

CHRISTIAN FASTING in our life



What is Fast?



- ❧ The Fast – is a sacrifice, it is voluntarily giving up certain foods, thoughts and evil deeds, for the cleansing of sins, for renewal of life and for living according to the will of God.
- ❧ It is a means of perfection, towards the likeness of God and angels.

Who gives an example of fasting?

✠ After He was baptized, Jesus withdrew to the Quarantania desert where He fasted for 40 days.

✠ Luke 4:1-2

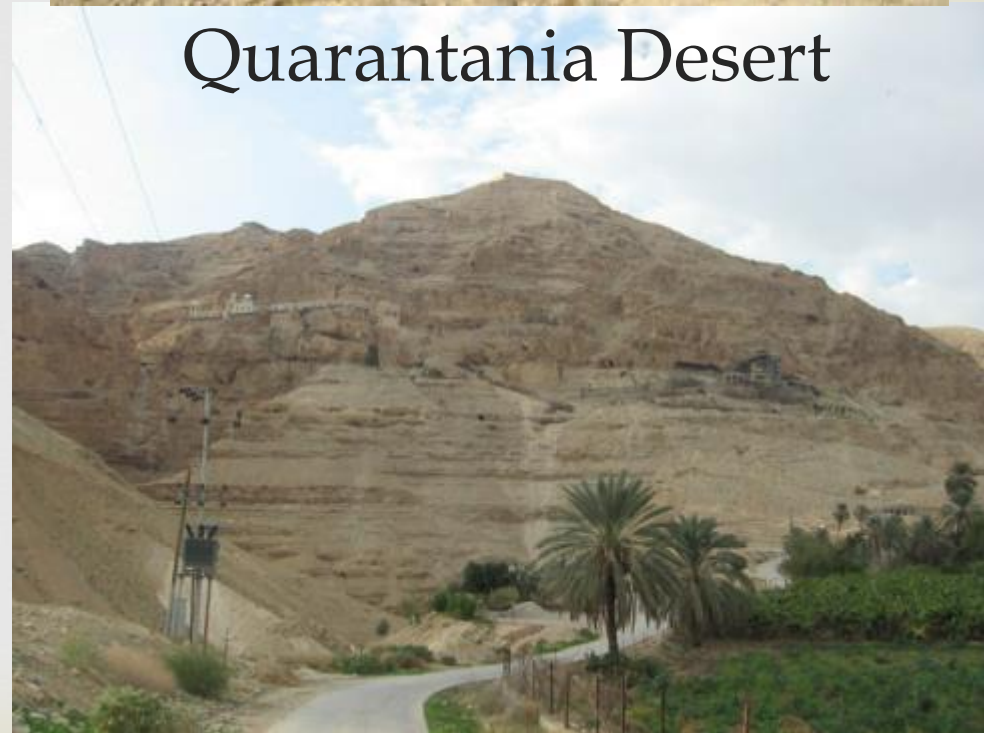
Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days...



The Temptation Church

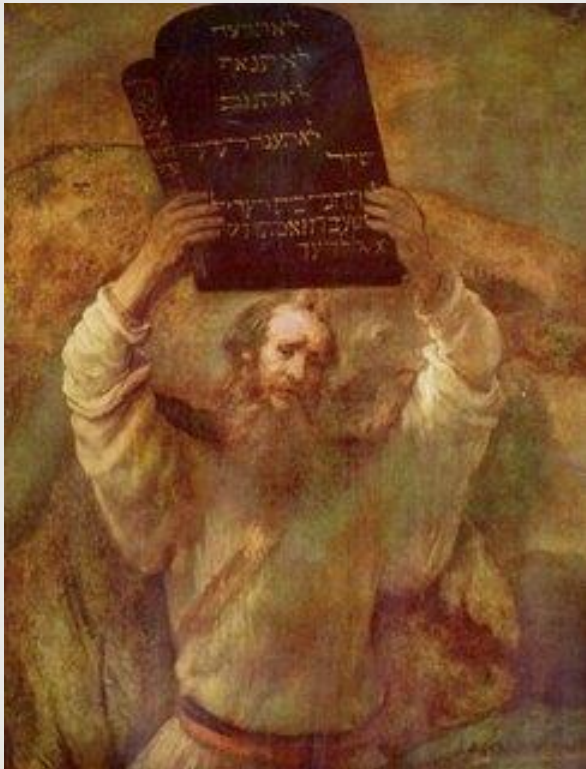


Quarantania Desert



Moses, while being on Mount Sinai, fasted 40 days before receiving the Tables of the Law of God.

