

**Do You Fast?**  
**By St. John Chrysostom**

- Do you fast? Prove it by your actions
- If you see a poor man, be kind to him.
- Do not envy a friend if he's more successful and prosperous.
- Fasting is not only to abstain from food but is also a training to have control on all one's senses.
- Discipline your eyes from being greedy, avaricious and desiring other people's wealth.
- Train your ears not to listen to evil conversations and gossip.
- Control your mouth from saying harsh words of judgment and criticism.
- What did you gain from depriving yourself from eating meat when you still hold grudge and hatred towards your brother and sister.
- May the Lord Jesus Who came to the world to save sinners give us strength to complete the fast with true and real meaning.

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**A woman** walked up to a little old man rocking in a chair on his porch. "I couldn't help noticing how happy you look," she said. "What's your secret for a long happy life?" "I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day," he said. "I also drink a case of whiskey a week, eat fatty foods, and never exercise." "That's amazing," the woman said. "How old are you?" "Twenty-six," he said.

**The Fast of Jonah**



- It commemorates the three days that Jonah the prophet fasted while in the belly of the fish. For Christians, the three day fast is symbolic of the three days that Christ remained in the tomb. The fast of Jonah begins on a Monday, February 6, 2012 two weeks before the Monday that marks the beginning of the Great Lent. This fast is a Syrian tradition, introduced to the Coptic Church by one of the Patriarchs of Alexandria of Syrian descent.

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**The Fast of Great Lent**

- The Great Lent will begin on Monday, February 20, 2012; it consists of six weeks (40 days), which correspond to the 40 days that Christ fasted on the mountain. It precedes the Holy Week, which precede Easter. The seven days of the Holy Week is also a period of rigorous fasting.

- There are an additional seven days of fasting before the beginning of the Great Lent, which serve as a preparatory period. Often called "Pre-Lenten Fast" or "Preparatory Week". It is, however, not a part of the fast of the Great Lent.



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When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, remember that God has given you a thousand reasons to smile.



**February 2012 Newsletter**

Fr. Mena Fam

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**"He Who Gives, With Liberality"**  
**(Romans 12:8)**

## How could Jonah survive three days in the belly of a “whale”?

\* It is a true story because:

- Whenever the Bible writers used allegories or parables or other symbolic stories, they always either said so or made it evident in the context.

The book of Jonah is certainly written as though it were actual history. Jonah was a real prophet who is mentioned also in (II Kings 14:25).

- None of the ancient Jews or early Christians ever doubted the authenticity of the book of Jonah and its story.

- Most importantly, the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the account as true. (Matthew 12:40, 41).

- Whole animals as large as or larger than a man have been found in the stomachs of the sperm whale, the whale shark and the white shark (The size of a whale shark is up to 50 ft or 15 m)

- So the “Great Fish” here may have been either a whale or a shark or even a fish specially prepared by the Lord for this purpose. (The Hebrew and Greek words that are used merely mean “a great aquatic animal.”)

\* How did Jonah survive?

- The event involved a divine miracle, as the Scripture strongly implies. The “great fish” was prepared and sent by God, as was the intense storm that threatened the ship on which Jonah was traveling. The storm ceased as soon as Jonah was cast overboard (Jonah 1:4, 15)

## Fasting Quotes

† **St. Anthony the Great:** “Do not neglect the Forty Days; it is the time during which the Lord Jesus fasted on the mountain; it is an example we should follow”

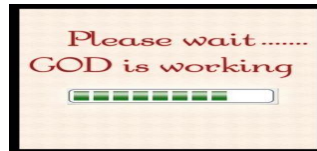
† **Saint Athanasius the Great:** “The strictness of the Forty Days restrains the desires, calms anger and rage, it also replaces gluttony with contentment.”

† **St. Jerome:** “Spending your money in the providing food for the needy is better than placing it in a safe.”

† **John Kronstadt:** “The greatest of the virtues is prayer, while their foundation is fasting.”

† **Ephraim the Syrian:** “A excellent faster is he who restrains himself from every impurity, who imposes abstinence on his tongue and restrains it from idle talk, foul language, slander, condemnation, flattery and all manner of evil speaking, who abstains from anger, rage, malice and vengeance and withdraws from every evil.”

† **St. Jerome:** “A fat stomach never breeds fine thoughts.”



## Jonah the Prophet and the Lord Christ

By Saint John Chrysostom

“For Jonah was a servant, but I am the Master; and he came forth from the great fish, but I rose from death. He proclaimed destruction, but I am come preaching the good tidings of the kingdom. The Ninevites indeed believed without a sign, but I have exhibited many signs. They heard nothing more than those words, but I have made it impossible to deny the truth. The Ninevites came to be ministered to, but I, the very Master and Lord of all, have come not threatening, not demanding an account, but bringing pardon. They were barbarians, but these - the faithful - have conversed with unnumbered prophets. And of Jonah nothing had been prophesied in advance, but of me everything was foretold, and all the facts have agreed with their words. And Jonah indeed, when he was to go forth, instead ran away that he might not be ridiculed. But I, knowing that I am both to be crucified and mocked, have come nonetheless. While Jonah did not endure so much as to be reproached for those who were saved, I underwent even death, and that the most shameful death, and after this I sent others again. And Jonah was a strange sort of person and an alien to the Ninevites, and unknown; but I a kinsman after the flesh and of the same forefathers.”