

# FASTING

Fasting has always been one of the most important elements of the Orthodox faith. It is considered the most ancient institution of the Church. **The fast of the Virgin Mary begins on the 1st of August and ends on the 14th of the same month.** This fast is one of the strictest, as we celebrate the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, one of the greatest feasts of Orthodoxy. At this time, we fast because, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary also fasted before going to sleep.

The items we fast from are:

1. Meat
2. Dairy
3. Fish (with the exception of the feast of the Savior on August 6)
4. Oil (allowed only on Saturday and Sunday)
5. Alcohol (applies to oil as well)

If the 15th of August falls on Wednesday or Friday, fish is allowed but not meat. On the 6th of August (Transfiguration of the Savior Christ) we always eat fish. On days when we eat at least the oil, we can eat seafood without blood. (shrimp etc.)

This fast is done in honor of the Virgin Mary, who also fasted before her Assumption. According to tradition, as soon as the Virgin Mary was informed of her impending death, she prayed on the Mount of Olives, and prepared and informed the Apostles.

On the day of the Assumption, because not all the Apostles were in Jerusalem, a cloud seized them and brought them to her. They placed her in the tomb of Gethsemane and after three days the tomb was empty, as the Virgin Mary ascended to heaven.

Initially this fast was divided into two periods, one period until the Transfiguration of the Savior and one period from the Transfiguration of the Savior until the Assumption of the Virgin. These two fasts were united in the 10th century.

Fasting is a Commandment of God. It is one of the first two given to Adam in Paradise.

Specifically, the first was "to work and guard Paradise", while the second "not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". The Meaning of this Commandment was as follows: With the "weapon" of Fasting, let people become accustomed to Obedience to God and to the Fight against the devil.

The Lord emphasized the value of fasting even more, when he characteristically stated about the genus of demons: "And this genus does not proceed except through prayer and fasting." That is, this genus can not be defeated by any person who does not pray or fast.

It is also worth noting that when we fast, we must also confess our fasting whenever necessary (for example, when we are invited to partake in a meal while it is during the fasting period, we should politely refuse to participate in it if the food is not lenten confessing that we are fasting), but without ever displaying it, that is, without revealing it to anyone to be proud of or to show how much we are struggling.

After all, the Lord teaches us to keep our every Prayer and Fasting a secret.

And the Holy and Great King mentions about Fasting: "When God said" You will not eat "to the firstborn, He gave them a Law of Fasting and Restraint.

If Eve had not eaten from the fruit of that tree, we would not need fasting today. Because we did not fast, we were expelled from Paradise. So let us fast in order to enter into Him again. "

### **Fasting Foods:**

Vegetables, legumes, potatoes, pasta, nuts, olives, fruits. Also, when we fast and do not eat oil, we do not drink wine or alcohol.

Only on those days when we eat at least the oil, wine and alcohol are allowed. Note here that when we say that on this day we eat fish, it means that we do not eat meat, dairy, cheese and eggs (that is, we eat only fish and oil).

### **Highlights**

In periods of Fasting, physical Fasting should be combined with spiritual Fasting (ie with more Prayer and Bible Study, as well as other Christian books), with greater sensitivity to those in need, with as much abstinence as possible from sins, with Confession and Holy Communion.

For any difficulties we may encounter during Fasting, it is necessary to consult our spiritual priest , who will guide us and facilitate our effort, allowing (as the case may be) some to catalyze some extra food (e.g. the oil).