





## 2020 LENTEN SCHEDULE

### March

<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday / Rite of Forgiveness (Turn in your updated memorial books at this time)</b>
<b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony,</b>
<b>Tuesday 3rd</b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony</b>
<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony</b>
<b>Thursday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony</b>
<b>Friday 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Sunday of Orthodoxy/ Icon Procession</b>
	<b>4:30 pm</b>	<b>Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, Holy Trinity Greek Orth. Church</b>
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck dinner</b>
<b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Memorial Saturday</b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Sunday of St Gregory Palamas</b>
	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>W.PA Deanery Vespers, Arnold (3:30 confessions)</b>
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner</b>
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Memorial Saturday</b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Veneration of the Holy Cross</b>
	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>W.PA Deanery Vespers, Carnegie (3:30 confessions)</b>
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner</b>
<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, St John of the Ladder</b>
	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>W.PA Deanery Vespers, South Side (3:30 confessions)</b>

### APRIL

<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete</b>
<b>Friday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1:00 pm</b>	<b>Mother of God, Akathist Saturday/ Missions/Confessions</b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>

<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, St Mary of Egypt, Pysanky Sale</b>
	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>W.PA Deanery Vespers, McKees Rocks (3:30 confessions)</b>
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Great Vespers, Annunciation</b>
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Annunciation</b>
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner</b>
<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Lazarus Saturday, Children Participation</b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Children Participation/ Parish grounds clean-up</b>
		<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Palm Sunday.</b>
<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Bridegroom Matins</b>
<b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Bridegroom Matins</b>
<b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Wednesday, Sacrament of Healing</b>
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Commemoration of first Divine Liturgy</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Thursday, Passion Gospels</b>
<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Royal Hours</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Friday, Vespers, Procession &amp; Burial</b>
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Holy Saturday, Anticipation Liturgy, Baskets Blessed</b>
	<b>9:00 pm</b>	<b>Reading of the Acts of the Apostles</b>
	<b>9:30 pm</b>	<b>Resurrection Services:</b>
		<b>Nocturnes, Paschal Matins &amp; Divine Liturgy</b>
		<b>Paschal Blessing of Baskets &amp; Agape Feast</b>
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Agape Vespers</b>
		<b>Blessing of Baskets</b>
<b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Bright Monday, Divine Liturgy</b>
<b>Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Bright Tuesday, Divine Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, St. Thomas Sunday</b>
		<b>St. Thomas Day Dinner, Provody, Grave Blessing</b>

Great Lent is a wonderful time to get spiritually refreshed and confession is an important step on that journey. Fr. John is available for confession by appointment and prior to as well as after all services. On Sundays, Fr. John will stop hearing confessions at 9:20 so that Liturgy may begin on time. Please plan accordingly. If you'd like to confess in Ukrainian please let Fr. John know and he will arrange for a Ukrainian speaking priest to come to a Saturday Vespers.



# Lenten Readings

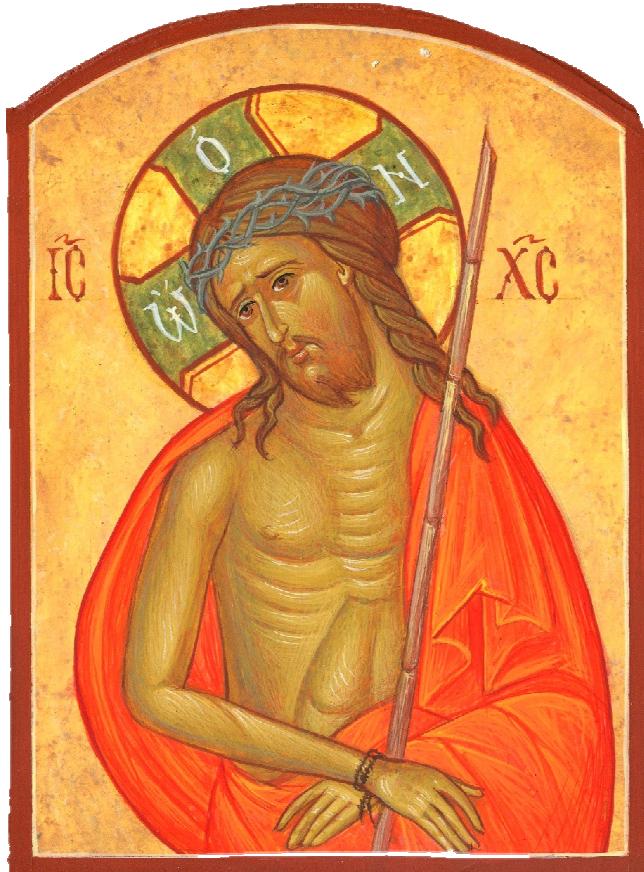
## March

- 2 Gen. 1:1-13, Is. 1:1-20, Prov. 1:1-20
- 3 Gen. 1:14-23, Is. 1:19-31, Prov. 1:20-33
- 4 Gen. 1:24-31, 2:1-3, Is. 2:3-17, Prov. 2:1-22
- 5 Gen. 2:4-19, Is. 2:11-21, Prov. 3:1-19
- 6 Gen. 2:20-3:20, Is. 3:1-14, Prov. 3:19-34
- 7 2 Tim. 2:1-10, Jn. 15:17-16:2
- 8 Heb.11:24-26, 32-40, Jn 1:44-52
- 9 Gen 3:21-4:7, Is 4:1-6, 5:1-7, Prov 3:34-4:21
- 10 Gen 4:8-15, Is 5:2-16, Prov 5:1-15
- 11 Gen 4:16-26, Is 5:16-25, Prov 5:15-22
- 12 Gen 5:1-24, Is 6:1-12, Prov 6:1-20
- 13 Gen 5:32-6:8, Is 7:1-14, Prov 6:20-7:1
- 14 Heb 3:12-16, Mk 1:35-44
- 15 Heb 1:10-2:3, Mk 2:1-12
- 16 Gen 6:9-22, Is 8:12-22, 9:7, Prov 8:1-21
- 17 Gen 7:1-5, Is 9:9-21, Prov 20:1-16
- 18 Gen 7:6-9, Is 10:12-20, Prov 9:12-18
- 19 Gen 7:11-8:3, Is 11:10-16, 12:1-3, Prov 10:1-22
- 20 Gen 8:4-21, Is 13:2-13, Prov 10:31-11:12
- 21 Heb 10:32-38, Mk 14:17
- 22 Heb 4:14-5:6, Mk 8:34-9:1, Heb 2:11-1, Lk 1:24-38
- 23 Gen 8:22, 9:1-17, Is 14:24-32, Prov 11:19-12:6
- 24 Gen 9:8-17, Is 25:1-9, Prov 12:8-22
- 25 Gen 9:18-10:1, Is 26:21-27:9, Prov 12:23-13:9
- 26 Gen 10:32-11:9, Is 28:14-22, Prov 13:20-14:9
- 27 Gen 12:1-7, Is 29:13-24, Prov 14:15-26
- 28 Heb 6:9-12, Mk 7:31-37
- 29 Heb 6:13-20, Mk 9:17-31
- 30 Gen 8:21-22, 9:1-7, Is 37:33-38, 38:1-6, Prov 11:19-31, 12:1-6
- 31 Gen 15:1-15, Is 40:18-31, Prov 15:17-19

