

Date of publication: September 25, 2022

DOI: 10.52270/26585561_2022_15_17_122

Historical Sciences

ORTHODOX POSTS IN THE PUBLIC LIFE OF RUSSIA

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Abstract

The article examines the practice of observing Orthodox fasting, which seems relevant in the context of many changes in the life of modern Russian society, since this practice reflects the level of religious consciousness of the Russian people, where an important component of ethnic identity comes to the fore. This indicates the urgent need for a special study of the everyday experience of church fasting in a historical perspective.

Keywords: post, church, society, priest, state.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fasts are special days established by the Church in order to encourage believers to take more care of their spiritual life, the eternal salvation of the soul, repentance and inner self-purification. Externally, fasting consists either in abstinence from fish and meat food, or in complete disregard (complete abstinence from food for one or several days). Lenten rules provide for varying degrees of abstinence: the strictest days are indicated in Great Lent, when food is not served at all.

The next degree is “dry food”, when bread, vegetables, etc. are offered at the meal. undigested food. Hot food without oil also has its statutory days. Allowance for vegetable oil and fish is already considered a mild degree of abstinence. A detailed provision on the proposed Lenten meals for each day can be found in the annual church calendar.

II. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The degree of study of the practice of Russian Orthodox fasting is relatively small, while foreign electronic resources, data from dictionaries and encyclopedic publications on abstinence and fasting among different peoples of the world include quite a lot of work.

For example, the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, published in the USA in 1928, describes in detail the fasts adopted both in world religions and in the smallest primitive communities at different periods of their history. The purpose of fasting could be different: religious, magical, in connection with mourning, initiations, etc. It has long been customary to observe fasts by the whole community or individually, for a long time or for one day, to abstain from certain foods or from any particular food product, reaching the point of perfect asceticism.

Of interest are those studies by foreign authors that deal with the issues of everyday implementation of abstinence in Catholic monasticism in the Middle Ages (M. Dembinska, M. Winter, E. White, E. Kisban, etc.).

Despite the fact that the Russian practice of fasting has not yet become the subject of a monographic study, information about fasting has been cited in various works by Russian scientists. Particularly noteworthy are the studies of T.A. Listova, built on a wide range of archival materials and devoted to rituals and customs; associated with the birth and upbringing of children in various regions of Russia, including the Russian North. In them, she gives many examples of the socialization of children, when the basic norms of Christian life were instilled in a child from early childhood through the practice of fasting. Fasting on vows was reflected in the works of Kremlevoi I.A. Many holy fathers spoke about the importance of fasting in the spiritual life. Of course, Orthodox fasting has never been seen as an end in itself. He, according to the Holy Fathers, is a means for true spiritual life, an aid in the struggle against passions and on the path to communion with God. "Abstinence is necessary so that, after pacifying the flesh with fasting, it is easier to enter into battle with other passions," Abba Serapion instructed.



Bodily fasting must always be paired with spiritual self-restraint, primarily in passions, sinful desires. "There is a bodily fast when the womb fasts from food and drink; there is spiritual fasting when the soul refrains from evil thoughts, deeds, and words... Physical fasting is useful for us, but spiritual fasting is undoubtedly needed, so that bodily fasting is nothing without it," wrote St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. However, the importance of bodily abstinence was recognized by all ascetics from the venerable to the monastic elders of the XX-th century. At the same time, the Orthodox Church over the centuries has developed fairly clear rules and recommendations regarding the order and quality of food necessary for the successful completion of the feat of bodily abstinence. These institutions are indicated in the Typicon and Triodion. At the same time, on the one hand, the number of meals per day is limited, on the other hand, the time of the first eating of food, and, finally, the quality of food. In some cases, the entire volume and composition of the meal is clearly specified. The basis of nutrition during fasts is bread, cereals, kvass, mushrooms, honey, fruits and fruit drinks, vegetables, pickles, marinades, fermentations, nuts. Moderate - meat, eggs, dairy products - are excluded from the menu.



It should be noted that the Orthodox charter is not divided into monastic and secular and is mandatory for all believers of the Orthodox Church. Only breastfeeding women, children, and the seriously ill are exempted from bodily fasting. However, it should be borne in mind that the charter was nevertheless formed in the monasteries and mainly for the monastic community. Moreover, he was guided by countries with a hot climate. Even St. John Chrysostom, while in exile in the far north of the Roman Empire, noted that for the northern monasteries he founded, it was necessary to adjust the charter on fasting, taking into account the more severe climate and hard physical labor that the brethren had to endure. Since ancient times, the Orthodox Church has established three one-day fasts: Epiphany Christmas Eve (on the eve of the feast of the Baptism of the Lord), the day of the beheading of John the Baptist, the day of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord. Multi-day fasts include: Great Lent, Peter's (Apostolic) fast, Assumption fast, Christmas (Philippi) fast

