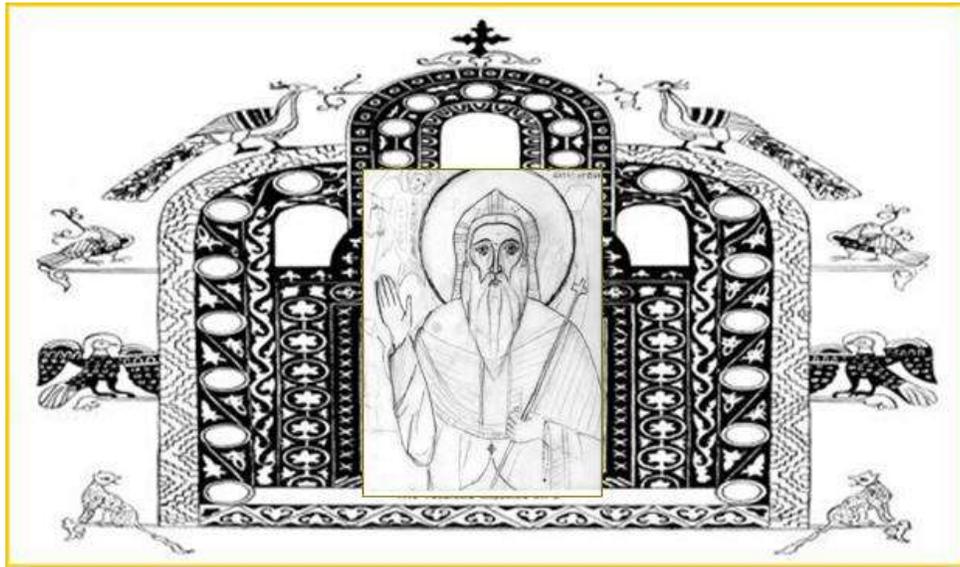


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CHURCH

(*Orthodox Church in America, oca.org*) saintmakarios.org
Fr. Elijah Mueller, Pastor (312) 714-9775 elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net

LENTEN SCHEDULE Starting 2/29/2012:

Wednesdays, 5pm at Bond Chapel: *Presanctified Liturgy* with meal after; preceded by Holy Unction divided over 7 weeks.

Thursdays, 6:30pm at Brent House: 3/1 – Evening prayers w/*Canon of St. Andrew*; 3/8 & following weeks, *Salutations* (Hairetismoi, sections of the Akathist to the Mother of God).

Saturdays, 6pm Vespers at Calvert House.

Sundays, 9am *Orthros/Matins*; 10am *Divine Liturgy*.

If you have not come to Confession recently, one should come during Lent: call to arrange; Saturdays & Wednesdays best. Paschal Schedule will go out within a week or two.

Fasting is a tool. It is nothing in and of itself. We fast from food and certain pleasures to reveal our need and weakness, and to push ourselves to rely upon God more. Fasting is a test of the strength of our desire for God. Do we want to see Him? We fast from certain foods, because God is our food, and he nourishes our hearts and sustains our lives. If we want to be very strict, we fast also from alcohol, because God is our comfort and we can be 'drunk' with his presence in prayer. If a husband and wife can mutually agree to it, they can fast from sexual relations because they want to recognize that it is God that is truly the 'bond', 'unity', and source of all that is good in the love between them.

So fasting is simply a means to an end. What is the goal of fasting? Prayer. When Jesus rebukes his disciples for their lack of faith he says, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." We fast because it helps us to leave our preoccupations so that we can seek God.

Fasting connects us to the experience of the Israelites as they left their 'slavery' to the Pharaoh in Egypt. Fasting reminds us of the story of Adam and Eve's first sin through eating. Fasting connects us to the great repentance of kings and prophets in ancient times. Fasting is a practice—among many of the religions of the world—in preparation for spiritual visions and revelations. These are the reasons why we fast before the great holy days set up as memorials of Christ's deeds. In the Resurrection Christ frees us from slavery to death and sin; he forgives our sins; he shows us the vision and revelation of the human body and soul restored to life and made into the glory and "light which can never be overtaken by night" (as the priest sings when he brings out the candle in the midst of the darkened Church on Pascha).

Fasting is a useful tool and meaningful only in order to focus on God and lead to prayer. But how do we do it? Bit by bit. Do we have to do it all? No. Traditionally, the strict rule was to eat no meat, dairy products (cheese, milk, butter), eggs, vertebrate fish, wine (or any alcohol) and oil—perhaps also to eat nothing during the

day; and also to abstain from sexual relations. Very few people can or will do all of that. Usually just monks, nuns, widows and some priests. Fasting is simply a matter of challenging yourself to give up some things for the sake of seeking God in prayer. The best thing is to do a little more than you have before. Nobody can or should judge what anyone else does in terms of fasting. If you have never fasted, fast from meat all of Lent or at least on the weekdays. If you have fasted from meat, then try to fast from cheese. And so on. Everyone should, to the best of abilities, challenge themselves. Some people who are pregnant or are taking medication or who have diabetic, metabolic or other problems should simply be practical-follow doctors' orders. We don't fast to 'show strength', but to realize our weakness and need for God.

