

Great Lent in the Malankara Orthodox Church starts with evening prayer on the 1st Sunday (Wedding of Cana) and concludes with the Holy Qurbana on 8th Sunday (Resurrection/Easter).

### **1. How do I take part in Great Lent?**

Great Lent combines dietary restrictions and fasting. Dietary restrictions include avoiding fish, meat, wine, eggs and dairy products. Fasting is up to the ninth hour (approximately 3 p.m., when Christ's suffering on the Cross ended) on weekdays, and until noon (12 p.m.) on Saturday's and Sunday's.

Note: Nursing mothers, the sick, and the infirm have been exempted from these requirements. Plus, the extent of following these practices should be balanced with individual circumstances. At the very least, dietary restrictions should be observed.

### **2. Is Great Lent only about dietary restrictions? Is there something more?**

Physical fasting is meaningless if it is disconnected from spiritual growth. When one fasts, their negative state of hunger is transformed by prayer and meditation into His positive presence.

### **3. Besides dietary restrictions, what prayers are said during Great Lent?**

The Church's canonical prayers for Great Lent are said at least three times a day in the morning, noon and evening. These prayers are marked by prostrations. This is done by kneeling down, touching the ground with the forehead, then standing up and making the sign of the cross.

Furthermore, the noon prayers of Great Lent are marked by 40 prostrations. This is done with four sets of ten prostrations.

The first set is accompanied by chanting "Kurielaison" or "Lord have mercy"

Second set: "Lord have mercy upon us"

Third set: "Lord be kind and have mercy"

Final set: "Answer Lord and have mercy"

#### **4. How are each of the days/weeks set up during Great Lent?**

Great Lent starts with Forgiveness Service on Monday after noon prayer. It is a beautiful ceremony of preparation, involving the act of forgiveness, marked by forty prostrations, and the kiss of peace.

Thereafter, each succeeding Sunday of Great Lent is based upon a specific miracles performed by Our Lord.

The final week of Great Lent is known as the Passion Week (or Holy Week), which begins on Palm Sunday, followed by Passover on Thursday, Good Friday, Saturday of Good Tidings, and finally Easter.

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#### **General Outline of the Great Lent**

1st Sunday: Wedding at Cana

1st Monday: Forgiveness Service

2nd Sunday: Healing of Leper

3rd Sunday: Healing of Paralytic

4th Sunday: Healing of Canaanite Woman

Mid-Lent (25<sup>th</sup> day): Exaltation of the Cross

5th Sunday: Healing of the Crippled Woman/Good Samaritan

6th Sunday: Healing of Blind Man

40th Day (Friday): Christ's Triumph over Satan

#### **Holy (Passion) Week:**

7th Sunday: Palm Sunday

Passover (Thursday)

Good Friday

Saturday of Good Tidings

8th Sunday: Easter

Written by: *George Aramath*