“So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.” Exodus 34, 28





*“Now John was
clothed with
camel’s hair and
with a leather belt
around his waist,
and he ate locusts
and wild honey.”
Mark 1:6*



Why do we need to fast?



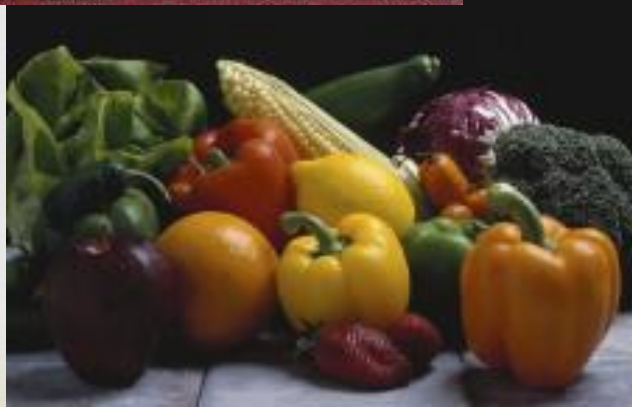
- ❧ Christians are fasting for Christ (to get closer to Him);
- ❧ To grow spiritually as a man;
- ❧ To be able to fight against the temptations of the flesh and soul;
- ❧ To strengthen faith, mercy and to acquire humility.
- ❧ It is an exercise for strengthening of the will, a form of repentance, thus a means of salvation.

How do we fast?

- ❧ Before we fast we must reconcile with all our fellow men.
- ❧ We go to the priest to confess and relieve our souls of sins.
- ❧ We abstain from evil thoughts and deeds.
- ❧ We pray more.
- ❧ We do good deeds.
- ❧ We do not eat food of animal origin.

❧ *“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”*

Matthew 6:16-18



Classification of Fasting Periods



✧ In the Orthodox Church, fasting periods are classified by:

✧ strictness;

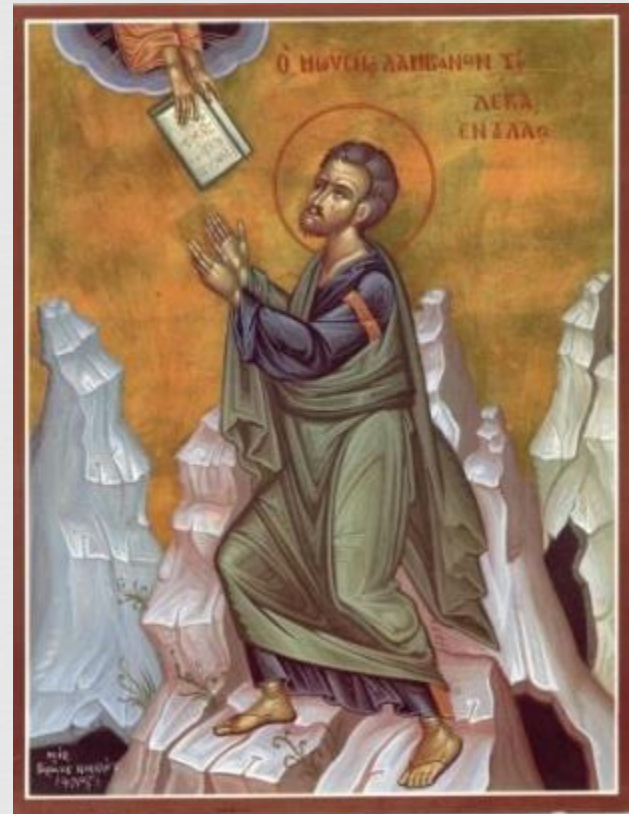
✧ length;

Types of fast based on strictness:



❧ *Absolute fast (total)*

- This fast implies total abstinence from any kind of food and drink, for one or more days.
- Moses, on Mount Sinai, and the Savior, before beginning His preaching activity, fasted 40 days, a period difficult to replicate by ordinary people.



