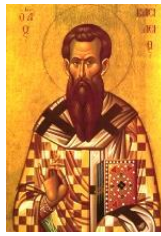


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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FAST OF THE APOSTLES

SUNDAY 2ND AFTER PENTECOST
Saturday, June 13 & Sunday, June 14, 2020

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM
Holy Confession: Every Monday at 4-6PM
Vespers: Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Holy Rosary: Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yany, Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Wael and his son Jordan Barahmeh, Nadia Casab, Nancy Gazzal, Julia Nassimos, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection June 6/7: \$ 000.00
Syrian Cheese Sale: \$ 00.00
St. Pauly Textile: \$ 00.00
Memorial Offering: \$ 00.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, JUNE 13

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Tom Moran
† **Jannah Jbarah**, By Seham Campbell

THIS SUNDAY, JUNE 14

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Tom Moran
† **Fouad Marji**, By Seham Campbell

NEXT SATURDAY, JUNE 20

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Tom Moran
† **Jannah Jbarah**, By Seham Campbell

NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 21

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Tom Moran
† **Fouad Marji**, By Seham Campbell

* ANNOUNCEMENT *

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon July 7, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Room.

AFTER THE LONG FEAST OF PENTECOST, fasting is especially necessary to purify our thoughts and render us worthy to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit ... Therefore, the salutary custom was established of fasting after the joyful days during which we celebrated the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and the coming of the Holy Spirit” (from a sermon of Pope St. Leo the Great, +461).

On the eighth day after Pentecost, Byzantine Churches traditionally begin the Fast of the Apostles. This fasting season lasts until June 28, the eve of the feast of the principal apostles, Peter and Paul. The Coptic Church begins its fast on Pentecost Monday, Syriac Churches have abridged it to last for thirteen days or less. With this Fast, we return to the ordinary business of Christian life: prayer and fasting.

Prayer of supplication – beseeching God for a special favor – was associated with fasting as far back as time of King David. Fasting intensifies and confirms the sincerity of the prayer. Without fasting, prayer can be simply an expression of idle interest: chatting rather than intensely imploring the Lord. When the Apostles failed to cure an epileptic boy, the Lord Jesus made a point of telling them, “*This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting*” (Mt 17:21).

Early Witnesses to This Fast: The first documented mentions of this Fast are from the fourth century. In a letter to his friend and supporter, Emperor Constantin, St Athanasius describes the practice of the Alexandrian Church: “During the week following Pentecost, the people who observed the Fast went out to the cemetery to pray.” The Spanish pilgrim to the Holy Land in the early 380s, Egeria, described the practice in Jerusalem: “on the day following the feast of Pentecost, a period of fasting began”.

In that era, the Western Churches observed this Fast as well. St. Ambrose of Milan (+397) writes about the practice in his diocese: “The Lord so ordained it that, as we have participated in His sufferings during the Forty Days, so we should also rejoice in His Resurrection during the season of Pentecost. We do not fast during the season of Pentecost since our Lord Himself was present amongst us during those days ... Christ’s presence was like nourishing food for the Christians. So too, during Pentecost, we feed on the Lord who is present among us. On the days following His ascension into heaven, however, we again fast” (Sermon 61).

The fifth-century Pope of Rome, Leo I, spoke of this Fast as a chance to make up for any excesses in celebrating the feasts: “Today’s festival, dearly-beloved, hallowed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, is followed, as you know, by a solemn Fast. ... ordained as a wholesome and needful practice, so that, if perhaps through neglect or disorder even amid the joys of the festival any undue license has broken out, it may be corrected by the remedy of strict abstinence, which must be the more scrupulously carried out in order that what was divinely bestowed on the Church on this day may abide in us” (Sermon 78, On the Whitsuntide Fast).

None of these early documents connect this Fast to the apostles Peter and Paul. This Fast was practiced long before the Apostles’ feast came to be widely celebrated. In the earliest practice this Fast was connected instead to the celebration of Pentecost. Rather, this Fast was first seen as a resumption of fasting following the Paschal season. During the fifty days of Pascha we have celebrated Christ’s resurrection, then His ascension and finally the sending forth of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. We have feasted while celebrating the presence of the risen Christ, but now it is time to return to the more everyday practice of Christians: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

The struggle to be what we have become, to “put on Christ,” demands a lifelong effort. We observe times to celebrate the mysteries of Christ among us – the Lord’s Day and the Great Feasts on which we do not fast. But these are respites from the more ordinary Christian practice of fasting. As the Lord said when asked by the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees why His disciples were not fasting, “*As long as they have the bride-groom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days*” (Mk 2:19-20). (JuneLeaflets2020)