Fasting should always be put aside for the sake of giving or receiving hospitality. When you have guests who may not understand the rules of fasting, don't make a point of keeping the fast. When you are visiting someone's house, eat what is set before you without question and with gratitude. Love and generosity are more important than fasting.

Fasting should free your time and quiet your mind: don't cook so much, but come to pray and receive communion more often. Fasting should not make you a gourmet vegan or buff dieter; but rather someone who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, with a pure heart. Fasting is the request for peaceful release from worldly agitation, of which food, (even vegan) is the symbol. Learn a little bit about your own heart and soul. Love your neighbor and try to seek God more with greater love.

Fr. Elijah

Prayer of St. Ephraim:

(to be memorized and said at each time of prayer during Lent, each segment followed by prostrations)

Lord and Master of my life, do not give me a spirit of laziness, meddling curiosity, lust of power and idle talk.

But give rather a spirit of stability, humility, patient endurance and love.

Yes, O Lord and King Grant me to see my own errors, And not to condemn my brother and sister, Since you are blessed to the ages of ages,

Amen.

Κύριε καὶ Δέσποτα τῆς ζωῆς μου, πνεῦμα ἀργίας, περιεργίας, φιλαρχίας, καὶ ἀργολογίας μὴ μοι δῶς.,
Πνεῦμα δὲ σωφροσύνης, ταπεινοφροσύνης, ὑπομονῆς, καὶ ἀγάπης χάρισαί μοι τῷ σῶ δούλῳ.
Ναί, Κύριε Βασιλεῦ, δώρησαι μοι τοῦ ὄραν τὰ ἐμὰ πταίσματα, καὶ μὴ κατακρίνειν τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ὅτι
εὐλογητὸς εἶ, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

Doamne și Stăpânul vieții mele, duhul trândăviei, al grijii de multe, al iubirii de stăpânire și al grăirii în deșert nu mi-l da mie. (o metanie)

Iar duhul curăției, al gândului smerit, al răbdării și al dragostei, dăruiește-l mie, robului Tău. (o metanie)
Așa Doamne, Împărate, dăruiește-mi ca să-mi văd greșalele mele și să nu osândesc pe fratele meu, că binecuvântat ești în vecii vecilor. Amin. (o metanie)

Господи и Владыко живота моего, дух праздности, уныния, любоначалия и празднословия не даждь ми. Дух же целомудрия, смиренномудрия, терпения и любви даруй ми, рабу Твоему. Ей, Господи, Царю! Даруй ми зрети моя прегрешения, и не осуждати брата моего яко благословен еси во веки веков. Аминь.

More translations, discussion of issue of versions, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Saint_Ephrem

Link to a booklet by a modern Egyptian desert father on fasting: <http://www.saint-mary.net/servants/geninfo/Matthew%20the%20Poor%20-%20Fasting%20-%20Gethsemane.pdf>

From Tuesday Canon of St. Andrew

Canticle Two:

Irmos: Attend, O heaven, and I will speak, I will sing of Christ, Who from the Virgin took flesh to dwell with us.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Sin stripped me of the garment created for me by God, leaving me in a coat of skin.

Sensing his shame, Adam dressed himself in fig leaves and like him I now wear a garment of shame which reveals my many passions.

A soiled garment clothes me -- one shamefully stained with blood flowing from a life of passion and love of fleshly things.

I fell beneath the weight of the passions and the corruption of my flesh, and from that moment has the enemy had power over me.

Instead of seeking poverty of spirit I prefer a life of greed and self-gratification; therefore, Savior, a heavy weight hangs from my neck.

Joseph's was a splendid coat of many colors but mine is one of shameful thoughts which condemns me even as it covers my flesh.

I persist in caring only for my outer garment, while neglecting the temple within -- one made in the image of God.

The woman searched her house for the lost coin until she found it. Now the beauty of my original image is lost, Savior, buried in passions. Come and as she did, search to recover it.

Like the prostitute I cry to You, Savior, that I have sinned. I alone have sinned against You! But accept my tears as You did hers when she came to anoint Your feet.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

O God of all, I sing of You as One yet three in Person: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Most-Holy Theotokos, Virgin alone praised everywhere, pray fervently that we may be saved.