

# Petriwka – The Fast of Peter

Monday after All Saints Sunday to June 28<sup>th</sup>

Prayer and fasting was a very important part of the lives of the Apostles. They prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit with prayer and fasting. They prayed and fasted much before they went to preach the Gospel and only after prayer and fasting did they ordain new presbyters for apostolic work. The Church has always encouraged the faithful to prepare for a major feast with prayer and fasting.

We observe four major fasts in the Ukrainian Catholic Church: *Pylypiwka* (preparation for the Nativity), *The Great Fast* (preparation for the Resurrection), *Petriwka* (preparation for the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul), and *Spasiwka* (preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God).



*Petriwka*, also known as the Fast of the holy Apostles, the Apostolic Fast, the Fast of Peter (Peter's Fast), or the Summer Fast is a very ancient fast, dating back to the first centuries of Christianity. Simeon of Thessalonica († 1429) explains the purpose of this fast in this manner: "The Fast of the Apostles is justly established in their honour, for through them we have received numerous benefits and for us they are exemplars and teachers of the fast ... we fast in honour of the Apostles."

The Fast of Peter came into practice in the Church through custom rather than law. This fast lasts from the Monday after All Saints Sunday to the Feast of the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Depending on the date of Easter, the fast can be as long as 6 weeks, or as short as 1 week and 1 day.

As with any fast, it is not about following the law, but the spirit of preparation and sacrifice that accompany whatever actions one takes to observe the fast. However we choose to observe *Petriwka*, the purpose should be to bring us into a deeper relationship with God and to prepare us to fully celebrate the Feast day of our patrons, Saints Peter and Paul. This period of fast is not one that is an obligation, but of personal choice.