

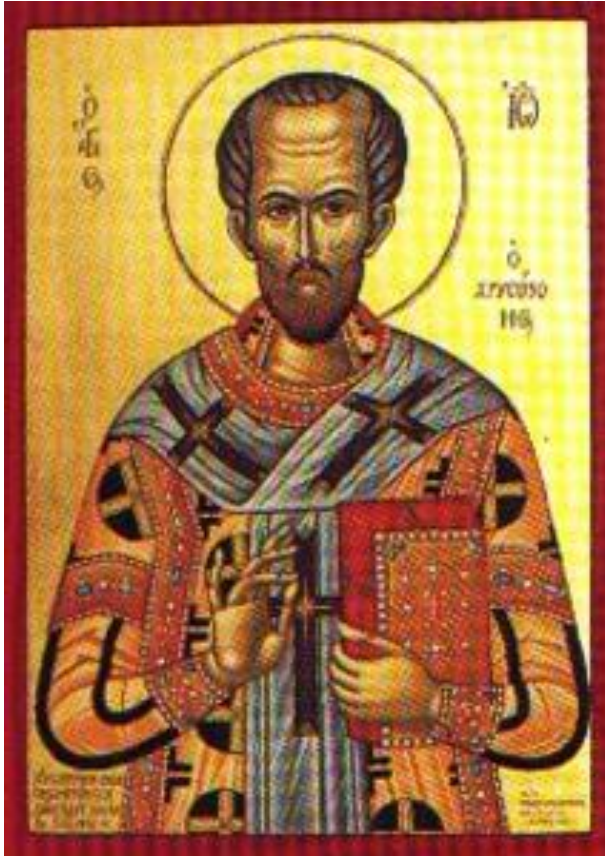
FASTING IN MODERN TIMES

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St Photini Orthodox mission,

Mt Ridley

St. John Chrysostom



“Do You Fast?
Give me proof of it by your works.
If you see a poor man, take pity
on him.
If you see a friend being
honoured, do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast,
but also the eye, and the ear, and
the feet, and the hands, and all
the members of our bodies.
Let the hands fast, by being free
of avarice...

- “Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful...
- Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.
Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?”

So, today, how do you fast with...

- Care for the poor
- No envy
- Eye?
- Ear?
- Feet?
- Hands?

Fasting overall

- Eating and being “simple”
- Healthy simple food (eg soy).
- Pray more
- Read the Scriptures
- Attend the liturgies

Why fast? Benefits...

- Our venerable and God-bearing Father **John Cassian** was a 4th/5th century monastic saint known for his writings on the monastic life. His feast day in the Orthodox Church is February 29.



- St. John Cassian begins with a definition of fasting which includes both body and mind. He instructs us that it is of no use to fast only physically. Even the bodily fast is aimed in part at making "our intellect **watchful**." The saint wisely observes that not all can fast alike, but that our adaptations of the degree of fasting can all accomplish the same end.
At the root of fasting is **self-discipline** and **self-control**. Without these tools, we cannot have any real focus in our lives, and we can hardly have a productive prayer life.

“In order to preserve the mind and body in a perfect condition abstinence from food is not alone sufficient: unless the other virtues of the mind as well are joined to it. And so **humility** must first be learned by the virtue of obedience, and grinding toil and bodily exhaustion. The possession of money must not only be avoided, but the **desire** for it must be utterly rooted out. For it is not enough not to possess it -- a thing which comes to many as a matter of necessity: but we ought, if by chance it is offered, not even to admit the wish to have it.

The **madness of anger** should be controlled; the downcast look of **dejection** be overcome; vainglory should be despised, the disdainfulness of pride trampled under foot, and the shifting and **wandering thoughts** of the mind restrained by continual recollection of God. And the slippery wanderings of our heart should be brought back again to the **contemplation of God** as often as our crafty enemy, in his endeavor to lead away the mind a captive from this consideration, creeps into the innermost recesses of the heart.”

St John Cassian

- Troparion “Having **cleansed yourself** through fasting, You attained the understanding of wisdom, And from the desert fathers You learned the **restraint of the passions**. To this end through your prayers grant our flesh **obedience to the spirit**. For you are the teacher, O venerable John Cassian, Of all who in Christ praise your memory.”

Fasting today is a struggle

- Do you think fasting is easy?
- Why is it hard?
- What about other kinds of fasting e.g. the tongue, the ears? The eyes?
- Struggle/battle/wrestling

St John of Kronstadt



“Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it; where there is no **struggle**, there is no virtue. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations.”

Cheese Fare Sunday Matins

- “The time is now at hand for us to start upon the **spiritual contest** and to gain the **victory** over the demonic powers. Let us put on the **armor** of abstinence and clothe ourselves in the glory of the angels. With boldness Moses spoke to the Creator, and he heard the voice of the invisible God. In your love for man, O Lord, grant us with the same boldness to venerate your Passion and your Holy Resurrection”

- In Greek “spiritual contest” is *agon* (wrestle, fight, struggle) cf Olympic Games.

قد وافى الزَّمانُ الذي هو بدءُ الجِهَاداتِ
الرُّوحيةِ

والغلبةِ على الشَّيَاطِينِ

Conclusion

“Do You Fast?

Give me proof of it by your works...