، كل ما يرى وما لا يرى
وبرب واحد يسوع المسيح، ابن الله الوحيد
المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور
نور من نور، إله حق من إله حق
مولود غير مخلوق
له الجوهر نفسه مع الأب
الذي به كان شيء
ذاك الذي من أجلنا نحن البشر
ومن أجل خلاصنا
نزل من السموات وتجسد متأنساً
بالروح القدس من مريم العذراء
وصلب عنا في عهد بيلاطس بنطيوس
وتألم وقبر وقام في اليوم الثالث
كما في الكتب وصعد إلى السموات
وجلس عن يمين الأب ويحيى بمجد
ليدين الأحياء والأموات
ولن يكون لملكه نهاية
وبالروح القدس
الرب المحيي
المنبثق من الأب
المسجود له والممجّد
مع الأب والإبن
الناطق بالأنبياء
وبكنيسة واحدة مقدسة، جامعة، رسولية
ونعترف بعمودية واحدة
لمغفرة الخطايا
وننتظر قيامة الموتى
وحياة الدهر الآتي
أمين