

The Benefits of Fasting

Since it is now clear to you from the example both of the Lord and his subjects that the value of fasting is considerable, and that great benefit accrues to the soul from it, I beg you, my dear people, now that you know its benefit not to resist its saving power through indifference nor lose heart at its approach, but rejoice and be glad, as blessed Paul says, “The more our external selves are destroyed, the more the inner person is renewed” (2Cor 4:16). Fasting is nourishment for the soul, you see, and just as bodily nourishment fattens the body, so fasting invigorates the soul, provides it with nimble wings, lifts it on high, enables it to contemplate things that are above, and renders it superior to the pleasures and attractions of this present life.

Homily on Genesis, on the beginning of the Holy Lent, 9
FC, vol. 74, p. 25-26.

ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου

Ἄλλ' ὅτι μὲν μεγάλη τῆς νηστείας ἡ ἰσχὺς, καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἐκ ταύτης κέρδος τῆ ψυχῆ προσγινόμενον, καὶ ἐκ τῶν δούλων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Δεσπότης δῆλον ἡμῖν γεγένηται· παρακαλῶ οὖν τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀγάπην, εἰδότας αὐτῆς κέρδος, μὴ διὰ ῥαθυμίαν ἀπώσασθαι τὴν ἐκ ταύτης ὠφέλειαν, μηδὲ δυσχεραίνειν πρὸς τὴν ταύτης παρουσίαν, ἀλλὰ χαίρειν καὶ ἀγάλλεσθαι, κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Παῦλον· Ὅσω γὰρ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, τοσούτω ὁ ἔσω ἀνακαινοῦται. Νηστεία γὰρ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶ τροφή, καὶ καθάπερ αὕτη ἡ σωματικὴ τροφή πιαίνει τὸ σῶμα, οὕτω καὶ ἡ νηστεία τὴν ψυχὴν εὐτονωτέραν ἐργάζεται, κοῦφον αὐτῇ τὸ πτερόν κατασκευάζει, μετάρσιον αὐτὴν ποιεῖ, τὰ ἄνω φαντάζεσθαι προξενεῖ, ἀνωτέραν αὐτὴν τῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ τῶν ἡδέων τοῦ παρόντος βίου ἀπεργαζομένη.

PG 53, 24-25.

St. Mark *Monthly Review*

Published by: The Monastery of St. Macarius the Great, Wadi El-Natrun.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS (10 issues a year, July & August excluded, sent by Int. Courier):

U.S.\$ 100.00; Single Copies U.S.\$ 10.00

Subscriptions to be paid through our Website as mentioned below, or sent by a check to:

“St Macarius Printing House”, P.O. Box 1574, Centreville, VA 20122, USA.

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Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 80-960629. ISSN 2805-2382

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