

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
NINTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



*Icon of Saints Amphilochius and Gregory -- November 23th*



**November 23, 2014**

**TONE 7**

**TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

*POSTFEAST OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE;*

*OUR HOLY FATHERS AMPHILOCHIUS, BISHOP OF ICONIUM, AND GREGORY, BISHOP OF AGRIGENTUM*

*SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 24 – NOVEMBER 30*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27 – THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR JAMES THE PERSIAN; OUR VENERABLE FATHER PALLADIUS; THANKSGIVING DAY (CIVIL)

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Please Note: **No Vespers this Evening**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30 – TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY AND ALL-PRAISED APOSTLE ANDREW, THE FIRST-CALLED

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

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*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily), please **stop** and be attentive - будьмо уважні!*

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**Please Note: Parking Lot**

*Beginning in early December and continuing for several weeks, work will begin on the parking lot which will include re-grading and resurfacing as well as landscaping work. The parking spaces nearest the church will be reserved for those with handicap stickers and those unable to walk a distance. For the rest of us this will necessitate parking at the dental office across the street. We will make every effort to minimize the impact on the parishioners.*

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**Last Sunday's Bulletin**

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org).

***The Church, through the temple and Divine service, acts upon the entire man***

“The Church, through the temple and Divine service, acts upon the entire man, educates him wholly; acts upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendour of the icons and of the whole temple, by the ringing of bells, by the singing of the choir, by the fragrance of the incense, the kissing of the Gospel, of the cross and the holy icons, by the prosphoras, the singing, and sweet sound of the readings of the Scriptures.”

– St. John of Kronstadt

# FASTING ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

by Gabe Martini, [blogs.ancientfaith.com](http://blogs.ancientfaith.com) April 16

The spiritual discipline of fasting has been part of religious life since the very beginning.

In Eden, the Lord commands Adam (Gen. 2:16–17):

*From every tree that is in the paradise you may eat for food, but from the tree for knowing good and evil, you will not eat from it. And on whichever day you eat from it, you will surely die.*

When Adam broke the fast—eating from that tree before he was mature enough to handle it—the consequence was corruption and death. Through one man’s sin, death entered the world (Rom. 5:12). While some have speculated as to whether or not man was always intended to eventually partake—and be transformed through death and resurrection—what we know for sure is this: Adam was meant to *abstain*; he was meant to fast. He was meant to say no to his own desires, so that he could say yes to God.

We don’t fast in order to merit or earn anything from the Lord, but rather to become like him, imitating Christ in his own forty day struggle. And when Christ was tempted by Satan (as all who are engaged in Christian fasting will no doubt experience), his reliance upon both prayer

and the promises of God were enough to sustain him.

Of fasting, the Lord taught his disciples:

*And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. —Matt. 6:16–18*

Christ mentions fasting as a foregone conclusion for his disciples. We also see that fasting is useless if it is not done with the right spirit. Those who fast publicly and with great fanfare have received their reward, and it is both temporal and fleeting. True fasting is a spiritual discipline that affects one’s whole person, aiding in one’s transformation into the likeness of Christ.

As the *Orthodox Study Bible* notes:

*Fasting is for spiritual growth and the glory of God, not to be seen by those around us.*

The preparation for Great Lent in the Orthodox Church is seeking forgiveness



from one's fellow parishioners (Forgiveness or Cheese-fare Sunday, the last Sunday before Great Lent), along with preparing for the fast *gradually* so that we are not caught off guard and more likely to falter.

Alongside fasting from food, one must also fast from the passions. Otherwise, our fasting is truly in vain. On the eve of Great Lent, we sing:

*Let us abstain from passions as we abstain from food.*

And St. John Chrysostom likewise warns:

*What good is it if we abstain from eating birds and fish, but bite and devour our brothers?*

When the apostle tells the Romans, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Rom. 13:14), the emphasis is not the rules of fasting, but rather the transformation of one's soul and body—transformation into a true and complete likeness of Christ.

