

St Mary Fast 2025

Day 1 (Thu 8/7) - Fasting Rule

Good morning, dear beloved!

Today we begin the Blessed Fast of the Virgin Mary. This is a fast that is loved by all of the faithful in the Orthodox Church for our beloved Mother Saint Mary!

We Fast until the Feast of the Assumption of the Body of St Mary (August 22)

The dietary rule for this fast is that after a period of abstaining from food, we eat a vegan diet with fish permitted (except Wednesdays and Fridays). Let us use the time of fasting to redirect our spirit, our minds and our bodies to the Lord. To practice self-control, to examine our weaknesses, and to grow in God's grace. Let us have a period of prayer, prostrations, veneration and reading the Scripture.

I encourage you to attend the Revivals and Praises that we will have during Vespers on Saturdays in St Rebekah 6:30pm.

I also encourage you to attend some Revivals in our sister church, St Mary & Archangel Michael in Oviedo, during the weekdays - they have a nice program with many visiting priests every weekday 7pm starting next Monday.

May the Lord grant us to offer Him an acceptable fast. May it be a period of growth for all us. Through the intercessions of our holy mother, the Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin, St Mary.



ليقونة والدة الإله القديسة مريم العذراء

Day 2 (Fri 8/8) - Theotokos

Good morning, dear beloved! Blessed Fast of St Mary

One of the names that we use for St Mary is ⲙⲁⲣⲓ ⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲓ "Theotokos" - Greek for "Mother of God." In Coptic, this word is ⲙⲁⲣⲓ ⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲓ. We don't use as much the term "Mother of Jesus" or "Mother of Christ" because "Mother of God" conveys a very important Theological idea - that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word of God; the Second Person of the Trinity; God the Son.

St John starts his Gospel with: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." ... "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Gabriel the archangel revealed this truth to St Mary when he told her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

The Son of God will be born from you! And the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled: "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The Son of God is the Son of the Virgin Mary

May she intercede for us always that the Lord forgive our sins



Day 3 (Sat 8/9) - Ever-Virgin

Good morning, dear beloved! Blessed Fast of St Mary

Another name for St Mary is ⲙⲁⲣⲓ ⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲓ (a-eiparthenos) - Ever Virgin.

In most icons of the Virgin Mary, you will find that her garments have on them three stars. Even in this icon of Pentecost (where St Mary was present) we can see the three stars. These represent her Ever-Virginity... she is Virgin before the Nativity, during the Nativity, and after the Nativity. Ever-Virgin!

In the modern day some Protestants and some "scholars" claim that the Virgin Mary had more children after the Lord. If that were the case, why would the Lord Jesus entrust her to the care of St John the Beloved at the Cross? No, but rather, she is Ever-Virgin; we are her children, and she is our Mother.

And thus, the Prophecies and Symbols of the Old Testament are fulfilled:

- "And the Lord said to me, 'This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.'" (Ezekial 44:2)
- The Burning Bush: "So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed." (Exodus 3:2)
- "A garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." (Song of Songs 4:12)
- The stone cut without human hands (Daniel 2:34-35)



Day 4 (Sun 8/10) -

Day 5 (Mon 8/11) - Monday Lobsh

Blessed Fast of St Mary, dear beloved

See this section from the Lobsh of the Monday Theotokia

"Adam our Father, • the first creation • by the hands of God, • the Creator;
Through the advice of Eve, • our first mother, • Adam ate from • the fruit of the tree.
So came to our race • and all the creation • the authority of death • and corruption.
Through Mary, • the Mother of God, • Adam was restored again • to his authority."

Our Mother St Mary is called the Second Eve - Eve, who played an active role in the fall of man stands in parallel with St Mary, who played an active role in the salvation of man.

I LOVE this icon.

You see on the top left the angel (cherub) with the flaming sword who was placed at the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life, contrasted with the Angel Gabriel on the top right who announced to St Mary the advent of Life.

You see the heel of St Mary on the head of the serpent fulfilling what the Lord spoke to the serpent in the garden: "He [the Seed of the Woman] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

You see the Virgin Mary covering the shame of Eve with her veil. And you see Eve seeing the salvation that she was waiting for, with her hand and her eyes on the Lord.

St Irenaeus says: "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary; what the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith."

Where Eve disobeyed the commandment of the Lord, St Mary, by faith, said: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."



Day 6 (Tue 8/12) - Tuesday Theotokia

Good morning, dear beloved! Blessed Fast of St Mary and Happy Tuesday!

In the Tuesday Theotokia, we sing this verse: "Hail to her who nursed, the Provider of everyone."

The Lord provides for us food and drink and all of our needs and this is why He tells us "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." (Matthew 6:25-34).

We see in the background of the modern icon the Manna coming from heaven. The Lord God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness with food to eat. It is not until after the incarnation that the Lord revealed to us: "I am the bread which came down from heaven" - "I am the Bread of Life" - "If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John 6)

Also in the background of that icon, we see water from a rock. The Lord God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness with water to drink. It is not until after the incarnation that the Lord revealed to us through St Paul: "all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10)

The Lord who provides for all - who provided for Israel in the wilderness for 40 years, who provides for us all of our needs even without us asking, and who provides us with His own Body and Blood for our salvation - was provided FOR by St Mary. She, as Theotokos, nursed Him with her milk and provided for Him the human needs.

The icon of the Lord being nursed by the Theotokos is an ancient icon especially in the Coptic Church (see image of 8th Century Fresco in the Monastery of St Mary El Sourian in Wadi al-Natrun). In the early centuries, the Church was dealing with Gnosticism and Docetism: heresies that denied the Lord Jesus' human nature. One of the ways the Church responded and combatted these heresies was with iconography. The icon emphasizes Christ's True Humanity - born of a woman, and needing nourishment like all humans.



provide for us

Day 7 (Wed 8/13) - Wednesday Theotokia

Day 8 (Thu 8/14) - Thursday Theotokia

Day 9 (Fri 8/15) - Friday Theotokia

Day 10 (Sat 8/16) - Saturday Theotokia

Day 11 (Sun 8/17) - Sunday Theotokia

Day 12 (Mon 8/18) -

Day 13 (Tue 8/19) - Transfiguration Feast

Day 14 (Wed 8/20) - The Rod of Aaron, The Golden Censer, the Pot of Manna



Day 15 (Thu 8/21) - Ark of Covenant

Day 16 (Fri 8/22) - Assumption of the Body of St Mary



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