

Gluttony

1- Objectives

- ❖ Avoid gluttony and not being indulged in food preparation and eating
- ❖ When we are aware of our spirituality, the care about food should fade

2-References

- ❖ “The spirituality of Fasting” HH Pope Shenouda III

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “Put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite” (Proverbs 23: 2)
- ❖ “The drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty” (Proverbs 23: 21)

4- Lesson Guidelines

- ❖ Gluttony is the act of overindulging in food or drink and it is considered a sin.

Experiments in animals and humans show that, for some people, the same reward and pleasure centers of the brain that are triggered by addictive drugs like cocaine and heroin are also activated by food, especially highly palatable foods, such as sugar, fat, and salt.

These foods trigger “feel-good brain chemical” such as dopamine. Once people experience pleasure associated with increased dopamine transmission in the brain’s reward pathway from eating certain foods, they quickly feel the need to eat again.

The reward signals from highly palatable foods may override other signals of fullness and satisfaction. As a result, people keep eating, even when they’re not hungry.

- ❖ People who show signs of food addiction may also develop a tolerance to food. They eat more only to find that food satisfies them less. They end up eating more than planned and they eat to the point of feeling ill.
- ❖ When certain foods aren’t available, they go out of their way to get it
- ❖ Sometimes they need to eat more food to reduce negative emotions or increase pleasure.
- ❖ Things may seem benign in our society but they all work towards food overindulgence and addiction like “All you can eat buffets” and junk foods with salt, fat and sugar.

Why is it a sin?

- ❖ There is a direct connection between gluttony and impurity. If we can’t control our stomachs, then we usually can’t control our tongues, our anger, and our sexual impulses. The flip side is also true, self-control in food leads to self-control in the other passions.
- ❖ Overeating ruins the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, which we are responsible for keeping healthy and being faithful towards God’s gift.
- ❖ Getting pleasure or comfort from food means that I am robbing myself of getting that from my relationship with God, and have virtually created an idol for myself that I worship “whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame” (Philippians 3: 19).
- ❖ Overindulgence often leads to pain according to the church fathers. The enjoyment of pleasure that works unnaturally or is wrongly directed produces suffering and sorrow.

Just as night follows day and winter follows summer, so distress and pain, now or in the future, follow self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

- ❖ Overindulgence leads to a lack of concern for our eternal life, we become lazy in our struggle to keep God's commandment and to pray.

So is it a sin to enjoy food?

- ❖ Enjoying food in the correct way is a sign of happiness and joy. When the father accepted his lost son, he said: "let us eat and be merry" (Luke 15: 23).
- ❖ A person who does not enjoy God in his life cannot enjoy his food and the psalm said about the reward of the person who fears the Lord: "when you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you" (Psalm 128:2).
- ❖ It is ok to savor the flavor of food and enjoy a good meal. Our Lord Himself used food as a means of bringing people together. He blessed the food and "So they all ate and were filled" (Matthew 14: 20). He also said "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone ... opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

How can we enjoy food away from gluttony?

- ❖ Use food in moderation for nourishment and enjoyment.
- ❖ Use food for fellowship and celebration.
- ❖ Avoid the foods as much as possible that create cravings and addictions.
- ❖ Use the ascetic practice for good "have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit" (Proverbs 25:16).
- ❖ Thank the Lord for what you have and feed the hungry from your abundance.

How can we treat gluttony?

- ❖ A lot of gluttony is born of boredom. Life is not satisfying or stimulating, relationships feel empty, and work is boring, but food is always there and tastes so good.
- ❖ The main way to fight cravings that we don't want is to experience higher cravings and have them master us.
- ❖ So we need to cultivate a range of appetites for great and good things, things like good literature, people's fellowship, reading the Bible, nature, work, etc.
- ❖ Discover these other appetites so that things other than food can satisfy you. Then pray earnestly and cultivate and nurture these satisfactions.
- ❖ Meditate in the words of God and fill your soul with its sweetness like King David "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119: 103).

5- Discussion Points

- ❖ Why does the church teach us to fast before any feast? Facing any problem? Having a request from God, starting a new mission or getting a grace?
- ❖ The church considers the days of fasting as Joyful days: "The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah" (Zechariah 8:19).

6- Conclusion

- ❖ According to St. John Climacus “The belly is the cause of all human shipwreck”.
- ❖ A lot of gluttony is born of boredom.
- ❖ Fill yourself with the Word of God as “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4: 4).
- ❖ Hunger leads to an acute awareness of our dependence on God for our sustenance.

7- Activities / Workshop

- ❖ Make groups to discuss tricks for healthy eating and avoid gluttony (ex: eat in small plates, drink water before meals.....)

http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=1386