

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

27th Sunday after Pentecost

Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphus, of Alexandria

**Tone 2
Troparion
(Resurrection)**

*When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out:
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”*

**Tone 8
Troparion
(Martyrs)**

*Having slain the fiery ragings and fierce movements of the passions through their ascetic labors,
the Martyrs of Christ, Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphus,
received grace to dispel the afflictions of the infirm and to work wonders both while alive and after death.
It is a truly great wonder that naked bones pour forth healing.
Glory to our only God and Creator!*

**Tone 2
Kontakion
(Resurrection)**

*Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior,
seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee,
and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.*

**Tone 4
Kontakion
(Martyrs)**

*Let us sing praise in honor of the glorious Menas, and of his companions, the holy Hermogenes and Eugraphus.
For they have honored the Lord and fought for His glory.
They are worthy of numbering with the Angels in heaven,
and are bountiful in their miracles.*

Prokeimenon

Tone 2 (Resurrection)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)

The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps. 117:18)

The Epistle Reading

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Efesianeve 6:10-17

Pra, o vëllezër të mi, forcohuni në Zotin edhe në pushtetin e fuqisë së tij. Vishni gjithë armët e Perëndisë, që të mundeni t'u qëndroni kundër mjeshtërive të djallit; sepse lufta jonë nuk është kundër gjaku dhe mishi, po kundër kryesive, kundër pushteteve, kundër sunduesve të errësirës së kësaj jete, kundër frymërave të liga në vendet qiellore. Prandaj merrni me vete gjithë armët e Perëndisë, që të mund të qëndroni kundër në ditën e keqe, edhe si t'i keni bërë gati të gjitha, të qëndroni ngritur. Qëndroni pra ngritur të ngjeshur në brezin tuaj me të vërtetën, edhe të veshur me parzmoren e drejtësisë, edhe me këmbë të mbathura me gatishmërinë për ungjillin e paqes, duke marrë mbi të gjitha mburojën e besimit, me të cilin do të mund të shuani gjithë shigjetat e zjarrta të të ligut. Edhe merrni përkrenaren e shpëtimit, edhe shpatën e Frymës, që është fjala e Perëndisë,

К Ефесянам 6:10-17

Наконец, братья мои, укрепляйтесь Господом и могуществом силы Его. Облекитесь во всеоружие Божие, чтобы вам можно было стать против козней диавольских, потому что наша брань не против крови и плоти, но против начальств, против властей, против мироправителей тьмы века сего, против духов злобы поднебесной. Для сего примите всеоружие Божие, дабы вы могли противостать в день злый и, все преодолев, устоять. Итак станьте, препоясав чресла ваши истиною и облекшись в броню праведности, и обув ноги в готовность благовествовать мир; а паче всего возьмите щит веры, которым возможете угасить все раскаленные стрелы лукавого; и шлем спасения возьмите, и меч духовный, который есть Слово Божие.

Tone 12

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee! *(Ps. 19:1)*

V. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call! *(Ps. 19:9)*

Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephus, of Alexandria

The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephus suffered for their faith in Christ under the emperor Maximian (305-313).

Saint Menas was sent by the emperor from Athens to Alexandria to suppress the riots that had arisen between the Christians and the pagans. Distinguished for his gift of eloquence, Menas instead openly began to preach the Christian Faith and he converted many pagans to Christ. Learning of this, Maximian sent Hermogenes to Alexandria to place the saints on trial. Moreover, he gave orders to purge the city of Christians.

Hermogenes, although he was a pagan, was distinguished by his reverent bearing. And struck by the endurance of Saint Menas under torture and by his miraculous healing after the cruel torments, he also came to believe in Christ. Maximian himself then arrived in Alexandria. Neither the astonishing stoic endurance of Saints Menas and Hermogenes under torture, nor even the miracles manifested by God in this city, mollified the emperor. Instead, they vexed him all the more. The emperor personally stabbed Saint Eugephus, the secretary of Saint Menas, who had declared himself a Christian upon witnessing the endurance of Saints Menas and Hermogenes; and then gave orders to behead the holy Martyrs Menas and Hermogenes.

