

# SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF THE GREAT & HOLY FAST

## Monday

### *Morning*

Genesis 1: 1 – 12  
Wisdom 7: 7 – 24  
Isaiah 29: 15 – 24  
St. James 1: 2 – 12  
Romans 1: 18 – 25  
St. Mathew 4: 1 – 11

### *Noon (Service of Reconciliation)*

1 John 4: 11 – 20  
1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 13  
St. Mathew 18: 18 – 35

## Tuesday

### *Evening*

St. Luke 4: 1 – 13

### *Morning*

Exodus 32: 30 – 35  
Isaiah 30: 1 – 4  
Hosea 14: 1 – 9  
St. James 1: 12 – 27  
Ephesians 4: 32 – 5: 21  
St. Mathew 6: 1 – 6

## Wednesday

### *Evening*

St. Mathew 6: 19 – 24

### *Morning*

Genesis 1: 14 – 18  
Isaiah 13: 6 – 13  
James 2: 1 – 13  
Romans 2: 7 – 24  
St. Mathew 6: 25 – 34

## Thursday

### *Evening*

St. Mathew 7: 1 – 12

### *Morning*

Exodus 22: 5 – 6  
1 Kings 18: 16 – 24  
2 Kings 17: 7 – 23  
Isaiah 36: 1 – 7; 37: 1 – 7  
St. James 2: 14 – 26  
Romans 2: 28 – 3: 6  
St. Mathew 7: 13 – 27

## Friday

### *Evening*

St. Mathew 5: 17 – 26

### *Morning*

Deuteronomy 6: 1 – 13  
Ezekiel 18: 21 – 32  
Hosea 4: 1 – 11  
Isaiah 1: 1 – 9  
St. James 3: 13 – 4: 5  
Romans 3: 9 – 26  
St. Mathew 5: 27 – 37

## Saturday

*Feast of Sts. Ephrem & Theodore*

### *Evening*

St. Mathew 10: 24 – 39

### *Morning*

St. John 15: 17 – 6: 3

### *Holy Qurbana*

Genesis 2: 4 – 17  
Zachariah 7: 8 – 14  
Isaiah 1: 24 – 31  
Acts of Apostles 12: 1 – 24  
Romans 12: 10 – 21  
St. John 4: 46 – 56

**Abridged from the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom**  
**“ON FASTING” – PART 1**

Fasting is a medicine. But medicine, as beneficial as it is, becomes useless because of the inexperience of the user. He has to know the appropriate time that the medicine should be taken and the right amount of medicine and the condition of the body which is to take it, the weather conditions and the season of the year and the appropriate diet of the sick and many other things. If any of these things are overlooked, the medicine will do more harm than good. So, if one who is going to heal the body needs so much accuracy, when we care for the soul and are concerned about healing it from bad thoughts, it is necessary to examine and observe everything with every possible detail.

Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins. Therefore, whoever limits the fast to the deprivation of food, he is the one who, in reality, abhors and ridicules the fast. Are you fasting? Show me your fast with your works. Which works? If you see someone who is poor, show him mercy. If you see an enemy, reconcile with him. If you see a friend who is becoming successful, do not be jealous of him! If you see a beautiful woman on the street, pass her by.

In other words, not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well. Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness. Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others. You are not eating meat, are you? You should not eat debauchery with your eyes as well. Let your hearing also fast. The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations.

Let the mouth fast from disgraceful and abusive words, because, what gain is there when, on the one hand we avoid eating chicken and fish and, on the other, we chew-up and consume our brothers? He who condemns and blasphemes is as if he has eaten brotherly meat, as if he has bitten into the flesh of his fellow man. It is because of this that Paul frightened us, saying: "If you chew up and consume one another be careful that you do not annihilate yourselves."

You did not thrust your teeth into the flesh (of your neighbor) but you forced bad talk in his soul; you wounded it by spreading lies, causing great damage both to yourself, to him, and to many others.

If you cannot go without eating all day because of an ailment of the body, beloved one, no logical man will be able to criticize you for that. Besides, we have a Lord who is meek and loving and who does not ask for anything beyond our power. Because he neither requires the abstinence from foods, neither that the fast take place for the simple sake of fasting, neither is its aim that we remain with empty stomachs, but that we fast to offer our entire selves to the dedication of spiritual things, having distanced ourselves from secular things.

If we regulated our life with a sober mind and directed all of our interest toward spiritual things, and if we ate as much as we needed to satisfy our necessary needs and offered our entire lives to good works, we would not have any need of the help rendered by the fast. But because human nature is indifferent and gives itself over mostly to comforts and gratifications, for this reason the philanthropic Lord, like a loving and caring father, devised the therapy of the fast for us, so that our gratifications would be completely stopped and that our worldly cares be transferred to spiritual works.

So, if there are some who have gathered here and who are hindered by somatic ailments and cannot remain without food, I advise them to nullify the somatic ailment and not to deprive themselves from this spiritual teaching, but to care for it even more.

***Part 2 of the homily will be included next week's Lenten Resource***