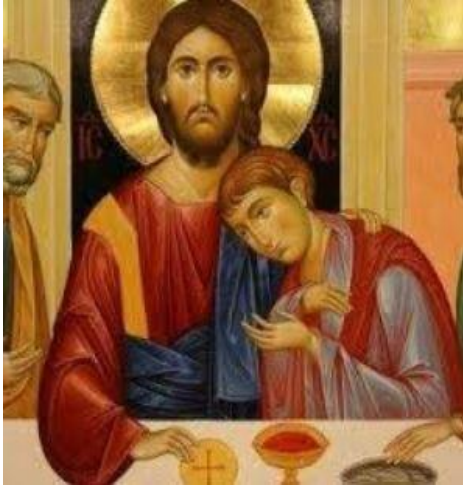


FASTING GUIDELINES



The Lenten Fast rules that we observe today were established within the monasteries of the Orthodox Church during the sixth through eleventh centuries. These rules are intended for all Orthodox Christians, not just monks and nuns.

The **first week of Lent** is especially strict. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, a total fast is kept. In practice, very few people are able to do this. Some find it necessary to eat a little each day after sunset. Many Faithful do fast completely on Monday and then eat only uncooked food (bread, fruit, nuts) on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, the fast is kept until after the Presanctified Liturgy.

From the **second through the sixth weeks of Lent**, the general rules for fasting are practiced. Meat, animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard), fish (meaning fish with backbones), olive oil and wine (all alcoholic drinks) are not consumed during the weekdays of Great Lent. Octopus and shell-fish are allowed, as is vegetable oil. On weekends, olive oil and wine are permitted.

According to what was done in the monasteries, one meal a day is eaten on weekdays and two meals on weekends of Great Lent. No restriction is placed on the amount of food during the meal, though moderation is always encouraged in all areas of one's life at all times.

Fish, oil and wine are allowed on the *Feast of the Annunciation* (March 25) and on *Palm Sunday* (one week before Easter). On other feast days, such as the First and Second *Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist* (February 24), the *Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (March 9), the *Forefeast of the Annunciation* (March 24) and the *Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel* (March 26), wine and oil are permitted.

For additional information about fasting, visit [[fasting](#)].