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✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

Luke 17:12-19

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

Llukait 17:12-19

Edhe kur po hynte në një fshat, e takuan atë dhjetë burra lebrozë, të cilët qëndruan nga larg. Edhe ata ngritën zërin, duke thënë: Jisu, mjeshtër, përdëllena. Edhe kur i pa, u tha atyre: Shkoni e rrëfeni veten tuaj tek priftërinjtë. Edhe ata duke shkuar u pastruan. Edhe një nga ata, kur pa se u shërua, u kthye duke lavdëruar Perëndinë me zë të madh, edhe ra përmbys në këmbët e tij, dhe e falënderoi; edhe ai ishte samaritan. Edhe Jisui u përgjigj e tha: A nuk u pastruan që të dhjetë? Po nëntë ku janë? Si nuk u gjetën të tjerë të kthehen që t'i japin lavdi Perëndisë, veç këtij të huaji? Edhe i tha: Ngrihu, e shko; besimi yt të shpëtoi.

От Луки 17:12-19

И когда входил Он в одно селение, встретили Его десять человек прокаженных, которые остановились вдали и громким голосом говорили: Иисус Наставник! помилуй нас. Увидев [их], Он сказал им: пойдите, покажитесь священникам. И когда они шли, очистились. Один же из них, видя, что исцелен, возвратился, громким голосом прославляя Бога, и пал ниц к ногам Его, благодаря Его; и это был Самарянин. Тогда Иисус сказал: не десять ли очистились? где же девять? как они не возвратились воздать славу Богу, кроме сего иноплеменика? И сказал ему: встань, иди; вера твоя спасла тебя.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Continued from page 2

The relics of the holy martyrs, cast into the sea in an iron chest, were afterwards found (see February 17) and transferred to Constantinople in the ninth century. The emperor Justinian built a church in the name of the holy Martyr Menas of Alexandria. Saint Joseph the Hymnographer (April 4) composed a Canon in honor of these holy martyrs.



PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		
<p>Newly Departed Miriam, Newly Departed Prifteresha Elisabeth Bouteneff,</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p>December 10 – 16 Noah Kelly (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u> Llukan Dylgjeri – health Michael Mogilevich - health</p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><i>Today</i> Ephesians 6:10-17 Luke 17:12-19</p> <p><i>Monday</i> 2 Timothy 2:20-26 Mark 8:11-21</p> <p><i>Tuesday</i> 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4 Mark 8:22-26</p> <p><i>Wednesday</i> Galatians 5:22-6:2 Luke 6:17-23 2 Timothy 4:9-22 Mark 8:30-34</p> <p><i>Thursday</i> Titus 1:5-2:1 Mark 9:10-16</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Nina, Sophia, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Llukan, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell, Donna, Christina, Anastasia, Mary</p>		
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>The community of Ss. Peter & Paul Miami, Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Marsha, Ann, Lilly, Stephen, Gela</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish in these places, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><u>December</u> 10 – Penny Party 17 24</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><i>Friday</i> Titus 1:15-2:10 Mark 9:33-41</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> Ephesians 1:16-23 Luke 14:1-11</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u> Dec 10: 1 Timothy 1-3 Dec 11: 1 Timothy 4-6 Dec 12: 2 Timothy Dec 13: Titus Dec 14: Philemon Dec 15: Hebrews 1-3 Dec 16: Hebrews 4-6</p>

Being Truly Human

BY FR. BARNABAS POWELL



“I don’t believe in God.” “OK,” I told him. “Tell me about this god you don’t believe in.” This young man began describing Zeus. You know, a god who is vindictive and angry; who punishes the mortals with lightning bolts of pain and sorrow. This god tries to control humans through threats and rewards. As the young man kept describing this “god” he didn’t believe in, I discovered I agreed with him. I didn’t believe in this “god” either. Imagine his surprise when I said, “Oh, I see. Well, I don’t believe in that “god” either. I’m an atheist about that god.”

All too often today, we deal with people who reject God and the Faith based on a wrong view of God. And, truth be told (I mean, let’s be honest here), many people have the wrong view of God based on how we who say we believe in God act! We aren’t the best role models about the God we say we believe in. And this, many times, is a result of our own wrong view of God.

