

Today's Bulletin Sponsor are:

(no sponsors this week)

Readings:**I Corinthians 8:8-13;9:1-2** (*Meatfare, 2nd Sunday before lent*)**Matthew 25:31-46** (*Meatfare, 2nd Sunday before lent*)

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Saturday service:**Vespers – 6:30 PM****(Private Confession – After Vespers by appointment.)****Sunday service:****Hours - 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****(General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month)****(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month)****Church School****All classes will meet every Sunday.****Grades 5-8 – 9:30 am****Preschool and Grades K through 4 – immediately after communion.****We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy, downstairs, for Coffee hour.****Announcement:**

- The Sisterhood is sponsoring **two pre-Lenten luncheons** for **Meatfare** and **Cheesefare** Sunday, today and next Sunday, March 1st. The cost of each luncheon is \$5.00 per adult, payable at the door. Children 12 and under are free. Anyone wishing to contribute a dish for next Sunday's luncheon should use the sign-up sheet in the community room.
- The **annual Paschal basket raffle will be held on April 5th**. Tickets for the raffle are \$1.00 each and can be obtained from Maribeth Romanofsky. Each parishioner is asked to sell ten tickets. If you'd like to contribute an item for the basket, there is a sign-up sheet on the community bulletin board.
- **Two Paschal baskets for children** will be raffled off on April 12th. Children can earn tickets for this raffle by attendance at church and Sunday School during Lent.

Reminders:

- **Dues and assessments** are now being collected for the year 2020. Total Parish Membership Fee is \$200. Partial payments are gladly accepted. Please indicate on the check that it is to be applied to Membership.
- We offer **general confession** the first Sunday of each month, and **Private Confession** after Vespers by appointment on Saturday evenings. It is important that every Orthodox Christian go to confession.
- Announcements or Prayer Requests for the bulletin, can be submitted by email to: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org
- The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.
- The Grey Book Step Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.

Sunday of the Last Judgment

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

To read more about the saints remembered today, see:
<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2020/02/23>

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Email us at: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

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**Glory to
Jesus Christ****Glory
Forever**

Sunday of the Last Judgment

*When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory,
all things shall tremble
and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat;
the books shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed!
Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,
and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, righteous Judge!*

Troparion – Tone 1

Today the Church remembers:

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE • Sunday of the Last Judgment. • Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (167) • Ven. Polycarp of Briansk (1620-1621) • Ven. John, Antiochus, Antoninus, Moses, Zebinas, Polychronius, Moses, and Damian, Ascetics, of the Syrian deserts (5th c.) • Ven. Alexander, founder of the Monastery of the "Unsleeping Ones" (ca. 430) • Ven. Damian of Esphigmenou (Mt. Athos—1280) • Monastic Martyr Damian of Philotheou (1568)

February 23, 202036th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**Triodion week 3****Tone 3** of the Octoechos