



Holy Lent 2010

At Saint Augustine's Orthodox Church, Denver, CO

OUR great Lenten Journey begins this year on **Ash Wednesday, February 17th**. And this year all Christians celebrate **Pascha** on the same date, **April 4**. We are invited once again to utilize the three legs of the Lenten table of **PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING** in order to help us reflect on our lives in relationship with our Loving Lord and one another.

Lenten Services and Spiritual Growth Opportunities

- Ash Wednesday:** February 17. Mass with the blessing and imposition of Ashes at 7:00pm
- Stations of the Cross:** Fridays – February 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19 Lenten Fridays 7:00pm
- Sunday of Orthodoxy:** February 21 Pan Orthodox Vespers at Assumption Cathedral: 5:00pm
- Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. Augustine's:** Sunday, March 7 at 5:00pm
- Devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows: *Via Matris*** Friday, March 26, 7:00pm
- Weekday Masses:** every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10:00am
Other Masses according to the Schedule in the weekly Bulletin
- The Feast of the Annunciation** Thursday, March 25; Mass at 7:00pm
- Pan-Orthodox Retreat** by Fr. Meletios Weber at St. Catherine's March 6, 9:30am-3:30pm

Holy Week Services

March 28-April 4

- Palm Sunday:** March 28, BLESSING AND PROCESSION OF THE PALMS AND HIGH MASS: 10:00am
- Monday — Wednesday:** March 29-31 Low Mass: 10:00am
- Holy Thursday:** April 1 MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AND PROCESSION: 7:00pm
Vigil at the Garden of Repose, after Mass until Midnight
- Good Friday:** April 2 Stations of the Cross: 12:00noon
SOLEMN AFTERNOON LITURGICAL SERVICE of the Passion of Our Lord: 7:00pm
- Holy Saturday:** *Cleaning and preparation of the Church for Easter* 9:00am-12:noon
THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER: **7:30pm**
- EASTER DAY [Holy Pascha]** PASCHAL HIGH MASS: 10:00am
Easter Dinner following Mass

A Few Words on the Lenten Discipline

FAST means not eating all or certain foods. As Orthodox Faithful, we can fast completely at certain times of great importance, and especially each time before receiving Holy Communion. Usually, fasting means limiting the number of meals and/or the type of food eaten.

The purpose of fasting is to remind us of the Scriptural teaching, “Man does not live by bread alone.” The needs of the body are nothing compared to the needs of the soul. Above all else, we need God, Who provides everything for both the body and the soul. Fasting teaches us to depend on God more fully.

The first sin of our parents, Adam and Eve, was eating from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-19). We fast from food, or a food item, as a reminder that we are to fast from sinning and doing evil.

There are several benefits of fasting. Fasting helps us pray more easily. Our spirit is lighter when we are not weighed down by too much food or food that is too rich. Through fasting, we also learn to feel compassion for the poor and hungry and to save our own resources so that we can help those in need.

Fasting is more than not eating food. Saint John Chrysostom teaches that it is more important to fast from sin. For example, besides controlling what goes **into our mouths**, we must control what comes **out of our mouths** as well. Are our words pleasing to God, or do we curse God or our brother?

The other members of the body also need to fast: our eyes from seeing evil, our ears from hearing evil, our limbs from participating in anything that is not of God. Most important of all, we need to control our thoughts, for thoughts are the source of our actions, whether good or evil.

Fasting is not an end in itself. Our goal is an inner change of heart. The Lenten Fast is called “ascetic.” This refers to actions of self-denial and spiritual training which are central to fasting.

Fasting is a spiritual exercise. It is not imposed or forced upon us. In the same way that true repentance cannot be forced upon anyone, each of us makes the choice to turn away from our sinful ways and go toward our loving, for giving Father in Heaven.

The Fasting Discipline within the Church has changed due to circumstances and geography over the centuries. As Orthodox Christians of the Western Tradition, our Lenten Discipline is different from our Eastern Rite brethren. First of all, there is a distinction made between Fast (the quantity of food taken) and Abstinence (the quality of food taken). Each of the Disciplines has the same goal, the curbing of our carnal appetites, freeing us for contemplation of higher things and care for the poor.

Here is a summary of the Western Orthodox Fast as we have received them from the Church::

Fast & Abstinence are required on Ash Wednesday, the Fridays of Lent, the Lenten Ember Days.

All of the Days of Lent are **Fast Days**, save Sundays (which are always commemorations of the Resurrection) and the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25).

The Lenten Observance ceases at 12 midnight on Holy Saturday, after the GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER.

- **FASTING:** only one full meal per day and two partial meals, not equaling one full meal.
- **ABSTINENCE:** no meat (beef, pork, veal, chicken, etc.) and the broth or gravy made from them. Dairy is not excluded in the Western discipline.

Those desiring to follow the more rigorous discipline of the Byzantine Rite should not do so before receiving the blessing of their Pastor.

In Pan-Orthodox gatherings and when we have guests from the Byzantine Tradition, we, out of hospitality, should follow their custom.