

**I** HAVE OBSERVED MANY PERSONS REJOICING, and saying one to another, “We have conquered; we have prevailed; the half of the fast is spent.” But I exhort such persons not to rejoice on this account, that the half of the fast is gone, but to consider whether the half of their sins be gone; and if so, then to exult. . . . For I see many who are so feeble-minded, that at the present season they are anxious about the following Lent; and I have heard many saying, that after their liberation from the fast, they are insensible to any pleasure from this remission, on account of their anxiety about the coming year. What can be more feeble-minded than this? I ask; and what is the cause of this? It is, that when the fast is arrived, we do not take pains that the concerns of the soul may be well ordered, but we limit the fast solely to an abstinence from food. Since, were we to reap the full benefit of it in a reformation of conduct, we should wish the fast to come round every day, receiving in very deed an experience of its good effects; and we should never cast away the desire of it, or be dejected and anxious whilst expecting it.

St John Chrysostom,  
Homily XVIII on the Statues, pp. 458–59  
Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Volume IX

**W**E NEED SOBRIETY IN ALL THINGS, in order that the good things that we seem to have may not turn to our hurt. For those who are naturally kind, unless they secure themselves, are gradually drawn aside by their very kindness; and those who have wisdom are deceived by their wisdom. A man must be well tempered together in all directions, kindness with severity, wisdom with discretion, word with deed, in everything to trust in the Lord, not in himself. For virtue is seasoned with many different spices, as an article of necessary diet is seasoned with condiment of some kind – not with honey only, but with pepper sometimes – and so is found good for food.

Saint Macarius the Great, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*,  
Homily XVI.9, p. 139

*Pearls from the Holy Fathers*

*Mid-Lent*

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