

The Second Monday of the Great Fast

Father John Kachuba

"The true fast is one that 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 in the Scriptures."

Matins for the Second Greatfast Monday: Canon, Ode One

In the act of creation, God placed us on earth to enjoy and experience His gifts. Because of our pride, however, we sometimes think we no longer need God. For the next several weeks as we prepare to celebrate worthily the Feast of the Radiant Resurrection of Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect and to put into practice those ways in which we can grow toward Christ—the methods to regain what we have lost by going astray from God.

The Great Fast is the time to liberate ourselves from the enslavement to sin. By fasting, it will become easier for us to refuse to accept the desires and urges of our fallen human nature as something normal and natural. The practice of fasting strengthens us spiritually and enables us to exert the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the flesh and the reign of matter over the spirit.

As we go through the Holy Great Forty-Days Fast, the question should not be how much to give up or sacrifice. Rather, the question must be: "What are our priorities?" Does God really come first in our lives? How much time do we give to Him? How often do we pray? How sincerely do we care for others, if at all? Is our personal well-being the most important part of our life? Is God present in our choices in life? Will we fast and follow the laws of abstinence for the sake of the law or rather for the sake of opening our hearts and minds to receive the message of Christ? Will we pray to see how many prayers we can recite in a certain amount of time, or will our prayers be meditative and sink into the depths of our being? Will we attend the greatfast liturgical services with a genuine intention of active participation? Will we be able to make holy again the "creation of God" that we have tainted because of our many sins and transgressions?

Let us not waste this time God has given us, but let us adequately prepare ourselves to celebrate His glorious Resurrection once again this year. As we begin this second greatfast week, let us make our fasting efforts genuine, and through them may we approach Jesus the Redeemer in order to be prepared to journey with Him to Golgotha where salvation awaits us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 4:1 - 5:7

Genesis 3:21 - 4:7

Proverbs 3:34 - 4:22