

2. We should not make a show of our fasting, nor should we go around with a sour look on our faces, complaining about how hard it is to keep the fast (Matthew 6:16-18).

3. Fasting is not an end in and of itself, but a means to an end. There are some (rare) circumstances in which it is better to break the fast than to be lacking in love for others. There are also some circumstances in which breaking the fast might be necessary for some other reason (e.g., ill-health, or extreme circumstances such as those serving in the military, and unable to fast due to the demands of their duty, etc).

If it happens to be a fast day, and some non-Orthodox loved one surprises you with a special meal that they went to great pains to prepare and they did not know it was a day that you should not eat most of what they have fixed, this would probably be one of those rare instances in which it would be better to break the fast than to hurt them by insisting on keeping the fast. However, one should not make a point of visiting as many non-Orthodox family and friends as you can during the fasts, and then using charity as an excuse to regularly break the fast.

Furthermore, while it is true that we should not make a show of our fasting, if you are in regular contact with family or friends who are not Orthodox, I think it is a practical necessity to let them know that there are many times during the year when you cannot eat certain kinds of foods. You don't need to make a big deal about it. You certainly shouldn't demand other people accommodate you, and prepare special meals for you, but if you are going to keep the fasts, you will have to gently let them know that this is how things are with you. Especially in recent times, the idea that people have special diets is not uncommon.

If you are asked why you are not eating certain kinds of foods by people you really do not know, it is probably better to simply say that you are on a special diet (which is certainly true during the fasts), or to just say, "I can't eat that." Most people who don't know you, will probably not probe further. However, if they do, just answer the questions they ask without making a bigger deal about it than necessary. You should just not go out of your way to inform people you are fasting, when there is no need for them to know.

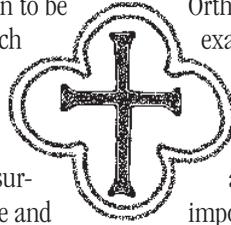
If you work around non-Orthodox people, on a regular basis, I think it is likewise practically impossible to keep the fasts without eventually letting them know about it. Especially during the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there is often a steady flow of non-lenten food that is brought to the office. The intentions of those who bring these foods are friendly, but you can gently refuse these things with a smile and good humor, without offending anyone.

If there is an office party during a fast, you don't want to draw any more attention to yourself than is necessary, and you should not ask anyone else to plan such things to accommodate you, but you can be sociable and participate in these meals by looking for what is available that is lenten (usually, there are

at least some vegetables, and maybe some chips and salsa (fairly standard fare in Texas, at least). You can also make a point of bringing something yourself that is lenten.

And when the fast finally does come to an end, you can then invite non-Orthodox friends and family to come and join you in celebrating the feast. For example, most parishes have some sort of a Christmas party (a "Yolka") on the Sunday after Christmas. This is a great opportunity to invite such people to visit your Church and join in the fun. Maybe you could also bring some donuts to work on the first day after Christmas that you are back on the job, and offer them to your coworkers, for a change. It is important to fast, but it is also important that we joyfully celebrate the feasts, and if we want others to be attracted to our faith, we should make sure that we do not leave them with the impression that we just fast a lot, but that we also know how to enter into the joy of our feasts at the end of those fasts.

<http://fatherjohn.blogspot.com/2015/12/stump-priest-nativity-fast-and.html>



"A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much. For what he gives away remains his forever"

- St John Chrysostom

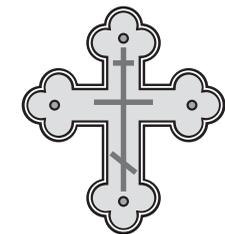
throughthegraceofgod.wordpress.com

SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

December 2, 2018



ST. NICHOLAS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6



Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, OCA
3237 West 16th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46222
317.638.4162 • saintsconstantineandelena.org

The Reverend Father David T. Wey, *Parish Priest*
317.484.1288 (home) • 317.627.2282 (cell)
Rev. Dn. Paul McDonald, *attached* 317.696.0079 (cell)

PARISH LIFE

NOVEMBER 15–DECEMBER 24: NATIVITY FAST

**DECEMBER 2, 2018: 31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(TONE 2, MATINS GOSPEL 5)**

8:40 am Matins
10:00 am Divine Liturgy
12:00 pm Annual Youth Dinner (in place of coffee hour)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5

6:30 pm Vigil for St. Nicholas

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

8:00 am Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas (with Academy Students)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

5:00 pm Mystery of Confession (by appointment, please)
6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND, AND THOSE EXPECTING CHILDREN, OF OUR PARISH:

Victor Cosgarea, Jay Hanko, Jan Isham, Brigid Johns (and unborn child), Jennifer Lashbrook (and unborn child), Filomena Vraciu, Jillian Walsh (and unborn child), Zachary Waltz, Doug Wampler and Margaret Wey

LOOKING AHEAD...

Next Sunday's readings: (27th Sunday after Pentecost; Tone 3, Matins Gospel 6): Ephesians 6:10-17; Luke 13:10-17.

