

2020.50.08

EPARCHY OF ST. GEORGE IN CANTON

FROM THE BISHOP

TO: EPARCHIAL CLERGY
FROM: MOST REVEREND JOHN MICHAEL BOTEAN, D.D.
SUBJECT: DISPENSATION: APOSTLES' FAST 2020
DATE: 6/5/20


The Fast of the Holy Apostles, from the Monday after Sunday of All Saints until the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul has long been, in my experience, one of the least observed of the four Lenten seasons of the Church. This is not surprising in a Western milieu, where the period of the fast typically coincides with weddings and graduations, as well as some secular holidays. After a long winter, families like to get together to enjoy one another's company, often in the presence of an outdoor grill! While the Apostles' Fast is a timely reminder that some things are more important than our social lives during the same time, it is meant to be of service to the Church, not a burden to it: *The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath* (Mark 2:27).

It had been my intention to issue, on a more or less permanent basis, a dispensation from observing the common abstinence assigned to this period whenever there is a special gathering or special occasion, such as a wedding. This year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of these gatherings have either been cancelled or were never considered in the first place.

Therefore, I am dispensing the faithful of this Eparchy from all abstinence, other than the usual Wednesday and Friday abstinence, for the period of the Apostles' Fast this year. The extraordinary and difficult circumstances created by the pandemic seem to me to warrant a relaxation of the traditional discipline in order to make life at home, which has become complicated enough, a little less so. Likewise, where it may be possible to have a safe family gathering for a special occasion, in view of all the extra planning and precautions needed, I would want to make such events a little bit easier to hold.

At the same time, I would stress that those who choose to observe the traditional fast do well, especially if they offer their penitential practice for an end to the pandemic and, now, for an end to the violence that is troubling our streets. Likewise, observing the fast in reparation for the sin of racism in our world would also be praiseworthy, and I would suggest it for those who are so inclined.

Please make this dispensation known to the faithful of your parish. May God swiftly end these plagues and bring peace to His Church and His world.



(Very Rev.) Ovidiu I. Marginean
Chancellor



(Most Rev.) John Michael Botean
Bishop