

B. The Holy Forty Day Fast

The most ancient Christian writers unanimously testify that the Holy Forty Day Fast was established by the apostles in imitation of the forty-day fast of Moses (Exodus 34), Elijah (3 Kings 19), and mainly by the example of Jesus Christ fasting for forty days (Mt. 4: 2). Ancient Christians have observed the time of the Holy Forty Days as the season of the commemoration of the Suffering of the Savior on the Cross, anticipating the days of this commemoration, so that, strongly imitating His self-renunciation and His self-denial, these ascetical feats would show the living participation and love on the part of the Savior, who suffers for the world _), and that before all this to be morally cleansed for the time of the solemn commemoration of the passion of Christ and His glorious resurrection. The very name of the Holy Forty Days is met rather frequently in the most ancient written monuments with the indication of the purpose of its establishment. "Do not neglect the Forty Days", wrote St. Ignatius the God-bearer in his epistle to Philipppians: "for it establishes the imitation of the life in Christ". St. Ambrose of Milan spoke even more clearly: "The Lord has blessed us with the Forty Day Fast. He created it for your salvation to teach us to fast not in words only, but also by example". Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa assert that the Holy Forty Day Fast existed everywhere during their time. According to the Apostolic Canons (Canon 69) the Holy Forty Day Fast is considered obligatory and its observance is protected by strict punishment. St. Hippolytus (3 century) serves as the indisputable witness of the antiquity of this fast and the paschal cycle traced to his see, containing the instruction from antiquity of the custom to stop the Holy Forty Days Fast on Sundays. On the basis of all traditions of the Holy Apostles, our Holy Church, on behalf of its representatives, fathers and teachers, always considered the Holy Forty Day Fast an *apostolic* establishment. Yet the Blessed Jerome on behalf of all Christians in his time said: "we fast for the Forty Days according to the apostolic tradition". St. Cyril of Alexandria repeatedly reminds us in his writings, that it is necessary to piously observe the Holy Forty Day Fast, according to the apostolic and gospel traditions. The Holy Forty Day Fast, continuing for forty days, was not observed however in the ancient Church at one and the same time, because that depends on the non-uniform number of the days of the fast and the days on which it was decided _). Beginning from the Third, even from the Second Century, the Holy Fathers gave clear testimonies that the Holy Forty Day Fast depended upon forty days. St. Ireneus wrote that Christians fasted for 40 days. Origen also confirms this in the Third Century. In the Fourth Century the eastern churches established the present order of the Holy Forty Day Fast from Monday after Cheese Fare Sunday until Great Saturday, understanding that this number includes

Passion Week in the fast. The Holy Fathers: Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, Blessed Augustine, etc., all agree that the Holy Forty Days is a fast for forty days, and all see it as the common establishment of the Holy Church. The fast of the Holy Forty Days is called *Great*, not only because of the number of days but also because of its special significance and its value for the Orthodox Christian.

"The more days of the fast", teaches the blessed Augustine, "the better the healing. The longer the abstention, the more bountiful is the salvation. God, the Physician of our souls, established the proper time for the pious to give praise, for the sinners to pray, for the ones to seek rest, for others to ask forgiveness. The time of the Holy Forty Days is proper, neither too short for giving praise, nor too long for seeking mercy. Holy and saving is the course of the Holy Forty Days by which the sinner is led through repentance in charity, and the pious to rest. During its days the Deity is mainly propitious, needs are filled, piety is rewarded".

According to the teaching of St. Asterius of Amasea, the Holy Forty Day Fast is "a teacher of temperance, the mother of virtue, the educator of the children of God, the guide through chaos, the serenity of souls, the staff of life, lasting and serene peace. Its strictness and importance calms the passions, dampens anger and fury, cools and calms all kinds of excitement, and slakes the appetite".

"The holy fathers", teaches St. John Chrysostom, "appointed forty days of fast in order that during these days the people, having been carefully cleansed through prayer, fasting and confession of sins, will approach holy communion with a pure conscience".

According to the teaching of the Ven. Dorotheus, "God has given these holy days (the Forty Holy Days) so that those who will try, with attention and wise humility, to take care of themselves and repent their sins, will be cleansed of the sins which were made during the whole year. Then their souls will be released from the burden, and in such a way cleansed will attain the holy day of the Resurrection and without condemnation to receive the Holy Mysteries, having become a new person through repentance in this holy fast".

The Divine Services of Great Lent, on the one hand, presents to us the continuous prompting to fast and repent, and on the other hand, describes also the very condition of the soul, repenting and crying over sins. This general content of the Great Lent Divine Services also fully impacts his external image.

The Holy Church lays aside any pomp in the Divine Service. Before all she does not perform the most solemn Christian Divine Service, that is, the full liturgy on the days of Great Lent, excluding Saturdays and Sundays. Instead she celebrates the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays and Fridays (Laod. 19, Trullo 52) . The Holy Church changes the structure of the other church services in accordance with time. She almost stops singing as an expression of the joyful condition of spirit,