The Feasts of December:

Wednesday, December 12

6:30 pm Vespers for St. Herman of Alaska

Thursday, December 13

8:00 am Divine Liturgy for St. Herman

Wednesday, December 19

6:30 pm Vespers for St. Ignatius of Antioch

Thursday, December 20

8:00 am Divine Liturgy for St. Ignatius

MATCHING FUNDS

Three Sundays remain in our special appeal to raise \$50,000 toward our new hall project, which will be doubled through the gracious offer of a matching funds offer made by an anonymous donor. We are well on our way, having raised just a little over \$31,000 so far (a little more than half of our goal), but we still have a way to go. Please consider making a year-end donation toward this special appeal before December 16, to double your donation; we don't want to fall short in this opportunity.



Clarification: our fund chart measures the total achieved so far including the match, working toward the full \$100K.

DON'T FORGET REGULAR PLEDGES FOR 2019

Although our pledge month is officially over, only a few cards have been submitted. If not done so already, please get them turned in in the next week. We encourage people to choose a percentage from the household income – 3%, 5%, 7%, 10% or more. Let each consider with prayer, and make a commitment to our common work with faith and trust in the good God who provides all our needs. Pledge cards (beige) are available at the book corner. “Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7).

A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

We have had a very low trend in giving in last couple months for pledges and general offerings; our expenses in September and October far exceeded our income (by over \$12,000). While the dedicated funds have received some very generous donations, please remember that pledges and offerings are critical to running the church and are needed to pay the salaries, utilities, grounds maintenance, and much more. Be sure to get current on your giving in approaching the end of the year.

– Respectfully, Isaac Lashbrook

EXTRA FISH DAYS THIS WEEK

Due to the feasts of several great Saints, our typic allows for fish on these days this week: Monday (Elder George of Cernica), Tuesday (Great-martyr Barbara, Ven. John of Damascus, Hieromartyr Alexander, missionary in America) and Thursday (St. Nicholas). These are in addition to the normal dispensation for fish on Saturday and Sunday. As our fasting regimen is lightened, let us keep well the memory of these faithful ones with thankfulness, for God is wondrous in his saints!

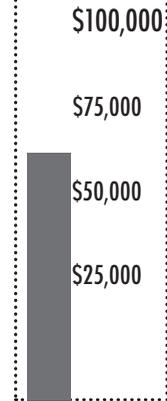
ANNUAL NATIVITY PLAY

The Nativity play this year will be presented following coffee hour on January 6th 2019. Casting is largely set, but there is room for a few more. Rehearsals will be held on the Sundays of December during the coffee hour in the St. Nicholas House. Interested in volunteering to help? Please contact Subdn. Frank at: thefrankthefew@gmail.com.

2018 ST. JOHN CAMP WINTER RETREAT

Our annual winter retreat for high schoolers and young adults will be held at Highland Lakes Camp December 27th-30th, 2018. It's an opportunity to “recharge” your batteries half-way through the school year. There will be fellowship, prayer, teachings, singing, games, and some good old fashioned pick-up football.

Building Campaign



The early bird registration rate is \$190 and ends October 31st! Standard registration is \$215 and closes December 17th. It is OKAY if you cannot pay the full registration fee up front, as long as full payment is received two weeks before camp. If you would like to set up a payment plan and make periodic payments before camp, we can do that, too!

Register now at: <https://www.saintjohnscamp.org/events/wr2018/>

THE NATIVITY FAST AND CHRISTMAS PARTIES

Fr. John Whiteford

In the past 50 years, American culture has gone from the older practice of putting up Christmas decorations on Christmas eve, and then celebrating Christmas on the actual day (albeit New Calendar), and continuing that celebration through either New Year's day, or Epiphany (what we usually call Theophany) on January 6th. This is evident from the older classic Christmas movies, such as “It's a Wonderful Life,” “The Bishop's Wife,” and even the Charlie Brown Christmas Special (the next time you watch these movies, pay attention to when the Christmas Trees are being decorated). Of course during the period leading up to Christmas there has always been a great deal of anticipation and preparation. However, most Americans now begin celebrating Christmas in earnest after Thanksgiving, and the weeks and days prior to Christmas consist of one Christmas party after another. Then on Christmas day, people are taking down their decorations, you see Christmas Trees on the curb waiting to be carted off to the dump, you cease hearing Christmas music on the radio usually by noon at the latest, and the time leading up to Christmas is observed in a manner that is completely opposed to the traditional order of things. The forty days prior to Christmas period is supposed to be a time of prayer and fasting. It is not as strict of a fast as Great Lent, but it is certainly not supposed to be the marathon of gluttony that it has become in the popular culture. For those of us on the Old Calendar, this made even more difficult by the fact that our fast continues until it is broken on January 7th, according to the civil calendar (which is December 25th on the Old Calendar).

So how should Orthodox Christians deal with this situation? We have family, friends, and co-workers that regularly invite us to participate in these parties, but how are we to keep the fast and prepare properly for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ? Obviously, we should make the effort to keep the fast, but how one goes about it is a question of wisdom, and so let me lay out how I approach it, keeping in mind that there are other ways that one could approach some of these issues.

We have a few priorities as Christians that sometimes have to be weighed against one another:

1. Fasting is an important spiritual discipline. The Church calls on us to fast corporately at certain times of the year, and this is one of those times (Matthew 9:15; Canon 69 of the Holy Apostles)

Continued on other side