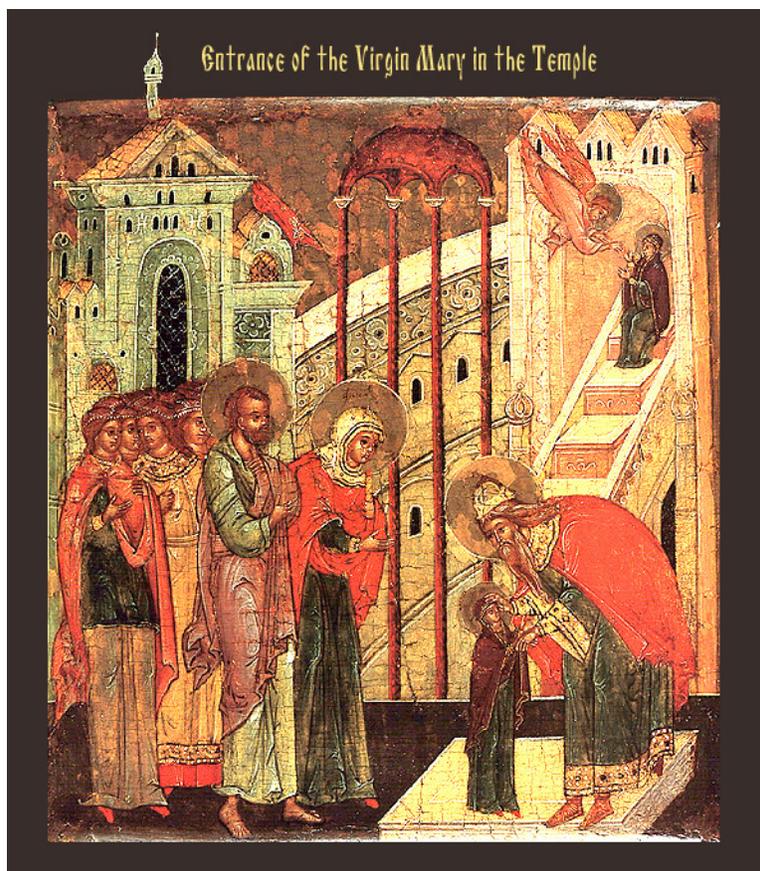


THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
NOVEMBER 2013



Entrance of the Theotokos — November 21

MARK THE DATES

November 2: St. Paul Oktoberfest, 6:00-9:00 PM (following Vespers)

Change clocks (back one hour)

November 4-6: Father out of town

November 8: Archangel Michael and all the Bodiless Hosts, Divine Liturgy, 8:00 am

November 9: Russian Confessions, 9:00 am; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 am

November 15: NATIVITY FAST BEGINS

November 16: FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 am

November 19: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 pm

November 20: Vespers with Litiya, 6:30 pm

November 21: ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS, Divine Liturgy, 8:00 am

November 25-December 4: Father out of town

November 28: Thanksgiving Day

Send email addresses and corrections to: frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

November 2013

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

1		2	
<p>GREETERS</p> <p>NOVEMBER 3: CAMPBELL/MASON NOVEMBER 10: OSBURN/CONDUCTOR NOVEMBER 17: MURPHY/JOHNSON NOVEMBER 24: MCAULEY/BRITTON</p>			
<p>3</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: YOUTH EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: HOOD CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>4</p> <p>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, NOVEMBER 4-6</p>	<p>5</p> <p>WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>8</p> <p>ST. MICHAEL AND ALL THE BODILESS HOSTS DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM</p>	<p>9</p> <p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9:00 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM</p>	<p>10</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BOWMAN EPISTLE: HOOD POST-COMM: PARKER CHURCH SCHOOL</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>13</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>14</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>
<p>15</p> <p>NATIVITY FAST BEGINS</p>	<p>16</p> <p>FEEDING THE HOMELESS 10:30 AM</p>	<p>17</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BROOKS EPISTLE: DEMKO POST-COMM: BROPHY CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> <p>WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>20</p> <p>VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM NO ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>21</p> <p>ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM ERITREAN SERVICE, 9:30 AM</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	<p>24</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: SAS CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>
<p>27</p> <p>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 4</p>	<p>28</p> <p>THANKSGIVING DAY ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL</p>
<p>31</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	<p>32</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	<p>33</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	<p>34</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>



The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
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NOVEMBER 2013

The Apostle on Stewardship

*We are now in our “Stewardship Month.” **Everyone** is asked to pray, meditate and ponder a financial commitment to the parish and then sign a pledge. These thoughts are offered to help us in our efforts.*

Father John

The concept of “stewardship” can be misunderstood in today’s Church. Although stewardship principles include giving money, it is much more than that. Stewardship is a Christian (and biblical) concept.

