

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE SECOND WEEK OF THE GREAT & HOLY FAST

Monday

Morning

Genesis 35: 1 – 5
2 Samuel 16: 5 – 12
Hosea 2: 21 – 3: 5
St. James 4: 7 – 5: 6
1 Timothy 2: 1 – 15
St. Luke 6: 27 – 36

Tuesday

Evening

St. Luke 6: 37 – 49

Morning

Exodus 16: 15 – 27
Acts of the Apostles 10: 25 – 33
2 Corinthians 6: 1 – 11
St. Mark 4: 21 – 34

Wednesday

Evening

St. Matthew 18: 1 – 11

Morning

Exodus 34: 1 – 17
Proverbs 7: 1 – 11
Zechariah 8: 1 – 8
3 John 1 – 15
1 Corinthians 8: 1 – 13
St. Luke 11: 1 – 13

Thursday

Evening

St. Luke 16: 1 – 13

Morning

Numbers 16: 1 – 10
Isaiah 22: 20 – 25
Acts of the Apostles 10: 34 – 48
1 Corinthians 9: 1 – 12
St. Luke 18: 1 – 8
St. Matthew 18: 18 – 22

Friday

Evening

St. Luke 16: 13 – 28

Morning

Exodus 21: 20 – 27
Job 25: 1 – 6
Acts of the Apostles 11: 1 – 18
Romans 1: 16 – 25
St. Matthew 5: 38 – 48

Saturday

Evening

St. Matthew 10: 24 – 39

Morning

St. John 15: 17 – 6: 3

Holy Qurbana

Deuteronomy 30: 1 – 7
Isaiah 35: 1 – 10
Acts of the Apostles 13: 37 – 52
2 Corinthians 8: 1 – 9
St. Mark 1: 21 – 31

Abridged from the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom
“ON FASTING” – PART 2

For there exist, there really exist, ways which are even more important than abstinence from food which can open the gates which lead to God with boldness. He, therefore, who eats and cannot fast, let him display richer almsgiving, let him pray more, let him have a more intense desire to hear divine words. In this, our somatic illness is not a hindrance.

Let him become reconciled with his enemies, let him distance from his soul every resentment. If he wants to accomplish these things, then he has done the true fast, which is what the Lord asks of us more than anything else. It is for this reason that he asks us to abstain from food, in order to place the flesh in subjection to the fulfillment of his commandments, whereby curbing its impetuosity.

But if we are not about to offer to ourselves the help rendered by the fast because of bodily illness and at the same time display greater indifference, we will see ourselves in an unusual exaggerated way. For if the fast does not help us when all the aforementioned accomplishments are missing so much is the case when we display greater indifference because we cannot even use the medicine of fasting.

Since you have learned these things from us, I pardon you, those who can, fast and you yourselves increase your acuteness and praiseworthy desire as much as possible.

To the brothers, though, who cannot fast because of bodily illness, encourage them not to abandon this spiritual word, teaching them and passing on to them all the things we say here, showing them that he who eats and drinks with moderation is not unworthy to hear these things but he who is indifferent and slack.

You should tell them the bold and daring saying that "he who eats for the glory of the Lord eats and he who does not eat for the glory of the Lord does not eat and pleases God." For he who fasts pleases God because he has the strength to endure the fatigue of the fast and he that eats also pleases God because nothing of this sort can harm the salvation of his soul, as long as he does not want it to. Because our philanthropic God showed us so many ways by which we can, if we desire, take part in God's power that it is impossible to mention them all.

We have said enough about those who are missing, being that we want to eliminate them from the excuse of shame. For they should not be ashamed because food does not bring on shame but the act of some wrongdoing. Sin is a great shame. If we commit it not only should we feel ashamed but we should cover ourselves exactly the same way those who are wounded do. Even then we should not forsake ourselves but rush to confession and thanksgiving.

We have such a Lord who asks nothing of us but to confess our sins, after the commitment of a sin which was due to our indifference, and to stop at that point and not to fall into the same one again. If we eat with moderation we should never be ashamed, because the Creator gave us such a body which cannot be supported in any other way except by receiving food. Let us only stop excessive food because that attributes a great deal to the health and well-being of the body.

Let us therefore in every way cast off every destructive madness so that we may gain the goods which have been promised to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.