

**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA
HELLENIC COMMUNITY OF WA**



PARISH & COMMUNITY OF STS. CONSTANTINE & HELENE

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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A few points relating to the Lenten Fast

Fr Elpidios

Throughout the liturgical year one is confronted with various fasting periods. However, the longest and strictest one is that of Great and Holy Lent. During this fasting period we abstain from all meat, fish and dairy products. Those who wish may even abstain from oil except on Saturdays and Sundays. The only Saturday throughout the entire year that we abstain from oil is on Great and Holy Saturday. On **no** Sunday of the year do we abstain from oil.

Abstaining from certain food groups during Great Lent must also be accompanied with the spiritual fast. Both the physical and spiritual fast together with prayer and the reading of the Scriptures are essential in preparing one for the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ.

Lent which lasts for 40 days, commenced on Clean Monday (7 March) and will officially conclude on the Friday before the Saturday of Lazarus (15 April). Although Lent officially ends on this day we still continue fasting on the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday. However on Palm Sunday fish is allowed.

Following Palm Sunday, we immediately enter another period of fasting – that of Great and Holy Week. This week prepares us for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now one may ask: so why did the Church decide to allocate 40 days for the Lenten fast? The first reason is since various 40 day periods of fasting appear in the Scriptures. For example Moses fasted 40 days prior to receiving the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 9:9), Elijah fasted forty days before speaking with God (3 Kings 19:8) and Jesus fasted for forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11).

Also in the Old Testament the tithe was a requirement of the law in which all Israelites were to give 10 percent of everything they earned to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30). We today dedicate to the Lord approximately 10 percent of our entire year. From the 365 days in the year, 40 days are dedicated to our Lord.

Fasting should never be underestimated. It is through fasting and prayer that one is able to receive divine gifts from above. Christ Himself speaks about fasting in the Gospel when He says, “this kind (evil spirits) cannot come out (expelled) by nothing but **prayer and fasting**” (Mark 9:29). These words

are enough to show us the immense power that prayer and fasting have on our spiritual life.

The Lenten Period is a time of mourning as we are preparing for the death of Christ. When one is mourning and is grieving the loss of appetite is a natural reaction and fasting is considered appropriate at these times. For example in the Old Testament King David fasted when he mourned for Abner who was murdered (2 Samuel 3:35) and there was a seven day fast at the death of Saul (1 Samuel 31:13). Since the entire Lenten Period is a period of mourning this means that we fast for the entire Lenten Period. **The idea of fasting the first and last week prior to Easter is a man made up rule and was never introduced by the church.** The church has always taught us that the strict Easter fast commences on Clean Monday and concludes on Easter Sunday.

The reason to why the church has introduced fasting into our lives is since fasting is a type of *ascesis* (the exercise of self discipline). Through fasting we learn to say **NO** to the various food cravings that we may have. Hopefully this will then help us in saying **NO** to the various temptations confronted by us throughout our daily lives by the tempter. However, we need to emphasise here that, if we manage to abstain from certain food groups for 40 days without putting up a spiritual fight against sin then we have in reality achieved nothing.

Now many ask, “Why on strict fasting days like Great and Holy Friday or Holy Saturday can we eat olives but not olive oil?” To answer this question we need to look at the proper meaning of fasting. We abstain from oil not because it will pollute us spiritually but because by using oil we can prepare a number of delicious fasting dishes. However with olives you cannot do much with them apart from consuming them as they are. Thus the consumption of olives alone restricts the types of meals that we can have which in turn increases the level of *ascesis*. The same logic exists behind the reason to why we can consume caviar when fasting but not fish.

Fasting has always expressed our contrition and repentance towards God. When Jonah predicted the downfall of Nineveh, the Ninevites (including their livestock as well) fasted as a sign of repentance in hope that God would spare their city (Jonah 3:3-9). When the Israelites sinned they would fast in the hope of obtaining God’s mercy (1 Samuel 7:6). Thus for this reason the church has, in all her wisdom, decided that a strict fast accompany the period of Great and Holy Lent since over the next few weeks we are all asked to repent and prepare ourselves for the death and Resurrection of Christ.

Also by fasting during Great Lent this means that we are being obedient to God’s commandments. The first commandment given to Adam and Eve in

Paradise was a commandment relating to fasting. Fasting is seen as useful for humbling oneself since by abstaining from certain food groups this shows that we are listening to what Christ and His church is telling us. When we have humility and are obedient to God's commandments then true repentance will follow. It is for this reason that the church has allocated fasting periods prior to the celebration of major feast days throughout the year such as Easter, Christmas and the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Another important point relating to fasting is that of unity. Many Orthodox Christians around the world have commenced the Lenten Fast. This shows the unity that exists amongst these Orthodox Christians. All these people are fasting for the same reason.

Finally, when we abstain from certain food groups during Lent it is not because these food types cause spiritual pollution. Nothing that God created is polluted. That which pollutes the soul is the evil that comes from within our hearts. Thus keeping this in mind we need to realise that the purpose of fasting are for the reasons outlined above and not because by eating will our souls be polluted. In addition, those who are sick or are expecting need not follow the strict rules of the Lenten fast.

I wish everyone a Blessed and Holy Lenten Period.

(Above information taken from a Greek article relating to fasting that appeared at <http://romfea.gr/>)

Greek National Day

Sunday 27 March

***Official Doxology at the Church of
Sts. Constantine and Helene at 10.15am followed by the
Wreath Laying Ceremony at the
State War Memorial (Kings Park) at 12.30pm***

The Ordination of His Grace Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis

On Sunday 20 February I was fortunate enough to partake in the Divine Liturgy that took place at our Cathedral in Redfern (Sydney) together with 8 other priests from around Australia, two deacons and our 3 Assistant Bishops. Presiding at this historical service was His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos.

The faithful had filled the cathedral by 7am. A tent was set up outside the cathedral with a large screen in order to cater for the faithful who could not fit inside the church but still wished to see the service from the outside. People had arrived at the Cathedral from all over Australia to be present at the ordination service of the first Australian-born bishop of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Bishop Iakovos, the name of the newly ordained Bishop, grew up in Sydney and is a graduate of St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College. Bishop Iakovos has now become the new Assistant Bishop to His Eminence together with Bishops Ezekiel (Melbourne), Seraphim (Sydney) and Nikandros (Adelaide).

Although the Sunday of the Ordination marked the second week of the Triodion cycle, it actually felt as if it was Pentecost Sunday. The reason for this is since when a Bishop is being ordained the service is similar to that of Pentecost. The dismissal hymn of Pentecost is chanted on this day for the Holy Spirit descends upon the newly elected bishop as it did upon the Holy Apostles on Pentecost Sunday.

At the ordination service, His Eminence emphasised how the newly ordained bishop will always be affiliated with His Eminence because the title that Bishop Iakovos received was Bishop of Miletoupolis, the exact same title that His Eminence had received prior to becoming Archbishop of Australia in April of 1975.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy His Eminence handed over to Bishop Iakovos the Mitre (Crown) which symbolizes the glory of the Lord and the highest ecclesiastical authority which is given to a Bishop. His Eminence then handed over to the newly ordained Bishop the Pastoral Staff which is topped by two serpents with a cross in the centre. This is a sign of the Bishop's authority. The serpents represent the visible and invisible enemies of the Church and the Cross symbolizes the power which Christ has granted to the Church and is entrusted to the Bishop (source GOAA).

Let us all keep His Grace Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis in our prayers so that he can constantly preach the word of truth.

Fr Elpidios



Source: fineartamerica.com/featured/virgin-mary-with-...

**Salutation Services to the Theotokos
Every Friday Evening During
Great and Holy Lent
6.30pm – 7.30pm**

**Orthodox Easter
Sunday
24 April 2011**

Church Brunch

On Meat-Fare Sunday (27 February) the parish of Sts. Constantine and Helene held a church brunch following the Divine Liturgy. Approximately \$3325 was raised and we would like to thank the following people who supported our function:

- Anonymous family for donating the meat
- Tony & Merrill Kostarelas for donating the Orange Juice and Milk
- Kakulas Brothers for donating the cheese and olives
- John Metaxas for donating the fruit
- Prokopi Koutlis for cooking the meat
- All the ladies who helped out on the day in the kitchen

STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELENE

SUNDAY SCHOOL

TIME: 10.00 – 11.00AM

(In the classroom adjacent to Fr Elpidios' office)

Classes taken by Qualified Teachers

All Children Welcome to attend

Sunday School Announcement

Are you a teacher or teacher assistant? There are many in our Greek community and our Sunday School team is always looking for new and enthusiastic recruits! Commitment is not extensive. At times teaching/assisting is only once or twice a term.

If you are interested or want to learn more about what's involved email Fr. Elpidios at p.karalis@bigpond.com.

PARISH NEWS

Infant Baptisms

The following parents recently christened their children at the church of Sts. Constantine and Helene:

Kane Baker and Melina (nee) Toutountzis. The child received the name Antonia. The godmother was Ekaterina Toutountzis.

Robert Gambitta and Pelagia (nee) Kouroulis. The child received the name Ioannis. The godfather was Theodore Kouroulis.

Milton Gartrell and Konstantina (nee) Kalimeris. The child received the name Troadios. The godfather was Anastasios Arima.

Toby Bird and Dimitra (nee) Ventouras. The child received the name Alexandra. The godfather was Telemahos Ventouras.

Panayotis Tzavellas and Shannon (nee) Martin. The child received the name Kalan. The godfather was Aristoteli Moschopoulos.

Alexander Novatsis and Julia (nee) Gavalas. The child received the name Kyriakos. The godmother was Zoe Sarris.

Anastassis Liveris and Claire (nee) Wyatt. The child received the name Andreas. The godfather was Manuel Liveris.

Graeme Doran and Elli (nee) Bouloudas. The child received the name Dimitrios. The godmother was Aphroditi Bolzonella.

Adult Baptisms

Congratulations to Anji Mollison who recently was baptised in the Greek Orthodox Church. Anji received the name Angeliki. The godmother was Eleni Poulis.

Congratulations to Claire Wyatt who was recently baptised in the Greek Orthodox Church. Claire received the name Ekaterina. The godmother was Flora Liveris.

Marriages

The following newly weds were recently married at the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helene:

- Mark Fernie and Alexandra (nee) Andronis. The *Koumbara* was Katerina Andronis.
- Bill Athans and Sarah (nee) Anderson. The bestman was Dimitrios Kassinas.
- Con Poulios and Anji (nee) Mollison. The bestman was Angelo Doudakis.
- Anastassis Liveris and Claire (nee) Wyatt. The bestman was Manuel Liveris.
- Scott Reilly and Aliko (nee) Hatsiyiannakis. The bestman was Paraskeva Hatsiyiannakis.
- Spiro Mallis and Birgit (nee) Clark. The bestman was Nickolas Geronimos.

Funerals

Our deepest sympathy to the families of the following people who recently reposed in the Lord:

- Fani Millios aged 85
- Irini Stratikis aged 89

The Sunday of Orthodoxy

This Sunday (13 March) commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ (and other icons) around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all".

(Source: http://lent.goarch.org/articles/lent_week_by_week.asp)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Announcement

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, His Grace Bishop Nikandros of Doryleou will be making a pastoral visit to Perth. The programme of His Grace is as follows:

Sunday 20 March: Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helene. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy His Grace will confer the title of Archimandrite upon Fr Elpidios.

Thursday 24 March: Great Vespers Service commencing at **6.30pm** at the Church of Evangelismos for the feast of the Annunciation.

Friday 25 March (AM): Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the church of Evangelismos. His Grace will be assisted by all the clergy of Perth.

Friday 25 March (PM): 3rd Salutations Service at the church of St. Nektarios commencing at **7pm**.

Ἅγιος Νεκτάριος - Διδαχές Διάκριση

Σᾶς συνιστᾶ νὰ ἔχετε σὲ ὅλα διάκριση καὶ φρόνηση. Ν' ἀποφεύγετε τὰ ἄκρα. Οἱ αὐστηρότητες συμβαδίζουν μὲ τὰ μέτρα τῆς ἀρετῆς. Αὐτὸς ποὺ δὲν ἔχει μεγάλες ἀρετὲς καὶ συναγωνίζεται μὲ τοὺς τέλειους, θέλοντας νὰ ζεῖ μὲ αὐστηρότητα, ὅπως οἱ ἅγιοι ἀσκητές, αὐτὸς κινδυνεύει νὰ ὑπερηφανευθεῖ καὶ νὰ πέσει. Γι' αὐτὸ νὰ πορεύεσθε μὲ διάκριση καὶ νὰ μὴν ἐξαντλεῖτε τὸ σῶμα μὲ ὑπέρμετρος κόπους. Νὰ θυμάστε πὼς ἡ ἄσκηση τοῦ σώματος ἀπλῶς βοηθᾷ τὴν ψυχὴ νὰ φτάσει στὴν τελειότητα, ἢ τελειότητα κατορθώνεται κυρίως μὲ τὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς ψυχῆς.

Μὴν τεντώνετε περισσότερο ἀπὸ τὸ μέτρο τὴ χορδὴ. Νὰ ξέρετε ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς δὲν ἐκβιάζεται στίς δωρεές Του δίνει, ὅταν αὐτὸς θέλει. Ὅ,τι · παίρνομε, τὸ παίρνομε δωρεὰν ἀπὸ τὸ θεῖο ἔλεος.

Μὴ ζητᾶτε νὰ φτάσετε ψηλὰ μὲ μεγάλες ἀσκήσεις χωρὶς νὰ ἔχετε ἀρετὲς, γιὰτὶ κινδυνεύετε νὰ πέσετε σὲ πλάνη γιὰ τὴν ἔπαρση καὶ τὴν τόλμη σας. Ὅποιος ἐπιζητεῖ θεῖα χαρίσματα καὶ ὑψηλὲς θεωρίες, ἐνῶ εἶναι ἀκόμα φορτωμένος μὲ πάθη, αὐτὸς, σὰν ἀνόητος καὶ ὑπερήφανος, πλανιέται. Πρῶτα ἀπ' ὅλα ὀφείλει ν' ἀγωνιστεῖ γιὰ τὴν κάθαρσίν του. Ἡ θεῖα χάρις στέλνει τὰ χαρίσματα σὰν ἀμοιβὴ σ' ὅσους ἔχουν καθαριστεῖ ἀπὸ τὰ πάθη. Τοὺς ἐπισκέπτεται χωρὶς θόρυβο καὶ σὲ ὥρα ποὺ δὲν γνωρίζουν.

(Πηγὴ: <http://www.prophet-elias.com/ελληνικά/>)