

**“THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER”** *Our Parish Bulletin*  
*O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!*



**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
 ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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**OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026**

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

**SUNDAYS                      THEMES / GOSPEL READING                      HOW TO PARTICIPATE:**

<p>3rd Sunday of Lent  <b>MARCH 15th</b></p> 	<p><b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b>  <small>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</small>                  Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6                  Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1</p>	<p>Wear your cross to church and                  kiss the cross                  each morning with a bow!</p>
<p>4th Sunday of Lent  <b>MARCH 22nd</b></p> 	<p><b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b>                  Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20                  Gospel: Mark 9:17-31</p>	<p>Every time you climb stairs this week                  ask St. John to help you reach                  Paradise with the sign of the cross!</p>

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**UPCOMING SERVICES**

- SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026** #TheGreatFast                      **VOL. XI**  
 +St. Arsenii, Bishop of Tver' (1409)  
 Youth Sunday  
 Church School  
 \* 4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's in Allison Park
- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18** #TheGreatFast  
**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts  
 with fellowship meal following
- FRIDAY, MARCH 20** #TheGreatFast  
**9:30 am** Moleben to the Holy Cross
- ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 21** #TheGreatFast  
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (4<sup>th</sup> of 5)  
 11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered  
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- SUNDAY, MARCH 22** #TheGreatFast  
 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER  
 9:15 am Third Hour  
 9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
 Liturgical Color: **Purple**  
 4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission at St Michael's  
 (146 Third Ave., Rankin)
- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25** #TheGreatFast  
**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts  
 with fellowship meal following
- FRIDAY, MARCH 27** #TheGreatFast  
 6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew with  
 reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt  
 followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)
- SATURDAY, MARCH 28** #TheGreatFast  
 Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas  
 (903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)  
**10:00 am** Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos  
 11 am to 5 pm Retreat (see separate flyer)  
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- \* *A complete list of services for the Great Fast is in the Online  
 Bulletin portion of the newsletter*  
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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear  
 Confessions after every service or by appointment.  
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\* *The date for Palm Cross making will be different this year. It  
 will happen right after we receive the palms*  
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**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!**  
**Glory be to Jesus Christ!** (*responded with:*  
*Glory be 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. We wish  
 God's Blessings to all who are with us today and pray that  
 you come again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any  
 questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

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**BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

\*\*\* **Great Lent 2026: Mid-Lenten Checkup** – We have reached  
 the middle, halfway point, of the Great Fast, the week of the Cross  
 – Ask Christ to lighten your cross! 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 your goal was to read our  
 book suggestion for Great Lent, how is that going? If you are behind,  
 read a little more each day. 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 ...* 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/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/](http://www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/)

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\* **Yum-Raising LAST CALL** – A different church candy  
 fundraiser is online. Various options are out there for purchase.  
 Spring orders are due by **Friday, March 20**. Click this link from  
 the online bulletin: <https://www.yumraising.com/store/spring-2026-st-johns-orthodox-church-allison-park-pa-321f/TimMar14872> (contact Tim with any questions)

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\* **LENTEN RETREATS IN THE AREA:**  
**Sat., March 21** - 10 am - 2 pm - "A Day of Reflection and  
 Spiritual Growth" by Fr. Paul Abernathy at Kimisis Church  
 (Aliquippa). Register by March 7 at [www.theotokou.org](http://www.theotokou.org)

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**Sat., March 28** - 10 am - 5 pm - the ACROD Central Region  
 Lenten Retreat led by Fr. Marc Wisnosky (adults) and Fr. Dave  
 Urban (youth) at St. Nicholas Church (903 Ann St., Homestead,  
 PA 15120). Sign up in the church hall or contact Fr. Dave

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\*\* **Purple Paper** – For those who get the printed bulletin...  
 Is the purple paper okay to read from? Please let Fr Dave know.

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**\*\*\* Paschal Commemorations - Stewards Needed To Sponsor Sacred Items For Holy Week And Pascha** – In prior years, many parishioners have generously given a free-will offering for various sacred items needed for use during the Holy Week and Paschal services. Often, these items were donated to honor or remember family members and/or loved ones. Below is a list of the items that are needed for the upcoming Lenten, Holy Week and Paschal seasons. *(some items have already been sponsored)*

- ✘ Processional Candles at Vespers
- ✘ Censer (Kadilo) Incense
- ✘ Censer (Kadilo) Charcoal
- ✘ Graveside Candles
- ✘ Vesperal Litiya Loaves
- ✘ Vesperal Litiya Wheat
- ✘ Vesperal Litiya Wine
- ✘ Processional Candles at Matins
- ✘ Priest's Paschal Candle
- ✘ Prosporhan (Eucharistic Bread)
- ✘ Sacramental Wine
- ✘ Pascha Bulletin
- ✘ 7-Candle Altar Candelabra
- ✘ 2 Altar Vigil Candles
- ✘ 2 Preparation Table Candles
- ✘ 2 Deacon Table Candles
- ✘ Altar Server Candles
- ✘ 4 Iconostasis Candles
- ✘ 2 Tetrapod Candles
- ✘ Altar Flowers
- ✘ Tetrapod Flowers

Please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule **by Palm Sunday (April 5)**. There is no set "amount" – just give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church from your heart.