## April

- 1 Gen 17:1-8, Is 41:1-14, Prov 15:20-16:9
- 2 Gen 18:20-33, Is 42:5-16, Prov 16:13-17

- 3 Gen 22:1-18, Is 45:11-17, Prov 17:17-18:5
- 4 Heb 9:1-7, Lk 1:39-56
- 5 Heb 9:11-14, Mk 10:32-45
- 6 Gen 27:1-41, Is 48:17-22, 48:1-5, Prov 19:16-25
- 7 Gen 31:3-16, Is 49:5-10, Prov 21:3-21
- 8 Gen 43:26-31, Is 58:1-11, Prov 17:17-18:5
- 9 Gen 46:1-7, Is 65:8-16, Prov 23:15-24:5
- 10 Gen 49:22-50:26, Is 66:10-24, Prov 31:8-31
- 12 Heb 12:28-13:8, Jn 11:1-45
- 13 Phil 4:4-9, Jn 12:-8
- 14 Mt 21:18-43, Mt 24:3-43
- 15 Mt 22:15-23:39, Mt 24: 36 – 26:2
- 16 John 12: 17-50 Mt 26: 6 -16
- 17 Lk 22:1-45, 1Cor 11:23-32, Mt 26:2-27:2 , Jn 13:1-17
- 18 1Cor 1:18-2:2, Mt 27:1-61, Lk 23:34-43, Jn 19:31-43
- 19 1 Cor 5 : 6-8, Gal 3:13-14, Mt 27:62-66, Rom 6 : 3 – 11





## **THE GREAT LENT EPISTLE OF THE PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE**

Beloved in the Lord: clergy, brothers and sisters in the Lord!

Once again, that time has come in our Orthodox Church calendar when we embark on a spiritual journey of Great Lent. Monday, March 2, 2020 marks the beginning of this sacred season, and it is known as Clean Monday. If you reflect on it, we all need cleanliness – need to be cleaned both inwardly and outwardly, and the time of Great Lent provides us an opportunity to clean. Fortunately, scientific technology has given us many ways of achieving cleanliness, of keeping our bodies clean. However, we require spiritual cleanliness as well. Are our bodies truly entirely clean?

There is a great need in our times to understand our existence in “supernatural” or “heavenly” terms. We live in a society run by mechanisms and technologies, and our thinking tends to become earthbound, determined by what we can see and sense, confined to material things.

But human life is so much more. There is a natural world and also a spiritual world that is “above.” The earthly is open to the heavenly, the visible to the invisible.

In these 40 days of Lent, as spiritual fathers of the Church we call upon you - ourselves first of all - to deepen our sense of the mystery of our lives in Christ. We call upon you to try to go deeper in your personal conversion, deeper into the heart of the Gospels and the New Testament writings.

We are living in times when many people have lost their “why.” They no longer know the answer to basic questions. Why do we get up in the morning? What purpose are we living for?

There is a crisis of meaning that has been spreading slowly over many years across our society. It expresses itself in many unlikely ways - from rising suicide and abortion rates to epidemics of drug addiction to the growing numbers of people who say they feel alone and isolated.

This is the sad irony that lies at the heart of our secular, technological society. People are thirsting for God even as our worldly leaders - politicians and judges, scientists, entertainers, artists and educators - all insist that we can build a progressive and prosperous society by living as if God does not exist and as if the human soul does not desire things that transcend material entertainments.

For us, Orthodox Christians, the question of “why” comes down to a question of “who.” We cannot answer why we are here or what we are living for unless we know who we are and what we are made for. That is the one answer that our science, technology and politics - all those things in our society that substitute for religion - cannot give. Of course, God is the great “who” and holiness is the great “why.”

We need to recover this awareness that we are created by the holy and living God and that He creates us to be holy as He is holy and to love as He loves.

And this begins with understanding that holiness is the ordinary measure of what it means to follow Christ the Savior.

The point is that holiness, to be a saint, is what God created us for.

This simple, beautiful fact should be at the center of everything in the Church - our parochial liturgical activities and preaching, our schools and religious education for the youth and adults, our work for justice, our sharing of the living Gospel with our neighbors.

This is the good news that we are called to proclaim in our times - that we are made to be saints. That is the same thing as saying we were made for love.

This is a discovery all of us need to renew, as we continue to follow our Savior, making our ordinary lives "our place of holiness."

We cannot change the world or change our lives in the simple period of 40 days, but we can make a good beginning! So, let us make this time of Great Lent a time of growing deeper in our friendship with Jesus Christ, by cleansing ourselves, by reforming and conforming our lives more closely to His.

In conclusion, remember that holiness is not only our work but God's work in us. So, this Great and Holy Lent, let us allow Him to do His work, by opening our hearts to Him through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving - asking the Lord to create in us a new heart, and a new desire to want to love and to live out the sacred calling of holiness.

May the Birth-Giver of God through her Protection help us to follow the living God with living faith and to know that we are called to be saints.

May our All-Merciful and Almighty Lord assist us on our travel through this Great Fast with humility and reverence so that we may be worthy to greet the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

With Archpastoral blessings,

+ YURIJ – Metropolitan

*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*

+ ANTONY – Metropolitan

*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America and Diaspora*

+ JEREMIAH – Archbishop

*Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America*

+ DANIEL – Archbishop

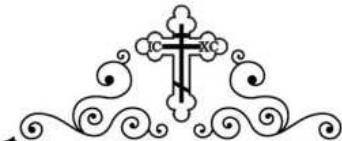
*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora*

+ ILARION – Bishop

*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*

+ ANDRIY – Bishop

*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*



## ВЕЛИКОПОСНЕ ПОСЛАННЯ ПОСТІЙНОЇ КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ПРАВОСЛАВНИХ ЕПІСКОПІВ ПОЗА МЕЖАМИ УКРАЇНИ

Возлюблене духовенство, брати і сестри у Христі!

Черговий раз, настає час у нашому Православному Церковному календарі, коли ми починаємо духовну подорож Великого Посту. Понеділок, 2 березня 2020 року, є днем початку цього натхненого періоду, і знаний він, як Чистий Понеділок. Якщо задуматись над цим, всім нам потрібне очищення - потрібно очиститися із середини, і ззовні, а час Великого посту надає нам можливість це зробити. Наукові модерні технології подають нам багато способів досягнення чистоти, щоб наші тіла були чистими. Однак ми також вимагаємо духовної чистоти. Проте, чи наші тіла є справді чистими?

У наш час існує велика потреба зрозуміти наше існування у “надприродних” або “небесних” термінах. Ми живемо в суспільстві, керованому механізмами та технологіями, і наше мислення має тенденцію до земного, визначається тим, що ми можемо бачити і відчувати, будучи обмеженими матеріальними речами.

Але людське життя набагато більше. Існує природний світ, але також і духовний світ, який знаходитьться “вище”. Земне відкрите - до небесного, видиме - до невидимого.

У ці 40 днів Великого Посту, як духовні наставники Церкви, ми закликаємо вас - насамперед самих себе - поглибити свої відчуття в таємниці нашого життя у Христі. Ми закликаємо вас спробувати заглибитись у своє особисте навернення, глибше заглянути у серце Євангелії та Новозавітних Писань.

Ми живемо у часі, коли багато людей втратили значення “чому”. Вони більше не знають відповіді на основні питання. Чому ми встаемо вранці? Яка мета нашого життя?

Існує криза сенсу, яка повільно поширюється протягом багатьох років у нашому суспільстві. Це виражається багатьма неприпустимими способами - у зростанні рівня самогубств та абортів, до епідемії наркоманії, до зростаючої кількості людей, які кажуть, що відчувають себе самотніми та ізольованими в житті.

Це сумна іронія, яка лежить в основі нашого секуляризованого, технологічного суспільства. Людині невистачає Бога, так як наші світові лідери - політики та судді, вчені, артисти та педагоги - всі наполягають на тому, що ми можемо будувати прогресивне та процвітаюче суспільство, живучи так, ніби Бога не існує, і так ніби людська душа не має бажати речей, які перевершують матеріальні розваги.

Для нас, Православних Християн, питання “чому” зводиться до питання “хто”. Ми не можемо відповісти, чому ми тут є або для чого ми живемо, якщо не знаємо, хто ми і для чого створені. Це єдине питання, на яке наша наука, техніка та політика - всі ті речі в нашему суспільстві, які замінюють релігію - не можуть дати відповіді. Отже, Бог є великим “Хто”, а святість - це велике “чому”.

Нам потрібно відновити це усвідомлення, що ми є створені святым і живим Богом; що Він створив нас бути святыми, так як Він є святым та любить, так як Він любить.

Все розпочинається з нашого усвідомлення чим є святість - звичайним ступенем того, що означає йти за Христом Спасителем.

Справа в тому, що святість - або бути святым - це є саме те, для чого створив нас Бог. Ця проста і прекрасна істина повинна знаходитися в центрі всього, що відбувається в Церкві – в наших богослужіннях та проповідях, наших школах та в релігійному вихованні молоді і дорослих, в справедливості, в нашему розповсюдженні святого Євангелія до близького. Це є благою вісткою, яку ми покликані проголошувати в наш час - що ми створені бути святыми. А це є те саме, що говорити, що ми створені для любові.

Це відкриття, яке нам усім потрібно відновити, продовжуючи йти за своїм Спасителем, роблячи наше звичайне життя “нашим місцем святості”.

Ми не можемо змінити світ або змінити своє життя за 40 днів, але можемо зробити добрий початок! Отже, давайте зробімо цей час Великого Посту часом глибшої дружби з Господом, очистивши себе, перемінюючи і наближаючи своє життя до Його.

На завершення пам'ятайте, що святість - це не тільки наша праця, але праця Божа в нас. Отже, у цей Великий і Святий Піст, дозвольмо Йому робити Свою справу, відкривши для нього своє серце через молитву, піст і милостиню - благаючи Господа утворити в нас нове серце і нове бажання хотіти любити і жити покликом святості.

Нехай Богородиця, через її Заступництво, допоможе нам наслідувати живого Бога з живою вірою і розуміти, що ми покликані бути святыми.

Нехай наш Всемилостивий та Всемогутній Господь допоможе нам на дорозі Великого Посту із смиренням та благоговінням, щоб ми були гідними вітати славне Воскресіння нашого Господа і Спасителя Ісуса Христа!

З Архіпастирським благословенням,

+ Юрій – Митрополит Української Православної Церкви в Канаді

+ Антоній – Митрополит Української Православної Церкви США,

Південної Америки та Діаспори

+ Єремія – Архієпископ Української Православної Єпархії а Південній Америці

+ Даниїл – Архієпископ Української Православної Церкви США та Діаспори

+ Іларіон – Єпископ Української Православної Церкви в Канаді

+ Андрій – Єпископ Української Православної Церкви в Канаді

**CATECHETICAL HOMILY AT THE OPENING OF HOLY AND GREAT LENT**  
**+ BARTHOLOMEW**  
**BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE – NEW ROME AND ECUMENICAL**  
**PATRIARCH**

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH,  
MAY THE GRACE AND PEACE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,  
TOGETHER WITH OUR PRAYER, BLESSING AND FORGIVENESS BE WITH YOU ALL

We offer hymns of thanks to the God of love as once again we enter Holy and Great Lent, the arena of ascetic struggle, fasting and abstinence, of vigilance and spiritual awareness, of guarding our senses and prayer, of humility and self-knowledge. We are commencing a new and blessed pilgrimage toward Holy Pascha, which has “opened for us the gates of paradise.” In Church and as Church, as we behold the Risen Lord of glory, we all journey together along the way of deification by grace that leads to the heavenly goods “prepared by God for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

In the Church, where “the eternal mystery” of divine Economy is realized, all things have their unwavering theological foundation and pure soteriological reference. The incarnation of God and the deification of man are the pillars of the Orthodox faith. We move toward our eternal destination in the love of Christ. Our God, Who is “always for us,” can never be reduced to some “higher power” enclosed in transcendence and the grandeur of almighty or its holiness. Instead, He is the pre-eternal Word of God, Who “assumed our form” in order to invite humankind to the communion of His holiness, of the genuine freedom. Man, who from the beginning “has been honored with freedom,” is invited to freely accept this divine gift. In the divine-human mystery of salvation, our synergy also functions as a witness in the world of the blessing that we have experienced—“what do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7)—through the love for the ‘brother.’

Holy and Great Lent is par excellence a period of experiencing this freedom bestowed by Christ. Fasting and ascesis do not comprise a discipline imposed externally, but a voluntary respect of ecclesiastical practice, obedience to Church Tradition that is not a sterile letter but a living and life-giving presence, a permanent expression of the unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church. The language of theology and hymnography speaks of “joyful sorrow” and “the spring of fasting.” This is because authentic asceticism is always joyful, springful and bright. It knows no dualism or division; it does not undermine life or the world. “Depressive ascesis” that leads to an “aridity of human nature” has nothing to do with the spirit of Orthodoxy, where the ascetic life and spirituality are nurtured by resurrectional joy. In this sense, fasting and ascesis contain an alternative proposal for life before the promised false paradise of eudemonism and nihilistic pessimism.

Another essential element of Orthodox ascetic spirituality is its social character. The God of our faith is “the most social God,” “a God of relations.” It has rightly been said that the Holy Trinity is “the negation of loneliness.” The individualization of salvation and piety, the transformation of ascesis into an individual achievement, overlook the Trinity-centered essence of the ecclesial event. When we fast for ourselves and according to our whim, then fasting does not express the spirit of the Orthodox tradition. Spirituality is the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit, Which is always “a spirit of communion.” The genuine Orthodox spiritual life always refers to the ecclesial dimension of our existence and not to some “spiritual self-realization.”

In adhering to the dedication of this year by the Holy Great Church of Christ to “the pastoral renewal and due concern for our youth,” we call upon our Orthodox young men and women to participate in the spiritual struggle of Great Lent in order to experience its anthropological depth and liberating spirit, to understand that Orthodox asceticism is a way of freedom and existential fulfilment in the context of the blessed life in the Church, whose core is to “speak the truth in love.” Our Orthodox youth is called to discover the holistic character of fasting, which is praised in the Triodion as “the commencement of spiritual struggles,” as “food for the soul,” as “mother of all good things and all virtues.” It is not simply an abstinence from certain foods, but a struggle against self-love and self-sufficiency, a sensitivity toward our suffering neighbor, and a tangible response of support. It is a Eucharistic use of creation, existential fulfilment, communion of life and solidarity. Ascesis, fasting, prayer and humility convey the fragrance and light of the Resurrection, from which they receive meaning and direction. As the quintessence of ecclesial life and its eschatological orientation, the Resurrection inseparably links the ascetic life with the Divine Eucharist, the sacrament of foretaste of the ineffable joy of the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the Divine Eucharist is preserved as the center of the life in the Orthodox Church is associated with the fact that the Resurrection is the foundation of our faith and the bright horizon of our ascetic spirituality as well as of our good witness in the world.

