



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church
714 Westmoreland Avenue
PO Box 3
Slickville, PA 15684-0003
[724] 468-5581

www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org

Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

GREAT LENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Anthony Dimitri, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Father Deacon Dennis Lapushansky, Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—an 7-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 4-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George & Mika Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Peter & Karen Special, Amy Boe, Doris Artman, Maureen Sams, Nancy Barylak, Henry & Shirley Tkacik, Carol Kowalcheck, Martin Golofski, Joe Paouncic, Anthony Yerace, Joanne Brodrick, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [3-year-old with cancer], Diane Waryanka, Nathan Forbeck, Joseph Baloga, Andy Torick,

Sarah Doyle, Carmella Berardesca, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Bonnie Blair [Pani Gina's mother], Charles & Esther Holupka, Jill Paha, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Glenn Miller, Robert Mason, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

GREAT LENT has begun—the “theme” this year is APPRECIATION. Please plan to fast according to your ability and as your health and schedule allows. REMEMBER: what comes out of your mouth is at least as important as what goes into it! If you have any questions, please see Father Bob

Please remember James John Logue George Senita, & John Kirkowski assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, Tonia Dec, Michael Repasky, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Seventh Grade and Matt’s Fifth Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, February 21 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
GREAT-MARTYR THEODORE STATELATES; PROPHET ZECHARIAH; SAINT SAVA II-ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA
Tone 4
Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2
John 1:43-51
Litany in Blessed Memory of Martha Trecki—40 days—Harry Batch & Family

Sunday, February 28 Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 10:30 AM
SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS-ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA
APOSTLE ONESIMUS OF THE 70; SYNAXIS OF SAINT JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN AT DIACONISSA; VENERABLE EUSEBIUS-HERMIT OF SYRIA; VENERABLE PAPHNUTIUS-MONK-AND HIS DAUGHTER SAINT EUPHROSYNE-NUN-OF ALEXANDRIA;
MARTYR MAJOR OF GAZA; VENERABLE PAPHNUTIUS-RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

Tone 5

Hebrews 1:10-2:3, Hebrews 7:26-8:2

Mark 2:1-12, John 10:9-16

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Hilda Holupka—Mike Holupka

Sunday, March 7

Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 10:30 AM

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—VENERATION OF THE MOST HOLY CROSS

FINDING OF THE RELICS OF THE HOLY MARTYRS AT THE GATE OF EUGENIUS AT CONSTANTINOPLE; MARTYR MAURICE & SON PHOTINUS, & MARTYRS THEODORE, PHILIP, & 70 SOLDIERS AT APAMEA IN SYRIA; VENERABLE THALASSIUS, LIMNAEUS, & BARADATES-HERMITS OF SYRIA; ATHANASIUS THE CONFESSOR OF CONSTANTINOPLE; SAINT PETER THE STYLITE OF MOUNT ATHOS

Tone 6

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Mark 8:34-9:1

Litany in Blessed Memory of John Metrick, Mary Smith, Andrew Hanczar, Anna Lawrence, Michael Cicio, Joseph Vangrin, & Frank Riznow—Fr. Bob

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Hilda Holupka—Mike Holupka

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 21 FEBRUARY 2010

FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

GREAT-MARTYR THEODORE STATELATES; PROPHET ZECHARAIAH; SAINT SAVA II-ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA

TROPARION—TONE 4

When the women disciples of the Lord
Learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection;
They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles:
Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 4

My Savior and Redeemer,
As God rose from the tomb
And delivered the earthborn from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of Hell,
And as Master, He has risen on the third day!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 4

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made
them all.

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou
made them all.

READER: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works!

PEOPLE: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 4

Go forth and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

You love righteousness and hate iniquity.

Finkelstein and Jesus—A little Jewish humor!!!—via e-mail

Jesus was wandering around Jerusalem when he decided that he really needed a new robe.

After looking around for a while, he saw a sign for Finkelstein, the Tailor.

So, he went in and made the necessary arrangements to have Finkelstein prepare a new robe for him. A few days later, when the robe was finished, Jesus tried it on—and it was a perfect fit!

He asked how much he owed.

Finkelstein brushed him off: "No, no, no, for the Son of God there's no charge!

However, may I ask for a small favor? Whenever you give a sermon, perhaps you could just mention that your nice new robe was made by Finkelstein, the Tailor?"