In his second letter to the Corinthians (8:1-9:8), St. Paul writes a remarkable essay on what it means to follow Christ as a steward. Anyone claiming to live a Christian life must reflect on his words.

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they

urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (8:1-7)

Christian stewards give “themselves first to the Lord.” True stewardship begins with the realization that Christ does not expect “something” from us — He expects everything. He told the rich young man to sell “everything,” give it to the poor, and follow Him. We begin a stewardly life by giving ourselves to the Lord.

But it is important to note that Paul exalts the Macedonians for their “rich generosity.” He also marvels in the fact that they, on their own, “pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service.” Generous giving of

ourselves to the “service of the saints” (i.e., the life and work of the Church) is not something that is to be taken grudgingly, or as something to be minimized or avoided, but rather a privilege that should be *embraced*.

In holding up the Macedonians as an example, Paul then turns his attention to the Corinthians. They are excellent in many ways: “in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness,” even in love. But if they are excellent in those things, they must also be excellent in the grace of **giving**. Paul implies that they would be lacking as Christians if they ignored this aspect of their lives. As would we be lacking if we excel in a number of Christian virtues but are miserly in giving.

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

And here is my advice about

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Virginia Hood, Secretary

James Brophy
Alan Buttell
Pamela Campbell
Kevin McAuley
Litsa Osburn
Catherine Wilkalis

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Amy McAuley
Christina Sas

Fellowship Committee

what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. (8:8-12)

In other words, it is easy to **talk** about being Christian, but hard to actually **do** it. Jesus reminds us that if we want to find out what a person's heart is like, we simply have to follow the money. When we find a person's treasure, we find a person's heart. The example for us is Christ Himself, who became poor for us so that we might become rich.

Again, Paul exalts the Corinthians because they were first to have the desire to give. He even tells them that the measure of our gift will not be how much it is, but rather the willingness to give the gift. If we are of modest means in what we can give (time, talent, treasure, etc.), we may give modestly if it springs from the generosity of our desire to give. But if we have great means to give and do not have the generosity of desire, leading to a small gift, "small" becomes "petty and cheap."

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is writ-

ten: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little." (8:13-15)

Giving is not a question of a certain segment of the Church carrying the burden, while other segments have no burden at all. In fact, God supplies everything — those who have plenty are given plenty that they might supply what is needed to those who lack plenty. What we do with our "plenty" will be part of our judgment. In the Orthodox wedding service, we pray that God "fill [the newly-wed couple's] houses with wheat, wine and oil and with every good thing, **so that they may give in turn to those in need...**" Abundance is not given by God as a blessing for us to have luxury, but to be generous to the needs of the Church and those less fortunate.

I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men. (8:16-21)

Paul not only told them the

offerings were used for good purposes, but also that their safeguarding was above reproach and testified to by two others. The Corinthians should have no concern about turning their gift over. So should it be in the Church today. Our offerings are given out of love, and they must be used in a way that honors the Lord.

In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we — not to say anything about you — would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as

one grudgingly given. (8:22-9:5)

Paul prudently sends the brothers ahead of his own arrival with the Macedonians because he wanted to ensure that neither he nor the Church were embarrassed by the gift not being ready or being turned over grudgingly. The Church today is called by God to have the same concerns: we must be eager to help with our giving and our gifts must be offered with a generous spirit.

It is also clear that our gifts must be given and released to the care of the Church. We cannot attach strings. How often pettiness takes over and we give “if it is used the way I like,” “if it is properly recognized,” and “if others are also going to carry their load.” God provides in my life what I need for salvation. And He will judge me on what I do with it — **my** generosity or miserliness, not someone else’s.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (9:6-8)

Someone farming a field does not plow one row and scatter a few seeds. Rather, they plow many rows and plant many seeds. If we take seriously that we are working on our salvation in this world, how can anyone be satisfied plowing a single row by be-

ing a miser? A farmer who sows sparingly does not harvest many crops and ultimately starves. A Christian who gives sparingly of anything will not harvest much on the last day and also will starve.

