

THE CHRISTMAS FAST - AN OUTLINE

November 15 - December 24

DAYS	THE HOLY CANONS SPECIFY THE FOLLOWING:	
Sunday Monday Tuesday Thursday Saturday	<u>Abstinence of:</u> Meat & Meat products Dairy products	<u>No Abstinence of:</u> Fish Shellfish Olive Oil Vegetables & vegetable products Fruit Wine
Wednesday Friday	Orthodox Christians maintain the same fast & abstinence on these days as they do on all Wednesdays, Fridays, and other days of Fast.	

Note: During the Christmas Fast, from Dec. 13 to Dec. 24 inclusive, the Fast becomes stricter, and olive oil and wine are permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays. Also, fish is not permitted on any day during this period.

Even when the following commemorations fall on a Wednesday or Friday, wine and oil are permitted:

- November 16 - Holy Apostle Matthew the Evangelist
- November 21 - Entry of the Theotokos - fish is also permitted on this day.
- November 25 - St. Catherine the Great Martyr
- November 30 - Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called
- December 4 - St. Barbara the Great Martyr and St. John of Damascus
- December 5 - St. Sabbas the Sanctified
- December 6 - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Bishop of Myra in Lycia
- December 9 - Conception by St. Anna of the Holy Theotokos
- December 12 - St. Spyridon the Wonderworker
- December 13 - St. Eustratius and Companions, and St. Lucia
- December 15 - St. Eleutherius the Bishop-Martyr
- December 17 - Holy Prophet Daniel & the Three Youths, and St. Dyonysius of Zante
- December 20 - St. Ignatius the God-bearer

Note: December 24 is a day of strict fast.
 There is no fasting from December 25 through January 4.
 January 5 is a day of strict fast (day before Theophany).

(OVER)

FASTING PRIOR TO RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION
(Throughout the year)

Sunday Morning Divine Liturgy	Complete fast from all food and drink from bedtime or midnight on Saturday evening. Saturday evening should be a quiet time of prayer and preparation for communion.
Evening Liturgies	Complete fast from all food and drink after lunch. Any (very light) breakfast or lunch meal taken should include only fasting foods.

Note: It is assumed that those who desire to receive Holy Communion regularly and frequently will also keep the Wednesday and Friday discipline.

A Note from Bishop Thomas:

Please remember that the Fast of the Holy Nativity or the Advent Fast will commence on November 15, and continue until the Feast (December 25). This fasting period is ordained by the Holy Church in order to prepare for the Holy Nativity of Our Lord. The particulars of the fast are as follows: During the first 28 days of the Fast, from November 15 to December 13 all meat products and dairy products are forbidden. On Wednesdays and Fridays, of course, olive oil, wine, all alcoholic beverages and fish are also forbidden as on most Wednesdays and Fridays during the year. This means that one can eat fish, shell fish, vegetables and fruit during this time. On Wednesdays and Fridays, only shellfish, vegetables and fruit. During the last twelve days, December 13-24, fish, olive oil, wine, and all alcoholic beverages are not used at all, except oil and wine can be used on Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, in the last twelve days, we may eat shellfish, vegetables and fruit. Please remember to increase your prayer life, read more scripture and spiritual books, especially the lives of the saints. A little less television, no anger, no gossip, no laziness, and let's try to avoid the pre-Christmas parties. If we prepare in this way, God will bless us and we will find the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord to be far more spiritually rewarding than ever before. May God help us to struggle courageously.

Thank you.

Yours in Christ,

+Bishop THOMAS