The apostle also tells the Galatians (Gal. 5:16–17):

*[W]alk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.*

He shows us again that we are at war with our own desires—the desires of the flesh. In order for us to find true spiritual renewal, one must strive to place the importance of that which is *eternal* over that which is *temporal*. Satan always tempts us with the fleeing desires of this present, evil age, but God promises something far better.

Ultimately, the purpose of fasting is not dieting or merely carnal in nature, but rather gets to the heart of what it means to be truly human.

Our relationship with the Father was distorted in Paradise, and only through true spiritual renewal—such as experienced through the discipline of fasting, along with both prayer and almsgiving—can we grow to become greater than the sum of our parts. Through this, the first Adam becomes the last and true Adam.

This is why fasting is an integral part of the Christian life, both taught and encouraged by the Lord. But we must always do so with a right heart, in the right way, and for the right purpose.



## STUFF FIRST-CENTURY CHRISTIANS FOUGHT ABOUT

*christianitytoday.com November 6*

*Earlier this year, I posted a large part of the following post on Ed Stetzer's blog. But I want to share it here as well, with some important additions, to set the tone for an ongoing conversation on multiethnic churches.*

In Acts 15, we find the first major church dispute. Considering how Christians like to argue about stuff, the reason for the disagreement is quite interesting.

Was it over Calvinism, Arminianism, or Molinism?

Was it over speaking in tongues, prophecy, or healing?

Maybe it was over worship music styles? Those Jews just couldn't stand those Greek worship leaders wearing tight, skinny-leg jeans.

The first major church dispute actually was over how fast multiethnic churches were growing outside of Jerusalem. These ethnically diverse congregations were blowing up the mental and cultural circuits of the Jewish believers in the holy city.

These first-century multiethnic churches included Jews and Gentiles of Phoenicia and Samaria, as well as uncircumcised Africans, Arabs, Greeks, Syrians, Asians, Romans, Persians, and more. Their presence and growth challenged traditional concepts of what it meant to be Jewish and what it meant to follow Jesus.

Theologian Christopher J. H. Wright in *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* summarizes the disagreement

*If only all the theological disputes in Christian history had been caused by successful mission and rapid church growth. Undoubtedly the first dispute was. The first major council of the church (Acts 15) was convened to consider a knot of problems caused by the success of cross-cultural church planting efforts. These had been initiated by the church of Antioch and carried out among the predominately Gentile and ethnically diverse peoples of the Roman provinces that made up what we now call Turkey. Paul and Barnabas, who had been entrusted with this initiative, were not the first to cross the barrier from Jew to Gentile with the good news of Jesus Christ. Philip (Act 8) and Peter (Acts 10) had already done that. They were, however, the first to establish whole communities of believers from mixed Jewish and Gentile backgrounds—that is, to plant multiethnic churches.*

During the first century, there were several streams of thought concerning the salvation and inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel—from the destruction of the Gentiles, to the Gentiles coming to worship God without proselytism, to Gentiles making a pilgrimage to worship the one true God.

Specifically, the Pharisees responded to the news about the growing churches from Paul and Barnabas, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). They leaned on their ethnicity as the means of their salvation coupled with belief in Jesus. Their thought process was that the Jews were God's chosen people. It was Jews who had the law, the Sabbath, circumcision, and the dietary laws. Therefore, the Gentiles had to become Jews in order to be saved and become members of God's people. This is called *ethnocentrism*.

In the midst of this heated debate, Peter stood up and said

“Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:7–11, ESV).

Peter’s words match Paul’s, when Paul writes, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:27–29, ESV). To Paul, it was not ethnicity that saved the Jews or Gentiles. It was the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Israel’s Messiah alone.

Ethnocentrism gives way to Christocentrism.

Sure, the council at Jerusalem in Acts 15 was about circumcision and food, but it was also about ethnicity. The gospel of grace is so glorious—a new humanity is created and man is reconciled to God and to one another (2 Cor. 5:14–21).