With these thoughts, we humbly invoke upon all of you the mercy and blessing of the God of love, so that we may pursue the race of Holy and Great Lent with devout heart, reach the saving Passion of Christ our God and, glorifying His ineffable forbearance, shine brightly for the feast of His splendid Resurrection that leads us from death to endless life.

# Wearing “The Armor of Light” Requires Forgiveness: Homily for the Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare) in the Orthodox Church

· [Fr. Philip LeMasters](#)

Romans 13:11-14:4;  
Matthew 6:14-21

When the prodigal son returned home, he was surely filthy, malnourished, and at least half-naked. The father restored him to the family by clothing him with a robe, a ring, and sandals, and then celebrated his return with a great banquet. As we prepare to begin the Lenten journey tomorrow, we recall today how Adam and Eve stripped themselves naked of the divine glory and

were cast out of Paradise into a world enslaved by death. Like the prodigal son, they rejected their Father because they used His great blessings only to fulfill their self-centered desires, and made themselves miserable and weak as a result. The murder of their son by Abel by his brother Cain provides a vivid portrait of where the path away from God leads for those created in His image and likeness.



During Great Lent, we seek to follow a path that leads back to Paradise. In order to liberate us from slavery to death and to restore us to our proper dignity as His sons and daughters, our Lord offered up Himself on the Cross. That is when He said to the penitent thief, “Truly I tell you, you will be with me today in Paradise.” (Lk. 23:43) In doing so, He took upon Himself the full consequences of sin and entered into death. Hades and the grave could not contain Him, however, for He is not merely human but also God. The icon of Christ’s resurrection portrays Him lifting up Adam and Eve from their tombs. The Savior raises us up with Him so that we may participate already in the joy of the Kingdom as we anticipate “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.”

We become members of Christ’s Body when we receive the garment of light through baptism. Our first parents repudiated that divine glory when they chose to diminish themselves and the entire creation. St. Paul describes baptism as putting on Christ like an article of clothing, for “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:27) When we are baptized into His death, we rise up with Him into the new life of holiness for which He created us in the first place. Upon being baptized, we receive the Eucharist as participants in the Heavenly Banquet. Like the prodigal son, our nakedness is covered and we are restored fully as beloved children of the Father.

Our Savior is the New Adam Who, as the God-Man, has fulfilled our vocation to become like God in holiness. As we join ourselves to Him, He enables us to become perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect. Because He is infinitely holy, however, that is a goal we should never think that we have completed, and too often we do not want to pursue it at all. Only a moment’s introspection shows that much of the corruption of the old Adam remains within us. We remain enslaved to the power of self-centered desire in so many ways. We typically do not live as those clothed with a robe of light, but prefer the pain and weaknesses of those who choose their own will over God’s. Instead of returning to Paradise through union in holiness with Christ, we often prefer to head the other way.

That is precisely why we need Great Lent as a stark reminder of the importance of offering ourselves to the Lord Who offered up Himself for our salvation. The only way to do that is to take intentional steps to become more like the One Who has restored and fulfilled what it means to be a human being in God's image and likeness. As St. Paul taught, that involves us in a struggle with our own distorted desires, for we must "put on the armor of light" and "make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." That means that we must mindfully direct our energy, time, and attention to fueling growth in a life pleasing to God, even as we refuse to devote time, energy, and attention to whatever enslaves us to our passions. Lent will provide us with many opportunities to invest ourselves so fully in prayer, fasting, generosity, and other spiritual disciplines that we will not have much left to invest in "the works of darkness."

We must remember, however, that Lent is not about going through the motions of piety for their own sake. We must conform ourselves to Christ from our hearts in order to follow Him through His Passion back to Paradise. Today's gospel lesson provides us with a severe test of whether we are doing that. The same Lord Who said from the Cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," tells us that we must forgive others their offenses against us if we want the Father to forgive our sins. (Lk. 23:34) The hard truth is that, if we refuse to forgive others, then we are not uniting ourselves to Christ. If His merciful love is not becoming characteristic of us, then we are not participating in His healing of our souls. Like other spiritual disciplines, forgiveness is often a struggle and a process. If we refuse even to begin the journey of forgiveness, or to get back on its path after we have strayed from it, then we direct ourselves away from Paradise and do our best to rip off the robe of light. If we stubbornly refuse to forgive others, then we show that we want no part in the Lord Whose forgiving love is most fully manifest in the Cross, from which He forgave even those who nailed Him to it.

Because we typically find it hard to forgive, we need spiritual disciplines like fasting that help us gain strength in redirecting our desires for fulfillment to union with God in holiness. Remember that sin came into the world through our first parents' refusal to restrain their desire for food according to God's command. By struggling to abstain from rich food and large portions, we will grow in our awareness of how addicted we are to satisfying ourselves on our own terms. We will see our own weakness before our passions a bit more clearly, which should fuel our growth in patience and empathy for others when they fall prey to self-centered desire. Fasting should strengthen our ability to forgive those who wrong us, for it helps us understand that we are all weak before the deeply rooted desires that so easily lead to words and deeds that harm other people. Because it is pride that hinders forgiveness, the humility fueled by fasting gets to the heart of the matter. The Savior warns, however, that we must not make a show of our fasting in order to draw attention to ourselves or win the praise of others. Doing so will destroy its healing power.

The same is true about generosity with our resources, time, and attention for the needy. If we invest everything in hopes of gaining the world's riches, we will end up worshiping our vision of success in the world. That will only further enslave us to self-centered desire and incline us to hate those who stand in the way of our plans. Our hearts will follow our treasure, and those who stand between us and our treasure will have no place in our hearts. By limiting self-indulgence in order to help others, we turn away at least a bit from making the world our god. If we want to be the kind of people who display Christ's mercy in our own lives, we simply must be generous with our neighbors. Remember that we serve Him in them.

The Lenten journey leads us back to Paradise through the Passion of our Lord. It is a calling to embrace as fully as possible the great dignity that He has restored to us through baptism as sons and daughters called to the celebration of the Heavenly Banquet. If we pray, fast, give, and forgive with integrity, our eyes will be opened to how much of the corruption of the old Adam is still with us. When that happens, we will see how ridiculous it is not to extend to others the same forgiveness that we so desperately need from God. The coming weeks are all about becoming more like Christ, for it is only by sharing more fully in His life that we will be able to enter into the joy of His great victory over death. That is why we all need to "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/easternchristianinsights/2019/03/09/wearing-the-armor-of-light-requires-forgiveness-homily-for-the-sunday-of-forgiveness-cheesefare-in-the-orthodox-church/>



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## **Forgiveness and Love**

March 25, 2019 · [Abbot Tryphon](#)

### **The capacity to forgive and the capacity to love**

The capacity to forgive is directly related to the capacity to love, and it is in our act of forgiving others, that we find forgiveness. For it is in the turning away from our own self-concern, and our own self-will, that we begin to see that our salvation is directly linked to the salvation of our neighbor. To refuse to forgive our neighbor, is to cease having the capacity to love, “for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:20)?”



The ability to forgive others requires work on our part, for we must cooperate with the grace that comes as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Since we have been forgiven much, we, in turn, must forgive much. The Lord Himself told us that we must forgive our brother seventy times seventy, no easy feat, to be sure. Yet it is this same Lord Who gives us the power, and the will, to be quick to forgive those who have hurt or offended us. It is this very Christ Who demonstrated the importance of forgiving others, when He forgave those who were crucifying Him. “Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).”

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/2019/03/forgiveness-and-love-5/>

## **The Journey of Joyful Sorrow**

March 21, 2019 · [Abbot Tryphon](#)

### **The journey of joyful sorrow in the expectation of the Resurrection**

The main reason Christianity spread so rapidly following the Resurrection of Christ, was the power behind the resurrection. The truth of Christ’s resurrection empowered believers to joyfully embrace martyrdom, knowing that they would be joined in eternal bliss with their resurrected Saviour. Although their martyrdom would involve both mental and physical anguish, they were almost joyful in their willingness to go to their deaths, rather than betray their faith. Not the kind of thing one would do just to be part of some “religion”. Many contemporaries observed that these Christians were facing their martyr’s death as though they were about to be married. They were not grim faced, but shown a certain light in their countenance, embracing, as they did, their crown of martyrdom.

When Saint Polycarp was sentenced by the proconsul, he responded by asking why they were delaying his death by burning. These believers were rejoicing as they faced their immanent death, for their knowledge of the bodily resurrection of Christ, was proof enough to have giving them an invincible courage as they faced certain death. Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara were said to have been singing hymns, after having been thrown into the well, by the Bolsheviks, as they prepared for eternal life with Christ.

Early Christian apologists cited hundreds of eyewitnesses, many of whom willfully and resolutely endured prolonged torture and death rather than repudiate their testimony. Their willingness to suffer death, ruled out deception on their part. According to the historical record most Christians could have ended their suffering simply by renouncing the faith. Instead, most opted to endure the suffering and proclaim Christ’s resurrection unto death.

What makes the earliest Christian martyrs remarkable is that they knew whether or not what they were professing was true. They either saw Jesus Christ alive-and-well after His death or they did not. If it was all just a lie, why would so many Christians perpetuate a myth, given their circumstances? Why would they all knowingly cling to such an unprofitable lie in the face of persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death?

Immediately following Christ's crucifixion, His followers hid in fear for their lives. Yet following Christ's resurrection they boldly proclaimed the resurrection despite intensifying persecution. Only a true resurrection could have accounted for a sudden change that would lead believers to give up everything, including their lives, to preach Christ's resurrection.

One skeptic, Paul, was of his own admission a violent persecutor of the early Church. Yet after an encounter with the resurrected Christ, Paul underwent an immediate and drastic change from a vicious persecutor of the Church to one of its most prolific and selfless defenders. Following his encounter with the Risen Christ, Paul suffered impoverishment, persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and finally execution for his steadfast commitment to Christ's resurrection.

The sorrow we Christians experience during our lenten journey, is tempered with the knowledge that Christ is conquering death by His death, and that His resurrection is our resurrection. We look to the future with the same faith of the saints and martyrs that have gone on before us, and we've experienced the truth of Jesus Christ's teachings, for our hearts of been transformed by the power of His message. Our sins have been forgiven, and we are guests at the Eucharistic banquet, awaiting our time when the gates of paradise will be opened to us. We fear nothing, just like the martyrs, because we know the truth of the Holy Resurrection of Christ our God.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/2019/03/the-journey-of-joyful-sorrow/>

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

FAST from self-concern and FEAST on compassion for others.

FAST from discouragement and FEAST on hope.

FAST from lethargy and FEAST on enthusiasm.

FAST from suspicion and FEAST on truth.

FAST from thoughts that weaken and FEAST on promises that inspire.

FAST from shadows of sorrow and FEAST on the sunlight of serenity.

FAST from idle gossip and FEAST on purposeful silence.

FAST from problems that overwhelm you and FEAST on prayer that sustains.

FAST from criticism and FEAST on praise.

FAST from self-pity and FEAST on joy.

FAST from ill-temper and FEAST on peace.

FAST from resentment and FEAST on contentment.

FAST from jealousy and FEAST on love.

FAST from pride and FEAST on humility.

FAST from selfishness and FEAST on service.

# Praying Our Way Together

## Through Great Lent 2020

Eph.6:17-18 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to the end with all perseverance..."



Come join your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ on a Lenten journey as we pray and read the Psalter each day for 20 days!

**What:** Reading the Psalter

**When:** March 16, 2020 – April 10, 2020, five days a week, Monday - Friday, at any convenient time

**Where:** In the comfort of your home or wherever you may be with your device.

**Why:** To heighten your Lenten journey by reading the Prayer Book of the Church!

If you would like to journey with us, please email your name, address, phone number, parish name, and parish address to Janice Meschisen at [Praying-our-way@uolofusa.org](mailto:Praying-our-way@uolofusa.org) and more information will be sent to you.

**Please respond by March 13, 2020**  
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# CELEBRATE ORTHODOXY!



THE ORTHODOX CLERGY BROTHERHOOD OF GREATER PITTSBURGH INVITES YOU TO THE PITTSBURGH AREA

## SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS

Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 4:30 PM  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
985 Providence Boulevard  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Celebrant and Homilist: His Grace Bishop John  
Antiochian Orthodox Diocese of Worcester and New England

Also featuring the Pan-Orthodox Choir under the direction of Fr. Tom Soroka

Vespers will be followed by fellowship and Lenten refreshments.

# SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2020

## The Long Road Home

March 10, 2019 · [Hieromonk Gabriel](#)

Today we stand at the threshold of Great Lent, and prepare ourselves for the struggle of the long journey towards Pascha, the Bright Resurrection of Christ. Again, after another year of sinful falls, defeat by the passions, and entanglement with all the pleasures and distractions of the world, we strive once more, with Christ's help, to lay for ourselves a good beginning. Because of our human weakness and our feeble hearts which so often seem to change with the wind, it is necessary for us each day, each hour, each minute to strive to make this good beginning, but each year on this day in particular we are given the opportunity to lay a good foundation for the Lenten season of repentance which is about to begin.

In the church hymns for this day we commemorate the expulsion of Adam from Paradise; he is vividly portrayed to us sitting outside the Garden of Eden, weeping for his great sin and for all that he has lost. But these hymns are often sung in the first person; for like Adam, all of us have sinned, all of us have been cast out by God, all of us weep for our lost homeland. But unlike Adam, we weep for what we have never known. We long for the heavenly kingdom, but we ourselves have never been there. We have only known this broken life, full of empty pleasures, of toil, of the innumerable snares of the enemy and the terrible wickedness of men.

It may seem strange to us that this day, commemorating the curse and the exile of all mankind, should also bear the name of Forgiveness Sunday. It may seem hard to us that we must undergo – over and over again – the hard struggle and bitter toil of the Lenten fast in order to reach the joyful Paschal night. It may seem inexplicable to us that we all must spend a lifetime in a world full of such terrible misery, evil, and sin – subjected year after year to the cruelty and callousness of those around us and to the raging passions within our own souls – all in order to reach a paradise that we have probably never even glimpsed. Like the disciples, when we see reality of the wicked world and the wretchedness of our own sinful hearts, we can sometimes only cry out: “Lord, who then can be saved?”