What is so very dangerous about this is the Truth that since we are made in the image of God, having a distorted view of God will AUTOMATICALLY mean we have a distorted view of being a person. So to be truly human means doing the attentive work of knowing God. I don’t mean knowing “about” God. That’s too small. No, what I mean is a deep motivated desire to KNOW God in intimacy, love, and devotion.

Look at our lesson today in 1 Timothy 6:17-21:

TIMOTHY, my son, charge the rich in this world not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed. O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

I love Paul’s words to Timothy here, and it isn’t a mistake that the Church has us read these words during this time of year. Paul wants to make sure Timothy leads his parish correctly so he insists Timothy teach clearly the whole purpose of the Faith.

And it may surprise you that the purpose of the Faith isn’t so you’ll know how to “go to heaven” or even miss “hell.” No, the purpose of the faith (and you know I’m big on purpose) is to be set free from all the false notions about God SO THAT I can become LIKE God. And what is God like? In another place, the scriptures insist that God IS Love. God IS Life Himself. If I am ever going to be like God and be truly alive, it’s going to be by learning to love as God loves.

Paul reveals true life and true love first by insisting Timothy warn us about rejecting the false idea of life as being about accumulating stuff! Too often in our society, we come to believe that the acquiring of stuff is how to be happy or how to have a “good” life. It’s a trap. It’s a dead end. All of us know people who have lots of stuff and yet they aren’t happy or loving.

Turns out that the path to becoming truly human is loving people and using things. Never the other way around. In fact, true riches are to be rich in “good deeds.” To excel in generosity is true life. But, of course, that’s truly living because that’s exactly how God is. He holds nothing back. He gives Himself in creating His universe. He gives Adam His very “breath,” the “breath” of life. He gives Himself in revealing Himself

in His Son, God in the flesh. He gives Himself in entering into even our mortality to destroy mortality from the inside out! God IS Life. God IS Love.

We become like God when we are generous and share our treasures with others. When we avoid the haughty lie that our possessions somehow “make” us happy or safe or fulfilled. It doesn’t work. Never has! No, the path to true life comes from the humble embrace of the generosity of mercy, and kindness, and seeing all my life as an invitation to give my life away rather than hoard my life to myself.

St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, was born in Gaul in 340 AD. He was a nobleman and a member of the Roman Senate. During his lifetime, the Church and Roman society was being torn apart by the controversy of Arianism. Arius was a priest in Northern Africa who taught that Jesus was a created Being and not co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. The Church, in Council, condemned this teaching as heresy because it confused how we understand God, and it was not how the early believers understood Who Jesus is. And when you confuse this foundational teaching, it has ripple effects everywhere else! Get God wrong and you’ll never be able to get yourself right. So, Milan had an Arian bishop, and when he died, a violent dispute erupted as to who would replace him. Since Ambrose was the governor of the area and a member of the Roman Senate, he desired to mitigate the dispute and bring peace to the area. He spoke so eloquently and wisely that the people demanded he become bishop! A small child in the crowd shouted “Ambrose bishop” and the people roared their approval. He was a tireless defender of true Orthodox doctrine, an effective administrator, a great preacher, and a faithful example to all the people. He wrote many scholarly works in defense of the Faith and fell asleep peacefully in the Lord at age 57 in the year of 397 AD.

Today, are you “liberal” (not a very popular word in some circles) with your possessions? Do you fear losing your safety or your “security” if you are loving and generous? Then, know you are in danger of a haughty delusion that your safety and security can be obtained by selfishness. The true God, the God we are called to become like, is generous and kind even to His enemies. Being Orthodox on Purpose means being set free to know true life and the true God Who gives, expecting nothing in return!

<https://faithencouraged.org/being-truly-human/>

The Prayer of the Heart **The Prayer That Can Change Your Life**

We all need to find that place in our life where we can connect with God in silence. That place where we close ourselves off from the business of family life, work, and friendships, and enter into that sacred space. The place where the peace of Christ reigns supreme.

The Jesus Prayer is that perfect prayer that allows us to enter into adoration and praise, where we proclaim that Jesus is Lord, and where He as God will bestow His mercy upon us. The simple prayer which invokes the Holy Name of Jesus can transform our life, and take us into the very Heart of God. This prayer is known as the Prayer of the Heart for the very reason that it is of the heart.

