

Fasting and its benefits (2)

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Who is as strong as a lion, but, for the sake of his stomach falls into a trap and the whole of his strength is brought low?

When the fathers in Skete ate bread and salt, they used to say: 'Let's not be beholden to bread and salt'. In this way they were strong enough to do the Lord's work.

Abba Ioannis Kolovos

There are three things I can't do without: food, clothing and sleep.
But I can cut down on them.

Abba Ioannis Kolovos



So when you fast and eat with restraint, don't keep anything left for the next day, but, as the Lord says, we're poor and he makes us rich. So if you go hungry by choice, you can feed those who are starving without choice.

Your fast will then be like a dove which brings to your soul the good news of salvation from the flood. As the great Isaiah says: 'If you remove yourself from conspiracy, and stop resorting to blows and carping words and you give bread to the hungry from your heart, and satisfy the humbled soul, then your light will spring up in darkness, and your darkness [shall be] as the noon-day' (58, 10, Septuagint).

And if you don't want to give of your own, at least don't take somebody else's and don't take possessions of things that don't belong to you, snatching and storing away things- often unfairly- from those who are poorer than you.

Gregory Palamas

Better to eat meat and drink wine than to eat the flesh of others through gossip.
Abba Yperekhios

How can we acquire fear of God when inside us we've got barrels of cheese and containers of preserved food?

Abba Pimin

Two things I ask of you; do not take your favour from me before I die. Remove vanity and falsehood far from me. Do not give me wealth or poverty, but provide me with what's necessary and sufficient, in case, being filled, I become false, and say, 'Who's watching?' Or being poor, I steal, and take the Lord's name in vain.

Proverbs 24, 7-9 (Septuagint)

There are many things people do that are good in themselves, but for some reason aren't good for us. For example, fasting, vigils, prayer and singing hymns, charity and hospitality are, by their nature, good works, but when they're performed for vainglory, they aren't good any more.

For all our actions, God wants to know the reason behind them. In other words, are we doing them for His sake or for some other reason?

Maximos the Confessor