

Fasting & Abstinence

Orthodox churches of the Western Rite adhere to the discipline of fasting and abstinence according to the Latin tradition. Holy Incarnation Orthodox Church follows the prescriptions for this fast as directed in the annual Ordo of the Western Rite Vicariate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

FASTING consists in eating but one full meal in a day, and that not before noon. A collation, or about one-fourth of a meal, is allowed in the evening. While all communicants and catechumens are asked to fast, those between the ages of 21 and 60 are obligated to observe the fasts of the Church, unless exempted for some legitimate reason.

ABSTINENCE refers to refraining from flesh meat (pork, beef, chicken, etc.) and the juice or broth thereof (soup, etc.) Eggs, milk, or its products, or seasoning, are not forbidden in the Latin tradition. All who have completed the seventh year of age are bound by the law of abstinence.

- The law of abstinence without fasting is to be observed on all Fridays throughout the year.
- The law of fasting without abstinence is observed on all Wednesdays in Advent and all weekdays in Lent (excepting Fridays).
- Both fasting and abstinence must be observed on
 - Ash Wednesday
 - Fridays of Lent
 - Ember Days (specified quarterly Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays)
 - Vigil of Pentecost
 - Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - Vigil of All Saints
 - Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord
- The observance of Lenten fasting and abstinence ceases at midnight on Holy Saturday.
- Fasting and abstinence is not binding on all Sundays (even within Lent) and certain Major Holy Days (unless they fall in Lent).
- Major Holy Days exempt from fasting and abstinence (if outside Lent) are
 - Circumcision of Our Lord (1 January)
 - Epiphany of Our Lord (6 January)
 - St. Joseph (19 March)
 - Ascension of Our Lord
 - Corpus Christi
 - Ss. Peter & Paul (29 June)
 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August)
 - All Saints (1 November)
 - Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 December)
 - Nativity of Our Lord (25 December)

Those who desire to imitate more austere fasting practices, such as those of the Byzantine Rite, should do so only after consulting with their Father Confessor.