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”. We can say this prayer with the aid of a Prayer Rope, which allows us to bring our body into the action of the prayer.

This prayer accomplishes Saint Paul’s admonition that we should “pray always”. It is a prayer that takes us out of ourselves and into communion with Christ. It is a prayer that will change our life because through this prayer we can taste the presence of Christ beside you.

Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

<https://abbottryphon.com/the-prayer-of-the-heart-2/>

December Events

December

10 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

13 – 12:00pm 6th Hour

7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

17 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

20 – 12:00pm 6th Hour

7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

24 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

7:00pm Compline & Matins

25 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

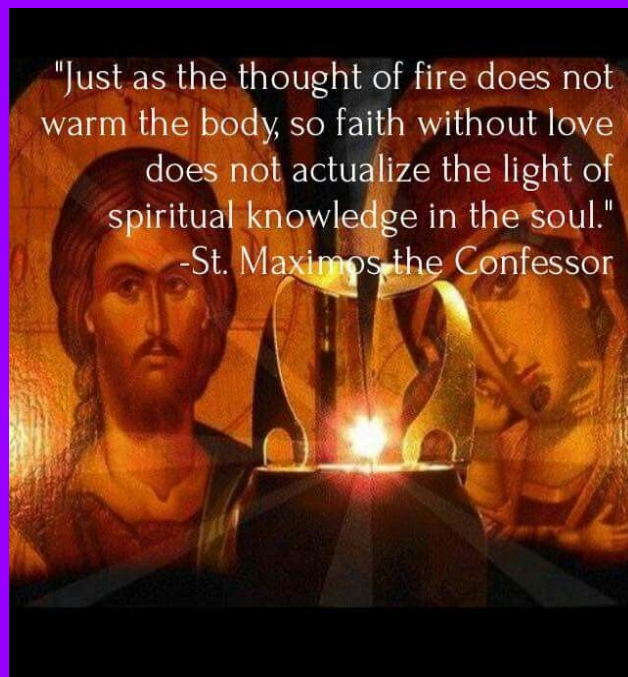
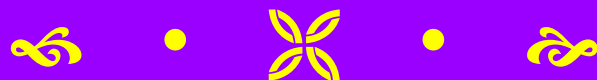
31 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

7:00pm Compline & Matins

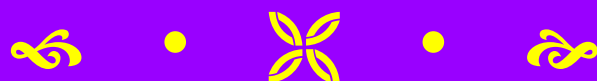
Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxhurchoi810>



"Just as the thought of fire does not warm the body, so faith without love does not actualize the light of spiritual knowledge in the soul."
-St. Maximos the Confessor



BODILY FASTING FOR THE SOUL'S BENEFIT

The Nativity fast begins on November 14/27, and lasts forty days. The Nativity fast is not as strict as Great Lent or the Dormition fast, and can be compared to the Apostle's fast. It was instituted by the Church so that we would worthily greet the feast of the Nativity of Christ after having cleansed our hearts by prayer and repentance.



The establishment of the Nativity fast, like many other long fasts, dates back to the early days of Christianity. Already in the fourth century, St. Ambrose of Milan, Philastrius, and Blessed Augustine recall the Nativity fast in their works. St. Leo the Great wrote about the antiquity of the Nativity fast in the fifth century.

At first the Nativity fast lasted seven days for some Christians and a little longer for others. At the council of 1166 held during the time of Patriarch Luke of Constantinople and the Byzantine Emperor Manuel, all Christians were instructed to keep the fast for forty days before the great feast of the Nativity of Christ.

The Antiochian Patriarch Balsamon wrote that "His Holiness the Patriarch himself said that although these fasts (the Dormition and

Nativity fasts —Ed.) are not determined by the canons, let us nevertheless force ourselves to follow the unwritten Church tradition and obligate ourselves to fast ... beginning November 15."

The Nativity fast is the final long fast of the year. It begins on November 15/28 and goes until December 25/January 7, forty days in duration, and therefore it is called the Forty Days in the Church typicon, just like Great Lent. Because the last day before the fast falls on the commemoration day of the Apostle Phillip (November 14/27), this fast is also called the St. Phillip fast.

