

Second Week of the Great Fast

Let us feast on the spiritual delicacies of our Lenten Triodion

MONDAY: Let us begin this second week of the Fast in joy; O faithful, let us exert ourselves from day to day as did the prophet Elijah the Tishbite. May the four principal virtues be our chariot of fire! Let us lift our spirit by turning away from passions, and through purity, let us struggle against the flesh, so that we may resist and conquer the Enemy.

Come, let us purify ourselves by sharing with the poor, not sounding the trumpet for our almsgiving, nor making public our good deeds. May our left hand know not what our right hand does, let vainglory rob us of our fruit! But in secret, let us say to Him who knows all secrets: Forgive us our trespasses, Father in your goodness for humanity.

The true Fast is the one which drives us away from sin and cuts us off from sinful passions. The true Fast is the love of God, fervor in prayer, tears of contrition and concern for the poor and needy, as Christ teaches us in the Scriptures.

TUESDAY: O God, You now lead us into this holy season of the Fast and permit us to begin the period of the second week. Lead our work, O Lord, to a good conclusion. Fill our souls and bodies with grace and strength, so that at the end of this journey, we may reach the sovereign day of your holy Resurrection, and that obtaining the crown of victory, we may unceasingly praise You.

Let us keep a spiritual Fast; let us break up every hypocrisy; let us flee the traps of sin; let us forgive the offenses of others, so that our sins might also be forgiven. Thus we shall all be able to sing: May our prayer arise like incense before You, O Lord.

The Fast offers us a mystical banquet and invites us to partake abundantly; for food let us take the immortal gifts of the Spirit, and for drink the tears of contrition, offering joyously to God our unending praise.

As a beautiful plant gives delight to the heart, the Fast makes the marvelous fruits of virtue blossom forth in a divine manner. In these holy days, let us plant the seeds that we may gather a harvest of holiness.

Let us keep a true fast for the Lord; and as we deprive ourselves of food, let us also abstain from idle gossip and lying speech, and from every other passion, that we may see the Pasch in purity.

O fasting! You have made Samuel blossom; you have made Samson the great hero; from you, priests and prophets have drawn their perfection. Grant us also the fruit of holiness.

WEDNESDAY: When You extended your hands on the Cross, You took upon yourself the sin of Adam, who in days of old extended his hands toward the tree of knowledge to pick its fruit; for You, O Word of God, are full of goodness and compassion.

O Cross of Christ, hope of the ends of the earth; may you guide us across the peaceful ocean of the Fast! Save us from the storm of sin.

O Savior, by your Cross You have destroyed death which entered the world through the fruit eaten in Paradise from the forbidden tree. During this Fast deliver us from every evil delight, and grant that we may labor for the nourishment of eternal life, and obtain the immortal crown which You have prepared for those who truly fast.

THURSDAY: Subdue your passions, O my soul, and you shall be saved; abstaining from food is not a true fast, unless you also abstain from sin.

This is the season for repentance, the struggle of the Fast. It gains eternal life for us if we stretch out our hands to do good. For nothing is better for the salvation of our souls than to share with the poor; and almsgiving together with fasting free us from death. Let us dearly love this rich treasure which can bring salvation to our souls.

FRIDAY: Of old our first parents did not fast from the Tree of Knowledge according to the command of the Creator, and they received death as the fruit of their disobedience. They were deprived of the Tree of Life and the sweetness of Paradise. Therefore, O faithful, let us fast from perishable food and our deadly passions, so that we might acquire life from the divine Tree of the Cross, and return with the good thief to our ancient homeland, through the mercy of Christ our God.

The Fast, the destroyer of passions, offers a remedy to souls bruised by sin. Let us cultivate it as a help coming from God; let us receive from Moses the tablets of the Law, and not prefer the intemperance that would break them, nor imitate those who perished in the desert. Let us not wear a painful appearance, but let our face shine with joy. Let us not be hypocrites as the Pharisees, but place our honor in the Gospel and glorify the Cross of Christ, the Redeemer of our souls.



Why Kievan Rus' ~ Modern Ukraine is so important to Byzantine Christians!

This is the region whose prince Vladimir was converted to Byzantine Christianity *anno Domini* 988. As the center of Christianity in ancient Rus', it is said to have had over 400 churches in the early eleventh century. Throughout the tsarist period which ended with the October Revolution in 1917, Kiev remained a significant centre of Orthodox learning and culture, and developed its own style of ecclesiastical music. Its role has increased since the fall of Communism in 1991 and the independence of Ukraine in 1994.

The capital city of Kiev is now the seat of three Orthodox churches:

- ❑ the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kievan Patriarchate
- ❑ the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), and
- ❑ the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church

It is also now the seat of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. There is a smaller number of Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Churches in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's newly constructed patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ was consecrated on 17 – 18 August 2013 (eve of the feast of the Transfiguration, Old Calendar) by his Beatitude Sviatoslav Schevchuk. Over 20,000 pilgrims attended the dedication of the 1,500-seat cathedral, which took over a decade to build at a cost of 10 million dollars with donations from Ukrainian Catholics worldwide. Let us pray for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine as Christ and Prince Vladimir – Equal to the Apostles would want! May the «Pokrov» of the Theotokos be cast over all Ukrainians!



~ Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ ~