



# St. Nicholas Family Connection

February 2024



## *An Orthodox Family Talks about Fasting*

*Anthony M. Coniaris*

*Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*

Parents may share with their children the following basic facts on fasting. The Orthodox Church has always placed great emphasis on fasting. We fast on Wednesdays because on this day the decision was made to arrest Jesus. We fast on Fridays because it is the day on which Jesus was crucified. Fasting helps us remember that these are special days in the history of salvation. Other periods of fast are during Lent, Advent (pre-Christmas fast), the first fifteen days of August, etc.

Orthodox Christians fast from meat and products derived from meat, i.e., milk, cheese, eggs, butter, etc. The purpose of such fasting is threefold: (1) it helps us concentrate more on prayer. A full stomach is not as conducive to prayer as one not so full. (2) Fasting helps strengthen our will power. By learning to say “no” to certain types of food, we shall find it easier to say “no” to temptations. (3) Fasting is a way of helping us identify with those who hunger and provide food for them. (4) Jesus fasted. He tells us in the Bible, “When you fast ... “ He does not say, “If you fast...” He expects us to fast.

An early Christian, Aristides, wrote, “If there is a poor person among the Christians and they do not have the means to help him, they fast two or three days and give the food they have saved through fasting to the hungry person.”

Orthodox Christians are called upon to fast not only for reasons of self-control and prayer, but also for reasons of love: to deny ourselves something that we may share what we have saved with a needy person

### **An Example**

One family decided to have a meal of just rice once a week since that is the diet of millions of underprivileged in the world. Of course, the rice was fancied up a bit. It was not watered down to a thin gruel as in the underprivileged countries. When Lent was over, this same family decided to continue once every month the practice of serving only rice for din-



ner. The money they saved was placed in a special envelope to be given through their Church to the world’s hungry. They could have obtained the money by cutting out some luxury but they felt that the rice meal helped them identify with those they wished to help.

### **A Suggested Family Prayer Service**

To visualize the relationship between your fasting and charity you might want to try this approach to grace before meals. Use it especially on Friday.

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** God speaks to us of sharing, of caring about our many brothers and sisters in this world who are hungry, thirsty, starving, and who are waiting for our love. As we share this meal, let us think of them and pray for them together.

**Mother:** Give to one of the children, or another family member, the money that was not used for food at this meal, saying, “This is the money we would have spent if we’d had a bigger supper. Let us give it to: (here mention the charity your family selected, or the parish project).

**Child:** Let your children place the money in a box or envelope designated for this purpose.

**All:** Bless the little which we are doing. Help and multiply it, in Your mercy, to serve the needs of those unknown to us, but known and loved by You.

## Why Connection Counts: Parenting From the Heart

George Papageorge, M.A., LMFT



### The Journey of Love

Our awareness to know what they feel is strongly connected to having enough emotional awareness to know what we feel; emotionally aware parents raise emotionally aware children. Empathy is incorporated into our communication through the skill of active listening. Empathy is that journey of love where we are secure enough to leave our frame of reference and travel to the others' frame of reference in order to understand them and be present with them, resulting in connection and love.

Dr. John Gottman, a well-known psychologist and author of the book: *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*, speaks of his view of the importance of the parents' role in the emotional development of their children. Of the thousands of parents and children he has worked with, he states: "Our results tell a simple, yet compelling story. We have found that parents fall into one of two broad categories: those that give their children guidance about the world of emotion and those who don't."

As we think through ways that we can connect with our kids, we can be encouraged to know that emotional connecting can occur during most conversations and daily activities.

### Upcoming Events:

February 4	Godparent/Godchild Sunday
February 4	5 pm GOYA at FLC
February 11	5 pm Jr. GOYA at FLC
February 16-19	GOYA Ski Trip
February 17	10 am OCMC Pan Orthodox Missions Children's Retreat

PAN-ORTHODOX  
YOUTH RETREAT  
FEBRUARY 17, 2024



## TRAVEL THE WORLD Youth on a Mission For children in grades K - 8

Saturday, February 17, 2024; 10 am - 2 pm  
St. Nicholas Family Life Center

For registration and questions,  
please contact:

Simona Kacso  
ocmcyouthretreat@gmail.com

Sponsored by Mission Team St. Louis

Save  
the  
Date

Registration  
Information  
Coming  
SOON!



## HELLENIC CULTURE CAMP August 5-9, 9 am - 4 pm (drop off at 8:30)

at

St. Nicholas Family Life Center

For questions or to volunteer please contact:

Tania Scarpino 314.255.3262  
helleniccamp@gmail.com