Jesus readily agreed and as promised, extolled the virtues of his Finkelstein robe whenever he spoke to the masses.

A few months later, while Jesus was again walking through Jerusalem he happened to walk past Finkelstein's shop and noted a huge line of people waiting for Finkelstein's robes.

He pushed his way through the crowd to speak to him and as soon as Finkelstein spotted him he said: "Jesus, Jesus, look what you've done for my business!

Would you consider a partnership?"

"Certainly," replied Jesus.

"Jesus & Finkelstein it is."

"Oh, no, no," said Finkelstein.

"Finkelstein & Jesus...after all, I am the craftsman."

The two of them debated this for some time.

Their discussion was long and spirited, but ultimately fruitful—and they finally came up with a mutually acceptable compromise.

A few days later, the new sign went up over Finkelstein's shop:



HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS OF ATLANTA ON FASTING

“...I humbled myself with fasting;
And my prayer would return to my own heart.” Psalm 35:13

My beloved,

At this time of year, we must do special things in relationship to our Church in order to approach our Lord. Already our Church has directed us in prayer, both reasons why we should pray and the way we should pray, but also to assist us in understanding that prayer is a way of life, not just an action. One way to do this is by fasting, not only because the person who fasts prays more, but most importantly thinks of his neighbor more. Practiced together,

prayer and fasting will help us to become closer to God and to others by cultivating a lifestyle that is personally sacrificial.

Unfortunately today's materialistic society doesn't support or even recognize our human need for a relationship with our Creator and our fellow man. In our modern era, we have replaced the spiritual practice of "fasting" with the secular practice of "dieting". Of course, we deny ourselves on a diet to improve our health or our appearance – which has nothing to do with the other part of our individual nature, our spiritual nature. Fasting improves our spiritual health, freeing us from the things of the world that hold us down.

Another aspect of fasting is thinking of others, sacrificing for others, and becoming meek and humble. In this way we can really live out the will of God, and practice what our Lord Jesus Christ did after His Baptism, when He started His vocation of meeting people and bringing them the Good News of the New Covenant.

Fasting is not easy; indeed it is very difficult, combining obedience and self-denial. Unlike the rest of the year we can't eat what we want when we want, but rather we eat in the way our Church has guided us from the days of the Holy Apostles. Indeed our Church teaches us that there will be difficulties and obstacles as we strive to follow the path of fasting and prayer. Even our Lord was tempted as He fasted in the wilderness after his Baptism.

Our Lord fasted to set us an example of overcoming temptation. To be tempted is to be tested in fundamental ways, but also to show us that we can control our bodies instead of letting our bodies control us. We can overcome temptation by using the other tool – prayer.

Therefore if we really want this Pascha to be different from the past, we must practice, from our hearts and to the best of our ability, this beautiful way of ecclesiastical and spiritual life of fasting and prayer. This is what the Church offers to all Orthodox Christians.

I pray fervently that we may all receive abundant strength and wisdom from above to enable us to live the life of fasting and prayer and love for one another. Amen.

[More on Fasting](#)

Posted: 12 Feb 2010 08:05 AM PST

by St. John Chrysostom



St. John was the Archbishop of Constantinople during the fourth century. He was fearless when denouncing sin in high places, and was a prolific writer, and bold preacher, unafraid to hit the topical issues of the day squarely between the eyes with all the subtlety of a ball peen hammer. His last words were "Glory to God for all things!" He correctly deduced the real purpose of fasting for Orthodox Christians, and on the threshold of the fast, we offer this article, originally published on Orthodoxytoday.org.

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 thrust bad talk in his soul; you wounded it by spreading dis fame, causing unestimatable 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 (philanthropic) 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.

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.

What True Fasting Consists Of by St. John Chrysostom

Posted By admin On February 12, 2010 (8:37 am) In [Featured](#), [Patristics](#)



St. John was the Archbishop of Constantinople during the fourth century. He was fearless when denouncing sin in high places, and was a prolific writer, and bold preacher, unafraid to hit the topical issues of the day squarely between the eyes with all the subtlety of a ball peen hammer. He had many powerful enemies, but they feared him, and had him banished. He had to march, at the age of 60, to the place of his banishment, and died on the way. His last words were “Glory to God for all things!”

Let us not then despair of our safety, but let us pray; let us make invocation; let us supplicate; let us go on embassy to the King that is above with many tears! We have this fast too as an ally, and as an assistant in this good intercession.

Therefore, as when the winter is over and the summer is appearing, the sailor draws his vessel to the deep; and the soldier burnishes his arms, and makes ready his steed for the battle; and the husbandman sharpens his sickle; and the traveler boldly undertakes a long journey, and the wrestler strips and bares himself for the contest.

So too, when the fast makes its appearance, like a kind of spiritual summer, let us as soldiers burnish our weapons; and as husbandmen let us sharpen our sickle; and as sailors let us order our thoughts against the waves of extravagant desires; and as travelers let us set out on the journey towards heaven; and as wrestlers let us strip for the contest. For the believer is at once a husbandman, and a sailor, and a soldier, a wrestler, and a traveler.

Hence St. Paul saith, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers. Put on therefore the whole armor of God.” Eph. 6. 12. Hast thou observed the wrestler? Hast thou observed the soldier? If thou art a wrestler, it is necessary for thee to engage in the conflict naked. If a soldier, it behooves thee to stand in the battle line armed at all points. How then are both these things possible, to be naked, and yet not naked; to be clothed, and yet not clothed! How? I will tell thee. Divest thyself of worldly business, and thou hast become a wrestler. Put on the spiritual armour, and thou hast become a soldier.

Strip thyself of worldly cares, for the season is one of wrestling. Clothe thyself with the spiritual amour, for we have a heavy warfare to wage with demons. Therefore also it is needful we should be naked, so as to offer nothing that the devil may take hold of, while he is wrestling with us; and to be fully armed at all points, so as on no side to receive a deadly blow.

Cultivate thy soul.

Cut away the thorns.

Sow the word of godliness.

Propagate and nurse with much care the fair plants of divine wisdom, and thou hast become a husbandman.

And Paul will say to thee, “The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.” 2 Tim.2. 6.

He too himself practiced this art. Therefore writing to the Corinthians, he said, “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” 1 Cor. 3. 6.

Sharpen thy sickle, which thou hast blunted through gluttony—sharpen it by fasting. Lay hold of the pathway which leads towards heaven; rugged and narrow as it is, lay hold of it, and journey on.

And how mayest thou be able to do these things? By subduing thy body, and bringing it into subjection. For when the way grows narrow, the corpulence that comes of gluttony is a great hindrance.

Keep down the waves of inordinate desires.

Repel the tempest of evil thoughts.

Preserve the boat; display much skill, and thou hast become a pilot.

But we shall have the fast for a groundwork and instructor in all these things. 8. I speak not, indeed, of such a fast as most persons keep, but of real fasting ; not merely an abstinence from meats; but from sins too. For the nature of a fast is such, that it does not suffice to deliver those who practice it, unless it be done according to a suitable law.

“For the wrestler,” it is said, “is not crowned unless he strive lawfully.” 2 Tim 2:5

To the end then, that when we have gone through the labor of fasting, we forfeit not the crown of fasting, we should understand how, and after what manner, it is necessary to conduct this business; since that Pharisee also fasted, Luke 18:12, but afterwards went down empty, and destitute of the fruit

of fasting. The Publican fasted not; and yet he was accepted in preference to him who had fasted; in order that thou mayest learn that fasting is unprofitable, except all other duties follow with it.

The Ninevites fasted, and won the favor of God. (Jonah3. 10)

The Jews, fasted too, and profited nothing, nay, they departed with blame. (Isa. 58: 3, 7; 1 Cor. 9. 26)

Since then the danger in fasting is so great to those who do not know how they ought to fast, we should learn the laws of this exercise, in order that we may not “run uncertainly,” nor “beat the air,” nor while we are fighting contend with a shadow.

Fasting is a medicine; but a medicine, though it be never so profitable, becomes frequently useless owing to the unskilfulness of him who employs it. For it is necessary to know, moreover, the time when it should be applied, and the requisite quantity of it; and the temperament of body that admits it; and the nature of the country, and the season of the year; and the corresponding diet; as well as various other particulars; any of which, if one overlooks, he will mar all the rest that have been named.

Now if, when the body needs healing, such exactness is required on our part, much more ought we, when our care is about the soul, and we seek to heal the distempers of the mind, to look, and to search into every particular with the utmost accuracy.

I have said these things, not that we may disparage fasting, but that we may honor fasting; for the honor of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from sinful practices; since he who limits his fasting only to an abstinence from meats, is one who especially disparages it.

Dost thou fast? Give me proof of it by thy works!

Is it said by what kind of works?

If thou seest a poor man, take pity on him!

If thou seest in enemy, be reconciled to him!

If thou seest a friend gaining honor, envy him not!

If thou seest a handsome woman, pass her by!

For let not the mouth only fast, but also the eye, and the ear, and the feet, and the hands, and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being pure from rapine and avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing from running to the unlawful spectacles.

Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves rudely upon handsome countenances, or to busy themselves with strange beauties.

For looking is the food of the eyes, but if this be such as is unlawful or forbidden, it mars the fast; and upsets the whole safety of the soul; but if it be lawful and safe, it adorns fasting. For it would be among things the most absurd to abstain from lawful food because of the fast, but with the eyes to touch even what is forbidden. Dost thou not eat flesh? Feed not upon lasciviousness by means of the eyes.

Let the ear fast also. The fasting of the ear consists in refusing to receive evil speakings and calumnies.

“Thou shalt not receive a false report,” it says.

Let the mouth too fast from disgraceful speeches and railing. For what doth it profit if we abstain from birds and fishes; and yet bite and devour our brethren? The evil speaker eateth the flesh of his brother, and biteth the body of his neighbor.

Because of this Paul utters the fearful saying,

“If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Gal. 5. 15. Thou hast not fixed thy teeth in the flesh, but thou hast fixed the slander in the soul, and inflicted the wound of evil suspicion; thou hast harmed, in a thousand ways, thyself and him, and many others, for in slandering a neighbor thou hast made him who listens to the slander worse...

Abridged from St. John Chrysostom homilies “On Fasting”

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HOW TO STAY SAFE IN THIS LIFE:

1. Avoid riding in automobiles because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.
2. Do not stay home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.
3. Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.
4. Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.

5. Of the remaining 33% ... 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals. So ... above all else, avoid hospitals.

BUT ...

You will be pleased to learn that only 0,001% of all deaths occur in worship services in Church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at Church!

From DeKerkklok

A Reflection on Christian Stewardship

“Do I possess the house in which I live? No, it is only on loan to me from God while I remain in that place. Do I possess the clothes I wear? No, they are on loan to me until they wear out, or until I give them away to someone in greater need. Do I possess this body that you see before you? No, it was lent to me by God when I was born, and he will take it back when I die. Do I possess the mind that is composing the words that I speak? No, that too was lent by God at my birth and will go when I die. So do I possess anything? Yes, I possess the virtues which during my life have grown and flourished within my soul. Inasmuch as I have grown in faith, I possess faith. Inasmuch as I have grown in gentleness, I possess gentleness. These things are immortal; they are divine gifts which God will not take away, because he wants heaven itself to be filled with virtue. And, of course, I possess my soul, in which these virtues have their roots.”

St John Chrysostom from *On Living Simply: The Golden Voice of John Chrysostom*

When someone ceases to live spiritually, he ceases to have a relationship with the other who continues to live spiritually. This separation is self imposed; he is not distanced by the other. The more someone lives according to God, the more closely he can approach Him; and the more he distances himself from a godly life, the more he is isolated from Him. God does not send him away; it is he who isolates himself from God's presence. *Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain (Athos)*

God desires and seeks the salvation of all. And He is always saving all who wish to be saved from drowning in the sea of life and sin. But He does not always save in a boat or a convenient, well-equipped harbor. He promised to save the Holy Apostle Paul and all his fellow-travelers, and He did save them. But the Apostle and his fellow-passengers were not saved in the ship, which was wrecked; they were saved with great difficulty, some by swimming and others on boards and various bits of the ship's wreckage. *St. Ignatius Brianchaninov*

That our acts of kindness must be unconditional, or the evil one will find a way to steal their spiritual benefit from us [Part 2 of 5]

"When you do a kindness, always feel that you simply have done your duty; and be prepared to face temptation; so that you may not lose - but gain - all of the good you may have done. Someone, for example, offers charity, and has no intention of revealing it. Then temptation comes in to it, and makes others say to him, *'You avaricious person, you have done nothing; and so and so has done this and that. ..'*" This may force him to say humbly, *'Well, I too have done something small --- a hospital.'* Or he may become indignant and be forced to say, *'Who me? I, who have done this and that?'* Either way, he loses the spiritual benefit."