



Reflections | Fast for the Climate

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Climate Change and Fasting

By his Eminence Archbishop Serafim Kykotis

What people have not managed to destroy for thousands of years, the generations of the past two hundred years have managed to. The risk of our planet being transformed into a dangerous hot-house without a ventilator further constitutes a visible threat for all of us, staying a little away at the point to avoid the eventuality of the condition of death like the plants of an enclosed hot-house which at stages wither, dry-up and die.

The initiative of the Youth from the Loutheran Church to be involved all of us in fasting to wake up and to react together to save our Planet, our lives and the lives of the people of the future generations is very important for the whole Humanity.

Only when we accept the teaching of our Church, that the Creator of all things is God, can we love the whole of Creation and protect it. We as the crown of God's creation have a special place on our planet. As humans we have been invited by God to continue the work of creation, and simultaneously to look after it, take care of it and to push for its advancement to whatever protects it as far as its survival is concerned. Hence God, in the first book of the Old Testament, namely in the book of Genesis, invites the first man, Adam, to give names to the animals and to all things. This symbolic Biblical reference shows precisely our responsibilities to the whole of God's creation. In order to respect God's creation we must naturally become conscious of the fact that everything in the world belongs to God who created it. Consequently, we human beings are under no

circumstance, the proprietors of God's creation but people who accept his commandments, that is, His management. Hence, what is created in addition in our relationship with creation and nature, is awe and respect. We become conscious of the fact that we have a serious and responsible role to perform for the protection of the environment, which is associated directly with our fitting respect, which we all owe to the Creator, that is, to God.

The teaching of the Church approximates the relationship of humans with nature and the environment to another perspective, where the reconciliation and coexistence of people is preserved.

One important way to live in this direction of reconciliation and all of us to protect our Environment is the initiative of fasting.

Fasting is never an intention but a means to an end. However it always has noteworthy intentions: the transformation of ourselves to do good things for the whole Creation of God. Fasting is our effort to keep ourselves far away from the source of evil. In this way we establish true fasting when we avoid -condemnation and not well-meaning criticism which is based on events, when we abstain from anger and lies and on our insistence on the truth. The true meaning of fasting does not simply refer to abstinence from certain foods. There are times when we fast for a few days and consider ourselves prepared to receive Holy Communion. However, fasting on its own, without repentance is useless. We might not eat meat, but our behaviour may be the cause of disputes in other people. There are times when we fast from some provisions and inside us we allow hatred and vengeance to nest. This is why in the Old Testament it is persistently emphasized that we cannot fast and simultaneously eat away at our fellow human being's flesh with our hatred against them. These forms of fasting constitute the hypocritical fasting which the Gospel refers to. The one virtue that is linked to true fasting is forgiveness; to forgive those who have wronged us. The other virtue is charity; to help our fellow human beings whenever we can and not to become enriched with material wealth, but with spiritual treasures, as is charity. Besides, every illegal and unjust wealth is a fire which scorches and a beast which devours. Consequently, the true essence of fasting presupposes the forgiveness of others as well as charity and generally our support towards all our fellow humans beings, Greek and non-Greeks, Whites and Blacks, young and old.

Fasting helps all of us that we should be there to help the poor people who are the first victims of the climate change tragedies and above all fasting is the way to remember our spiritual role as soldiers of Christ to protect our Planet as a gift given by God to the whole Humanity.

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