



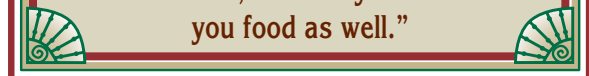
2100 W. Frontage Rd. • Palatine, IL. 60078

Volume 20 - NO. 1/2 - January/February, 2005

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One day, St. Antonios went to visit Anba Paula. At that same day the raven brought a whole loaf of bread. Anba Paula said to his guest: "Now I know that you are one of God's children, because for 70 years the Lord has been sending me half a loaf, but today the Lord sent you food as well."



THE SPIRITUALITY OF FASTING

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Why do we fast? Is it because the calendar says so? Or is it because the church tells us? Of course we have to obey the church and adhere to its teachings. However, when we listen to the church, we have to do so with deep spirituality and not with mere superficiality. If the church puts this fasting for us, then what is the purpose behind it? Is it just to deprive the body?... As a matter of fact depriving the body is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end. Fasting is a means to free the spirit. The question now is: Do we just limit ourselves to the physical meaning of fasting or do we want to achieve a higher goal?

People might fast to satisfy their ego; to be praised by people. By doing so they fall into the trap of



false glory ... in actuality they give in to sin.

We fast because we love God, and we want our spirits to be close to Him. We do not want our bodies to hinder our spirits, so we discipline our bodies to be attuned to the work of the spirit. Fasting lifts us beyond the material level, and helps us lead a spiritual life. We give our spirits the chance to be with God, thus we will enjoy God's love and presence. This should be our life style, always remembering that God's love and presence can be attained by fasting...

Therefore, we fast because we love God and we love His presence in our life. Fasting helps us to disregard the worldly desires and prepares us to the eternal life with God.

Fasting then, is a period dedicated solely to God.

An Insight

Amshir 2nd, (February 9th), marks the departure of Anba Paula the Anchorite. He was from the city of Alexandria, Egypt. At an early age, he withdrew from the world and lived in a cave in the Eastern inner wilderness. Close to the cave there was a spring of water and a palm tree.

Anba Paula stayed in that cave for more than seventy years, during which he did not see any human being. His daily meal was only half a loaf of bread, which a raven used to bring him in the evening. He never ate a cooked meal. As for his clothes he always wore a simple dress which he himself used to make out of palm tree fiber.

Anba Paula abstained from all worldly pleasures, always remembering that: "the world passes and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides for ever." (1John 2:17)

Besides the fact that Fasting is healthy, it is also a great blessing. It is quite feasible once you put your heart into it.... Dear brothers and sisters, make a sincere effort to fast, and you will never regret it....



CHURCH NEWS:

On Sunday, February 20th, H.G. Bishop Angaelos will bless us by a short visit from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m..

On Saturday, April 2nd H.G. Bishop Makarios, will hold Ashya prayers at 6:00 p.m., and on Sunday, April 3rd H.G. will preside over the Devine Liturgy Service from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Please be sure to attend and be blessed.

On Saturday, March 5th, is a spiritual day for the servants. It starts at 8:30 a.m. with the Devine liturgy Service, and ends with the Ashya prayers.



Congratulations To:

❖ **Rev. Fr. Rewis Awadallah**, for the 15th Anniversary of his ordination. May the Lord grant him health and bless his service so it will always be fruitful and successful.

❖ **Dr. Allen Mikbail & Ms. Megan Davia** For their blessed engagement, may the Lord bless and guide them in all their endeavors.