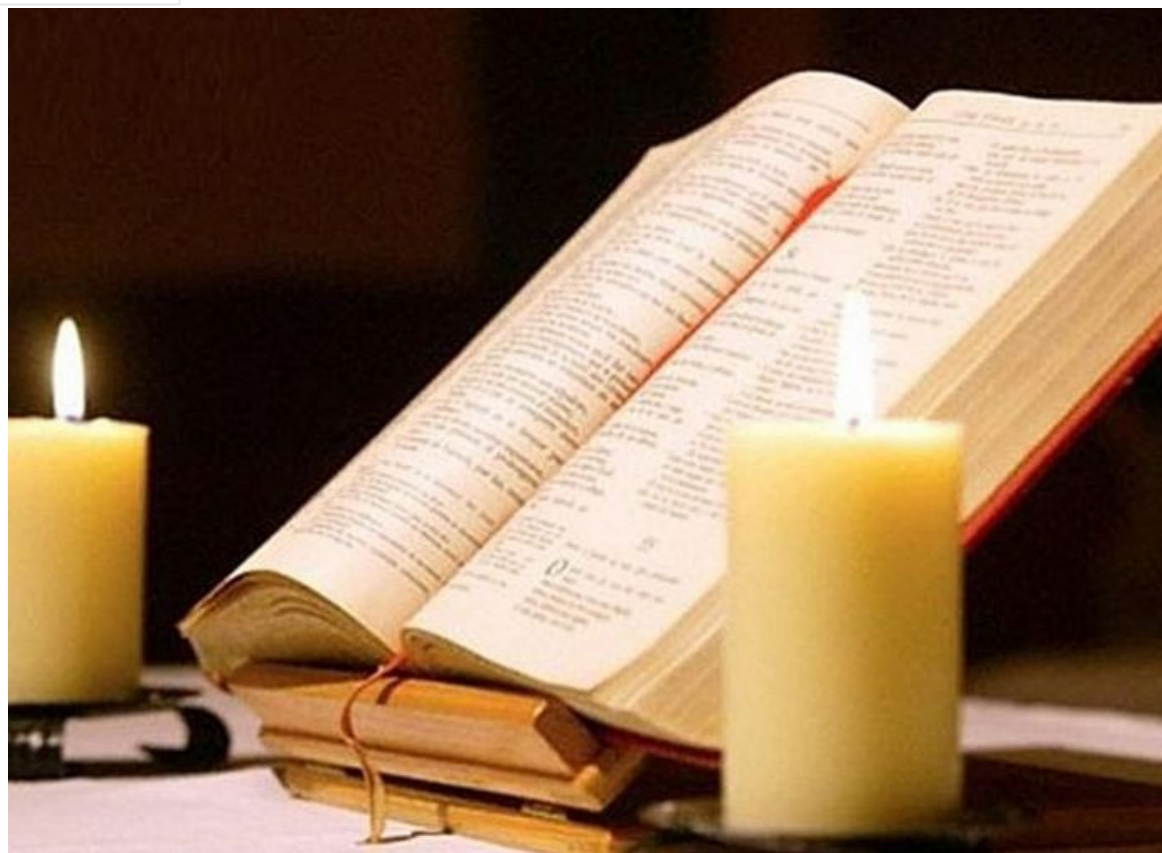


GOSPEL PEARLS

Acts of devotion

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Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

(Matthew 9: 14-17)

Acts of devotion, including fasting, should not be done to make us feel better than others. In fact, their real purpose is to draw us closer to God and His Will. Some of the Pharisees and followers of St. John the Baptist consider Jesus's disciples lacking faith in God because they do not fast like they do. Jesus replies that His disciples have no need to fast, that is, to do acts of devotion of the sort, because they are already in His presence: God speaks to them directly and fully manifests His will to them. May we always listen for Jesus's voice in order to do His will.