

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For health of:**

Bryant Naumov, best of birthday wishes from great grandmother Elena Wolff and family.

Readings:

- **Romans 13:11-14;14:1-4** (Sunday before lent)
- **Matthew 6:14-21** (Sunday before lent)

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Sunday service:

Hours - 9:40 AM **Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**
(General Confession – 9 50 AM on the first Sunday of each month. Except during Lent)
(Private Confession – Half hour before any service. Please don't delay the service.)
(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month)

Church School - 9:30 AM **Coffee hour** after Liturgy
(no classes 1st Sunday of each month)

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy, downstairs, for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **2012 Services for Great Lent:**
Today, Sunday, February 26, after Sunday Liturgy - Forgiveness Vespers
Friday, March 2, 6:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 9, 6:00 PM -Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 16, 6:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Sunday, March 18, 4:00 PM - Deanery Sunday Lenten Vespers
Friday, March 23, 6:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 30, 6:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Friday, April 6, 6:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
- **Candles prices** will be adjusted next Sunday. Candles that are now \$1.50 will cost \$2.00 and the \$2.00 candles will be \$2.50. The price of the \$1.00 candles will remain the same.

Special Announcements:

- **Cheesfare Sunday**, the last day that dairy products are allowed before Lent, is today **February 26th**. The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God is sponsoring a luncheon after the Divine Liturgy today. Cost is \$5.00 per person, payable at the luncheon.
- **Choir practice** will be held at 9:30 Sunday mornings, downstairs. All those who wish to sing in the choir are welcome and encouraged to attend.
- **The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on March 25th**, after coffee hour.

Reminder:

- **Dues and assessments are being collected for the year 2012, Total Parish Membership Fee is now \$200.** Partial payments are gladly accepted.
- **Volunteers are needed to clean the church.** Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, downstairs, to indicate when you can help.

Pre lent - Forgiveness Sunday:

On this eve of Great Lent, the day called **Cheesefare Sunday** and **Forgiveness Sunday**, we sing of Adam's exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord's teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us, **"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses"** (Mt 6:14-18).

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: *"Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...."*

Great Lent services:

The beautiful Lenten services more than anything else help us to deepen our spiritual vision. Starting **today** with **Forgiveness Vespers**, then each **Friday evening**, our parish will celebrate a special Vespers called the **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**. It consists of solemn Great Vespers and communion with the Holy Gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday. This service can "crown" the week of fasting, with the partaking of the Bread of life, the ultimate fulfillment of our efforts.

Each Sunday afternoon (4:00 PM), around the New Jersey Deanery, different parishes invite everyone to a Lenten Vespers Service. This year the schedule for NJ Deanery Sunday Lenten Vespers 2012 is as Follows:

- **March 4, Sunday of Orthodoxy:** Saints Peter & Paul Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Passaic, NJ.
- **March 11, St Gregory Palamas:** St. Gregory Palamas, Glen Gardner, NJ.
- **March 18, Sunday of the Holy Cross: Mother of God, Mays Landing, NJ.**
- **March 25, Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos:** Annunciation Church, Brick, NJ.
- **April 1, Saint Mary of Egypt:** Ss. Peter and Paul, Bayonne, NJ.
- **(April 18, 2012, Bright Wednesday Vespers,** Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ.)

See us on the web at:

ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin

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Sunday Bulletin

Church of the Mother of God

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Glory to
Jesus Christ

Glory Forever

Expulsion from Paradise

Master, Teacher of wisdom,

Bestower of virtue,

you teach the thoughtless and protect the poor:

Strengthen and enlighten my heart.

Word of the Father,

let me not restrain my mouth from crying to you:

Have mercy on me, a transgressor,

O merciful Lord!

Kontakion - Expulsion of Adam from Paradise

On this day the Church remembers:

Sunday of Cheesefare • The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise

- St. Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza (420) • Ven. Sebastian of Poshekhónsk (ca. 1500)
- Martyr Sebastian (1st c.).

February 26, 2012

Tone 4 of the Octoechos.

Triodion week 4

37th Sunday after Pentecost