



199. Nov. 7/20, 1975 St. Cyril of New Lake

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : October 1, 2016

Dear Brother in Christ, Phanourios [Ingram],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We were glad to hear from you again. In answer to your two questions:

1. You should be allowed to receive Holy Communion in San Francisco after simply going to confession. There is no special rite for receiving people from the Greek Archdiocese, because our Russian Church Abroad has not made any declaration officially breaking off communion with them nor declaring that their sacraments are without grace; all that has been done was a statement strongly discouraging our people from being in communion with the Greek Archdiocese. Some people might even try to tell you that it is “all right” to receive communion again in the Greek Archdiocese, but you should not do so; you should strive to be in harmony with the spirit and not merely the letter of the decrees of our bishops, being aware that the Greek Archdiocese is going faster and faster into apostasy from Christ and Orthodoxy. In our Russian Church you must go to confession each time before receiving Holy Communion—except for some special times such as Holy Week, when you can go to confession on Great Thursday or Saturday and then receive communion without confession at the Pascha Liturgy (or even receive communion at all three Liturgies—Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday).

About receiving communion—we will write our Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco and inform him what we have told you, and if he says anything different we will write you again before January.

2. Concerning fast days, we will be printing some details in the 1976 Calendar. The precise rules of fasting are a little complicated, but in general: on Wednesdays and Fridays one eats no meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, or oil (such as fried foods), and also no wine; but if there are feast days on Wed. or Friday the fast is relaxed to allow the eating of oil and wine (lesser feasts) or fish (greater feasts—mostly the Twelve Great Feasts). During the Nativity Fast no meat, eggs, or dairy products are eaten for the whole fast, but on Tuesday and Thursday oil can be eaten even if there is no feast day, and on Saturdays and Sundays fish can be eaten. If a lesser feast day falls on Wed. or Friday, oil can be eaten, and if on Mon, Tues, or Thursday, fish can be eaten. Of course, if you can't go to church every day and don't know just what kind of feast is being celebrated, it's difficult to keep up with this— that's why we will indicate it for every day in the new Calendar. Most people don't know all these rules, and for laymen who might be mixed up by them it's really enough to refrain from fish (and of course meat, eggs, and dairy products on Weds, and Fridays during the Nativity Fast. The Great Lent is stricter, allowing only oil and wine on Saturdays and Sundays.



Unfortunately, our 1976 Calendar won't be out for at least 3 weeks. Please pray for us so that we will finish it at least by then. We have many difficulties, and it begins to look like a hard winter ahead. Last night we had our third snow already (5 inches), and usually we don't have snow until the last days of November. But all this we accept for our humbling, and it is good for us.

Don't worry too much about how spiritually poor you are—God sees that, but for you it is expected to trust in God and pray to Him as best you can, never to fall into despair, and to struggle according to your strength. If you even begin to think you are spiritually “well off”—then you can know for sure that you aren't! True spiritual life, even on the most elementary level, is always accompanied by suffering and difficulties. Therefore you should rejoice in all your difficulties and sorrows.

Nina has written us that your wife is planning to go to New Jersey, either soon or in January, and she gave her the address of Father George Lewis. There is another church she might visit if she has the chance—I'll find the address and put it at the bottom of this page. The services there are in Slavonic, but the priest, who is a very good friend of ours, speaks good English and is very good and zealous. If she visits Fr. George Lewis' church, she should be sure to meet my godfather there, who is the choir director: Dimitry Andrault de Langeron. It would be good if she could visit his home also—which is like a little church. He has three children. I will write him also and tell him to expect her.

Please pray for us—the prayers of true Orthodox Christian for each other are very necessary in these terrible times.

With love in Christ,
Seraphim, monk