



Nativity

**“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, goodwill
towards men” Luke 2:14**

Nativity fast

❖ How long is the Nativity fast?

- 43 days – fish is allowed.
- 40 days - the 40 days Moses fasted to prepare himself to receive the 10 commandments (the word of God). We also fast to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Word of God – Jesus Christ.
- 3 days – the 3 days all the church fasted before the miracle of moving the mountain.

How do we fast?

❖ Vegetarian food and no dairy products. Why?

- Man's original state in Paradise was to eat fruits and vegetables only until Noah's time. (Gen 9:1-6).
- Examples from the Bible:
 - Gen. 1:29
 - Numbers 11:7-8
 - Daniel 1:12-15
 - Ezekiel 4:9-11

❖ Is it only food?

- Through fasting and prayer, we grow spiritually and get closer to God.
- Fasting weakens the body and elevates the soul. It's a battle against the flesh.
- Fasting – change of food, change of way of life.

Fasting

- ❖ **Did you start fasting?**
- ❖ **If yes, do you understand why it's important or are you doing it because you were told?**
- ❖ **If no, why not?**
- ❖ **How did your life/way of life has changed since you started fasting?**

When is Nativity?

Jan 7th, Kiahk 29th or Dec. 25th?

❖ **2 different calendars: Julian and Gregorian.**

- **Pope Gregory XIII decreed: “In A.D. 1582, Oct. 5th will be called Oct. 15th. The Julian calendar should be shortened by 3 days every 400yrs, by making the centenary year a normal 365 day year, not a leap year, except if its number is divisible by 400. Thus the year 1600 remained a leap year as usual, while 1700, 1800 and 1900 had only 365 days each and the year 2000 was a leap year of 366 days.”**
- **Nativity will be celebrated on Jan 8th after the year 2100 A.D.**
- **In short, it’s a difference in the calendar!!!**

Emmanuel: God with us

- ❖ The blessing of the Nativity is: to feel that Christ is God with us, God is among us, dwelling with us and within us.
 - What does this mean to you?
 - God loves us so much and likes to give us the pleasure of being with Him. He wanted our heart to be a place for His residence.
 - What kind of a heart do you have?
 - “there is none who seeks after God” (Rom 3:10-12)
 - “This is My resting place forever. Here I will dwell for I have desired it” (Psalm 132:14)

Emmanuel: God with us

- ❖ **All the Saints used to feel that they are always in the presence of God. They see Him with them always and at their right hand...what about you?**
 - **If I feel God's presence, I will not sin and I will be ashamed of God if I sinned.**
 - **St. Ephriam's story**

Emmanuel: God with us

❖ **“Do you think, my brother, that only atheists deny the existence of God?!” Pope Shenouda III**

- **No. We also deny His existence.**
- **Every sin we commit proves that we have forgotten God’s existence.**
- **When we always think of His presence, that mere thought gives us purity, holiness and protection always.**
 - **It gives us courage and will deliver us from any fears. “Be strong and of good courage...for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:5-9)**

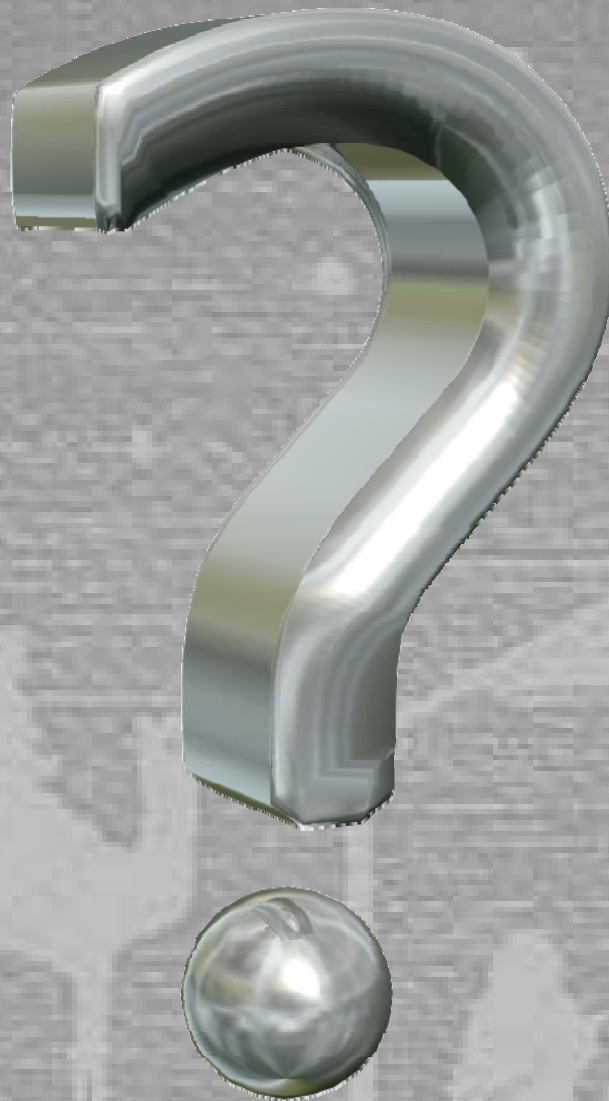
Emmanuel: God with us

❖ “The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear...though an army may encamp against me, in this I will be confident” (Psalm 27:1,3)

- The sin of fear is a sin of unbelief in Emmanuel and His care.
- The courage of the people of the world results in trusting their own power, but the courage of the saints is caused by their trust in Emmanuel, God is with them.
- The 3 young youth and Daniel.

Nativity = Emmanuel

- ❖ God is with us – never fear.
- ❖ God is with us – remember that and you won't sin.
 - Does that mean we'll be perfect?
 - Repentance.
- ❖ God is with us – peace, goodwill and happiness.
- ❖ What did you learn?



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