Lent (Lent) is the most important and strict, established by the Church in imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who fasted in the desert for 40 days and nights. It lasts from Forgiveness Sunday to Easter (6 weeks of fasting itself and the 7th week is Holy). These days, animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc.) are completely excluded from the diet. Vegetable products are consumed in moderation. Even vegetable oil is allowed only on Saturdays, Sundays and on the days of remembrance of especially revered saints, and fish — only on the Annunciation and Palm Sunday. It is also recommended to give up alcoholic beverages and limit the use of sweets, spicy seasonings and spices. Lent is a preparation for the Bright Resurrection of Christ, it is a time of special repentance and intense prayer. The Church teaches that the meaning of fasting is not only in abstinence from food, but, most importantly, in spiritual purification, liberation from evil, anger, slander, and the taming of lust. With the onset of the first day of fasting, songs were everywhere silenced, bells stopped ringing. The appearance of temples has also changed: mourning vestments on icons, lights are extinguished, lamps are darkened, services in temples last longer than usual. Life on the street seemed to freeze for several weeks, only on the holidays of the Annunciation and Palm Sunday there was some revival.

From the first Monday after the Spiritual Day following the Trinity, i.e. from the 58th day after Easter, the Peter's, or Apostolic, fast begins. Its duration ranges from 8 days to 6 weeks and depends on what Easter was this year: early or late. Peter's Fast always ends at the same time — on June 29 (July 12, new style), on the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. The beginning of Peter's fast has been going on since ancient times, it is already commanded in the apostolic decrees. Most often begins to be mentioned since the IV century. This time is popularly called Petrovki. From August 1 (August 14 according to the new style), the Assumption Fast begins. It continues until August 15 (August 28 according to the new style), that is, until the feast of the Assumption of the Most Holy Theotokos.

The Church has always regarded this fast as an ancient institution. In 1166, the number of days of the Dormition Fast was included in the cathedral definition, since up to that time the duration of the Dormition Fast was not the same in different localities.



By establishing the Dormition Fast, the Church encourages believers to imitate the Most Holy Theotokos, who spent her whole life in exploits, fasts and prayers, and especially strengthens fasting before her Dormition, and also encourages us to spiritual transformation, considering fasting as an effective means to grace-filled inner illumination.

The celebration of the Nativity of Christ, built in the image of the celebration of Easter, is preceded by a forty-day fast, which received the name of the Christmas Fast. Sometimes it is called the Philipian Fast, since the plot for the Christmas Fast falls on November 14 (November 27 according to the new style), on the day of the memory of the Apostle Philip. The Christmas fast ends on Christmas Eve on December 24 (January 6 according to the new style). The Christmas fast becomes strict in the last week before the Christmas holiday, reaching its highest severity on Christmas Eve. During the Christmas Fast, fish is not eaten on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Christmas fast falls at a time when agricultural work is completed, food supplies are processed and stored in storerooms and cellars. "Domostroy" – a set of rules that regulated the life of our ancestors – strongly required the heads of families to prepare food for the future for the whole year, to have a stock of frozen and dried fish, salted fish, vegetables, mushrooms, pickles, pickles, fresh, dried fruits, various drinks and syrups, honey in the glacier and dryer, nuts, cereals, flour, etc.

Such a reserve made it possible for the family to live without too much fuss, to plan the daily, week, and season schedule correctly in order to allocate time for both home prayer and church services. The products that were always at hand allowed our ancestors to be hospitable and hospitable hosts, to help those in need, to give shelter to pilgrims who were on pilgrimage to holy places, and to supply them with food for their further journey.

According to St. Seraphim of Sarov, fasting is an indispensable means of acquiring the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, to a modern civilized person, the requirements of the Orthodox charter will seem unbearable, but even the very knowledge of what was considered ordinary and normal for a pious Christian in former times will allow us, if not to imitate the ancient Christians, then at least soberly assess our own measure of abstinence and ascetic feat and thus acquire humility.

III. CONCLUSION

Fasting has always been an integral part of human history. In the course of their existence, the posts absorbed the historical, religious and folk features of life. With the adoption of Christianity in Russia, a new era began.

Church fasts are not just a memory of an event that happened in the distant past, it is a time when we participate in God's eternity itself, and therefore remains modern from day to day, from century to century, from millennium to millennium, until until the history of the world ends. If we think abstractly about historical events, we will never come into contact with these events. We ourselves must become, as it were, among the people who participated in these events in the past.

Orthodox holidays and fasts allow us to think about important topics not only in the Christian world, they allow us to consciously approach such important issues as love, faith, forgiveness and the meaning of life.

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ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЕ ПОСТЫ В ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЙ ЖИЗНИ РОССИИ

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается практика соблюдения православного поста, которая представляется актуальной в контексте многих изменений в жизни современного российского общества, поскольку эта практика отражает уровень религиозного сознания русского народа, где на первый план выходит важный компонент этнической идентичности. Это указывает на настоятельную необходимость специального изучения повседневного опыта церковного поста в исторической перспективе.

Ключевые слова: пост, церковь, общество, священник, государство.

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