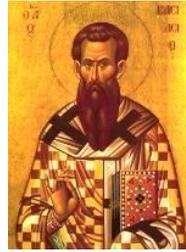


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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*** ANNOUNCEMENT ***

The next Parish Advisory Council meeting will be held on Mon March 4, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm.

FASTING FROM MEAT

Why is meat targeted in the Fast? Certainly, in most places' meat is a special festive dish. We think of the fatted calf which the father ordered slain to welcome his prodigal son back home. In some discipline's other festive items like wine and oil are avoided as well. As Christ said when pressed by the Pharisees about His disciples' behavior, "*Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast*" (Mt 9:15). In many cultures to this very day meat is a luxury. Numerous people regularly get their protein from beans or pulses, not meat. It's too expensive. One of the reasons why American fast food has become so popular throughout the world is that it makes meat affordable to more people than ever before.

The Food of Paradise: There is another reason why we avoid meat on fast days. During the Lenten season we seek to focus on restoring the likeness to God within us, to stress the quality bestowed on us at the beginning and lost at the fall. During the Fast we seek to return to the Garden of Eden, as it were, to return to Paradise, and no one ate meat in the Garden. According to the Book of Genesis, "*God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food'; and it was so*" (Gen 1:29-30). In Genesis the consumption of animal products and wine are described as arising later in human history; we were all vegetarians in Eden. By avoiding meat, we are symbolizing our desire to return to Eden, to recover our nature as God meant it to be.

The Book of Genesis paints a picture of human history in a downward spiral to the time of Noah and the flood. According to Genesis, after that catastrophe, God began restoring humanity on the earth. Part of that restoration included the addition of meat to our diet. God said to Noah, "*Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as [I gave] the green herbs*" (Gen 9:15). Our fasting from meat, then, is not to avoid something bad but to express our desire for something better. In this kind of fasting we glorify God in the body by limiting ourselves to what has been called the "food of paradise." In this way we are saying that we value above all things the communion with God that our first parents had.

Unclean Foods: As the Jewish people developed, the meat of certain animals, fish and other sea creatures was considered as "unclean," unfit for God's Chosen People. This served in part to stress their particular relationship to God and distinguish them from others. In the New Testament we see that this distinction is abolished; there would be no separation between Jews and Gentiles and no unclean foods. This is expressed in the Acts of the Apostles which records St. Peter's vision of a sheet lowered from the heavens containing all kinds of animals. Peter was told to eat but he refuses on the ground that these animals were unclean. Then a voice from heaven told him, "*What God has cleansed you must not call common*" (Acts 10:15). Gentiles and all foods were acceptable to the Creator and were to be received by the followers of Christ.

In our Tradition there is room for customizing the practice of fasting for each believer, under the guidance of his or her spiritual father. According to her physical strength and spiritual growth, a person may be able to fast from all foods until noon; another may be able and led to fast until evening. The individual believer who does not have a spiritual father should follow the guidelines of their own eparchy without adapting them to personal taste. People who envision a one-size-fits-all rule of fasting may be put off by seeing someone fast differently from them. This brings us back to the principle which St Paul taught the Corinthians: "*If food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble*" (1 Cor 8:13). Our fasting should be informed by love. This may mean fasting the way my neighbor is fasting when in his company, whether this is more or less than my own rule prescribes. Needless to say, we should not seek out such circumstances which would lessen our practice of fasting with that end in mind. *(FebLeaflets2019)*

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:00AM **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Matins/Orthros: Every Sunday at 9:00AM **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Maggy Attalah, Nadia Casab, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, , and Jean Benoit. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection February 16/17: \$ 380.00 Fuel Collection: \$10.00
Memorial Offering: \$ 20.00 Syrian Cheese Sale: \$50.00

*** SPECIAL INTENTION ***

Our prayers and special intentions goes Weael & Olga Barahmeh & their children. May our Lord Jesus Christ grant them many years to come in good health, prosperity, happiness, and holiness. Amen

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

† **William Chanatry**, By Mr. Al Zito
† **Katerine Aubain**, By Robert Lalli
† **Annabelle Calabrese**, By Maryann Astour

THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24

† **William Chanatry**, By Mr. Frank Strange
† **Rose Casatelli**, By Eva Hajec
† **Deceased Members of the Barahemh & Rihany families**, By Wael & Olga Barahmeh

NEXT SATURDAY, MARCH 2

† **William Chanatry**, By Mr. Mrs. Abe Acee

NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 3

† **William Chanatry**, By Mr. & Mrs. Dan Klockowski