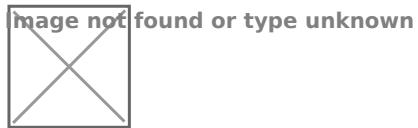


Patriarch Daniel: By fasting, we show that we love God the Giver more than His gifts



“The Saviour teaches us that we must show through fasting that we love God, the Giver of life, more than the gifts He offers us and that we love heavenly spiritual gifts more than limited and transient material gifts,” His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel said on Cheesefare Sunday.

His Beatitude explained the Gospel of the Cheesefare Sunday, or of the Expulsion of Adam from Heaven, from which the following teachings emerge:

“Forgiving the mistakes of our peers enlightens the soul for its communion with God,” said the Patriarch of Romania. “Through this, the Gospel teaches us that man’s relationship with God depends on man’s relationship with his neighbours, that is, man cannot approach God by passing over his neighbour.”

“Fasting is an act of self-giving or an offering, a sacrifice of man’s love to God as a sign of gratitude for the gift of life and as a desire for the sanctification of soul and body.”

“Heavenly treasures are the lights gathered in the soul through prayer and good deeds.”

Patriarch Daniel dedicated most of his sermon to the importance of fasting.

A proof of love for God

“This is the essence of fasting: it is the sign of the faithful man’s love for God,” His Beatitude continued.

“God, the Giver of all earthly and heavenly gifts and, above all, the Giver of eternal life, is more precious than all that we receive from Him as gifts. Fasting shows us how to value God the Giver,” the Patriarch of Romania noted.

Violating the only commandment received in Eden, “Adam and Eve forgot the Giver and greedily approached the forbidden tree. By this, they proved that they valued the gifts more than the Giver.”

Fasting means “not only abstaining from foods of animal origin and replacing them with products of vegetable origin but also changing the way of looking, speaking

and living. This metamorphosis, this change, means spiritualization. It means dispassionate thinking," His Beatitude explained.

School of freedom and provision of the resurrection

That is why "the work of resurrection as a rising from the death caused by sin in man's life is a work throughout the entire fasting period".

"This period is also a time of joy because the believer who fasts, prays a lot, confesses more often, communes more often, gives alms more often feels the joy or provision of the joy of the resurrection through this mystical raising from the death of the soul caused by sin," Patriarch Daniel said.

"In other words, the fasting season is a school of human freedom to love God more than His gifts and to feel how God's grace works in those who, with much humility and much love and effort, with humble and merciful love, draw closer to God and help their fellows."

"The man who fasts and prays also becomes a joyful man. There are people who, at the end of Great Lent, seem to regret somewhat that Lent is ending because they felt very encouraged, enlightened and penetrated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who mysteriously works inside us," His Beatitude added.

"God rewards the person who fasts. He mysteriously answers not with words but with another state of life, a state of inner liberation, of joy, namely the joy of man's encounter with God the Giver, because of Whom he enjoys more than receiving limited and transient material gifts."

Patriarch Daniel participated on Sunday in the Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Chapel of Saint George at the Patriarchal Residence.

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