Yet it is precisely in our exile that God has provided us the only possible path to return. It was nothing other than His great mercy and compassion which exiled us from our ancestral paradise into this world of suffering. As Abba Dorotheos teaches, upon seeing mankind's fall into sin, the Lord said: “man is mad; he does not know how to be happy, unless he experiences evil days he will go away and completely perish.” If the prodigal son had gone into the far country and there experienced great prosperity, peace, and happiness, he would almost certainly never have returned to the Father's house – nor indeed have even remembered it at all. And what is more, if the Lord had not allowed us to be subjected to physical death as well as to suffering, if we had been born to live eternally in this fallen world experiencing nothing but good times and earthly happiness, then we would likely never have realized the cause of our inner spiritual misery, our lives would have been totally deprived of any real meaning, and we would have spent all eternity in total separation from God.

And so it turns out that even the curse of God is for us only a blessing. As St. Ephraim the Syrian writes, “the staves with which Thou punishest are carved from the wood of Thy loving-kindness.” The Lord does nothing out of vindictiveness, for in Him there is only mercy and compassion.

So let us remember this during the coming fast, and indeed for the rest of our lives: that every temptation, every pain and sorrow, every sickness of body and even every sinful fall is allowed by a loving God in order to turn us toward Him, to remind us that this world is not our home, that without Him our life is only a fleeting shadow and a passing dream. Let us bow our necks and accept with tears of gratitude the blows and chastisements given to us by a loving Father for the sake of our eternal healing and happiness. And then let us lift up our eyes from this broken world and see shining before us the Bright Day of Pascha, and let us never forget that the road upon which God is guiding us is the only one that can lead us home. Amen.

# LENTEN RETREAT APRIL 4, 2020

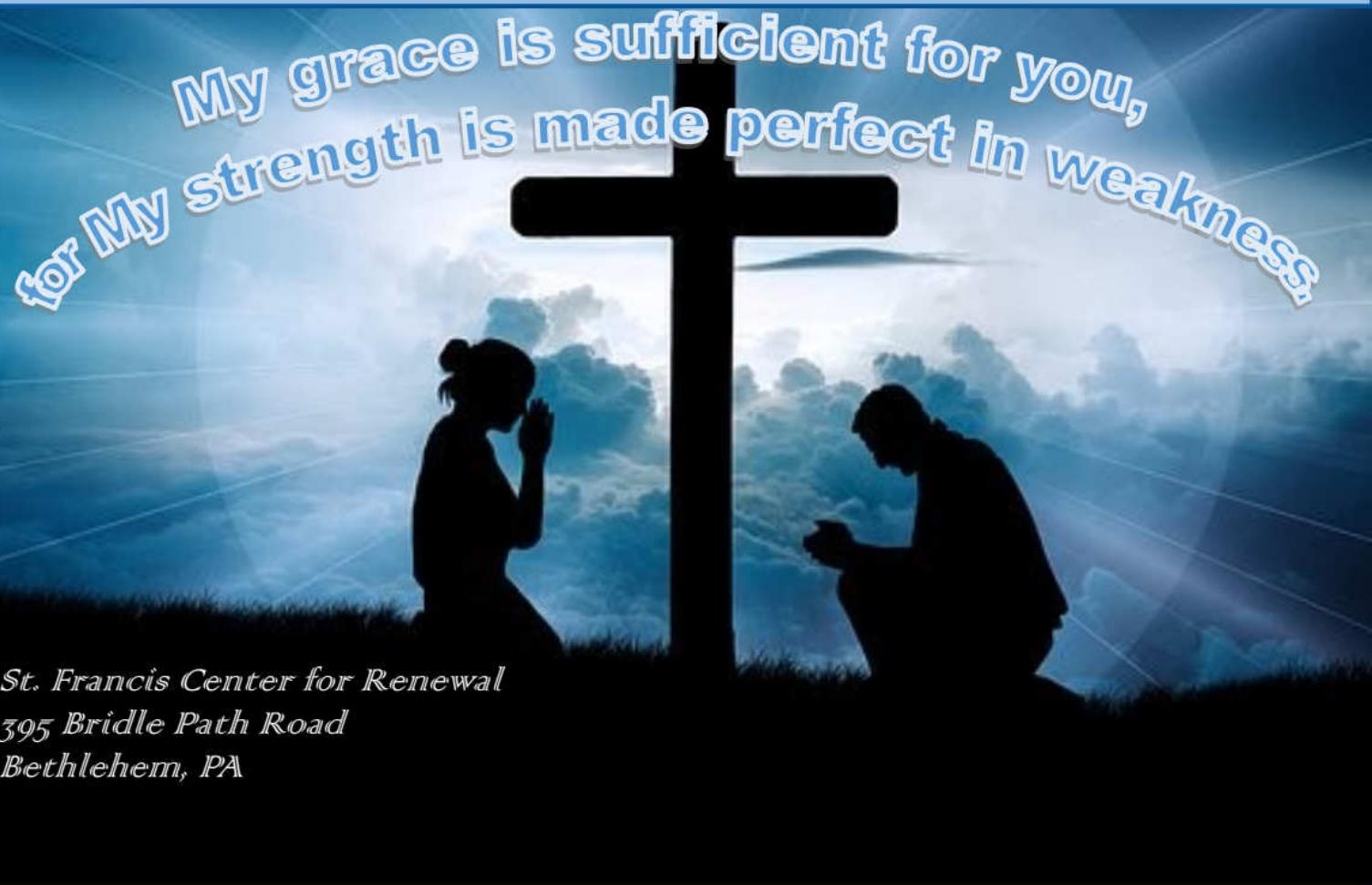
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## Why Lent?

March 11, 2019 · [Molly Sabourin](#)

To be reminded of grace is grace  
itself, shorter  
the shadows fall. Illumination  
now  
is lit, and lighter

is heavy life, yet like lace,  
with all its order  
designed to be seen through, I see  
and  
avow  
the bit that's brighter

– From “Lent” by Maurice  
Manning



Why Lent? I mean what is it, besides refraining from certain foods – a laundry list of “nos”? One has to be careful not to treat it like a formula instead of a state of being. To me, Lent is the tidying up of my cluttered and musty soul. It’s being intentional about pausing and turning inward, allowing the tools the Church prescribes for us (prayer, restraint, stillness, almsgiving) to enter into it and open the windows, letting in light and fresh air.

What I long for is an inner life adorned with beauty, calm, and quiet (a haven from stress and anxiety), but I am not strong or disciplined enough to resist the lure and pull of the noise and bedlam “out there.” It gets under my skin and keeps me fearful, dissatisfied, and resentful. All I see are my losses and potential losses, all I hear is despairing and hateful rhetoric. Grumbling becomes my default. I gorge myself on the mindless consumption of voyeurism, excess information, material possessions. It’s all just escapism, and it’s empty as hell.

Lent is a caring mother stepping in to set boundaries for her overtired, over stimulated, over worried, and under nourished child. “No, because you need your rest,” I often tell my own kids. “No, because your body can’t run on junk.” “No, because I know you, and love you so deeply. You are hurting, let me help you find healing and relief.”

