Why do we fast?

We must say first of all, we fast in imitation of Christ. Fasting was used by Our Lord during the time of His spiritual struggle against the Enemy before He began His public ministry. And we, engaged in the same struggle, are offered this powerful weapon.

We can say that we fast because it is part of our tradition. This Tradition is not a mere collection of practices and customs. It is the life-giving fountain of our Faith which includes the Holy Scriptures, the Sacred Mysteries, the Creed and Councils, the teachings of the Fathers. In other words, it is the heritage of the faithful who continue that community of discipleship first formed by Our Lord. If we take our faith and our heritage seriously, we must include this practice of physical self-denial which was recommended and commanded by the Church Bishops in every age. It is given to us not as a punishment or a mere "practice," but as a tool. And the use of this tool is to assist us to gain self-mastery over our passions. And by this self-mastery, with God's help, we gain freedom. The Nativity fast in our Melkite Church starts on December 10th and continues to December 24th, concluding with the Divine Liturgy. This Fast prepares us to clean and ready ourselves to enter the Mystery of the Incarnation and accept Christ in our lives.

I would like to thank Munira Gharib and Ibtisam Ishak for their continued service in offering the Holy Bread for Communion and for the Antideron respectively. May God bless you both and may He repay you a hundred fold.

There is a sign-up poster in the hall for different maintenance jobs that need to be done around the church. Unfortunately, very few of you signed-up to offer to help. We will have two "Work Days" next Friday, December 9, and Saturday, December 10, 2011 which will also include the Christmas Decoration around the church and hall. I urge you to come and be involved in your church. The work will start both days at 7am until the work is done. Please sign your name on the poster in the hall today, or just show-up on any of these days. Thank you.

I would like to thank the anonymous person who donates money to have professional cleaners come and clean our church. Without the financial help of many of you the church could not be managed and maintained. May our Lord bless you and your families with health and happiness.

We have been invaded by a large amount of termites. The company that treats the property proposed a treatment that will cost $3150 and will require two days to complete. They guaranty that this will take care of the problem. We have secured two other bids by other companies who came higher than the our actual company. However, they all came up with the same treatment for the problem. If we do not treat the entire building we risk damaging the icons on the walls and this will be a very expensive problem. I am asking all of you who can help financially to see me since we really do not have funds to cover these emergencies.

Do not forget the hungry! (Collection Basket at the door)

DECEMBER 4, 2011

10TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS - CRIPPLED WOMAN

FEAST OF THE HOLY MARTYR BARBARA

LK 13:10-17 | **EPH 4:1-7** | **TONE 8**

St. John of the Desert Calendar

Saturday, December 10	*7:00 am*	*Work day to clean and decorate the Church and Hall*
Sunday, December 11	*9:00 am*	*Children Religious Education*
	10:20 am	*Doxology*
	10:30 am	*Divine Liturgy Followed by the Social Hour*
		(+) Nellie O'Connor
Saturday, December 17	*5:00 pm*	*Vespers followed by the PPC Meeting*
Sunday, December 18	*9:00 am*	*Children Religious Education*
	10:20 am	*Doxology*
	10:30 am	*Divine Liturgy Followed by the Social Hour*
Wednesday, December 21	*7:00 pm*	*Penance Service at St. Joseph*
Saturday, December 24	*7:00 pm*	*Carols and Children's Nativity Pageant*
	8:00 pm	*Nativity of our Lord Divine Liturgy - Followed by light reception*
Sunday, December 25	*10:30 am*	*Nativity of our Lord Divine Liturgy*

Today's Intentions:

- For the Health and Salvation of Bo Bolinaga
- For the Health and Salvation of Michelle Barbara by Arlette Khouzam
- For the Health and Salvation of Nadia Demian by Kh. Simone
- For the Repose of the Soul of Gloria Herro
- For the Repose of the Soul of Nellie O'Connor by Paul & Shirley Davis
- For a Special Intention

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Eric Rimmer, Mary Kostisak, Andre and Osama Eid, Lynn Hume, Linda Herro, Kafa Dababneh, Camille Holt, Refga Sayegh, Bo Bolinaga, Pauline Hamra and Nadia Demian.

Come, plunge and swim in the Deep Water of the Liturgy

I would like to thank Dcn. Marion and Zyad Abyad for their presentation of the Divine Liturgy. They both did a tremendous job of explaining the different parts of the Divine Liturgy, what we do and why we do it and how we do it. They enlightened us on so many things we do without really knowing why and where the tradition came from. I would also like to thank all the people who came to listen and learn and ask questions. Unfortunately, the majority of the parishioners were not present and missed the opportunity of learning proper ways of participating in the Divine Liturgy.

THE BISHOP'S APPEAL: Our beloved Saint Nicholas whose feast we celebrate with joy is the Patron Saint of charity and the inspiration for all images of Father Christmas and Santa Claus throughout the world. St. Nicholas is also the Patron of our Eparchy! Let us imitate his loving generosity by making a special gift to the Bishop's Appeal for the support of our Melkite Eparchy. Please give an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church in America and help produce SOPHIA magazine, assist in faith formation and spiritual renewal, support the training of new priests and deacons, help expand our missions and start new ones, give support to our elderly priests. Please give generously so that all these vital works can continue and grow. May God bless you for your generosity.