Before Jesus, there were two ethnic groups on earth: Jew and Gentile. After Jesus’ resurrection, a new ethnic group made up of Jews and Gentiles was birthed. This new ethnic group is called the church: the “one new man” (Eph. 2:14–16, ESV).

In the 21st-century American church, these concepts of circumcision and eating restrictions do not make much sense; however, when we build homogenous local churches, even though ethnic diversity is possible, it is a form of ethnocentrism. Homogenous churches, in essence, have a culture that says “Our way of being the church is better than your way and that’s why our ministry models are geared to reach and minister to people who are like the majority culture.” I suspect this is mostly done out of ignorance, not out of malicious intent.

For example, my daughter’s high school was 60 percent white and 40 percent black, Asian, and Latino. Yet every church in this area is overwhelmingly homogenous. We hide our ethnocentrism with nice words like “This is our ‘style’” or “This is the way we’ve ‘always done church.’” The gospel of the Lord Jesus doesn’t give us the option to build homogenous local churches because God desires for the local church on earth to reflect the eternal church.

Why is it that the secular, public school system can achieve ethnic diversity and the supernatural local church can’t?

### **Be Like Paul**

Speaking as a planter of a multiethnic local church, it is so beautiful to see ethnically diverse people loving Jesus and each other as one voice glorifying God. Like Paul and Barnabas witnessing the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles, we are invited to partner with God to bring the eternal church into the present.

Are you concerned with multiethnic church planting? The apostle Paul was, and it’s God’s heart.

Marinate on that.

## Sunday offering for October 12

Amount	Number
\$4.00	1 (loose)
\$5.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	5
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$300.00	1
\$400.00	1
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\$1224.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1204.00  
 Guest: \$20.00

Average / parish household (42): \$29.37  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00  
 Deficit: (\$921.00)

## Sunday offering for October 19

Amount	Number
\$7.00	1 (loose)
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	4
\$40.00	1
\$75.00	3
\$150.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$300.00	1
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\$1172.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1152.00  
 Guest: \$20.00

Average / parish household (42): \$28.10  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00  
 Deficit: (\$973.00)

### ***Please Note:***

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

## Sunday offering for October 26

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$27.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$120.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$300.00	1
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\$887.00	

Parishioner Total: \$687.00  
 Guest: \$200.00

Average / parish household (42): \$16.76  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00  
 Deficit: (\$1438.00)



## Haven't seen someone in a while?

Give them a call. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.

### **Pastor:**

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

### **Pastoral Council:**

Fr. Deacon Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667  
 Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279  
 Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357  
 Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008  
 Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

### **Social Committee Chairpersons:**

Vacant: Please consider volunteering as chairperson.

### **Finance Committee:**

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698  
 Fr. Deacon Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667





**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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### ***Gratitude for Independence***

In such a [current] state of things it is, in an especial manner, our duty as a people, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God, and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experience.

Deeply penetrated with this sentiment, I GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States, do recommend to all religious societies and denominations, and to all persons whomsoever within the United States, to set apart and observe a day of PUBLIC THANKSGIVING and PRAYER; and on that day to meet together and render their sincere and hearty thanks to the Great Ruler of Nations for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation: particularly for the possession of constitutions of government, which unite, by their union establish liberty with order – for the preservation of our peace foreign and domestic – for the seasonable control which has been given to a spirit of disorder, in the suppression of the late insurrection – and generally, for the prosperous course

of our affairs public and private; and at the same time, humbly and fervently to beseech the kind Author of these blessings graciously to prolong them to us – to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to Him for them – to teach us rightly to estimate their immense value – to preserve us from the arrogance of prosperity, and from hazarding the advantages we enjoy by delusive pursuits – to dispose us to merit the continuance of His favors, by not abusing them, by our gratitude for them, and by a corresponding conduct as citizens and as men – to extend among us true and useful knowledge – to diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality and piety; and finally, to impart all the blessings we possess, or ask for ourselves, to the whole family of mankind.

*George Washington  
This proclamation was issued by the President of the  
United States in 1795.*

**For more information on the Eastern Churches,  
visit [www.mytheosis.com](http://www.mytheosis.com)**