Why Lent? Because it shifts my gaze from the earthly waves and storms threatening to drown me and on to Christ Who is above, beyond, within, encompassing all of it. When my context is eternity and resurrection, I am no longer bound by worldly rationales and limitations. I become free – free to show mercy, free to forgive, free to hope, free to embrace the mystery of dying in order to live, and free to pursue peace, regardless of my circumstances.

How grateful I am for this season of repentance, knowing pride, gluttony, and slothfulness only make me miserable. Yes, to rootedness. Yes, to joy. Yes, to love being the only answer necessary or relevant. “To be reminded of grace, is grace itself.”

May Great Lent be a balm for all of us!

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/gracehereandnow/2019/03/11/why-lent/>



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# IN SEARCH OF GOD!

2020 Pan-Orthodox LENTEN RETREAT

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday, March 28, 2020

*Who is your God?*

The Call of Great Lent: Finding God through Repentance

Holy Things are for the Holy: Finding God in Liturgy

Finding God in One Another

*"Who is so great a God as our God?*

*You are the God who works wonders."*

*(Sung at Vespers on the  
the Sunday of Orthodoxy)*

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## St. Andrew's Great Canon: a Rival Voice

March 11, 2019 · [Fr. Lawrence Farley](#)

Every year during Lent we invite into our churches a great pastor, St. Andrew of Crete, and listen while he leads us in a meditation on sin and repentance. That is, we listen while his Great Canon is chanted, and in response we reply over and over again, “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me!” Some things in this long poetic work might strike some moderns as a bit jarring, if not downright pathological—all this self-flagellation over our sins, this torrent of anguish and self-abhorrence. Is all this really necessary? Is it even healthy?

A quick and superficial perusal of the text might leave us wondering. “There has never been a sin or act or vice in life that I have not committed, O Saviour. I have sinned in mind, word, and choice, in purpose, will and action, as no one else has ever done.” “I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against You. Be merciful to me. For there is no one who has sinned among men whom I have not surpassed by my sins.” “From my youth, O Christ I have rejected Your commandments. I have passed my whole life without caring or thinking, a slave of my passions. Therefore, O Saviour, I cry to You: at least in the end save me!” Isn’t all this self-condemnation a bit much? And how accurate is it? Are all those people standing about in church for hours on end in Lent really as bad as all that?

Such questions miss the point of the Great Canon. The long meditation from the pen of St. Andrew is not offered as an individual’s personal confession of sin. It is not intended to be the sort of thing one shares with a psychiatrist while lying on his couch, or with one’s confessor while standing before the Cross. It is not intended as autobiography, but as medicine. Like some medicines, it might seem a little severe, and even taste bitter. But it is exactly the medicine that we need, however it might taste.

The disease the medicine is intended to cure is the one now afflicting large segments of our modern secular population—that of careless and serene self-righteousness. We far too easily fall into the assumption that we are pretty sensational spiritually, and that we have racked up an impressive score. We soon enough become blind to our true spiritual state. We can see others’ sins clearly enough, especially when they sin against us, but our own failings often seem to elude us.

I remember this kind of delusional approach being expressed on the radio one afternoon. A lady was being interviewed about her life and her life choices, and she said that she really couldn’t bring herself to regret anything she had ever done, because all her actions combined to make her the person she was today. Quite the confession! Really—she couldn’t bring herself to regret *anything? Ever in all her life?* Speaking personally, I can find plenty of things I regret doing, saying, and thinking in the last twenty-four hours, never mind all my life. The interviewed lady seems to reflect a culture in the last stages of the “I’m Okay; You’re Okay” disease. We are just fine spiritually, and we can’t bring ourselves to regret anything we have done.

Into this den of insanity and illness comes St. Andrew of Crete, bearing just the right medicine. We need to hear him, to listen to our conscience afresh, and to submissively receive its inner rebuke. Something inside of us is indeed broken and dark, diseased and dying. By confessing the brokenness, by admitting to the darkness, we can begin to separate ourselves from them, and to find healing and soundness of mind and peace. The World with its lies shouts at us every day, all day long, without ceasing. We need a rival voice, the voice of sanity, a voice calling us home. We need St. Andrew and his Great Canon. Maybe that is why he is so welcome in our churches every Lent.



# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2020

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 9th</b>	 TRIODION WEEKS <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>FEBRUARY 16th</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>FEBRUARY 23rd</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 1st</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 FORGIVENESS SUNDAY <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 8th</b>	 GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 15th</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 22nd</b>	 HALF WAY TO PASCHA! <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 29th</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 5th</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 12th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 GREAT AND HOLY WEEK <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>APRIL 17th</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>APRIL 19th</b> NO FASTING!	 BRIGHT WEEK <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

# FASTING

The fast for the forty days of Lent is indicated below, though many are not able to hold to the strict fast. We offer the following guidelines to be considered prayerfully with the guidance of your spiritual father and in consideration of any medical condition or dietary requirements.

## STRICT FAST

No Meat, Fish, Milk, Dairy Products, Oil, or Oil Products

## PALM SUNDAY

Fish, Oil & Wine permitted

## FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Fish, Oil & Wine Permitted

Shellfish are permitted throughout Great Lent

### Resource:

The Orthodox Daily Planner and Resource Guide published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries provides daily guidance in fasting, scripture, feast days and more.

## St. John Chrysostom on Fasting

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.

If you see a poor man, take pity on him.

If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.

Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes,  
but bite and devour our brothers?

May He who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.

## Jesus' Instructions on Fasting

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

*Gospel of Matthew Chapter 6:16-18*

## REPENTANCE & CONFESSSION

Repentance has its roots in the apostles. In the Book of Acts the Apostle Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)

When we fall away from God, we have removed ourselves from His communion – with Him and with other Christians. We have excommunicated ourselves. To re-enter communion with God is the on-going activity of all Christians. We fall away daily in some way or another. No one is exempt.

Often, when children play in competitive games, one will call out "that's a do over!" Haven't we all wished for that chance to undo the past and start over? Repentance offers us this new beginning.

We are telling God that we have changed our mind about our past direction and want to be back in communion with him. The Greek work for repentance, metanoia, implies a very deep change in the way we see ourselves, our world, and our relationship to God. To change our mind in repentance is the starting point in our Lenten journey. We leave behind regret as we move toward hope. Repentance is not a single action but an attitude, a frame of mind.

Think back over your life of things which you regret having said or done – hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, deceitful. Think also of those things which you have done which may not have directly affected others, but which you know to be wrong according to the teachings of the Church. Bring them to mind as if they were occurring right now. Think of how it would have been if you had acted differently. Take this regret and turn it into repentance. Acknowledge that you have offended another person or the Church, and in doing so you have offended God.

If we are to be forgiven by God, He requires of us that we also forgive one another. For many of us, this is the most difficult aspect of repentance and confession. Yet we say it each time we pray the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Just as God's love for us is personal, so must ours be for Him. As the Christian grows from child to adult, his or her personal response to God becomes crucial. This personal response is the act of confession.

## PRAYER

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.

*-St. Paul's letter to the Philippians*

One key to a more fulfilling life is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, the aim of prayer is to enter into conversation with God. Prayer is sometimes referred to as dialogue with God. Often it is a waiting on God in silence. In the church it is defined as the lifting of the mind and heart to God, and also as walking in the presence of God. We turn our mind and thoughts toward Him. We mentally gaze at Him and speak with Him in reverence, fear, and hope. At times we speak to Him with words and at other times we stand in reverent silence, saying nothing, but being aware of His presence. In this dialogue with God we praise Him and thank Him. We ask Him for what we need. Our mind and our heart are opened to Him. Prayer is not only repeating words, it is trust in God that he hears and directs us in His Way involving spiritual growth and development.