Each person must pray, ponder, and reflect on their level of giving to God, the Church and those less fortunate. Giving must not be reluctant, for that betrays a lack of trust in God to provide. It must not be under compulsion, for God expects us to use our free will to do the right thing and see it as the right thing. Once we choose the good and right thing, God rejoices in our cheerful giving. It is a blessing and a gift to be able to give. It is not an obligation or a minimal fulfillment of parish membership. It is being a good Christian.

All our giving — our money, our time, our talents and abilities — is borne out of the reality that God fills our life with abounding grace. God is the One who gives to us in abundance so that we have enough for our needs and then might do our best impression of Him. Our best impression of Him is not how much we acquire and squirrel away. It is not how we handicap the Church by making her beg for the resources to fulfill her mission in this world. It is not how we walk away from those hungry, thirsty and destitute in this world. Our best impression of Him, indeed our **only** impression of Him, is that from the abundance that God gives to us, we honor Him by “abounding in every good work.” That is the only reason God gives us anything.

After all, it all belongs to Him — we are only stewards.

FEASTDAYS

In November, we celebrate the following feastday. Please join us!

Archangel Michael

November 8

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (FRI)

Entrance of the Theotokos

November 21

VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM (WED)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (THUR)

OKTOBERFEST

Our first St. Paul's Oktoberfest will be held after Vespers on Saturday, November 2nd, 6:00-9:00 PM. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 for 12 and under) and will feature bratwursts, german potato salad, and good ol' hamburgers and hot dogs with fixins. Soft drinks are included, and German beer and wine will be available for purchase. David Poe and his Oktoberfest Band will perform. Tickets should be purchased **in advance**, see Tim Johnson.

A reminder also that on that evening, **we move our clocks back one hour**, resuming Pacific Standard Time on Sunday morning, November 3.

TRAVELS

Fr. John will be taking some personal time off. On **November 4-6 and November 25-December 4**, he will be out of town. If if you need a priest when Father is away, please call Ginny Hood (526-4428) and she will coordinate an appropriate local response. Father Aurel Sas will be serving for Fr. John the weekend of November 30-December 1. Please welcome him warmly!

NATIVITY FAST

The Church calls us to prepare for the glorious celebration of the

Nativity of our Lord with fasting. The Nativity Fast begins on November 15 and ends with our celebration on December 25.

All regular communicants should take the time during this holy season to come to the Sacrament of Confession. Father will hear confessions on Saturdays after Vespers and by appointment.

CHOIR REHEARSALS

All choir members are reminded that there are two scheduled rehearsals in November. Rehearsals will be held **after Vespers on November 9 and November 23**. If you might be interested in singing, see Matushka Elizabeth.

SLAVONIC LITURGY

Father Alexander will be here on the normal second Saturday of the month (November 9). Russian Confessions begin at 9:00 AM, followed by Slavonic Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

A change of date: our next Feeding the Homeless project date is **Saturday, November 16th**. We gather at 10:30 AM to prepare bag lunches then go down to distribute them to the needy. Join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches, it would be appreciated.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK

The second annual Christmas Cookie Walk Sale will take place on Saturday, December 14, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (noon). While that seems like a ways off, bakers are going to be asked to make plenty of goodies, so you may want to start early. Tanya Riley is chairing the effort and if you are contacted to bake, please help!

If you are not contacted, please seek out Tanya to offer your help. Let's make this successful!

2014 BENEFIT DINNER

Our annual Benefit Dinner (not held in 2013 because of the 25th anniversary celebration), will be scheduled for February 23, 2014 at the Sunset Gardens. Tickets will be \$100. Dinner, dancing and a silent auction will benefit the Capital Fund of the parish. Start planning to attend now, and if you have possible silent auction items, please see Pam Campbell or Eve Kaganovitch.

COFFEE CHAT

We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM. We have gone back to our usual Badger Cafe at the corner of Tropicana and Spencer.

READING GROUP

The Women's Reading Group continues in the church library on Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30 AM. **(Note time change!)** The book is *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives: The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*. Please contact Christine Johnson at 651-233-3551 (voice or text). The book will be read together with discussion.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

We have received a bid on the repair, resealing and re-stripping of our parking lot. We anticipated a bid of \$20K. **The bid came in at \$7,800.** We can commence with this project as soon as donations come in.

We have established a goal of **\$60,000** to fund needed projects. We ask everyone to consider a special donation to this fund, above and beyond your normal

contributions for the support of the parish.

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. *Special needs at this time: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken.* Thank you!

