



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor*
 Very Reverend Father John Brancho, *Pastor Emeritus*
 Subdeacon Ryan Ferko
 Timothy Martin, Reader
 Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, *Cantors*
 Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*
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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory to Jesus Christ! (*responded with: Glory forever!*) Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*)
 We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, APRIL 3 #THEGREATFAST

St. Cyril, bishop of Catania (2nd c.)
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
 Panachida for Lawrence Martin (24-yr), 40-day for +Kimberly Bining and +John Neimer
 4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Missions at
 211 Cable Avenue, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112
 (*Confessions start at 3:30, Vespers at 4:00, and a Fellowship Meal following*)

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TUESDAY, APRIL 5 #THEGREATFAST

9:30 am The Great Canon of Repentance

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6 #THEGREATFAST

6:00 pm *** **Feast Day Great Vespers**
 with community meal following

THURSDAY, APRIL 7 #THEGREATFAST

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

*** **9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy of St. John**

^^ *Please note these changes!*

FRIDAY, APRIL 8 #THEGREATFAST

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 #THEGREATFAST

~~8:30~~ **9:00 am Maintenance and Mulch Morning**

11 am – 1 pm Confessions offered

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SUNDAY, APRIL 10 #THEGREATFAST

Venerable Hilarion the New of Pelecete (754)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Purple**

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Missions (Ambridge)

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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**** Spring Maintenance Morning** – On **THIS Saturday, April 9**, starting at 8:30am, we will gather for our next parish maintenance (and mulch) morning. Please sign up in the church hall (or call Kathy Schrmack) if you are able to share your time and talent on this day. Whether for 1 hour or 4, your stewardship is much appreciated!

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“THE VOICE” Our Parish Monthly Newsletter

John the Baptist said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ (Jn 1:23)

4th Sunday of Lent

APRIL 3rd



ST JOHN of the LADDER

Epistle:
Gospel:

Hebrews 6:13-20
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

APRIL 10th



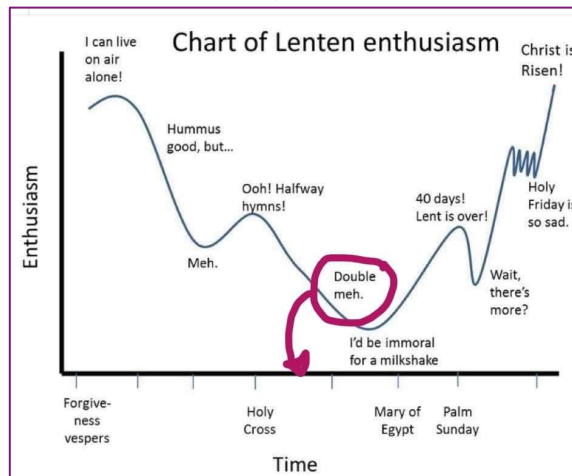
ST MARY of EGYPT

Epistle:
Gospel:

Hebrews 9: 11-14
Mark 10: 32-45

Ask the Theotokos to offer you
and the world pure thoughts
and ideas this week.

Mid-Lenten Checkup – Last week we reached the middle of the Great Fast. How are you doing? When we want to improve – remember that we need to do some work! Have you been able to maintain your goals for increasing your prayer, fasting, and charity? If not, restart today! If you did not set any – do so today. If your goal was to read our book suggestion for Great Lent, the Book of Psalms (*the Psalter*), how is that going? If you are behind, read a little more each day and/or add weekends if you need. Every day try to read scripture, pray the St Ephraim Prayer, and/or Psalm 50. No matter what you do, try and do more than last year on your Lenten Spiritual Journey through the Great Fast! – *with love in Christ, Fr. Dave*



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**** Pirohi** – St George Ukraine Catholic Church (3455 California Ave.) sells Pirohi every Thursday & Friday. Call 412-766-8801 for the available varieties.

*** **Blessing of Graves** – Our annual grave blessings at the cemeteries needs to be rescheduled. Please see Fr. Dave to help pick a date.

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*** **Ukraine** – The community outreach for last month was for the support of Ukrainian Refugees. In 2014 Fr. Dave went on a mission trip to Moldova. This church is now assisting refugees as they arrive. Any additional offering *earmarked* “for Ukraine” will go to that church.

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Palm Crosses – On **Saturday, April 16th**, following the Divine Liturgy, we will be making crosses out of palms. This activity is geared towards the youth, but all are welcome to come!

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* **Paschal Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used during Holy Week and Pascha as Special Intentions: *anonymously, for the health of OR in memory of departed loved ones*. Please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule **by Palm Sunday (April 17)** and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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* **Palms & Pussywillows** – We are collecting in the Church Hall our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away, but they will respectfully be taken care of. *Please bring yours in so that your home will be ready for the new ones in a few weeks!*

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*** **Pot-Luck Paschal Meal** – Our community meal following Liturgy on Pascha will return this year. All families are encouraged to bring something to share.

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 550
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 84
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 459
Community Outreach:	\$ 1,200
Total Collections:	\$ 2293
Relocation Fund:	\$ 50

In faith that God provides:

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.’” – 2 Cor. 9:8-9

(March and Fiscal Year-to-Date summaries will be in next week’s bulletin.)

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Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Melanie Shuster; Mirilovich Family; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis

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“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” - John 8:12

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On-Line Giving is available from our parish website to donate to the: *General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund*. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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Bulletin Sponsor – If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

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* **Candle Offerings** - Starting **March 1**, these are the new requested minimum offerings for candles:
* \$4 donation for the weekly vigil candles
* \$1 donation for the smaller votive candles
* free-will offering for the Eternal Lamp
* free-will offering for the “Christ Cross Candles”
* free-will offering for the “Theotokos Cross Candles”
Special intentions *In Honor of* (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.), *For the Health of*, or *In Memory of*. will be taken for the Eternal Lamp and the “Candle Crosses” on the two stands.

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddioocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioocese

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RELOCATION UPDATE

We are continuing our goal of looking for property around the Wexford exit of 79. Last month, property became available in the McCandless area and we examined this possibility. This location was in too close proximity to two existing Orthodox churches for us to consider further. This location would not help “grow Orthodoxy” in the 79 Northern corridor as originally intended, so it was not pursued. Relocation committee meetings will resume after Great Lent. Those interested, please contact Sharon Peifer.

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ORTHODOXY AROUND THE ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

*** **50th Anniversary** - The St. Nicholas Parish and the Zak Family invite you to join them on **Sunday, May 1** as they celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Marriage and Ordination to the Holy Priesthood of Very Rev. R. Michael Zak and Pani Deborah Zak. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will be at 9:00 am. A banquet will follow in the church hall (903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120) - Adults \$30 and Children 12 and under \$20. Please RSVP by **April 15** at 412-461-9437 or stnickhomestead@gmail.com.

*** **Bowling Tournament** - This year's Metropolitan, Orestes Memorial Bowling Tournament, which will take place on Memorial Day Weekend, **May 27-30**, is a collaboration between Camp Nazareth and Saint John’s parish in Hermitage. (Events throughout the weekend will take place in Hermitage and Mercer, PA; and nearby Brookfield, OH.) It should be noted that deadlines for all paperwork and reservations is **APRIL 26**. It will be the first of a kind to be hosted in part by Camp Nazareth. You do not have to be members of the ACRY to participate. If you have any questions, please contact the Bowling Tournament Committee at acrybowling2022@gmail.com. Additional information can also be found at: www.acrod.org/organizations/senioracry/acryn-e/acrycomingevents/bt-2022 **If you are interested in bowling, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko**

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*** **Camp Nazareth Events** - Save these dates as Camp Nazareth returns to its full schedule this year!

- Diocesan Religious Education Conference: **April 29-May 1**
- Diocesan Deacons, Sub-deacons and Readers' Retreat: **May 6-8**
- Diocesan St. Symeon's Seniors Retreat: **May 10-12** (Open to anyone over age 65)
- Diocesan Family Camp: **June 3-5**
- Diocesan Family Day: **June 5**
- Diocesan Camping Week 1 (Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries): **July 17-23**
- Science and Nature Camp: **August 7-13** (Open to anyone ages 8-18)
- Foster Kids Camp: **August 14-19**
- Young Adult Retreat: **October 28-30** (Open to anyone ages 18-35)
- ACRY Encounter: **November 11-13** (Open to anyone ages 8-18)

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Spiritual Vitamin:

“A servant of the Lord stands bodily before men, but mentally he is knocking at the gates of heaven with prayer.”
+St. John of the Ladder (*Climacus*)

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MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH

OCCMC - This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for the **Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCCMC)**. This is the organization that puts out the Coin Boxes that we have been using through the Great Fast. Please bring in your coin boxes on Pascha. (There will also be an additional offering requested on our regular last Sunday of the month.) “Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (1 Tim 6:18)

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

Charity That Is Wise as Well as Caring

The word of the day is “devise.” Often those who promote acts of mercy make an emotional appeal. They show a malnourished child or an abused animal and in pleading tones ask us to care. But in today’s reading of Proverbs 14:15-20, the wise sage of Proverbs offers a different viewpoint. He says, “Deceivers devise evil things, but good men devise mercy and truth” (OSB 14:23). The word “devise” suggests that “good men” plan their acts of compassion just as evil men strategize their wicked deeds. Today we will consider the sage’s suggestion that charitable giving involves our thinking as well as our feelings.

To Devise a Plan

Both the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint (LXX) agree that the word “devise” has to do with fashioning one’s intentions to show mercy. The word in Greek is derived from the thought of crafting something. The word in Hebrew comes from working metal or plowing a field. We might say that good people “craft” a course of action for their works of mercy. They carefully prepare for their acts of aid to those in need, just as one works metal for shaping it or plows a field for planting. Note that the term “devise” applies to both the righteous and the unrighteous. “Deceivers devise evil schemes in advance (OSB vs. 22). There is nothing spontaneous about their wickedness. Theirs are not “crimes of opportunity.” But like the scam in the movie “The Sting,” every detail of their fraud is carefully set up.

Giving as We Purpose in our Heart

If that is true for the concocting of evil, what about the construction of good? Spontaneity in giving is the product of manipulation. Its charitable mood is temporary. St. Paul instructs the Corinthians to lay aside something each week “on the first day of the week” (1 Cor. 16:2). Their offering for the poor in Jerusalem was not to be a one-time thing. And he says, “Let each one give as he purposes in his heart” (OSB 2 Corinthians 8:7). The Greek word “purpose” has the sense of choosing one thing over others: to prefer something. The Corinthians are to decide how they were to contribute to the needy in Jerusalem and then store up their donations with their goal in mind. Thus, the acts of mercy of the godly involve the mind as well as the emotions. Alms-giving requires more than knowing the need. But the sage teaches that those who give according to wisdom must understand “mercy and faithfulness” (OSB vs. 23). The Elpinor translation of the Septuagint puts it, “The good devise mercy and truth. The framers of evil do not understand mercy and truth: but compassion and faithfulness are with the framers of good”.

Mercy is Compassion in Action

The Greek word for “mercy” refers to the feeling of sympathy for the misery of others. To be merciful is to be compassionate in the active sense. Likewise, in Hebrew, the term “mercy” means to stoop in kindness to someone of lesser status. By choosing these words, the sage teaches that those who show mercy should not stand aloof from those who suffer. But they share in their misfortune to the point of doing something to alleviate it.

Giving with Faithfulness

Yet those who give alms should also understand faithfulness. The Greek word means trustworthy, faithful, and believing. The Hebrew word refers to a cluster of thoughts including stability, certainty, truth, and fidelity. Those who plan deceitful deeds do not understand faithfulness. But those who give generously are true and trustworthy in all they do. They do not contribute dishonestly out of the pretext of caring. They do make their contributions so that they will be admired. Rather, they give faithfully to the God who would not have the poor be dishonored (OSB 14: 21), neglected, or unjustly treated (NKJV 29:7).

In summary, charitable giving is not merely an emotion. If that were the case, then the feelings stirred up by images of the needy would always conflict with our thoughts. Our unreformed and natural inclination to greediness, possessiveness, and our own financial security would usually prevail over the appeals of the destitute. Our mind would find sufficient reason to close the doors of mercy to those who plea for it. But charity should involve our whole self. Yes, emotions may motivate it. But our minds must guide it. And our rational understandings of mercy and faithfulness should inform it. Together, feelings and thoughts should devise deliberate, effective and long-term plans to be merciful to those in need. By doing so, we will be faithful to the God who has mercy on us.

For Reflection

Here is a quotation from St. Basil the Great’s “Sermon on Almsgiving:”
“How you should beam with joy at the honor of having other people come to your door, instead of being obliged to go to theirs! But you are now ill-humored and unapproachable; you avoid meeting people, in case you might be forced to loosen your purse-strings even a little. You can say only one thing: ‘I have nothing to give you. I am only a poor man.’ A poor man you certainly are, and destitute of all real riches; you are poor in love, generosity, faith in God and hope for eternal happiness ”.

On the other hand, those who give to those in need with open hearts, minds, and wallets or purses might not have much to offer. But they are rich in the very things that the stingy lack: love, generosity, faith, and hope.

Source: <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/word-of-the-day/2022/03/31/charity-that-is-wise-as-well-as-caring-fri-april-1/>

SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

The Certainty of God’s Promise

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes

an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

And one of the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has he had this?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

They went on from there and passed through

Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

Spiritual Vitamin:

“Fire and water do not mix, neither can you mix judgment of others with the desire to repent. If a man commits a sin before you at the very moment of his death, pass no judgment, because the judgment of God is hidden from men. It has happened that men have sinned greatly in the open but have done greater deeds in secret, so that those who would disparage them have been fooled, with smoke instead of sunlight in their eyes.”

+St. John of the Ladder (Climacus)

FEAST DAY FEATURES

2 of the 12 Major Feast Days of the Church are celebrated this month

The Annunciation Of Our Most Blessed Lady Mother Of God And Ever-Virgin Mary

Commemorated on April 7 / March 25

Introduction

The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on March 25 each year. The Feast commemorates the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

Biblical Story

The biblical story of the Feast of the Annunciation is found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (1:26-39). The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you.” Mary was perplexed and wondered what kind of greeting this was.

The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. He said, “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name

Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the “Son of God.”

The angel then proceeded to tell the Virgin Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age (John the Baptist), and affirmed that with God nothing is impossible.

In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word.” Upon her response, the angel departed.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that Orthodox Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, whereby He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, whereby Mary freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God’s plan for our salvation. Thus, when on this and other feasts the Orthodox Church honors the Theotokos, the Mother of God, it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose to follow His will.

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The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday / Flowery Sunday)

April 17

Introduction

On the Sunday before the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha and at the beginning of Holy Week, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of its most joyous feasts of the year. Palm Sunday is the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of

honor and shouts of praise. On this day, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord.

Biblical Story

The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a colt of a donkey, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city.

People had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and were looking for Jesus, both because of His great works and teaching and because they had heard of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. When they heard that Christ was entering the city, they went out to meet Him with palm branches, laying their garments on the ground before Him, and shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!”

At the outset of His public ministry Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and announced that the powers of the age to come were already active in the present age (Luke 7:18-22). His words and mighty works were performed "to produce repentance as the response to His call, a call to an inward change of mind and heart which would result in concrete changes in one's life, a call to follow Him and accept His messianic destiny. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a messianic event, through which His divine authority was declared.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the One who came to us once riding on a colt, but as the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, "to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart," as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and Resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the King, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday summons us to behold our King: the

vanquisher of death and the giver of life.

Palm Sunday summons us to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our identity from Christ and His kingdom. The kingdom is Christ - His indescribable power, boundless mercy and incomprehensible abundance given freely to man. The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is a present reality as well as a future realization (Matthew 6:10). Theophan the Recluse wrote the following words about the inward rule of Christ the King:

“The Kingdom of God is within us when God reigns in us, when the soul in its depths confesses God as its Master, and is obedient to Him in all its powers. Then God acts within it as master ‘both to will and to do of his good pleasure’ (Philippians 2:13). This reign begins as soon as we resolve to serve God in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Christian hands over to God his consciousness and freedom, which comprises the essential substance of our human life, and God accepts the sacrifice; and in this way the alliance of man with God and God with man is achieved, and the covenant with God, which was severed by the Fall and continues to be severed by our willful sins, is re-established.”

The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom. He is the God-Man, Who brought God down to earth (John 1:1,14). “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not” (John 1:10-11). He was reviled and hated.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king - the Suffering Servant. We cannot understand Jesus' kingship apart from the Passion. Filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation, in His inexpressible humility Jesus accepted the infinite abasement of the Cross. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our

transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (Isaiah 53). His glorification, which was accomplished by the resurrection and the ascension, was achieved through the Cross.

In the fleeting moments of exuberance that marked Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the world received its King, the king who was on His way to death. His Passion, however, was no morbid desire for martyrdom. Jesus' purpose was to accomplish the mission for which the Father sent Him.

“The Son and Word of the Father, like Him without beginning and eternal, has come today to the city of Jerusalem, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. From fear the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him; yet the children honor Him with palms and branches, and mystically they sing a hymn of praise: ‘Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David, who has come to save from error all mankind.’” (A hymn of the Light.)

“With our souls cleansed and in spirit carrying branches, with faith let us sing Christ's praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master: Blessed art Thou, O Savior, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse; and in Thy love for mankind Thou hast been pleased to become spiritually the new Adam. O Word, who hast ordered all things for our good, glory to Thee.” (A Sessional hymn of the Orthros)

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE MONK JAMES, BISHOP & CONFESSOR
Commemorated on April 3 / March 21

The Monk James, Bishop and Confessor, had from his early years yearned towards the ascetic life. Saint James left the world and withdrew to the Studite monastery, where he was monasticised. He led a strict life, full of works, fasting and prayer. Pious as a monk and remarkably learned in Holy Scripture, the Monk James was elevated to the bishop's cathedra-seat of the Church in Catania (Sicily). During the reign of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V Kopronymos (741-775), Saint James was repeatedly urged in vain towards a renunciation of holy icons. They exhausted him in prison, starved him with hunger, and they beat him, but he bravely endured all the suffering. The holy Bishop James died in exile.

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:00pm or by appointment.

Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

Parish Phone Tree - Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

Emergency Sick Calls – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

Mystery of Confession – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

Holy Communion/Eucharist – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive *a blessing* from the chalice.

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

Baptisms – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr. Dave for more details.

Adult Chrismation – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

Marriages – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall).

Church Funerals – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

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“The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning.” - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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LIVING ORTHODOXY



To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at:

www.acrod.org/prayercorner/lentenresources/

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How one can miss the point of fasting:



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FASTING SUGGESTIONS:

(source unknown)

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.

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PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for
Special Intentions and Other Needs**

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A Prayer For The Sick:

O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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For the Health of... Michelle, Paul, Kathleen, John, Joanne, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta
...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.

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For the Special Intentions of... His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. David S., Fr. Myron, Dcn. Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Thomas, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin, Subdeacon Seamus, Nicholas, *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth, John, Wendy, Margaret, John, Patricia, John, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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April Namedays:

Pañi's brother Florin Popescu and Pañi's mother Liliana Popescu – Palm (Flowery) Sunday ...May God grant them many and blessed years!

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April Birthdays:

Sonia Kretchek (4/1), Louis Deluca (4/3), Tristan Bowser (4/5), Milena Petrovich (4/5), Bryce Blobner (4/10), Jenelle (Petrovich) Specca (4/10), Rich Mirilovich (4/13), Melanie Paieski (4/14), *Father's Uncle* Dan Urban (4/15), *Father's Father* Dave Urban (4/15), John Kirish (4/18), *Father's Brother-In-Law* Christopher Ditmore (4/19), Susan Waugh (4/19), Dr. Lawrence Martin (4/20), Max Anton (4/22), Donald J. Gavulich (4/23), Fred Anton (4/24), Donna Tongel (4/24), Jaxson Maruscak (4/25), Maryhelen Hoffman (4/29), Sharon Peifer (4/29)

...May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!

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For our Catechumens & Inquirers... Tyler, Susan, Marilynn, John *...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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For those preparing for Marriage... Justin & Erica, Francis & Alexandra, Nicole & Dustin *...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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April Anniversaries:

John & Theresa Sharpless (4/21)

...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas

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For Pregnant Mothers... Allison (*due in May*), Marilynn (*June*), Stacey (*June*), Sammy (*June*), Caitlin (*September*), Mallory (*September*) *...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities... Thomas R. Dzadovsky and Trevor Meegan *...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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For the souls of the newly departed... +David Himelright (3/6), +Kimberly Bining (2/23), +John Neimer (2/18) *...May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

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* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. *This prayer list is **NOT** limited to only Orthodox Christians.*

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS OF THE GREAT FAST

A Prayer for Peace

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. Amen.

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A Prayer for Strength *by St Ephrem of Syria*

Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings, You have power over life and death. You know even things that are uncertain and obscure, and our very thoughts and feelings are not hidden from You. Cleanse me from my secret faults, for I have done wrong and You saw it. You know how weak I am, both in soul and in body. Give me strength, O Lord, in my frailty and sustain me in my sufferings. Grant me a prudent judgment, dear Lord, and let me always be mindful of Your blessings. Let me retain until the end, Your grace that has protected me till now.
Amen.

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A Prayer Of Repentance (Psalm 50/51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, And done this evil before You. That You might be justified in Your words, And prevail when You judge. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, And in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, You have loved truth; The hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made clear to me. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear joy and gladness, The bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And with Your governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, who are the God of my salvation, My tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; With whole burnt offerings You shall not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, A heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; And let the walls of Jerusalem be built Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings; Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM OF SYRIA

(in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St. Peter Mogila's 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik))

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. + *[Prostration]*
But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. + *[Prostration]*
Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

*The following triplet is recited 4 times
(making a total of 12 bows):*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. *[bow]*
O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. *[bow]*
O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many. *[bow]*

*Then the prayer again with only one
prostration:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

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The Jesus Prayer

(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!

(Repeat until your heart is calm ...)

A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

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A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop *(name)*, and our spiritual father *(name)*, and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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ONLINE BULLETIN BONUSES

The Life of St John of the Ladder

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John Klimakos, the author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent. In this book the Igoumen of Saint Katherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai bears witness to the great effort which is required for entry into God's Kingdom (Matthew 10:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is difficult since it is "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Ephesians 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, as the Lord has said, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Saint John was born around the year 525, the son of devout and wealthy parents. He received a very good education, but at the age of sixteen, he forsook the world and went to Mount Sinai, subjecting himself to the spiritual guidance of Elder Martyrios. When he was nineteen years of age (This was his monastic age. He was, in fact, thirty-five years old), his Elder reposed. Then Saint John entered the arena of hesychasm, visiting the monastic communities of Skete and Tabénnisē in Egypt. For another forty years, he lived in a cell at Thora in the Sinai Desert, which was a two hour (5 mile) walk from the Monastery of Saint Katherine.

Aflame with indescribable longing for God, he ate everything that was permitted by the monastic Rule, but only in very small quantities, and not unto satiety. By so doing, he overcame the vice of pride; and by eating just a little food, he humbled the stomach,

which always wants more. He raised his body from death and paralysis by the remembrance of death, and he overcame the tyranny of anger with the sword of obedience.

Who can describe the fountain of his tears, which is now to be seen in very few individuals? He slept only as much as was necessary to prevent his mind from being distracted. Before going to sleep he prayed a great deal, and he also wrote books. This was how he subdued despondency. His entire life was spent in unceasing prayer, and incomparable love for God. After writing The Ladder at the request of Igoumen John of Raithu Monastery, and leading a God-pleasing life, Saint John fell asleep in the Lord when he was about seventy-five years old (ca. 603). He is also commemorated on March 30/April 12.

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The Rungs of The Ladder of Divine Ascent

St. John of the Ladder

http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/assets/writer/FourthSundayinLentSt.JohnoftheLadder_A4EB/Ladder_Divine_Ascent_web.jpg

Step 1. On renunciation of the world

Step 2. On detachment

Step 3. On exile or pilgrimage

Step 4. On blessed and ever-memorable obedience

Step 5. On painstaking and true repentance

Step 6. On remembrance of death

Step 7. On joy-making mourning

Step 8. On freedom from anger and on meekness

Step 9. On remembrance of wrongs

Step 10. On slander or calumny

Step 11. On talkativeness and silence

Step 12. On lying

Step 13. On despondency

Step 14. On that clamorous mistress, the stomach

Step 15. On incorruptible purity and chastity

Step 16. On love or money, or avarice

Step 17. On non-possessiveness (that hastens one Heavenwards)

Step 18. On insensibility

Step 19. On sleep, prayer, and psalmody with the brotherhood

Step 20. On bodily vigil and how to use it to obtain spiritual vigil.

Step 21. On unmanly and puerile cowardice

Step 22. On the many forms of vainglory

Step 23. On mad pride and unclean blasphemous thoughts

Step 24. On meekness, simplicity and guilelessness

Step 25. On the destroyer of passions, most sublime humility

Step 26. On discernment of thoughts, passions and virtues

Step 27. On holy stillness of body and soul

Step 28. On holy and blessed prayer

Step 29. Concerning Heaven on earth, or Godlike dispassion and perfection

Step 30. Concerning the linking together of the supreme trinity among the virtues

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):

We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time...

PRAYER:

- ✠ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.
- ✠ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).
- ✠ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.
- ✠ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

FASTING:

- ✠ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, March 8. This is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, strict fast on Great & Holy Friday (4/22) and Great & Holy Saturday (4/23)
- ✠ The tradition of the Orthodox Church is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) by all of the faithful for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.
- ✠ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:
 - a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;

- b) fast only from meat;
 - c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
 - d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week (*April 18-23*).
- ✂ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!
- ✂ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular “midnight Fast” is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great*)
- ✂ The sick and infirm are not bound by the fast at any time.
- ✂ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician’s instructions.
- ✂ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a “40 day diet program” or simply a “dietary adjustment” (or “label Lent”).

ALMSGIVING:

- ✂ Find a way to give more of your time, talent, and treasures.

A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:

Try to do more than last year.

Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with.

May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one! – *Fr. Dave*

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A Note About The Mystery Of Confession

Confessions will be heard in the first pew in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard *following every* service, from **11am – 1pm** on most Saturdays during Great Lent (*the side door will be open*), and at other times by appointment: please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this. If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! Confessions will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.