

A PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM FATHER PETER

LENT - 2014

LENTEN SEASON BEGINS ON MONDAY, MARCH THE 3RD

Some one some time ago wrote that " lent is a time of "house cleaning " - a cleaning away of the dust in your interior house,, a rearranging of our mental furniture, discarding outworn ideas and manners, polishing the windows through which you look at yourself and your neighbors - in general, transforming the whole place.

If we stop and reflect on the above, we realize that it is very true. During the period of Great Lent, or the Great Fast, as it is some-time called , we do perform a sort of " spring cleaning " on our inner beings. We stop our normal activities, in order to take a spiritual inventory... a type of self-examination. As is to be expected in any inventory, our surpluses and our shortages will show up. Hopefully, our inventory shows that we have had an increase in spirituality. If so, be glad, and give thanks to God.

Unfortunately, however, usually, we see a shortage in the area of spiritual growth. Thus we receive a good lesson in humility. We see that here is a lot of room left for improvement. For this reason, Lent is a most appropriate time to be honest with ourselves and to undertake a " spiritual renovation".

One of the many means of improving ourselves is through fasting. Fasting is not simply the act of not eating certain foods; it is the abstinence from foods and sinful acts. Many people will tell you that there is no sense of fasting. However, the long history of the Church proves otherwise. Both saints and sinners have recognized the value and the necessity of fasting. In fact, the perfect man, Christ Himself, fasted. With this in mind, certainly, we, who are of a lesser quality than our Creator, are ignoring an

important spiritual exercise and a weapon against evil, if we ignore fasting. A person who can not control his stomach cannot control the evil passions and urges that attack, constantly.

Lent is also a time of worship It is that in prayer we find strength.It is in Holy Communion that our identity as Christians is found, that we become one with Christ and all those who receive His Body and Blood. For this reason, the Church developed the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts, which allows the faithful to receive Holy Communion, not just on Sundays during the Divine Liturgy, but also on

the week days during Lent, during which the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated on weekdays, with the exception of the Feast Day of the Annunciation. Also, during the Great Lent, the Church has other services for us. The best known is the XAI PETISMOI, or the SALUTATIONS TO THE VIRGIN MARY., which are held on Friday evenings. Also, there is the Service of the Great Compline. Each of these services give us the chance to escape the world, and , for few

minutes, to reach the heavens. These services allow us to speak to God, and for God to listen and speak to us, as is the case with prayer, always.

Take little time out of your daily busy life and speak to God. Check over your spiritual inventory, and make the necessary adjustments, and may your journey through this lenten season be a blessed one.

Fr. Peter

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SALUTATIONS TO THE VIRGIN MARY - XAI PETISMOI

Every Friday evening during March 6:00 p.m.

