



1. Our behaviour inside and outside church:

It is very noticeable that many people during Passion Week act very differently inside church than they do outside church. Inside church... black curtains, sad hymns, solemn readings, and complete concentration on the suffering of Christ. However, outside of church, we often laugh, joke around, socialise, think and talk about many worldly issues. We lose all the spiritual depth that we gained inside church. Let us concentrate our thoughts, conversations, and meditations around the events of this Holy Week and the passion of our Saviour.

2. Retreat:

During our regular fasting days, we put the words of the Bible before us, "Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly" (Joel 1: 14). How much more then should we apply this commandment during Holy Week? This week should be characterised by solitude and retreat with God by staying away from idle discussions, various means of entertainment and pleasures. Reserve your time for God and to spiritual activities worthy of this week.

3. Follow the steps of Christ:

Meditate on the events of the week one by one, from Palm Sunday when Christ refused His worldly kingdom and the Jews gave up their hopes in Him, until they crucified and buried Him. On Palm Sunday, ask yourself: Is Christ King and Lord over everything in my life? Do I, like Christ, turn down worldly glory for spiritual and eternal glory? And during the "general funeral" afterwards, consider yourself attending your own funeral (because during this week the church will not hold funeral services). Also, when the church denounces Judas' betrayal with a kiss on the eve of Wednesday's Pascha, ask yourself in prayer, "How often, O Lord, have I betrayed You?" "How many times have I told You words of love in prayers, while my actions show the opposite and my heart is far away from You?"

4. Share in the fellowship of His suffering:

St. Paul said "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10). Can we give ourselves an exercise this week to share in the fellowship of His suffering and be conformed to His death? Can we follow Him in His suffering and ascend with Him to the cross? Can we say with St. Paul "With Christ I have been crucified; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, in order for Christ to live in us, we have to carry our cross and follow Him. If you have a cross in your life, don't complain about it, but rather rejoice in it and bear it for Christ's sake. "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him but to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29).

5. Asceticism:

Whoever puts the suffering of Christ before Him will not take any pleasure in eating, drinking or pampering the body. But in order to succeed in pursuing asceticism, we must satisfy our souls with spiritual food so that it may thrive and overcome physical hunger.

6. Spiritual readings:

Spiritual readings are also food for the soul. The church has organised for us a treasure of appropriate readings for every day of Holy Week. This consists of Gospel readings, Old Testament prophecies that correspond to the events of each day, spiritual explanations and sermons of the church fathers and on Holy Saturday (Apocalypse night) the church reads the entire book of Revelation.

7. Hymns:

The hymns of Passion Week are moving and full of spiritual depth. Also, Hymns, like reading, preserve thoughts from wandering and guides them in a spiritual direction.

8. Prayer:

Since the prayers of the Agpeya are not used during Holy Week, we are to substitute personal prayers in their place. This is in addition to the intensive prayers of the church asking the Lord, who bore the sins of the world and died for us, to forgive and have mercy upon us according to His great mercy.