and gives preference to reading. She also changes the choice of the readings themselves according to the season. Thus, the Holy Church deprives the faithful of the joyful proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, and offers readings from the Old Testament word of God. She uses the Psalter especially widely, which mainly induces a prayerful and repentant spirit. The entire Psalter is read twice each week. The terrible speech of the Prophet Isaiah is also read, accusing the lawless and encouraging the hope of repentance. The pericopes in which the creation and the fall of man is described in the book of Genesis are read, and on the one hand, the awful displays of the wrath of God on the impious are described, and on the other hand, His mercy on the righteous. Finally, lessons from the book of Proverbs are read, where the Wisdom of God calls us to true enlightenment, teaches us about heavenly wisdom. In all the church services the Holy Church leads us to the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, that God take away from us the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk, and that He grant us the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Also frequently repeated is the prayer of repentance of David: "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me", and the appeal of the reasonable thief: "Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy heavenly Kingdom". All Divine Services of Great Lent are done quietly, slowly and with the greatest reverence. Few candles are lit in the candle stands, the Royal Doors are rarely opened, the bells are seldom and minimally rung, those present in the temple are called to prostrate to the ground frequently, and to kneel often. By the appearance, the setting and the external character of the Divine Service, the Holy Church teaches us that there should not be a place for joy and pomp, but only humility and sorrow, and lamentation for our sins in the internal temple of our repenting soul. Finally, the Holy Church connects the daily church services, the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours with Vespers to indicate the length of time for the daily fast. Generally, the Holy Church with parental care wisely directs all of us to observe strict abstention from food, to devote all time "of the soul-pleasing Holy Forty Days" and the cares of our salvation to God, to be released whenever possible from the usual earthly cares and occupations, everyday efforts and entertainments, to give a rather larger part than ever of our time for self-examination, moral self-correction, divine thoughts and to the Divine Services of the church. That we use this time, as the most convenient one for the cleansing of all sins, laying as a heavy burden on our souls and darkening the Divine image in us, through the Sacrament of Repentance, and then, already with a cleansed conscience, unite ourselves with the Lord, the Source of all joy, happiness and eternal salvation, through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. That, finally, having worthily "completed the soul-pleasing Holy Forty Day Fast", in peace with God, with our neighbor and with our conscience, brightly and joyfully, with a pure soul and an open heart, we

will meet "the Holy Week" of the passion of Christ and "the light of His Resurrection".

On Wednesdays and Fridays, beginning with the first and ending with the sixth week of the Holy Forty Day Fast, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays of these weeks the Liturgy of the Presanctified Liturgy is served if a feast day with a Polyeleos or the temple feast falls on these days. (Typicon, Chapter 35 the Temple). For Tuesday and Thursday of the Fifth week see below.

Refer to the Typicon for the **Order of the Presanctified Liturgy** for Wednesday of the first week for the services during the entire Holy Forty Day Fast. "And **if there is no Presanctified Gifts**", refer to the same place in the Typicon.

On the weekdays of the Holy Forty Day Fast the Third, the Sixth, the Ninth Hours, the Typika and Vespers **are served together**. When the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is scheduled, all these **services** are served before the liturgy itself. **Great Compline** is served on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This Compline, except for the Compline on Saturday and for days on which there are feasts with the Polyeleos, ends with the prayer: "O Greatly-merciful Master", with prostration of all to the earth. At the Daily **Midnight Office** after: "O God, take pity on us", the Prayer of St. Ephraim with 16 bows is appointed (but on Monday of the first week of the Fast only 3 bows are appointed). Except for Saturdays, Sundays and the feasts of the Annunciation, of the temple, or of the saint with a Polyeleos (Feb. 24, Mar. 9), **at Matins**: instead of "God is the Lord" and the Troparion to the Saints, we sing "Alleluia, and the Trinity Hymns of the tone; the Sessional Hymns (Sedalens), with the most part after the three Kathisma; then Psalm 50 and the prayer: "O God save Thy people"; except for Saturdays and Thursday of the fifth week, we do not sing from the "Osmoglasnik (i.e. the Octoechos) during all the Holy Forty Day Fast except for Sundays; we sing only the Menaion and the Three Ode Canon, and in those hymns where no Three Ode Canon is present, we sing only from the Menaion". We sing the Canon with the Biblical Canticles: "To the Lord let us sing"; after the 3rd Ode, the Little Litany, then the first Sessional Hymn (Sedalen) to the saint, once, "Glory, both now and ever, the Theotokion; after the 6th Ode, the Little Litany, the Sessional Hymn (Sedalen) to the martyrs; "if there is one for the saint, the Kontakion, we say it here, we say the hymn to the martyrs after the 1st Kathisma, with the Sessional Hymns (Sedalens) with the refrain: "Wonderful is God"; we sing the Exapostilarion in the tone of the Trinity Hymn; we do not sing the Great Doxology, but read it; instead of the Litany: "Have mercy on us, O God" except for

the Feast of the Annunciation, of the temple, of the saint with the Polyeleos (see Feb. 24, Mar. 9), we read: "Lord, have mercy" 40 times. After the exclamation of the priest: "Blessed is He That Is", instead of the many years we read the pray: "O Heavenly King". **The Hours:** 3, 6 and 9th, are served together. In all the Hours the Kathisma is chanted, except in the 1st Hour on Monday, and the same hour, together with the 9th Hour on Friday, when the Kathisma is not chanted; In the 6th Hour we read the Paramoea, before which and after which the Prokimenon of the Triodion is appointed; each Hour we sing the special Troparion (in the 1st: "In the morning Thou shalt hear my voice", in the 3rd: "O Lord, Who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit", in the 6th: "Thou Who on the sixth day and hour", in the 9th: "Thou Who for our sakes at the ninth hour"), with bows. The Typica follow directly after the 9th Hour and we begin with the hymn: "Blessed" (the Blazhenni), instead of the typical Psalms (102 and 145). **Vespers** follows immediately after the Typica. Except for the evening of Saturday and Resurrection Day, at Vespers we read the Paramoeas, before which we intone the special Prokimenon of the Triodion; then "Our Father" followed by the Troparion "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos" and so forth, with bows; instead of the Litany: "Have mercy on us, O God" we say: "Lord, have mercy" 40 times; after the exclamation of the priest: "Blessed is He That Is", instead of the many years we read: "O Heavenly King"; after the bows: the "Trisagion" "Our Father", etc. **The Order** of these **services** during all the Holy Forty Day Fast is in the Typicon (Ustav) for the order of Monday of the First Week. During the serving of all the services during the Holy Forty Day Fast, except for Saturdays, Sundays and festal days, we do not ordinarily **vest** in bright vestments, as on the other days of year. Concerning the entrance and the Prokimenons **in Vespers on Sundays** see above, page 500. **On the All Day Vespers for feast days** (for example Feb. 24, Mar. 9), although it be the eve of these days and the Presanctified Liturgy was not served, an entrance is necessary. (For details see below, the Table of the Order of church services).

Refer to the Typicon (Rubrics): "If the order for two saints in the Menaion falls on a weekday, except for Saturdays and Sundays".

In the Ustav (Rubrics) when the great **bows** are appointed they are often added to the "Prayer of St. Ephraim", and sometimes not; but in it, in the article "About prostrations, (see Monday of the First Week of the Great Fast) it specifies: "there is written in the service books, to do the great prostration, after the holy prayer is exclaimed: O Lord and Master of my life". Great prostrations with the Prayer of St. Ephraim are done according to the following paradigm: "O Lord and Master of my life", one should stand straight and not inclining look to God sincerely and corporally; having ended this part of the prayer, one should make a prostration to the ground; then, having got up and standing straight as before,

sincerely and corporally looking to God, one should pray, saying the second part of the prayer: "But give rather the spirit of chastity", and, having ended this part of the prayer, one should make another prostration exactly as before; then having ended the third part of the prayer and make another prostration; then, having got up and having caught one's breath, one should make 12 little bows with the words: "O God, cleanse me a sinner"; upon ending them, standing the same as before and all over again, one should say the entire prayer and end it making one full prostration. To do all these bows the priest, usually, leaves the sanctuary and stands before the Royal Doors where he does the bows. The Ustav (Rubrics) subjects the priest to great responsibility before God and the Church court if he indifferently reads the prayer and carelessly does the bows, and all Orthodox if they bow with confused haste, not attentively listening to the words of the prayer and not imitating the priest. The Ustav says: "Where it is written to do the great prostration, one should do it slowly, and where it is written to do a simple bow, one should simply bow". This last bow (sometimes still called small, and sometimes easy) is called that bow when the person "If one can, standing erect, (i.e. direct) bow "reach the ground with the hand", not falling on one's knees, nor bowing one's head to the ground". The Ustav (Typicon) blames the one who, "having bowed with one stoop, blessing oneself while bowing a little, nods his head, and then as if by his carelessness he fulfills what has been handed down from the fathers. Nor does he pray to God with mind and soul, but so much as while he stooped he does his bow carelessly, in this way and as if in a stupor, he hastens to recite the prayer of St. Ephraim. And in like manner he rushes all prayers to fit in the prostrations and from those imaginary disgraceful prostrations and from his insane prayer he rises, like a fool, that he neither creates the message by himself, nor sees those standing in the church, but he somehow anticipates, disturbs as if he twists with the whirling wind, not looking the best, nor wanting to learn. But he confirms his character as he supposes it to be". One general prayer for everyone is read, and one should silently, not rocking and not moving, to listen to everything in it, and then make one general prostration, without agitation, and remembering that prayer is the conversation of the person with God Himself.

The Panikhida Service is not done in the temple on weekdays of the Holy Forty Day Fast. If the "tretini", i.e. the third day after death, falls on these days, then it is done on the nearest Saturday, and the Panikhida may be done in the temple on Friday evening, and the Memorial Liturgy may be done on Saturday. The "deviatini", i.e. the ninth day after death, service will be done on the following Saturday, even if ninth day did not fall on this Saturday. The "chetiredeciatini", i.e. forty days after death, Panikhida will be done "in the temple when the number of days has passed, i.e. on the 40-th day after death as long as it doesn't fall during the

time of the forty days in Great Lent or on Pascha, and the week after Pascha until the Sunday of the Apostle Thomas _).

In the southwestern territory in cathedral and monastic temples, and in local and parish churches, on Fridays during the first 4 weeks the Gospels of the Passion of Christ is read in Compline, according to the number of the week and according to the order of the four following Gospels. Before the Gospel we sing: "Joseph and Nicodemus take Thee down from the tree", after the Gospel we sing, "Come, let us honor Joseph", and then the sermon is preached. Pious Christians prepare themselves every day in the Fast by listening to the Gospel events. This church divine service ceremony is called the **Passia** (from "πα, scw, I suffer), in commemoration of the passion of Christ.

The paradigm of the observance of the Holy Forty Day Fast was determined from of old. Ancient Christians observed this lent with special strictness, abstaining even from the taste of water until the 9th hour (3 p.m. in the afternoon). They ate after the ninth hour of the day, using bread and vegetables and abstaining from meat and wine, and also cheese and eggs, even on Saturdays and Sundays _). The exceptions to this order were only supposed in extreme need.

The strict keeping of the fast weakened on Saturdays and Sundays and on the feast of the Annunciation (when it came in the Holy Forty Day Fast) on which it is necessary to serve a full liturgy, but it was not weakened when the feasts in honor of the saints fell on the weekdays of the Holy Forty Day Fast, likewise when the same feasts were celebrated on Saturdays and Sundays. The present Ustav (Rubrics, Typicon) commands:

"The strong may persevere fasting up to Friday". "On the first day of the first week (Monday) it is by any means not necessary to eat, and the same way in the second. On Wednesday after the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the meal is placed, and we eat warm bread, and for food warm vegetables. Warm water with honey is given also. To keep the fast on the two days of the first week, the weaker eat bread and kvass after Vespers on Tuesday. The same applies to the elderly. "The Holy Mountain Typicon commands not to eat food at all on the first day. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday one may eat one liter of bread and water, and nothing else, unless salt is needed with the bread. On Saturdays and Sundays olive oil and wine is permitted". In the other weeks, except for Saturdays and Sundays, we eat dry foods (xerophagy). Wine and olive oil is authorized on February 24, March 9, and on the day of the reading of the Great Canon on Great Thursday. "We do not eat any fish during all the Holy Forty Day Fast, except for the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos and Palm (Flower-bearing) Sunday". On Lazarus Saturday it is permitted to eat caviar, but not fish. _).

_) The didactic imitation of the fast of Christ during the time preceding the days in which the sufferings, the death and the glorious resurrection of Christ are remembered, gives to the Holy Forty Day Fast a special meaning and value for us. The suffering of the Savior and His resurrection grant to all of us hope even for our resurrection to eternal life. But to realize this hope of receiving an eternal blessed life, we need to imitate Christ in purity and holiness of life. We need to go through the same path of life, as also did the Savior: the way of self-renunciation and self-denial and besides this, the way of struggle against the sensuality and sinfulness of our nature. The Holy Forty Day Fast serves as the most convenient way to follow this way. "If we shall carefully observe them", teaches the Blessed Augustine, "the Forty Days signify the life of the present age, as the days of Pascha also signify the life of eternal blessedness". In the Forty Day Fast we have contrition, and in Pascha we have joy. And in the present life we should be repentant so that in the future life we could reach eternal blessings. So, everyone, during his terrestrial life, should sigh about his sins, pour out his tears, and do works of mercy. But if the obstacles of the world often confuse us in this, then in a larger measure we shall fulfill in our heart the sweetness of the law of God during the Holy Forty Days. During the harvest season food for the body is gathered, so that during the season of the spiritual harvest we should gather food for the soul, which could be eaten for eternal life. If we are negligent and have not prepared anything during its season, the whole year endures famine. So the one, who neglects fasting, reading the Sacred Scriptures, prayers during this period fails to gather spiritual wheat and heavenly food for the soul, and will reap eternal thirst and heavy distress". Even the Holy Church expresses a similar idea when she prays to God for us that He guide us "in these most honorable days" of the Holy Forty Days, "for the cleansing of souls and bodies, for the abstention from passions, for the hope of resurrection", and gave to us the power "through ascetical effort to strive for the good, to complete the course of the fast, to observe the undivided faith, to destroy the heads of the invisible serpents, and to be revealed the conqueror of sin". In such a way the Holy Forty Days, according to the sense and meaning for us, is a paradigm of our life as it should be, i.e. life not for the flesh and this world, but for heaven and eternity.

_) The number 40 relates to those few significant numbers (3, 7, 9), which have become known all over the world from deep antiquity, even from the time before Christianity. The number 40 was pointed out and determined by God Himself, and was revealed from above as the appointed measure of fulfillment of some ascetical feats and even the preoccupations in the life of the forefathers, the prophets. At all times, from the beginning of the world, the term of repentance and correction of sinners was usually determined by the number of forty days, and

sometimes even by a year (Gen. 6:4-16; Acts 7:22, 2_, 30, _6; Ex. 34:28; 3 Kings 19:8; Ezek. 4:6). In Christian history the number 40 is sacred and confirmed anew, with even much greater and sacred examples. The Savior Himself, fulfilling the law, is brought into the temple on the fortieth day. Preparing to announce the good news of the Gospels to the world, He leaves for the desert and fasted there for forty days. After His resurrection He willed to remain on earth for forty days before His ascension into heaven. Following this great example, the Holy Church in the very beginning blessed the number forty, as a specially significant number: such as, the fortieth day after birth, the fortieth day after death, the forty day repentance, and, finally, established the forty-day fast, the Holy Forty Days. Besides this, the Holy Forty Days is actually 36 days (when we exclude Sundays which, strictly speaking, cannot be ranked as days of contrition and fasting), is, by approximate calculation, a tenth part of the whole year. Therefore the Holy Forty Days is not like other periods in the Old Testament, from of old a torah tithe to God. There are divinely determined tithes in every year, and consequently even all our life is a tithe, in which we, being released by this time from everyday amusements, dedicate our primary service to God.

"In the law", teaches the Ven. Abba Dorotheus, "it is written that God has enjoined the Sons of Israel to give a tithe of everything they have every year, and, doing so, they have been blessed in all affairs. Knowing this, the holy apostles have established and turned over help to us, and as blessing for our souls, something still greater and higher, that we separate a tithe from the days of our life and consecrate it to God. That we also, thus, received a blessing on all our affairs and every year cleansed the sins made by us during the whole year. Having judged so, they have consecrated these seven weeks of the Holy Forty Day Fast out of the three hundred sixty five days of the year for us. Thus, they have set apart these seven weeks; but in due course the fathers wisely decided to also add one more week to them. First, they wished to enter into an ascetic effort of the fast they were already accustomed to during the course of these weeks as if they prepared for this. Second, to honor the fast of the Holy Forty Days, which our Lord Jesus Christ fasted. For, having taken away Saturdays and Sundays from the eight weeks, we have forty days, and the fast of Holy Saturday is regarded special because it is the most sacred and unique fast of all the Saturdays of the year. And seven weeks without Saturdays and Sundays make thirty-five days. Then having applied the fast of holy and great Saturday and half of the bright and light-bearing night, we have thirty six and a half days, that accurately makes the tenth part of the three hundred sixty five days of the year".

_) Doing the full liturgy on Thursdays of Great Lent for the sake of the significance of this time for the number of those fasting does not agree with the canonical canons, and with the character of the Holy Forty Days as a time of

spiritual sorrow and grief for sins. Preeminent Christians usually received the Holy Mysteries daily, and the Holy Church did not deprive their reception of the Holy Mysteries during the days of the Holy Forty Day Fast, and established the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts for these days. Such an establishment was especially needed, since on the fast days during the time of spiritual ascetic efforts, Christians needed spiritual reinforcement, the spiritual food, more than ever. Thus, based on the purpose for which the Holy Church established the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on the days of the Holy Forty Day Fast, it is obvious that prepared persons can receive the Holy Mysteries in this liturgy and can really partake, and that, hence, there is no need to do a full liturgy of St. John Chrysostom on Thursdays of the Holy Forty Day Fast. (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskikh Pastirej (Manual for Village Pastors) 1888, 5).

_) Canon 49 of the Council of Laodicea decrees: "It is not necessary to offer holy bread (in the Slavonic Nomocanon: "not to do the Proskomedia", Canon 48) in the Forty Holy Day Fast, except on Saturday and Sunday". In the commentary on this Canon the following are the indicated reasons: "because these days of Great Lent are the season of repentance, and there should be every reason to have them for ones sins, and not to forsake making haste about them, or to avoid them for the feasts, or to have haste about those, and to satisfy oneself with spiritual joy before the time".

Canon 52 of the Council of Trullo decided: "In all of Great Lent, except for Saturdays and Sundays and the holy day of the Annunciation, let only the service of the Presanctified Gifts be served". Theodore Balsamon makes the following commentary on this canon: "It is established that the days of the fasts were days of crying and pleading for the forgiveness of God for the sins of each person. And the offering of a sacrifice to God is a celebration; a celebration that is nothing other than joy. What kind of paradigm is it if at the same time there is crying and rejoicing? Therefore the fathers also determined that there was no sacrifice in all of the Holy Forty Day Fast, except for Saturdays and Sundays and the feast day of the Annunciation, for on these days it is enjoined for us to celebrate and not to cry, and not to fast, and not to bend the knees. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is not called the bloodless sacrifice, but the presentation of the sacrifice already offered and accomplished, and the holy action already fulfilled".

Not allowing the serving of the Divine Liturgy during the weekdays of the Holy Forty Days Fast, the Holy Church decided to transfer the commemoration of the departed to Saturdays during the time of Great Lent and Meat Fare Week. It is even directed to celebrate the birthdays of martyrs on Saturdays and Sundays during the Forty Holy Day Fast. "It is not appropriate to celebrate the birthdays of martyrs during the Holy Forty Day Fast, but to commemorate the holy martyrs on

Saturdays and Sundays" (Canon 51 of Laodicea). Balsamon in his commentary on this canon observes: "To read Canon 52 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and Canon 49 of the present Council in which it is said, that only on Saturdays and Sundays is there a perfect sacrifice during the days of the entire Holy Forty Day Fast, but that other divine services are done through the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. But in order that some one might not say that the commemoration of the holy martyrs should not be prohibited on all of the Holy Forty Day Fast through the offering of a sacrifice because they are not days of joy, and it is only good to prohibit their birthdays which consist of days of joy and are marked by solemn assemblies. Considering this the fathers have determined that in all the Holy Forty Day Fast there should neither be a sacrificial celebration on the days of commemoration, nor on the birthdays of martyrs, but that a feast be served for them only on Saturdays and Sundays. So, notice that on the basis of the present canon commemorations for the departed are not done in all of the Holy Forty Days, except on Saturdays".

On the basis of the resulting canons of the holy councils one must conclude: that during the time of Great Lent, except for Saturdays and Sundays, if it is forbidden to serve the full liturgy on the days of the commemoration of martyrs in Great Lent then it is also forbidden and especially cannot be lawful to serve a full liturgy on the occasion of the burial or commemoration of the departed.

It is fruitless for Orthodox laymen who are confused by the refusal on the part of the priest to ask for the service of a full liturgy at the burial or commemoration of the departed on the days of Great Lent, which is an infringement of the church Ustav (Rubrics) of the sanction not to serve a full liturgy on the occasion of burial or commemoration of the departed. And besides in the holy Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts the Holy Church prays "for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us". Besides, the Orthodox Church, fretting about our salvation, and knowing better than each of us what is necessary and useful for us, has established known canons by which we should be supervised in the affairs of faith, piety and worship (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskij Pastirej, (Manual for Village Pastors), 1894, 5; ref. Moskovskiiia Tserkovniya Vedomosti (Moscow Church News), 1894, 9).

_) According to the witness of St. John Chrysostom, some people during his time were content with only bread and water during the entire Holy Forty Day Fast, and "on other hand, although the fast was coming there were those who tried a thousand times to get him to drink wine or to eat something not appropriate for the fast, the sooner he decided to undergo all that, rather than to taste the forbidden food". In Byzantium in the Sixth Century, during the reign of Emperor Justinian, there was a famine during time of the Holy Forty Day Fast. The emperor allowed

the sale of meat. Even though it was allowed out of necessity, the people, out of piety, did not buy nor eat the meat, wishing to endure hunger rather than to depart from ancient customs and traditions. In every possible way abstaining from food and strictly limiting its choice, ancient Christians, agreeing with the canons of the Holy Church, limited themselves in even all the purest and holy joys, considering even such actions as incompatible with quiet sorrow of the days of repentance. From the most ancient times as it has been told by us before, on the weekdays of the Holy Forty Day Fast the full liturgy was attended by ancient Christians with spiritual gladness and festive agape meals (Laod. 19, Trullo 52), on those days the commemoration of the holy Martyrs were not celebrated (Laod. 51). And during all of the Holy Forty Day Fast it was strictly forbidden "to perform marriages, or to celebrate birthdays" (Laod. 52). To not give an occasion to believers to absent-mindedness and entertainments, the canons of the Holy Church have forbidden all shows and common games. And ancient Christians counted it an inexcusable sin for themselves during the days of general repentance, humility, soulful weeping and lamentation for sins, to afford the earthy entertainments and worldly pleasures with which pagans betrayed themselves at this time of prodigality with the darkness of superstition and impiety. Subsequently the Emperor Theodosius the Great prohibited public shows through the imperial code of laws. Similarly fairs were prohibited in lent, and also suits and litigation was stopped during this time. During the same time of the Holy Forty Day Fast was the time of the greatest display of Christian mercy and love: the sovereigns released captives, forgave debtors, facilitated the destiny of criminals, removed fetters from those in prison; bishops reconciled penitents with the Church, released the reformed from heavy interdicts and public penance; all believers considered it their primary duty at this time to help the poor, the needy, to visit the sick, to comfort pilgrims, to mediate conflicts, to stop all mutual quarrels and disputes, to manage slaves with special kindness, etc. Several times a day the faithful gathered in the temple for divine services, for public prayers and hearing the word of God, filling these practices with obligatory personal prayers; assiduously preparing themselves for worthy reception of the Holy Mysteries and during the Holy Forty Day Fast repeatedly receiving communion during the full liturgy and at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Full silence reigned during this time even in the special life of Christian societies. St. John Chrysostom in one of the commentaries says: "What blessing does not occur for us in lent? Everywhere there is silence and pure clarity. And are not the dwellings also free from noise, bustle and any anxiety? But before yet the dwelling, the spirit of the one who fasts tastes calmness, and that all the cities everywhere should reveal such decency, as what exists in spirit and in the dwellings: neither the audible singing in the evening, nor the afternoon commotion

and drunkenness. There is no audible shouting, nor quarreling, but everywhere great silence".

_) The holy fathers and teachers of the Church, having proved by their own experience the beneficence of fasting, zealously inspired, agrees with the teaching of the Holy Scripture about fasting (Gen. 2:17; Ex. 4:28; Lev. 16:29-30, 27:27-28; Deut. 9:9, 18, 31:12; 2 Kings 12:16; 3 Kings 19:6-8, 21:27; 2 Chr. 20:3; 1 Esdras 1:4, 8:21, 9:3; Neh. 9:1-2; Ps. 68:11; Ex. 58:3-12; Dan. 10:3; Joel 1:14, 2:12-18; Jon. 3:5-10; Zech. 7:1-6, 8:19; 2 Esdras 5:1, 20, 6:3, 35; Mt. 3:4, 4:2, 6:16-18, 9:15, 11:18, 17:21; Mk. 1:6, 2:18, 20, 9:29; Lk. 2:37; Acts 10:9,30, 13:2-3, 14:23; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 6:4-5, 11:27; Col. 3:5. Refer to Apostolic Canon 69; VI Ecumenical Council 29, 56, 89; Gangra 19; Laod. 50; Dionysius of Alex. 1; Peter of Alex. 15; Timothy of Alex. 8, 10), the necessity of the latter by their contemporaries. In view of this at the present time many now break the canons of the Holy Church about the fast, leading us to a few endurances of the fast from the writings of the holy fathers.

According to the teaching of Saint Basil the Great, "the prophets gave birth to the fast which strengthens the powers; the fast makes wise the law-givers. The fast is a kind of protection for the soul, a reliable companion for the flesh, the weapon of the valiant people, the school for ascetics. It repels temptations, it anoints the ascetics in piety. It is the companion of sobriety, the practitioner of chastity. It performs valiant deeds in abuses, it teaches silence during the time of peace. It blesses the vow of abstention, it perfects the priest. Without the fast it is impossible to risk one's self in the liturgical action not only in the present sacramental and true service, but also in the transfiguring and lawful service". "The fast sends up a prayer before heaven, being done as if with wings, before the mountain of Ascension. The fast is a complement of homes, the mother of health, the tutor of the youth, an adornment of the elders, the good companion of travelers, a reliable companion of those living together". "The fast is the weapon for protection against demons because "this kind does not go away, except through prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:28). Our guardian angels more really stay with those who have cleansed our souls through fasting. The fast is imitating angels, cohabitating with the righteous, the training for a chaste life ". "The fast protects children, keeps chaste the youth, and makes respectable the old adorned with gray hair worthier of respect by fasting. The fast is the most decent attire of women, a restraint in the prime of life, the defense of marriages, the tutor of virgins. Everyone in the home has access to such honorable services of the fast. But how does it order our life in society? Suddenly the whole city and all the people approach decency, quieting the shouts, rejecting quarrels, forcing an end to reproaches ". "If all accepted him in the counsel concerning their deeds, then

nothing would interfere with the peace that would be in the whole universe: nations would not rise against each other; troops would not enter into battles between themselves", "in the deserts there would be no robbers, in the cities, no slanderers, on the sea, no brigands".

According to the teaching of St. John Chrysostom, "as incontinence in food occurring from innumerable causes and sources is malevolent for the race of man, and fasting and contempt of carnal pleasures always were the cause of inexpressible blessings for us. God, having created man in the beginning, and knowing, that healing is rather necessary for him for the salvation of his soul, immediately and from the very beginning gave the following first given commandment: "You may eat of every tree in paradise; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2:16, 17). And the words: this, eat, but this do not eat, were in the paradigm of a fast. But man instead of observing the commandment, has broken it, and for that has been condemned to death". "And the inhabitants of Sodom have drawn upon themselves the relentless wrath of God, over other crimes with these. For here is what the Prophet says: "this lawlessness of Sodom, as in the surfeit of bread had sensual ease" (Ezek. 16:49). This defect in the very deed really is as though the source and root of all that is bad. But look now at the beneficent actions of the fast". "The fast leads us to abuse from our enemies, delivers from slavery, returns us to freedom". "He helps in the fiery furnace, protects us from the paws of the lions, banishes demons, changes the decisions of God, tames the fury of passions, allows us freedom, leads us to great silence in ideas". "The fast restrains the body and bridles disorderly desires. On the contrary, it enlightens the soul, gives wing to, and makes even the scaling of the mountain with ease. The fast is food for the soul, and as food for the body food it fattens the body so the fast strengthens the soul, communicates easy flight to it, gives it the ability to rise to the heights and to think about the high place and delivers the pleasures and pleasantness from above to the present life. As the light judgment crosses the seas sooner, but the large overburdened cargo is more likely to capsize; so lent, making our mind much lighter, enables it to cross the sea of the present life more quickly, to aspire to heaven and be subject to heaven, and not to respect the present, but to consider more than the shadows and sleepy dreams".

According to the teaching of St. Isaac the Syrian, "As satisfying the stomach is the beginning of any evil, so fasting is the basis of any virtue and the holy way to God. The fast is the protection of virtue, the beginning of self-sacrifice, a wreath of abstinence, the beauty of virginity and holiness, the shine of chastity, the basis of a Christian life, the father of prayer, the originator of chastity and wisdom, the instructor of silence, and the leader to everything good. As healthy eyes naturally

aspire to light, so the soul of the person observing a reasonable fast, naturally aspires to prayer. When you will fast then your mind will aspire and wish to converse with God. Equally the body, which is used to fasting, will also not want to sleep and lay on the bed all night. Whoever has accustomed the body to fasting, has turned over his mind to meditation with the perfect calmness, pours out his heart in prayer, expresses grief in his face, and will not have a place for shameful thoughts at all. Cheerfulness is not apparent in his visage. It is the enemy of passions and vain conversations. No one has seen that whoever fasts reasonably, cringes at any shameful passion. Reasonable fasting is great open space for all goodness. Whoever neglects it subverts all goodness. Therefore the commandment, issued right at the beginning of our existence, is fasting".

"Fasting is the weapon prepared by God for us. Whoever neglects it is not right. For if the Law-giver Himself fasted, is it not also necessary for those for whom the law is given to fulfill the fast? For a long time the human race was not able to win, for a long time the devil did not test the defeat of our nature; but at the very beginning he was weakened by this weapon. Our Lord was the leader and the first conqueror. He first delivered the victorious crown of our nature. Since then, whenever the devil sees that some one has this weapon, immediately he is afraid, immediately he imagines and remembers that defeat which he underwent by the Savior in the desert: his power is destroyed and disappears".

"Whoever does not love fasting, then in performing other ascetical feats, becomes lazy, careless, powerless and shows this to be a thin sign of the weakening of the soul and allows an occasion for the enemy to win a victory over him. Therefore it is clear that he enters the struggle naked and unarmed, and that he will return without victory; for his members are not armed with fasting. And whoever observes him, sees that he has a hard soul, ready for any opposition and, foreign to all evil passions".

"The basis of any blessing, and the liberation of souls from the captivity of the enemy, and the way leading to light and life, are the following two things: stay in one place and continually fast. From here comes an obedience of feelings, from here coolness of mind; by these means wild passions living in the body are tamed. From here come meekness of thoughts, bright ideas, diligence in deeds of virtue, and uplifting and fine concepts. From here at all times come eternal tears and the memory of death. From here comes that pure chastity which is completely foreign to everyone with seductive thoughts. From here comes insight and distant enlightenment. From here proceeds the soul understanding, by the power of the Word of God, the deepest sacramental ideas and internal spiritual movements. From here comes the art to distinguish evil spirits from sacred powers, and true visions from vain dreams. From here comes constant vigilance of the mind, not allowing one the inclination for various ways and steps, and banishing laziness and

negligence. From here comes that flaming zealotry which scorns any danger and fears nothing. From here comes that fervent diligence, which does not bear any passion, expels it from thoughts and tries to erase from memory everything that passes through the soul. In short, from here comes the true freedom of the person, both the joy of the soul and the resurrection, and the tranquility with Christ in His Kingdom".

"Fasting is general peace of soul and body, a serene life, a consistent pattern of behavior, a way of life, pleasing God and grieving the enemy".

"Guards and vigilant protectors of the dwellings of the faster are angels, whereas those that turn themselves over to feasts and entertainment during the Holy Forty Day Fast are demons, these real friends of the greasy smell, fans of blood and accomplices of drunkenness".

"No one of the living in luxury was morally zealous, and no one given to feasts was the disciple of virtue, any not one lover of entertainment is a saint and no one in the living flesh is a member of the (heavenly) Kingdom".

"Fasting is a holy classmate; fasting is the originator of all good deeds. And as masters do not make their products without the help of tools, so the adherents of piety and those glorified for their spiritual talents never created anything wonderful and extraordinary without abstention. The fasting Elisha revived and enlivened the dead man. The fasting Moses saw God. The fasting Daniel overcame the sorcery and deceit of the Assyrians. Even the Lord overcame the temptations of the devil. Even the fasting Apostles made prayers about important affairs. The fasting Ninevites averted the threat of death. Speaking in general, the fast is the mediator before God, worthy of respect, and the most hopeful ambassador who soon bowing to God for those whom he raises up prayer. Therefore, every pious man, everyone, who loves God more than pleasures, start the days of abstention with joy and gladness. For no one having a sad visage at the beginning of a fight will be a brave fighter".

"The fast is not hunger, but a little diversion from food. It is not inevitable punishment, but voluntary abstention. It is not slavish necessity, but free philosophy".

Revealing the necessity, importance and beneficence of the fast, the holy fathers and teachers of the Church at the same time explain also those conditions which makes the observance of the fast saving for us.

St. Basil the Great teaches: "The benefit of fasting is not limiting to one abstention from food, because true fasting is eliminating evil deeds. "Destroy every connection with the unrighteous". Forgive your neighbor his offenses; forgive him his debts. "Do not fast in judgment and quarrels". You do not eat meat, but you eat

your brother. You abstain from wine, but you do not abstain from insults. You wait until evening to eat food, but you spend the day in judgment places".

"Let our Lenten fasting be pleasant and pleasing to God. True fasting is the driving away of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the suppression of one's anger, the removal of carnal desire, slander, lies, and perjury. Abstaining from this is the true fast. In this fast are beautiful deeds".

"The deeds are not only", inspires St. John Chrysostom, "that we come to church daily, continually hearing the one and the same, and fasting during the entire Holy Forty Day Fast.

No if we from continual going here and hearing lectures shall not get anything, and from the fasting season we do not receive anything good for our soul: all this will not only not deliver any benefit for us, but will even serve our greater condemnation when, the Church taking such care of us, we remain the same as we were before".

"If we, coming here every day, and constantly hearing so much instruction, and receiving help from the fast, we do not conquer the passions arising in us: then what will be the forgiveness for us, what the justification?"

"Don't tell me, that I fast so much during these days, that I do not eat this or that, nor drink wine, or deprived myself, but rather show me that you did these things, that you are well disposed from the severe acts or if you are full of anger which overwhelms your flesh? If inside you are hatred and love of silver, then what is the benefit if you drink water? Do not display your fast as unpleasant, for one fast does not ascend to heaven".

According to the teaching of the Ven. Dorotheus, by the fast "we not only should observe the measure in food, but be kept also from any other sin, that, as we fast with the stomach, we should fast also with the tongue, keeping from slander, from lies, from celebrations, from abasement, from anger and in a word from any sin made by the tongue. Also we should also fast with the eyes, i.e. not to look at vain things, not to give the eyes freedom to look at anybody shamelessly and fearlessly. As well the hands and the feet should be kept from any evil deed".

"The respectable faster", teaches St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, "is the one who keeps himself from fornication, adultery and every impure one. The respectable faster is the one who rids him of anger, fury, rage and revenge. The respectable faster is the one who has imposed restraint of his tongue and keeps him from idle talk, foul language, inflammatory speech, slander, condemnation, flattery, lies and all kinds of foul speech. The respectable faster is the one who keeps his hands from theft, plunder, extortion, and his heart from coveting another's things. In a word:

the good faster is one who departs from any kind of evil. You see, O Christian, what a sincere fast is! The carnal fast is useful for us because it serves us in the killing of passions. But the sincere fast is irrevocably necessary, because the carnal fast without it is just to eat nothing. Many fast in the body, but do not fast with the soul. Many fast from food and drink, but do not fast from evil thoughts, deeds and words. And what benefit is there for them from this? Many fast through the day or two or more. But do not want to fast from anger, spite and revenge. Many abstain from wine, meat, and fish, but with their tongue will bite people similar to them. And what benefit is that to them? Such existence with the hands often does not concern food, but extends them to extortion, plunder and coveting of another's goods. And of what benefit is that to them? The true and simple fast is abstention from any evil. So, if you will, O Christian, in order that the fast will be useful to you, fast carnally, fast sincerely, and fast always. If you impose a fast on your stomach, then also impose it on evil ideas and your whims. Yes fast intellectually from vain thoughts. Yes fast with your memory from spite. Yes fast in your will from coveting. Yes fast in your eyes from bad knowledge." Turn away your eyes, that they will not learn vanities". Yes fast with your ears from corrupting songs and from slanderous whispering. Yes fast with your tongue from slander, judging, blasphemy, lies, flattery, foul language and any idle and putrid word. Yes fast with your hands from killing and plundering of foreign goods. Yes fast with your feet from going about evil deeds. "Depart from evil and do good" (Ps. 33:15 (LXX); 1 Peter 3:11). Here is the Christian fast, which our God demands from us! Therefore bring yourself to repentance, and, restrain yourself from any evil word, deed and thought, learn every virtue, and always be fasting before God".

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0500-0507
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