



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*Daily Devotion at Zion + March 2023 AD + **Season of Lent***

Fasting Revisited

“When you fast”: that’s how Jesus introduces the topic of fasting in Matthew, chapter 6. He says “when,” not “if,” assuming that His disciples will fast. He fasted (Matthew 4:1-11), and His followers would fast (Acts 13:2-3, 14:23), and the Church has always fasted after Him. To be sure, His followers also feast—often at times when people think it should fast! (see Mark 2:18ff)—but fasting is a feature of Christian devotion.

Why? The reason is more gracious than people think.

For the Christian, fasting is also a way of feasting. First, by eating less, we joyfully confess our utter trust in God. Hunger turns reminds us that we depend on Him, and what better thing is there, than to rest in God’s power, and not our own?

Second, by adopting set periods of time for our fasting, we *set a limit* to it. That is, we turn fasting into the *exception* that proves the *rule*: we were created to feast! It teaches us to love that feasting all the more, and especially, to love the Lord’s Supper.

Here, then, are the origins of “soup suppers” during Lent. Simple soup meals help us to fast—yet notice how joyful such suppers are! Truly, fasting is feasting as we join with our Lord in learning anew “that man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

About the Cover Art

“Fasting in the Wilderness” by Rose Datoc Dall presents us with a peaceful Christ, by no means disfigured or disheveled, confidently communing with His Father as He goes without nourishment following His Baptism. He seems to rest in a blue shadow, recalling Psalm 17:8: “Hide me in the shadow of your wings.” Neither desert nor hunger separated Him from God, as neither would death, in the end. Still today, He feeds and nourishes His whole Church with that eternal life.

Daily Readings for the Week of Lent 1 (February 26)

S Jeremiah 9:23-24 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Mark 2:18-22	Th Deuteronomy 9:23— 10:5 Hebrews 4:1-10 John 3:16-21
M Deuteronomy 8:1-20 Hebrews 2:11-18 John 2:1-12	F Deuteronomy 10:12-22 Hebrews 4:11-16 John 3:22-36
T Deuteronomy 9:1-12 Hebrews 3:1-11 John 2:13-22	Sa Deuteronomy 11:18-28 Hebrews 5:1-10 John 4:1-26
W Deuteronomy 9:13-21 Hebrews 3:12-19 John 2:23—3:15	<i>These readings correspond to pages 787—816 in Vol- ume I of <u>For All the Saints</u>.</i>

Daily Readings for the Week of Lent 2 (March 5)

S Jeremiah 1:1-10 1 Corinthians 3:11-23 Mark 3:31—4:9	Th Jeremiah 4:9-10, 19-28 Romans 2:12-24 John 5:19-29
M Jeremiah 1:11-19 Romans 1:1-15 John 4:27-42	F Jeremiah 5:1-9 Romans 2:25—3:18 John 5:30-47
T Jeremiah 2:1-13, 29-32 Romans 1:16-25 John 4:43-54	Sa Jeremiah 5:20-31 Romans 3:19-31 John 7:1-13
W Jeremiah 3:6-18 Romans 1:26—2:11 John 5:1-18	<i>These readings correspond to pages 816—849 in Vol- ume I of <u>For All the Saints</u>.</i>

Daily Readings for the Week of Lent 3 (March 12)

S Jeremiah 6:9-15 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Mark 5:1-20	Th Jeremiah 10:11-24 Romans 5:12-21 John 8:21-32
M Jeremiah 7:1-15 Romans 4:1-12 John 7:14-36	F Jeremiah 11:1-8, 14-17 Romans 6:1-11 John 8:33-47
T Jeremiah 7:21-34 Romans 4:13-25 John 7:37-52	Sa Jeremiah 13:1-11 Romans 6:12-23 John 8:47-59
W Jeremiah 8:4-7, 18—9:6 Romans 5:1-11 John 8:12-20	<i>These readings correspond to pages 349—879 in Volume I of <u>For All the Saints</u>.</i>

Daily Readings for the Week of Lent 4 (March 19)

S Jeremiah 14:1-22 Galatians 4:21—5:1 Mark 8:11-21	Th Jeremiah 22:13-23 Romans 8:12-27 John 6:41-51
M Jeremiah 16:1-21 Romans 7:1-12 John 6:1-15	F Jeremiah 23:1-8 Romans 8:28-39 John 6:52-59
T Jeremiah 17:19-27 Romans 7:13-25 John 6:16-27	Sa Jeremiah 23:9-15 Romans 9:1-18 John 6:60-71
W Jeremiah 18:1-11 Romans 8:1-11 John 6:27-40	<i>These readings correspond to pages 879—910 in Volume I of <u>For All the Saints</u>.</i>