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer: *Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts — time, talent and treasure — which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- **Baptisms.** A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.
- **Matrimony.** A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.
- **Memorials (Panikhida).** Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service

should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS SEPTEMBER 17, 2013 MEETING

Rector's Report: Metropolitan Council/Diocesan Assembly: *Assessments:* The OCA assessments will be \$92.00/person in 2014. This is \$3.00 less. Despite a proposal for a deficit budget a balanced budget was passed. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Father John Jillions, and Father Eric Tosi voluntarily will take a 5% pay cut.

Pension: Beginning in 2014 the pension contribution will go to 14% of a pastor's salary and housing from the current 12%.

OCA PSP for Misconduct: PSP stands for Policies, Standards and Procedures. The first 2 days of the diocesan assembly were spent on this topic and covered the protection of the children in the parish and clergy misconduct. Discussion followed. Father John will present the new PSPs to the parish council when they arrive.

Vice President: no report

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short reported that we are totally current on all our bills except assessments, which **now total \$8100** in arrears!

We will be changing banks for all parish accounts on October 24 from Bank of America to Wells Fargo.

Capital Fund: \$3,600.00

Rainy Day: \$4,500.00

Income for September was: \$15,924.15, and expenses of \$18,314.27 for a deficit of **\$2,390.12.**

YTD 2013

2013 YTD Inc \$ 153,747.53

2013 YTD Exp \$ 163,306.13

Exp over Inc \$ 9,558.60

Buildings and Grounds: The grounds clean-up went well. About 15 people showed up to help. Thank you!

Church School/Youth: No report.

Charity: The Feeding of the Homeless on August 24 went well. About 150 lunches were distributed. The cost was \$.82/bag. A total of \$90.00 was spent leaving \$121.73 for the next feeding. Next date is November 16.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: No report.

Fellowship: The committee has changed the Oktoberfest event to November 2nd at St. Paul's. The Hofbrauhaus was too pricey. Tickets will range from \$5-\$10 dollars. There will be authentic German food, beers and wine. David Poe will provide entertainment. This event is self-funded.

Outreach/Website: No report.

Russian: Father Alexander's November visit will be determined.

Stewardship: The 2014 Stewardship Drive has begun. Sermons will continue on this topic. Five 2014 pledges have been received to date.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: no report

Benefit Dinner: We have received some auction items for the dinner. Pam Campbell presented a list to the council. Date selected was February 23, 2014. Tickets will be \$100 as in the past.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Meeting December 8:

- *Treasurer/Financial Secretary*: It is recommended that we split the duties of Treasurer. We will begin to transition the duties this coming year, and propose changes to the By-Laws should the change make sense with experience.
- *Budget Committee*: Father John will arrange a meeting.
- *Nominating Committee*: Litsa Osburn will work with Fr John.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 19, 2013, 6:00 PM.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF NOVEMBER

- Jacquelyn George
November 6, 2002
- LemLem Tekle
November 8, 2003
- Konstantin Zaiats
November 15, 1999
- Jon Gregory
November 17, 1998
- Krsto Rosich
November 19, 1993
- Daniel Filimon
November 20, 1999
- Theresa Wilkinson
November 21, 2002
- Scott Irving Dotson
November 25, 1991

ON FASTING

THE NATIVITY FAST BEGINS ON NOVEMBER 15.

(The Orthodox Faith, Volume 4, Spirituality, by Father Thomas Hopko)

Saint Paul himself fasted, and in his teaching on food insists that men fast and do so in secret, without mutual inspection and judgment.

Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:17-19)

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food - and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immortality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (I Corinthians 6:12-13)

Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains, pass judgment on him who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?

He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of him for whom Christ

has died... for the Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God...the faith that you have keep between yourself and God...whatever does not proceed from faith (whether eating or abstaining) is sin. (cf Romans 14)

The whole essence of [fasting] is put simply and clearly in these two short stories from the fathers of the desert.

A certain brother brought fresh loaves of bread and invited his elders. When they had eaten much, the brother, knowing their travail of abstinence, began humbly to beg them to eat more. "For God's sake, eat this day and be filled." And they ate another ten. Behold how these that were true monks and sincere in abstinence did eat more than they needed, for the sake of God.

Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, called the abbot Hilarion to see him. A portion of fowl was set before them and the bishop invited the abbot to eat. The old man said, "Forgive me, Father, but since the time I took this habit I have never eaten anything that has been killed."

And Epiphanius said to him, "And from the time I took this habit I have let no man sleep who has anything against me, and neither have I slept holding anything against anyone."

And the old man said to him, "Forgive me, Father, for your way of life is greater than mine." (The Sayings of the Fathers)