### The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

Read each week-day during Great Lent

O Lord and Master of my life,  
take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of  
chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King,  
grant me to see my own transgressions,  
and not to judge my brother,  
for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages.

Amen.

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,  
present in all places and filling all things,  
the treasury of blessings and Giver of life:  
come and abide in us.

Cleanse us from all impurity, and save our souls,  
O Gracious Lord.

# A MEDITATION ON ALMSGIVING

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

Christ commanded his disciples to give alms. To “give alms” means literally “to do” or “to make merciful deeds” or “acts of mercy.” According to the Scriptures, the Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering, full of mercy, faithful and true. He is the one who does merciful deeds (see Psalm 103). Acts of mercy are an “imitation of God” who ceaselessly executes mercy for all, without exception, condition or qualification. He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Mercy is a sign of love. God is Love. A deed of merciful love is the most Godlike act a human being can do. “Being perfect” in Matthew’s Gospel corresponds to “being merciful” in Luke’s Gospel. “Perfection” and “being merciful” are the same thing.

To love as Christ loves, with the love of God who is Love, is the chief commandment for human beings according to Christianity. It can only be accomplished by God’s grace, by faith. It is not humanly possible. It is done by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Acts of mercy must be concrete, physical actions. They cannot be “in word and speech, but in deed and truth” (First letter of John and letter of James). Acts of mercy are acts done to Christ himself who was hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, in prison and sick in the form of being wounded for our transgressions on the cross, taking up our wounds, and dying our death.

Christian acts of mercy must be sacrificial. By this, we understand that we must not simply give to others what is left over. We have to be sharing our possessions with others in ways that limit our-selves in some way (The Widow’s Mite). And, acts of mercy should be done without qualification or condition to everyone, no matter who, what or how they are (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

## Alms Giving Opportunities

### IOCC- International Orthodox Christian Charities

**Mission- IOCC. In the spirit of Christ’s love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond. IOCC will respond without discrimination, to those who are suffering and in need, to enable them to continue to improve their own lives and communities and to have means to live with dignity, respect and hope.**

Donate at: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org) or send donation to IOCC, 110 West Road, Suite 360 Baltimore, MD 21204 or by phone 877-803-4622



### OCMC- Orthodox Christian Mission Center



**Mission- To help fulfill the Great Commission of Christ(Matthew 28:16); the Orthodox Christian Mission Center(OCMC) strives to establish vibrant Eucharistic communities throughout the world, to develop and support indigenous church leaders, and to strengthen the infrastructure of their churches. OCMC carries out this work primarily, though not solely, in countries where Christianity is in the minority and where the Gospel message has not been proclaimed. OCMC will recruit, train, send, and support Orthodox missionaries to preach, teach, baptize, construct, and minister to the spiritual and physical needs of those being served and saved.**

Donate at: [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org) or send donation to: OCMC, 220 Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086

## **Neighborhood Resilience Project**



Creating resilient healing and healthy communities. One block at a time. Rooted in the Gospel and teaching of the Orthodox Church, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement (American 1950s-1960s), the mission of the Neighborhood Resilience Project is to support the transformation of neighborhoods from Trauma Affected Communities to Resilient Healing and Healthy Communities through Trauma Informed Community Development.

### **Our Vision**

To inspire a movement in which suffering people are raised up from the ashes of trauma in unconditional love to become empowered healers, community builders, and positive change makers.

### **Neighborhood Resilience Project and the Orthodox Church**

The Neighborhood Resilience Project has a faith-based affiliation with the Orthodox Christian Church through a relationship with Saint Moses the Black Orthodox Church in the Hill District. The church provides pastoral support and spiritual direction as well as limited legal oversight.

Donate at: <https://neighborhoodresilience.org/>

## **ZOE for Life**

any women are fortunate to have the love and support structure to lead them to marriage, children, and a meaningful life. Others, however, are not as fortunate. They find themselves in a crisis pregnancy. They have made the wrong choices and are in turmoil. They're not thinking, they're panicking.

ZOE serves as a conduit, guiding women to a wider range of support organizations, providing them with a more attractive set of options and hopefully a more promising outlook on their situation. For example, there is counseling, housing assistance, medical assistance, prenatal care, adoption and other services available that are usually unknown to most women in crisis pregnancies. It is ZOE's goal to offer more options to women in distress to empower them to make life saving decisions for their babies as well as themselves.



ZOE for Life!™ is a pan-Orthodox outreach of Orthodox Christians. It is funded privately, and has received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. All gifts are tax-deductible as specified by law.

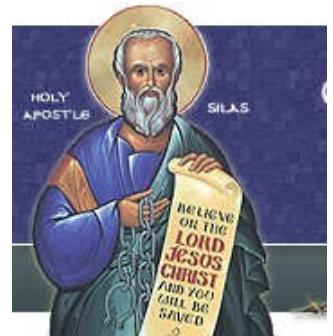
Donate at <http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org/index.htm> or  
3352 Mayfield Road , Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

## **OCPM – Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry**

**Mission - The goal of OCPM is to bring the love of Christ to those who are in prison by providing encouragement, material support, transition and reintegration services, Christian education, spiritual guidance and the sacramental life of the Church.**

Donate at: <https://theocpm.org/> or send donation to :

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM)  
P.O. Box 1597  
New York, NY 10025



## St Andrew's Society

Saint Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Society was founded in 1990 by the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA as a religious and charitable organization.

As an integral ministry of the Church, the Society's philanthropic mission focuses on providing humanitarian assistance to the needy and supporting church-related projects in Ukraine. Since its founding, the Society has raised over 1.3 million dollars towards the support of religious, educational and humanitarian projects.

Saint Andrew's Society Mission supports:

- the Christian spiritual rebirth of the Ukrainian people and reverse the consequences of Soviet militant atheism;
  - the efforts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in re-establishing the universal principle of humanity, justice, charity and tolerance;
  - the rebirth of the persecuted and devastated Church in the former Soviet Union.
- 
- humanitarian aid to the needy, the orphans, the elderly, and the refugees in Ukraine;
  - financial and logistical assistance to seminaries in Ukraine and scholarships for theological students to study abroad;
  - publications of religious literature, assistance towards medical projects and church restorations.



**Donations may be forwarded to:**

*St. Andrew's Society  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA  
PO Box 495  
So. Bound Brook, NJ 08880*

**There are many other worthwhile charities, causes and monasteries one can donate to during this Lenten season. Here are several links where additional information can be found.**

[www.uocofusa.org](http://www.uocofusa.org)

[www.assemblyofbishops.org](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org)

## Internet Lenten Resources

ANCIENT FAITH MINISTRIES

<http://www.ancientfaith.com/>

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE

<http://www.antiochian.org/lent>

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE

<http://lent.goarch.org/>

MYSTAGOGY: GREAT LENT RESOURCE PAGE

<http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2011/03/great-lent-resource-page.html>

My Beautiful Lent

<https://mybeautifullent.com/>

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN NETWORK

<http://myocn.net/>

SS. Peter & Paul  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
PO Box 835  
Carnegie, PA 15106

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED