#### **Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**

#### For health of:

Andrew Romanofsky, birthday, offered by his family.Savannah and Hayden Golden, on their birthdays, offered by their grandparents, Holly and Ed Dawson.

#### **<u>Readings</u>:**

- 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Last Judgment)
- Matthew 25:31-36 (Last Judgment)

**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."

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month)

**Church School -** 9:30 AM (no classes 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month)

Coffee hour after Liturgy

## 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:

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

#### **Special Announcements:**

- **Meatfare Sunday**, the last day meat is allowed before Lent begins, is today **February 19<sup>th</sup>**. 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. Ethnic foods will be featured.
- **Cheesfare Sunday is February 26<sup>th</sup>.** This is the last day that dairy products are allowed before Lent. The Sisterhood will be sponsoring a luncheon on that day as well and the cost will again be \$5.00 per person. If you wish to bring in a dish, there is a sign-up sheet downstairs.

#### **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.

#### Sunday of Meatfare - 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 Schmemann 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.

#### Lenten Fasting:

A special word must be said about fasting during lent. Generally speaking, fasting is an essential element of the Christian Life. Christ fasted and taught men to fast. Blessed fasting is done in secret, without ostentation or accusation of others (Mt 6:16; Rom 14). It has as its goal the purification of our lives, the liberation of our souls and bodies from sin, the strengthening of our human powers of love for God and man, the enlightening of our entire being for communion with the Blessed Trinity. The Orthodox rules for Lenten fasting are the monastic rules. No meat is allowed after Meatfare Sunday, and any eggs or dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday. These rules exist not as a Pharisaic *"burden too hard to bear"* (Lk 11:46), but **as an ideal to be striven for**; not as an end in themselves, but **as a means to spiritual perfection crowned in love.** The Lenten services themselves continually remind us of this.

Let us fast with a fast pleasing to the Lord. This is the true fast: the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies and cursing. The stopping of these is the fast true and acceptable. (Monday Vespers of the First Week)

The Lenten services also make the undeniable point that we should not pride ourselves with external fasting since the devil also never eats! (*from the Rainbow Series*)

See us on the web at: ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin <u>E-Mail us at:</u> Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

### Sunday Bulletin **Church of the Mother of God** *"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"*

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**Glory Forever** 

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 - Sunday of the Last Judgment

#### On this day the Church remembers: Sunday of Meatfare • Sunday of the Last Judgment

Apostles of the Seventy Archippus (Arkhipp) and Philemon, and Martyr Apphias (1st c.)
 Martyrs Maximus, Theodotus, Hesychius and Asclepiodota, of Adrianopolis (305-311)
 Ss. Eugene and Macarius, Presbyters and Confessors, at Antioch (363)
 Ven. Dositheus of Palestine, disciple of Ven. Abba Dorotheus (7th c.)
 St. Rabulas of Samosata (ca. 530)
 Ven. Theodore of Sanaskáry (1791)

#### February 19, 2012

**Tone 3** of the Octoechos. Triodion week 3

Glorv to

Jesus Christ

36<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost