

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

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

The Most Reverend MICHAEL, Archbishop of NY and the Diocese of NY & NJ
V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson
Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Sub-Deacon Vlashi
Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, March 13, 2016

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

Tone 8

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

Forgiveness Sunday—Sunday of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise: Sunday Before Lent

***Glory to
Jesus Christ!***



*Sunday of Cheesefare:
Expulsion of Adam from
Paradise*

***Glory
Forever!***

*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!*

Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints

Forgiveness Sunday/Sunday of the Cheesefare — Tone 8. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Translation of the relics of St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (846). Martyr Sabinus (Abibus) of Egypt (287). Martyrs Africanus, Publius and Terence, of Carthage (3rd c.). Martyr Alexander of Macedonia (305-311). Martyr Christina of Persia (4th c.). Ven. Aninas of the Euphrates.

Prayer Request

For Health of:

Katie Salcedo, during her pregnancy, offered by her father, Sub-Deacon Vlashi.



Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, March 13th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Monday, March 14th

6:30 pm: The Canon of St.
Andrew of Crete

Wednesday, March 16th

6:30 pm: Presanctified
Liturgy/Potluck

Saturday, March 19th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, March 20th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, March 23rd

6:30 pm: Holy Day of the
Annunciation/Presanctified
Liturgy/Potluck

Saturday, March 26th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, March 27th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, April 2nd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 3rd

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Bulletin Sponsors:

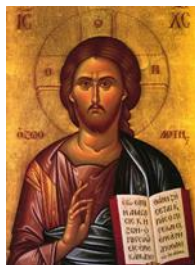
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Readings:



Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

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 revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling 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.



Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

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 of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise: Sunday before Lent

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....”



Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Candles/Memorial Candles: Candles may be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:
OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Study Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News

Choir practice will be every Sunday during Lent at 9:30

The next Parish Council meeting will be March 20th, (Sunday of Orthodoxy), after coffee hour. It has been changed from March 27th. All Parish Council meetings are open to any parish member and may speak on any issue of the Parish. All Parish Council members should attend or be excused by the Rector or President. Trustees of the parish. and, of course, the Rector and other clergy should attend.

Dues and assessments are being collected for the year 2016. The total Parish Membership Fee is \$200. Partial payments are gladly accepted. Please note, in the memo of your check, the amount that will go to membership.

Presanctified Liturgies will begin on Wednesday, March 16th, followed by a potluck meal.

The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God will be sponsoring a Cheesefare Luncheon today Sunday, March 13th. Various dairy dishes including blini will be served. The cost of both luncheons will be \$5.00 per person.

From The Treasurer

1. 2016 membership/dues/assessment: \$200 per person over 18 years of age. If there is a financial hardship, please speak to Fr. Matthew. All discussions are completely confidential.
2. Scraps of paper with notes and no name get lost in the offering basket. Please do NOT do this.
3. If you want your donation designated for a certain fund or purpose (Building Fund, Membership, bulletin sponsorship, etc.), please clearly write the amount and purpose on the memo line of your check. Otherwise the full amount of the check will go into the general offering fund. OR you may use an envelope for the same purpose. Blank envelopes are available at the Candle Desk.
4. Questions? Please speak to Trudy Ellmore. Email: trellmore@gmail.com. Cell: 610-393-9897.



NY/NJ Diocese News

GREAT LENT begins on Monday, 14 March 2016 - 03/11/16

UPDATED: Archpastoral Letter now available! As we make ready for our **Lenten journey to PASCHA** (the Resurrection of Our Lord, God, and

Savior, Jesus Christ), we are offered a period of time to prepare ourselves for the increased spiritual effort of prayer, charity, and fasting. **The Lenten journey begins on Monday, 14 March** and culminates in the joyous PASCHA on Sunday, 1 May. **Archbishops Michael has issued an Archpastoral Letter for the beginning of the Great Fast.** There are also two videos in the "Lessons in Our Faith" series that may be particularly helpful! They are: **"Great Lent: Our Spiritual Life" and "Fasting: 7 Questions & 7 Answers."** Each video is a very brief and concise discussion (8 minutes each); they have been very popular and highly acclaimed (viewed over 3,000 times). To view these instructional videos, visit "Lessons in Our Faith" ... **HERE: <http://www.nynjoca.org/>**

Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

Great Lent 2016

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon on the Beginning of Great Lent 2016

"Come, O People, and today let us accept the grace of the Fast as a gift from God!"

—Matins of the First Week of Great Lent



Prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These three "pillars" of our spiritual lives are inseparable. They stand at the heart of everything we, as the People of God, attempt to accomplish for the sake of our all-merciful Savior in church, in our homes, and in our places of study and work. So central are these three ascetic practices that Christ challenges us, in the Sermon on the Mount, to approach them not as the Pharisees, who sought the praise of others, but in silence and humility and with vigilance.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ makes it clear that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are not “optional.” He did not say, “*if* you fast” or “*if* you give alms.” Rather, He said “*when* you fast... *when* you give alms.” He *assumes* that those who desire to follow Him will do these things, not by “choice,” but by conviction—and as a means of personal conversion. How often have we been remiss, failing in our daily lives to pray, fast or give to those in genuine need, seeking to excuse ourselves due to a lack of time or resources? And how often have we forgotten that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are not limited to penitential seasons, such as that which we are about to begin, but are central in our lives and witness every day, 365 days of the year?

During Great Lent, we are called to “come to our senses,” even as the prodigal son recognized the error of his ways and sought his father’s forgiveness. We are challenged to flee from the pride of the pharisee and embrace the publican’s tears. We are urged to make an essential change in the quality and pace of our otherwise hectic lives while turning our attention to those matters that are “needful” in working out our salvation. And, as we are afforded yet one more opportunity to return to our heavenly Father and seek His unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness, “repositioning” Him at the very center of our lives, second to none. Enrolling as we are in the “School of Repentance,” we pray, fast and give alms as a means of grasping anew the need to prepare for the great and glorious Pascha which, in turn, offers us a foretaste of the Kingdom yet to be fully revealed, but already fully present in our midst in the life of the Body and Bride of Christ, the Church.

May our Lenten efforts not be seen as a burden—our Lord takes on our burdens and lightens our yokes—but as an opportunity to “come to *our* senses” by imitating the One Who Himself prayed, fasted and gave alms—or rather, gave His very life—for us. Certainly, we cannot do less during the impending season of “bright sadness” as we embrace “the Light never overcome by darkness” Who leads us “from death to live, from earth to heaven.” May all that we do and experience during this most holy time of preparation serve to glorify Him, that through us “God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ” [1 Peter 4:11].

Humbly asking your forgiveness and assuring you of my prayers for the Lenten journey, I remain

With love in Christ,
+ Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada



A Word from OCMC Executive Director Fr. Martin Ritsi on Mission Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We pray that the new year has already been full of blessings.

This year Mission Sunday falls on March 13th. As the official foreign missions agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, we invite you to join us in growing an awareness of Orthodox Missions while helping to share the Faith with people around the world this Lenten season.

Many people still do not know that through the OCMC the Orthodox Churches of the United States send and support several long-term missionaries and hundreds of short-term mission team volunteers each year to preach and teach the Faith, minister to youth, provide healthcare, and help the Church grow on nearly every continent. This service is offered by lay people and clergy, men and women, the young and the old. There are opportunities for everyone to bring the light of Christ to those who remain in darkness.

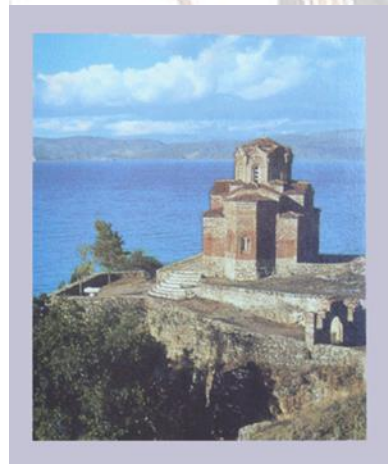
Please speak to your parish about Orthodox missions on Mission Sunday, March 13th, or at some point during Lent this year. Encourage your Sunday school teachers to use the lesson plans developed by the Mission Center to educate our children about this aspect of our Faith. Help them to use OCMC Coin Boxes to raise support for this vital work of the Church. Welcome people from your community to join an OCMC Mission Team or to serve as long-term missionary from your parish. A prayer, a gift, an offering of time to serve will touch the lives of hundreds of people and bring love to a world that needs it now more than ever.

Thank you for all that you have done and will do to continue the mission of the Church! None of it would be possible without you and the countless others who have answered the call to make disciples of all nations before you.

To learn more, or if you have any questions, please visit us online at www.ocmc.org, call us at 1-877-463-6784 FREE, or send an e-mail to missions@ocmc.org.

In Christ,

Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director



Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, XLVIII:

All the prophets have from the beginning cried out to my soul, imploring her to make herself a virgin and prepare herself to receive the Divine Son into her immaculate womb;

Imploring her to become a ladder, down which God will descend into the world, and up which man will ascend to God;

Imploring her to drain the red sea of sanguinary passions within herself, so that man the slave can cross over to the promised land, the land of freedom.

The wise man of China admonishes my soul to be peaceful and still, and to wait for Tao to act within her. Glory be the memory of Lao-tse, the teacher and prophet of his people!

The wise man of India teaches my soul not to be afraid of suffering, but through the arduous and relentless drilling in purification and prayer to elevate herself to the One on high, who will come out to greet her and manifest to her His face and His power. Glorious be the memory of Krishna, the teacher and prophet of his people!

The royal son of India teaches my soul to empty herself completely of every seed and crop of the world, to abandon all the serpentine allurements of frail and shadowy matter, and then--in vacuity, tranquility, purity and bliss--to await nirvana. Blessed be the memory of Buddha, the royal son and inexorable teacher of his people!

The thunderous wise man of Persia tells my soul that there is nothing in the world except light and darkness, and that the soul must break free from the darkness as the day does from the night. For the sons of light are conceived from the light, and the sons of darkness are conceived from darkness. Glorious be the memory of Zoroaster, the great prophet of his people!

The prophet of Israel cries out to my soul: Behold, the virgin will conceive and bear a son, whose name will be -- the God~man.³ Glorious be the memory of Isaiah, the clairvoyant prophet of my soul!

O heavenly Lord, open the hearing of my soul, lest she become deaf to the counsels of Your messenger.

Do not slay the prophets sent to you⁴, my soul, for their graves contain not them, but those who slew them.

Wash and cleanse yourself; become tranquil amid the turbulent sea of the world, and keep within yourself the counsels of the prophets sent to you. Surrender yourself entirely to the One on high and say to the world: "I have nothing for you."

Even the most righteous of the sons of men, who believe in you, are merely feeble shadows which, like the righteous Joseph, walk in your shadow. For mortality begets mortality and not life. Truly I say to you: earthly husbands are mistaken when they say that they give life. They do not give it but ruin it. They push life into the red sea and drown it, and beforehand they wrap it in darkness and make it a diabolical illusion. There is no life, O soul, unless it comes from the Holy Spirit. Nor is there any reality in the world, unless it comes down from heaven.

Do not slay the prophets sent to you, my soul, for killing is only an illusion of shadows. Do not kill, for you can slay no one but yourself.

Be a virgin, my soul, for virginity of the soul is the only semi-reality in a world of shadows. A semi-reality--until God is born within her. Then the soul becomes a full reality.

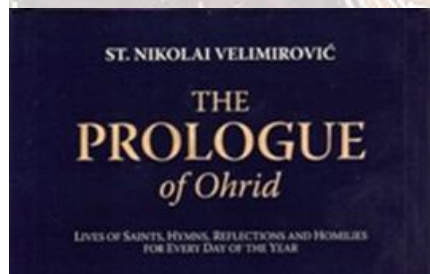
Be wise, my virgin, and cordially receive the precious gifts of the wise men from the East, intended for your Son. Do not glance back toward the West, where the sun sets, and do not crave gifts that are figmental and false.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XLVII:

II. The Realities of the Spiritual World The Purpose of Life

The chief end of our life is to live in communion with God. To this end the Son of God became incarnate, in order to return us to this divine communion, which was lost by the fall into sin. Through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we enter into communion with the Father and thus attain our purpose.

St. Theophan the Recluse, Letters to various people, 24



1. Saint Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Nicephorus governed the Holy Church wisely and zealously as one of the greatest archpastors of Constantinople. When Leo the Armenian rose up against icons, Nicephorus alone defied the emperor. He first counseled the emperor and then later denounced him. That is why the depraved emperor banished him to the island of Prokonis. On this island there was a monastery which

Nicephorous had built in honor of St. Theodore. This confessor of the Orthodox Faith remained in this monastery for thirteen years and afterward presented himself to the Lord in the year 827 A.D. Since all the iconoclastic emperors had perished, and Michael, with his mother Theodora, sat on the imperial throne, Patriarch Methodius was restored to the patriarchal throne. The relics of St. Nicephorous were translated from Prokonis to Constantinople in 846 A.D. There they rested first in the Church of Hagia Sophia [Divine Wisdom], from which he had been banished during his life, and later in the Church of the Twelve Apostles. The principal feast of this great hierarch is on June 2, and on March 13 the discovery and translation of his incorrupt relics is commemorated. On March 13, St. Nicephorous was banished

from Constantinople and then, again, on March 13, thirty-two years later, his relics were returned to the capital.

2. Saint Christina the Persian

For her unwavering confession of faith in Christ, she was cruelly tortured in Persia in the fourth century. So much did they torture her, flogging her with a whip, that she became exhausted and died. Her soul then departed from her tortured body and entered into the joy of Christ the King and Lord.

3. The Hieromartyr (Priestly-Martyr) Publius

This hieromartyr was successor to the glorious Dionysius the Areopagite on the episcopal throne in Athens. As a bishop, he was tortured by the pagans and beheaded in the second century. After a brief period of torture, he inherited life eternal.



Hymn of Praise *The City of Constantinople*

Constantinople, wondrous city near the blue Bosphorus,
Whose glory can be measured against your glory?
You were an awesome battleground of spiritual warriors,
Blasphemous heretics and saints of God.
As through a sieve you sifted them throughout the long centuries
Making known both apostates and servants of God.
By many sins you are soiled, and by the filth of sinners,
But you are consecrated with the abundance of the blood of martyrs.
Who could enumerate the spiritual heroes
And all the heavenly visions and all your mysteries?
The angels of God often flew down to you,
And men, like angels, were raised up to heaven.
The Mother of God appeared within you many times
To deliver those in danger, to heal the sick.
The flock of wondrous saints hovers over you,
And the prayers of your children are borne to the Most High.
Oh, how many saints were your children!
As many as there are lilies upon lilies, there are saints upon saints!
You wrote history and the calendar in red;
By your efforts even the great Symbol of Faith [The Creed] was written.
Thus, about you this could be said:
Among the many cities, you are a red letter.
With Holy Faith you enlightened the universe.
You healed the world of paganism and heresies.
Tortured much, but not slain, you have not yet passed away.
That is why we all celebrate you, Confessor that you are!
Throughout the earth and in the heavens your glory echoes;
Everyone who is baptized owes a great debt of gratitude to you.

Reflection

Great are those Christians who have a great love for Christ. Oh, in truth, how great were those Christians, those God-bearing fathers and martyrs! For so many in our time, this is impossible even to imagine. This

is what one of them, St. Simeon the New Theologian, confessed before all the monks in his monastery. Speaking from his own personal experience about how the words of the Lord, *For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light* (Matthew 11:30), were realized in him, Simeon said: "Believe me, when I fled to God my Savior, I did not encounter anything sorrowful, difficult or unbearable. The only great and unbearable sorrow I had was that I could not find sufficient means to die for the love for Christ." Are not such souls like burning flames enclosed in earthen vessels? Burning flames are always upright, directed toward heaven. Only remove the covering and the flame will shoot upward.

Contemplation

Contemplate the Lord Jesus at the judgment before Herod:

1. How Herod at first was very glad to see Jesus--not out of any spiritual need, but out of curiosity;
2. How Herod had hoped to see a miracle from Jesus, but was mistaken in that, for the Lord remained silent to all of his questions;
3. How Herod ridiculed the Lord and clothed Him in a beautiful garment.

Homily: on the reconciliation of the wicked for the sake of evil

"And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (Luke 23:12).

In His shame and humiliation, the Just One does good to His enemies. He reconciles them. It is true, in this case, that their reconciliation did not create mutual cooperation for some good deed but mutual persecution of the Just One. At least the flame of hatred between them was extinguished and died out. That was due to the Just One. Pilate and Herod were enemies. On that day when the Savior was brought for judgment before both of them, they were reconciled. The Prince of Peace brought peace between the quarrelling parties: peace which helped to hew out a cross for Him. But He also came to be a willing sacrifice for the sins of many.

Even today common enemies make peace among themselves when they find it necessary to attack and condemn the Lord. There are many who kill one another until you mention the name of the Lord to them. As soon as they hear that name, they gradually make peace among themselves for the sake of attacking that holy name. It is easier for the unjust to tolerate the unjust than it is for them to tolerate the just. It is easier for the unjust to come to an understanding and reconcile with the unjust than with the just.

In some countries, even the most quarrelsome parties seek reconciliation among themselves when it is deemed necessary to decide what place should be given to the Lord Jesus Christ in the state--the first place, which is befitting to Him, or the last place? Over these questions sworn enemies reconcile themselves, so that our Lord will be given the last place. So, also it was with the quarrelling parties of Pharisees and Sadducees, who were reconciled and entered into a partnership against Christ.

Why is it that the Most-pure and the Most-needed had to be awarded the last place? Because, according to their thinking, the first place would then be reserved for them. The same incentive was there between sworn enemies, the Pharisees and Sadducees, when it was deemed necessary to seek Christ's death. The same incentive was the occasion that caused the reconciliation between Pilate and Herod when it was deemed necessary to judge that Christ had to be put to death.

O my brethren, let us never seek peace with the unjust against justice. Rather, let us always seek peace with God, and that with a clear conscience.

O God, help us so that we may always possess such a peace.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration with Abbott Tryphon

Therapeutic Medicine

The therapeutic medicine that is found within the Church

As we begin the Lenten Journey, it would be good for us to consider the use of a “prayer rule.” This “rule” is of critical importance, for it will help us develop the discipline we need to progress spiritually. It is one of the great tools the Orthodox Church has to offer, since it has been handed down from the Fathers of the Church. This “art of prayer,” comes directly to us from the experience of the Early Church.

Along with keeping the fasting rules of the Church, including the Wednesday and Friday fasts, the prayer rule, received in consultation with your priest, your confessor, or your spiritual father or mother, is the medicine that will help you progress spiritually on your journey into the Heart of God.

An integral part of anyone’s prayer rule should be the recitation of the Morning and Evening Prayers, as found in the numerous translations available of the Orthodox Prayer Book. These prayers, together with the Pre-communion Prayers, and the prayers to the Holy Virgin, train our hearts in the discipline that help us sustain the grace that we receive when we commune of the Life Giving Mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood, and help us go deeper into our faith.

The use of the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner,” throughout the day, further aids us as we attempt to live out our day, focused on Christ. There is power in the Holy Name of Jesus, and this prayer fulfills Saint Paul’s injunction that we “should pray always.” The Jesus Prayer, also known as the Prayer of the Heart, gives us the strength to walk with Jesus throughout the day, even when driving through heavy traffic, weeding in the garden, waiting for the bus, or sitting in a long board meeting.

Finally, it is important to remember that the Church, as defined by the Church Fathers, is not a religious institution, but is a living organism that is the Hospital for the Soul. Therefore, the frequent use of the “tools” given to the Church, are of the utmost importance for our spiritual progress. Weekly confession, as well as the weekly reception of Holy Communion, fortify us spiritually, enabling us to live “in the world” without being “of the world”.

Because the Orthodox Church is “wholistic” our living out this Faith should not be confined to Sunday morning. If we were a pianist who made our living accompanying an orchestra, we wouldn’t think of going through a week without daily practice. The conductor of the orchestra wouldn’t put up with an unrehearsed pianist. As well, a marriage that is not worked at on a daily basis is doomed to ultimate failure since a relationship between two people requires effort. If we expect to have a relationship with God we have to prioritize our spiritual life. An occasional Liturgy does not suffice if we expect to grow in Faith and Wisdom.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon



Daily Reflection **A Rite of Forgiveness**

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you



love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’” (Jn 21: 15-19)

How very human, and humane, is this “rite of forgiveness.” I mean, because here the guilty party, a grown man, never explicitly asks for forgiveness. Instead, what happens here is, our Lord cooks breakfast for everyone, including Peter, and then lets Peter say what Christ knows already, that Peter does, indeed, love Him. So there’s more than one way to forgive, and ask forgiveness. That’s all I’m thinking today. And glory be to my Lord’s majestic, loving subtlety, because He lets me say I’m sorry, when I really am, in more ways than one.

Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers

"More True than the Truth" by Irenaeus

Some people abandon the teachings of the Church and fail to understand how a simple and devout person can have more worth than a philosopher who blasphemes without restraint. Heretics are like that. Heretics are always wanting to find something more true than the truth. They are always choosing new and unreliable ways. But like the blind led by the blind, they will fall into the abyss of ignorance by their own fault. The Church is like paradise on earth. "You may eat freely of the fruit of every tree in the garden," says the Spirit of God. In our case he means: Feed on the whole of Scripture, but do not do it with intellectual pride, and do not swallow the opinions of the heretics. They pretend to possess the knowledge of good and evil, but they are impiously elevating their own intelligence above their Creator. Beware! By devouring the ideas of the heretics we banish ourselves from the paradise of life.

From Spidlik, Thomas. Drinking from the Hidden Fountain: A Patristic Breviary. Cistercian: MA, 1994. Pg. 101.

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

When God in His mercy resolved to send down from heaven the grace of His divine power to us on earth, he established the sacred tabernacle with all its contents as a symbolical image, type and imitation of wisdom.

+ St Maximus the Confessor, 200 Chapters on the Knowledge of God

O holy temple, how good, how sweet it is to pray in you! For where can there be ardent prayer if not within your walls, before the throne of God, and before the...

+ St John of Kronstadt, My Life in Christ

March – 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	5 6:30pm Vespers
6 9:30am No School 9:40am Hours 9:45am Gen'l Confession 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Meatfare Luncheon	7	8 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	9	10	11 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	12 6:30pm Vespers
13 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Cheesefare Luncheon	14 6:30pm The Canon of St. Andrew of Crete Service	15 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	16 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	17	18 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	19 6:30pm Vespers
20 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	21	22 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	23 6:30pm Holy Day of Annunciation/Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	24	25 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	26 6:30pm Vespers
27 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	28	29 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	30 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	31		

Archpastoral Letter for the Great Fast 2016

Dearly Beloved Members of our Diocesan Family:

Christ is in our midst! – He is and ever shall be!

***“Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast,
and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat.”***

As we begin the sacred season of Great Lent, I am mindful of the Russian term *podvig*, a very important concept in our Holy Orthodox Tradition. The word “*podvig*” can be translated as “spiritual struggle.” It is an aspect of asceticism, a disciplinary way of life, pursued as a means of a higher ideal. In performing a *podvig*, we find it to be a means of drawing closer to Christ as we travel along the path of salvation.

The Great Russian Saint, Theophan the Recluse, defines our entire Christian life as *podvig*. He explains that while the spirit hates sin, the flesh may actually dwell in it. How then is this battle within ourselves to be resolved? It is resolved through *podvig*, the spiritual struggle of bringing the soul into mastery over the body. The Church gives us directions for doing this through our prayer rule, participation in divine services and Scripture reading, fasting and abstinence, standing in worship and making prostrations, giving alms to the poor, etc. All of these things strengthen the soul by disciplining the body, and as we fulfill these ascetical practices, we will indeed find that they help us draw nearer to our Creator and Savior. During Lent in particular, we are called to deepen our souls in Christ, to do more, to go beyond what the Church has already told us are the necessary first steps. *Podvigis* precisely that “doing more.”

In Great Lent, as the Church prescribes, many of us will strive to improve our rule of prayer – which, in the words of Saint Symeon of Thessaloniki, is “*conversation directly with God, being always with God, having one’s soul united with Him and one’s mind inseparable*” -- through the prescribed words in our prayer books, the saying of the Jesus Prayer, and the pouring out to God of our own requests, intercessions, and confessions. The Church will offer us more divine services to participate in, so that we can draw ever closer to our Savior, Who is the object of our worship. The world, however, with its demands on our time and talents, will tug at us to go in a different direction, and we will indeed have to “*struggle*” to stay focused on the One Who is “*the author and finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2).

During the Great Fast, many of us will strive to follow the Church’s guidelines and abstain from meat and dairy products for seven weeks. However, Saint John Chrysostom reminds us of an even greater understanding of the Fast – “*abstinence not only from food but from sins.*” He says, “*The fast should be kept not only by the mouth but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and the other members of the body.*” The eye must abstain from impure sights; the ear, from malicious gossip; the hands, from acts of injustice. Our *podvig* will be to fight the temptations that will come from the media and our own social life ... temptations to indulge in foods we have pledged to give up ... temptations to succumb to practices, common on the streets, which we have promised to avoid.

The Lenten Season affords us the opportunity to focus on the criteria of judgment on the Last Day, presented to us in the Gospel of Matthew: to express our love for others in practical form – to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked,

to visit the sick and those in prison. The second century Shepherd of Hermas insists that the money saved from abstaining from rich foods during the feast should be given to the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Because the world will continue to lure us to spend our time and talents and treasures on material possessions, creature comforts and forms of entertainment, we will “*struggle*” to increase our works of mercy for “*the least of His brethren*,” those in need.

The podvig of Lent, our spiritual struggle, is an imitation of the struggles of the Chosen People of the Old Covenant as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years, seeking entrance into the Promised Land. It is a replication of the struggles of the Saints of the New Testament, from the apostles and disciples of the first century to the martyrs and ascetics of our own time and our own country! It is the legacy of the struggles of so many of our grandparents and parents, who took their Faith seriously and held to the practices of Great Lent piously. But most importantly, the spiritual struggle we undertake is homage to the One Who prayed and fasted for forty days and nights, before He began His ministry which would achieve our salvation. In our Lenten struggle, we are encouraged by Saint Paul in I Corinthians 9:24-26, where he tells us that we need to be spiritually fit, like athletes in training. And in order to do that he urges us in Ephesians 6:10-18: “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places...*”

One might ask, why should we do all of this? Why should we undergo this Lenten “struggle,” this podvig, anyway? The answer is to achieve our goal, the goal not only of Lent but of our entire lifetime – to come closer to Christ, to become more like God, to enter into eternal communion with the Holy Trinity. We want that because we know how much Jesus Christ, our Lord God and Savior, has loved us – with that love greater than any man has, “*to lay down His life for His friends*” (John 13:35). And so, let us “*Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat*” ... let us undertake our Lenten podvig ... to show our love for the God Who loves more than we love ourselves. To Him be all glory unto ages of ages!

With my humble prayers, Archpastoral blessing and sincere love,

+ Michael

+ MICHAEL

Archbishop of New York and the
Diocese of New York and New Jersey