About Apostles’ Fasting
(June 12 – July 11)

Is the Orthodox Church serious? Another fast so soon after the Great Fast? Why do the Apostles require us to deprive ourselves of food? What is the significance of this period of preparation? What are we preparing for?

The Apostles’ Fast, also called the Fast of the Holy Apostles, the Fast of Peter and Paul, or sometimes St. Peter’s Fast, begins on the second Monday after Pentecost and continues until the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on July 12.

Having rejoiced for fifty days following Pascha (Easter), the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Apostles began to prepare for their departure from Jerusalem to spread Christ’s message. According to Sacred Tradition, as part of their preparation, they began a fast with prayer to ask God to strengthen their resolve and to be with them in their missionary undertakings.

The Apostles’ Fast is not as severe as Great Lent or the Dormition Fast, but entails fasting from red meat, poultry, meat products, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine. Fish, wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, and oil and wine are allowed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These fasting rules are much the same as those observed during the Nativity Fast.

As with the three other Fasts of the Church year, there is a Great Feast that falls during the Apostles’ Fast; in this case, the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist July 7 (June 24).

The length of the Fast is variable, being determined by the date of Pascha (Easter). Eight weeks after Pascha comes the Sunday of All Saints. The next day, Monday, the Fast of the Holy Apostles begins. The Fast lasts until July 12 (June 29), the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. In other words, depending on the date of Pascha, the Apostles’ Fast can begin as early as May 18 or as late as July 1. Thus, it may be as short as ten days or as long as fifty-five days in duration.
For those churches which follow the Gregorian Calendar – or **New Calendar** rather than the Julian Calendar – or **Old Calendar**, the Fast is truncated by 13 days. In 1924, the Church of Greece and the Church of Constantinople, and later some other local churches, changed to a different calendar from other Orthodox Churches. Pascha sometimes falls very late on the calendar, which can eliminate the Fast of the Holy Apostles entirely for the churches that follow the New Calendar.

It is this fast that we ourselves participate in when we observe the Apostles' Fast. But we do this not only because we honor the Apostles and their sacrifice. We do this by way of preparing ourselves to be sent as missionaries into our world to reflect and radiate Christ to those around us.

Somewhere along the line, we seem to have disconnected ourselves from the Apostles. We’ve placed them on a very high plane so that we may admire them and their spirituality while, at the same time, effectively preventing ourselves from ever having anything to do with it as far as our own personal lives are concerned.

When Christ asked his sleeping disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane why they could not watch and pray with Him for one hour, He was actually giving all of us some real practical advice on how much time we should be spending in prayer at a minimum.

Yet, today we think that His words were only for His apostles and disciples, for those who made a radical commitment to follow Him until the end of their days. THAT has nothing to do with us! And how wrong we are!

The apostles were people like we are. St Peter was actually so filled with a sense of his own sinfulness that he felt it was inappropriate for him to even speak with Jesus at their first meeting. And it was he who denied Christ three times. Later, through the power of the Holy Spirit, it was into this same Peter's shadow that sick people would try and throw themselves in the hope of receiving healing!

It was St Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, who called himself the “least of the disciples.” He considered himself to be a full member of the Apostolic group, notwithstanding that he did not see Christ before His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

It was Mark in whose parents' house the Mystical (Last) Supper was held. It was Mark who was the mysterious young boy in the Garden at the time of Christ's arrest who escaped naked from the soldiers.

In addition, Christ chose 70 disciples. These 70 disciples went out, two by two, as did the Apostles, and preached, prayed, healed and witnessed.

Added to this Apostolic Choir were the women who assisted Christ throughout his earthly sojourn. St Mary Magdalene was the most famous “Equal to the Apostles.” She was even invited by the Emperor of Rome, Tiberius himself, to dine with him! It was during that dinner that Mary Magdalene tried to convert him and then occurred the famous miracle of the egg.

The Emperor stopped her when she was talking about the Resurrection of Christ. He told her that there was no way that Someone who had suffered so much on the Cross could rise from the dead. It was as impossible as an egg turning red! At that, Mary Magdalene lifted up an egg and it turned red in her hands, a kind of ancestor to the colored Easter Eggs, the symbol of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection!

The Apostles' Fast is therefore something which should be undertaken with an apostolic vision on our part. When Christ told His disciples to go and preach to all nations, He had us in mind as well. When He set the standards of “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked” and others, He was also using these in a spiritual sense.

How many are around us who thirst for spirituality? How many who hunger for the Word of God? What about those in the prison of their own sinfulness? Or who are naked, that is, unclothed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit? These are all apostolic opportunities that are presented to us by our Lord Himself. As St Peter said, our battle is with principalities and dominions etc. the representatives of the Evil One. And they are something that can only be cast out with prayer and fasting.

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**TRIALS**

*On earth everything is temporary, brief and transitory. Soon everything will pass by, that which is pleasant and delightful, just as what is lamentable and sorrowful. If we have chosen for ourselves the path of piety, then we must remember and not forget the words of the Apostle: All that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution (II Timothy, 3:13)*

- St. Ambrose
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Notes:
عن صوم الرسل

لا يستهين أحد بصوم آبائنا الرسل ، فهو أقدم صوم وأول صوم صامته الكنيسة وعرفته الكنيسة المسيحية في كل أجيالها وباشر إليه السيد بقوله " ولكن حينما يرفع عنهم العريس فحينئذ يصومون...

وصام الآباء الرسل ، كبداية لخدمتهم ، فالرب نفسه بدأ خدمته بالصوم ، أربعين يوماً على الجبل . صوم الرسل إذن ، هو صوم خاص بالخدمة والكنيسة . قيل عن معلمنا بطرس الرسول إنه صام إلى أن " جاع كثيراً وابشى أن يأكل ".

وفي جوعه رأى السماء مفتوحة ، ورأى رؤيا عن قبول الأمم . وكما كان صومهم مصحوباً بالروح والترجيح الإلهي ، كان مصحوبا أيضاً بعمل الروح القدس وحلوله . ويقول الكتاب: " وربنا هم يخدمون الرب ويصمون ، قال الروح القدس إفرزوا لى بريان وأشادوا للعمل الذي دعواهما إليه . فصاموا حينئذ وصلوا ، ووضعوا عليهما الأيدي ، ثم أطلقوهما . فهذان إذ أرسلا من الروح القدس ، انحدرا إلى سلوكية".

أمور هامة ، تميز بها صوم آبائنا الرسل ، منها: الصوم ، والصلاة والخدمة ، وعمل الروح القدس . ويسيرنا أن يعمل الروح القدس صلال الصوم وأن تأتي الدعوة الإلهية خلال الصوم ، وأن تتم سياحة الخدمة أثناء الصوم أيضا ، وأن يبدأ الخدمة بالصوم ، قبل البدء بالخدمة ... هناك أصوات خاصة بالترجيح ، مثل صوم أهل نينوى ، وصوم أصول الأشياطين بحسب الحديث ، كما قال الرب إن هذا الجنس لا يخرج بشئ إلا بالصلاة والصوم . وأصوات أخرى خاصة بطلبة معينة ، مثل صوم أستير ، وأصوات إفرزاء الشياطين ، كم الرب إن هذا الجنس لا يخرج بشئ إلا بالصلاة والصوم . وأصوات نصوصها قيل كل نعمة تبتعداها من الرب ، كالأصوات التي تسبيق الأسرار المقدسة كالمطرية والسيغور والتناول والكهنوت . أما صوم الرب فهو من أجل الخدمة والكنيسة على الأقل ، لكي نتعلم لزوم الصوم للخدمة ، ونفعه لها . نصوم لكي يتدخل الله في الخدمة ، ويعينها . ونصوم لكي نخدم ونحن في حالة روحية . ونصوم شاعرين بضعفنا ... كم اشتهينا مجي هذا الصوم ، خلال الخمسين المسدسة.

Apostles Fast
June 12 – July 11
صوم الرسل

General Apostles Fasting Rules
Fish, Wine, and Oil
allowed on all Saturdays and Sundays

Wine and Oil
allowed on all Tuesdays and Thursdays

Strict Fast (No Oil or Wine Allowed)
on all Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
Exceptions to fasting rules will be announced as they occur
Have a Blessed Fast!

E-mail sjoc@earthlink.net for your bulletin personal announcements, comments, or feedback.

Thank You!

Congratulations to all Sunday School students for finishing another school year. Many thanks to all the parents who supported the school and and showed commitment to its success. And many thanks to Sunday School teachers:

Heba Khoury – Carol Kafeety – Mayce Keilo – Anna Keilo – Marya Husary

for all the hard work throughout the year. Your hard work and commitment is well appreciated by all. See you in September!

Choir Practice

ALL CHOIR MEMBERS

Please attend Choir Practices every other Friday starting at 7pm sharp

Next Practice – THIS Friday June 16
As we honor the Apostles during this Apostle’s Fast season, it is worth while to explore the life of each of the twelve Apostles over the next two weeks and learn more about their Holy Life.

**Apostle James, the Son of Alphaeus**

Holy Apostle James the son of Alphaeus one of the Twelve Apostles, was the brother of the holy Evangelist Matthew. He heard the Lord's words and witnessed His miracles.

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle James Alphaeus and the Apostle Andrew the First-Called, made missionary journeys preaching in Judea, Edessa, Gaza, Eleutheropolis, proclaiming the Gospel, healing all sorts of sickness and disease, and converting many to the path of salvation. St. James finished his apostolic work in the Egyptian city of Ostrachina, where he was crucified by the pagans.

**Apostle Jude, the Brother of James**

The Holy Apostle Jude, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, and was the son of Righteous Joseph the Betrothed by his first wife.

St Jude’s Epistle speaks about the Holy Trinity, about the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, about the good and bad angels, and about the dread Last Judgment. The Apostle urges believers to guard themselves against fleshly impurity, to be diligent in prayer, faith and love, to convert the lost to the path of salvation, and to guard themselves from the teachings of heretics. He also says that it is not enough just to be converted to Christianity, but faith must be demonstrated by good works.

The Holy Apostle Jude died as a martyr around the year 80 near Mt. Ararat in Armenia, where he was crucified and pierced by arrows.

**Apostle Simon Zealotes**

Saint Simon was from Cana in Galilee, and was known to the Lord and His Mother. Tradition says that he was the bridegroom at the wedding where the Savior performed His first miracle. After witnessing the miracle of the water which had been turned into wine, he became a zealous follower of Christ. For this reason, he is known as St Simon the Zealot.

St Simon was one of the twelve Apostles, and received the Holy Spirit with the others on Pentecost. He traveled to many places from Britain to the Black Sea, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. After winning many pagans to the Lord, St Simon suffered martyrdom by crucifixion.

With the hot summer days already here, shorts, short sleeves, and less clothes naturally become the normal dress code on Sundays! Of course they are much more comfortable to wear in warm days. And it becomes much easier to forget about the proper dress code for Orthodox services in the Orthodox Church: *Long sleeves and long pants or dresses*.

We never want to wear short sleeves or shorts at a job interview. God’s house deserves even a better dress.
If you cannot be merciful, at least speak as though you are a sinner.
If you are not a peacemaker, at least do not be a troublemaker.
If you cannot be assiduous, at least in your thought be unlike a sluggard.
If you are not victorious, do not exalt yourself over the vanquished.
If you cannot close the mouth of a man who disparages his companion, at least refrain from joining him in this.

- Saint Isaac the Syrian (of Nineveh) - 7th century

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Father’s Day and Graduations are just around the corner. Please consider buying Scrip gift cards for dads and your graduates. Big variety of restaurants and department stores. Complete list of retailers at www.glscrip.com.

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Happy Father’s Day

Best Wishes and God Bless all the fathers for their Father’s Day this Sunday.

Fasting Lunch This Sunday June 18

Lunch will be provided by
Saleh & Georgette Isied and Family
Thank you and God bless you.

Mark Your Calendar
St. James 12th Annual Food Festival
September 15, 16, 17

Samantha Ammari - 6/13 Siham Sousou - 6/15
Luma Theodossy - 6/15 Elias B. Khoury - 6/16
Jizelle Shehadeh - 6/16

nce
St. Metrophanes the first Patriarch of Constantinople  
Saturday June 17 (6/4)

Saint Metrophanes, Patriarch of Constantinople, was a contemporary of Saint Constantine the Great. His father, Dometius, was a brother of the Roman emperor Probus. Seeing the falseness of the pagan religion, Dometius came to believe in Christ. During a time of terrible persecution of Christians at Rome, Saint Dometius set off to Byzantium with two of his sons, Probus and Metrophanes. They were instructed in the law of the Lord by Bishop Titus, a man of holy life. Seeing the ardent desire of Dometius to labor for the Lord, Saint Titus ordained him presbyter. After the death of Titus first Dometius was elevated to the bishop's throne, and thereafter his sons, Probus and Saint Metrophanes.

The emperor Constantine once came to Byzantium, and was delighted by the beauty and comfortable setting of the city. And having seen the holiness of life and sagacity of Saint Metrophanes, the emperor took him back to Rome. Soon Constantine the Great transferred the capital from Rome to Byzantium and he brought Saint Metrophanes there. The First Ecumenical Council was convened in 325 to resolve the Arian heresy. Constantine the Great had the holy Fathers of the Council bestow upon Saint Metrophanes the title of Patriarch. Thus, the saint became the first Patriarch of Constantinople.

Saint Metrophanes was very old, and was not able to be present at the Council, and he sent in his place the chorepiscopos (vicar bishop) Alexander. At the close of the Council the emperor and the holy Fathers visited with the ailing Patriarch. At the request of the emperor, the saint named a worthy successor to himself, Bishop Alexander. He foretold that Paul (at that time a Reader) would succeed to the patriarchal throne after Alexander. He also revealed to Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria that his successor would be the archdeacon Saint Athanasius.

Saint Metrophanes reposed in the year 326, at age 117. His relics rest at Constantinople in a church dedicated to him.
St. James Orthodox Church invites you to our Annual Picnic in the Park!

CARDOZA PARK “Area A”
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Saturday, July 15th  B-B-Q Starts at 1pm

B-B-Q Chicken, Arayis, Burgers, Hot dogs & Much More!

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