Types of fast based on strictness:



✧ Strict fast

- This fact allows the consumption of dry food: bread, fruit, vegetables and water;
- This type of fast was practiced by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan Valley



Types of fast based on strictness:



❧ Common fast (regular)

- Allows eating cooked foods at regular mealtimes, but in smaller quantity and only of vegetable origin.

Types of fast based on strictness:



❧ Lenient fast

- It is practiced on holidays during a fasting period, allowing the consumption of fish, oil and wine; these days are mentioned in the calendar.



Types of fast based on length:

☞ one day;

☞ multiple days;



One day fasts:

✠ **Wednesday:** Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot on this day;

✠ **Friday:** Jesus Christ was crucified on this day;



One day fasts:

✧ **Beheading of Saint John the Baptist – August 29th**



Foto: Tribuna

✧ **Exaltation of the Holy Cross – September 14th**



One day fasts:



∞ **Theophany Eve -**
January 5th reminds us of
the ancient catechumens
who were preparing for
baptism;



Multiple days fasts:

❧ The Great Lent

(7 weeks before Pascha): It is the longest and strictest one of all fasts (oil and wine is permitted only Saturdays and Sundays, and fish is only permitted on the Annunciation and Palm Sunday).

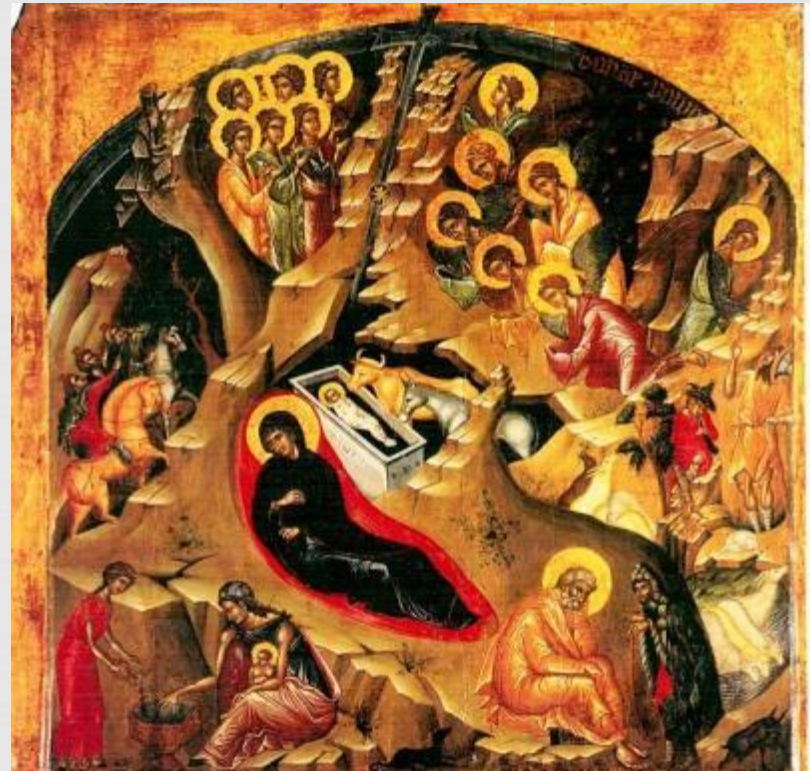


Multiple days fasts:

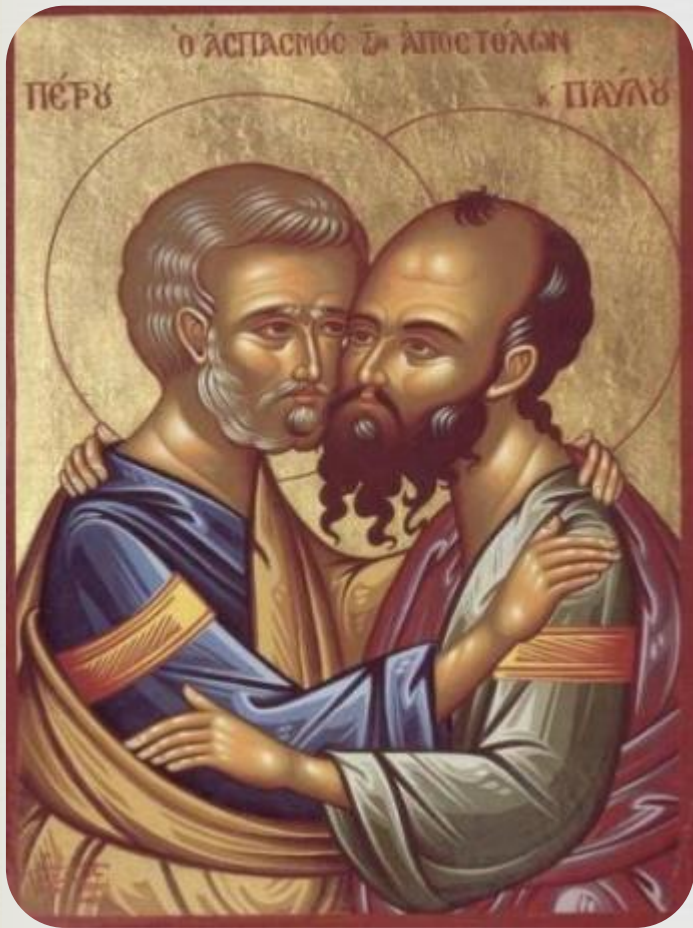
❧ *Nativity Fast*

Between Nov 15th – Dec 24th;

- ❧ It is a 40-day post, more lenient than the Great Lent (fish is allowed Saturdays and Sundays, also on the days of the most important saints).
- ❧ It prepares us for the joy of the Nativity. It reminds us of the patriarchs and righteous from the Old Testament who lived in fasting and prayer and fell asleep with the hope of the coming of the Savior Christ.



Multiple days fasts:



- ✧ *Apostles' Fast* (variable-length fast, depending on Pascha's date);
- ✧ This post reminds us of the love and patience with which Sts. Apostles Peter and Paul preached the Gospel and the martyrdom they endured during the persecution of Nero.

Multiple days fasts:



✧ Dormition Fast (August 1st - 14th)

- ✧ This fast is dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God.
- ✧ It lasts 14 days and is similar with the Great Lent: oil and wine is permitted on Saturday/ Sunday, while fish is permitted on the Transfiguration of the Lord.

- ❧ Fish is allowed on Great Feasts that fall during fasting periods.
- ❧ Oil and wine is allowed during Great Lent on Saturdays and Sundays.
- ❧ Fish is allowed on Saturdays, Sundays and on the days of the most important saints during Nativity Fast.
- ❧ If a Great Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday it is usually declared a fast-free day and all foods are allowed.

*Depending on the number of believers who
fast at the same time, the fast can be:*

- ❧ - *general fast* (the entire Church);
- ❧ - *local fast* (a region, city, diocese);
- ❧ - *private fast* or *personal*.

Remember!



- ✧ Since fasting is not a goal in itself, but only a means of striving for moral perfection, it must always be accompanied by prayer, repentance, mercy, confession of sins, and partaking the Body and Blood of Christ.
- ✧ Romanian Orthodox Church has specified some exceptions regarding the fasting rules for certain categories of people as follows: children up to the age of seven are not bound by the rules of the fast, children aged 7-12 years, believers of any age but suffering from a disease requiring a special diet, as well as pregnant and nursing women can eat milk, cheese, eggs, fish and fast only on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Warning!



⌘ If unreasonably kept, fast can put man's life in danger and the Church recommends avoiding excesses; risking life for this reason cannot be pleasing to God.