The Nativity fast is a winter fast; it serves to illumine the end of the year for us with a mystical renovation of our spiritual oneness with God and our preparation for the feast of the Nativity of Christ.

St. Leo the Great writes, “The very observation of abstinence is marked by four periods, so that throughout the course of the year we would know that we continually have need of purification, and that with a distracted life we always need to strive through fasting and almsgiving to eradicate sin, which multiplies through the frailty of the flesh and unclean desires.”

According to the words of St. Leo the Great, the Nativity fast is a sacrifice to God for the fruits we have gathered. “As the Lord generously gave us the fruits of the earth,” writes the holy hierarch, “so should we also be generous to the poor during the fast.”

In the words of St. Simeon of Thessalonica, “The forty days of the Nativity fast is an image of the fast of Moses, who having fasted for forty days and forty nights, received the words of God inscribed on stone tablets. But having fasted for forty days, we gaze upon and receive the living Word from the Virgin, inscribed not on stones, but incarnate and born, and we partake of His Divine flesh.”

The Nativity fast was established so that by the day of Christ’s Nativity we would have cleansed ourselves through repentance, prayer and fasting; so that with a pure heart, soul, and body we could reverently meet the Son of God Who has appeared to the world, and so that besides the usual gifts and sacrifices we would bring Him our pure heart and desire to follow His teaching.

The rule of the Church instructs what we must abstain from during the fasts—“All who piously fast should strictly observe the canons concerning the quality of food; that is, abstain during the fast from certain foods, not as from things defiled [may that not be], but as from things not appropriate to the fast and forbidden by the Church. Foods from which we should abstain during the fasts are: meat, cheese, butter, milk, eggs, and sometimes fish, depending upon which of the holy fasts.”

The rules of abstinence prescribed by the Church for the Nativity fast are as strict as for the Apostle’s fast. Furthermore, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the Nativity fast, fish, wine, and oil are not allowed by the typicon, and foods without oil (xerophagy) can be taken only after Vespers. On the other days—Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday—food may be taken with vegetable oil. Fish is allowed during the Nativity fast on Saturdays and Sundays and on major feasts, like the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, on a church’s patronal feast, and on commemoration days of great saints if they fall on a Tuesday or Thursday. If they fall on a Wednesday or Friday, the fast may be relaxed to include wine and oil.

From December 20—25 (old style) the fast is intensified, and fish is not blessed even on Saturday and Sunday. Meanwhile, the civil New Year falls on these days [for those observing the Julian calendar], and we Orthodox Christians have to be especially focused, so that we might not break the strict fast by parties, eating, and drinking wine.

Fasting bodily, we must also fast spiritually. “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, and break all communion with falsehood,” commands the Holy Church. Fasting is first of all man’s spiritual struggle with his passions. St. John Chrysostom warns, “He is mistaken who thinks that the fast consists only in abstinence from food. True fasting is departing from evil.”

Bodily fasting without spiritual fasting does not bring salvation of the soul; to the contrary, it can even be spiritually harmful if in abstaining from food a person is filled with an awareness of his superiority, knowing that he fasts. True fasting is bound up with prayer, repentance, refraining from passions and vices, uprooting evil deeds, forgiving offenses, abstaining from marital relations, avoiding parties, entertainment, theatres, and watching television. Fasting is not a goal but a means—a means of humbling our flesh and cleansing it from sins. Without prayer and repentance, fasting becomes no more than a diet.

The essence of fasting can be expressed in the following Church hymn: My soul, if you fast from food but are not cleansed of the passions, in vain are we content with not eating: for if the fast does not bring you correction, it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like the evil demons who eat nothing at all.”

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov:

“Learn to have restraint in food—by temperance you will bring health and strength to the body and vigor to the mind, so needed for the work of salvation...”

St. Isaac the Syrian:

“Fasting with discernment is the spacious dwelling-place of all goodness. Whoever is lazy in fasting brings all goodness to wavering, because fasting was the commandment given to our nature from the beginning as a precaution to eating food, and by breaking the fast our first created fell.”

St. Ambrose of Optina:

You must fast sensibly; try to conduct the coming fast judiciously, considering your physical strength.