

The Complete Rule for the Lenten Fast *

Abstain from:

Meat (*beef, pork, lamb, fowl*)

Animal (*products (eggs, cheese, milk, butter, honey)*)

Fish (*shellfish is permitted*)

Wine (*includes all alcoholic beverages*)

Oil

(It is understood that this rule of fasting must be lessened for pregnant women, the elderly, children, those who are ill and those who for any other reason are physically unable to keep the full fast. Also, many Orthodox Christians find the complete fasting rule too strenuous. While the complete rule remains the benchmark, there are various ways to adapt it to one's abilities. This guidance in this area can be obtained by talking with your priest or spiritual father. The spiritual purposes of the fast are always paramount. The remembrance of God and the subduing of passions).

Week before Lent: In the week before Lent, fast from meat, but animal products are permitted on Wednesday and Friday.

1st Week in Lent:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in the first week are total fast days. (If this is not strictly observed, it is suggested that we attempt to make the fast stricter in the 1st week). On Wednesday and Friday in the first week, one meal is permitted after the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. (Since we do not have the Presanctified Liturgy in our parish on Fridays, some may wish to lessen the fast of this first week on Thursday and Friday).

2nd-6th Week in Lent: On the other weekdays in Lent, one meal is permitted. On Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, oil and wine are permitted and two meals are eaten.

Holy Week: On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Holy Week, one meal is permitted after the Liturgy. On Thursday in Holy Week one meal is permitted after the Liturgy (usually a simple and quiet meal). Friday and Saturday in Holy Week are total fast days, with a light, fasting meal of wine, bread and fruit permitted after the Liturgy on Holy Saturday.

Feast Days: On the Feast of the Annunciation (*March 25*) and on Palm Sunday, fish, wine and oil are permitted. On March 9 (*40 Martyrs of Sebaste*), March 24 & 26, wine & oil are allowed.

Bright Week and Easter Season: There is no fasting during Bright Week. During the season from Easter to Ascension, according to the tradition of the Church of Antioch, no fasting is prescribed — after Ascension, Wednesday & Friday fasts resume but wine and oil are allowed. There is no fasting during the week following Pentecost. Following this the “Apostle’s Fast” begins.

Articles on the purpose of fasting may be found online at Antiochian.org/discover/feasts