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**\* All-Soul Saturday (Zadušna Subota)** services for 2026 during Lent are on **March 7, 14, and 21**. On these days, we especially pray for the departed loved ones of our families. If you are not working on a Saturday, come to church, pray with us, and light two candles for your living and departed loved ones. Please inform Fr Dave if there are any *additions* to be made to your Departed Commemoration Diptychs (*Hramoty*). Envelopes and cards are available in the vestibule. [\*\*\* *This is different from the "Monthly Memorial" that we have on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month which is specific to each month.*]

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**\* Deanery Lenten Mission Schedule:**

**March 22:** St Michael's (146 Third Ave., Rankin)

**March 29:** St John's (211 Cable Ave., East Pgh)

*3:30 Confessions, 4:00 Vespers, and Fellowship Meal following*  
All are encouraged to attend services at our sister parishes this spring. Not only is it beautiful fellowship with other Orthodox, but each church is unique and you get to see the differences firsthand.

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**\*\*\* 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Ukrainian Easter Egg Sale** – On **Sunday, March 29** from 11 AM to 4 PM. Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Mansfield Blvd, Carnegie, will have Eggs, Food, Arts & Crafts, and more. Don't miss it. For more info, call 412-527-5359.

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**YOUR CROSS WE ADORE, O MASTER,  
AND YOUR HOLY RESURRECTION WE GLORIFY!**

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**\*\*\* Pirohy and Halušky Sale** - St. John's in Ambridge will sell potato/cheese pirohy for \$10 a dozen and dumpling haluški for \$10 a quart on **Friday, April 3** from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at their Parish Center on Fifth St in Ambridge. Advanced orders can be placed by Mar. 28 by calling (412) 512-5521 or by emailing [anrighetti21@gmail.com](mailto:anrighetti21@gmail.com). See Fr. Dave with any questions.

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**\* Spring Maintenance Morning/Afternoon** – Due to a conflict with the Diocesan Lenten Retreat (held in Homestead), our Spring Maintenance "Morning" is moved later in the day after Liturgy on Lazarus **Saturday, April 4** from 11 am to 2 pm (ish).

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**\*\*\* Faith Night** – The 2026 Pittsburgh Pirate's Faith Night will be on **Saturday, May 2** at 4:05pm. In years past, we had a great time going to a game together. If you are interested in organizing a parish family event at the ballpark, please contact Fr. Dave.

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**\*\*\* Sts. Joachim and Anna Senior Retreat** - Our Diocese is pleased to announce its seventh annual Sts. Joachim and Anna Senior Retreat which will take place at Camp Nazareth Retreat and Conference Center in Mercer, PA from **May 5-7**. The Retreat will feature keynote addresses, church services, time for fellowship, and great evening events. His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory, is inviting all our Diocesan Seniors, ages 55 and over, to join him for fellowship, prayer, and learning. The Theme of the Retreat is **"Living and Dying Orthodox in the 21st Century"**. Retreat participants will have opportunities to get to know other Seniors, enjoy the beauty of our Diocesan Camp, and simply enjoy each other's company throughout the Retreat. Online Registration is open! Visit [2026 Senior Retreat](http://2026SeniorRetreat.org) to register for the event. Visit [campnazareth.org](http://campnazareth.org) or [acrod.org](http://acrod.org) for more information. You may also call (607-329-2844) or email Fr. Stephen Loposky at [fr.stephen.loposky@gmail.com](mailto:fr.stephen.loposky@gmail.com) for more information. For those staying at Camp, the Retreat cost is \$160. For those who do not need lodging at Camp, the Retreat cost is \$110. Don't miss out on our annual Sts. Joachim and Anna Senior Retreat! Register today (Registration closes April 28)

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**\*\*\* Another Call for CN Staff Applications** - If you are eligible to work at Camp Nazareth this summer season, please take the time to fill out and send in a staff application! While I know the "deadline" for applications is already past, we still need help for the upcoming summer season. If you are hesitating because you don't know what your summer plans are (things like internships, jobs, travel, etc), apply anyway! That way, if your plans work out and you can work, the paperwork is already done! I am excited to work together with you to create another amazing summer for our Diocese and all the visitors who enjoy our Camp. But I certainly can't do it alone! I look forward to seeing your applications soon! Thank you! In Christ, *Fr. Nathaniel*

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**\* Presanctified Liturgies** – When coming to the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and planning to receive the Eucharist, please abstain from food for 3-hours prior the service (starting at 3pm). If 6:00 pm in Allison Park is not good for you and you wish to attend the other churches for Lenten services, please check their websites for service times.

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**COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS**

Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave

- \* March 22:     ? , ? , ? , ?
  - \* March 29:     ? , ? , ? , ?
  - \* April 5:      ? , ? , ? , ?
- \*meatless during the fast*

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\*\*\* **Registration is Open!** You can now register your child (aged 8-18) for Camp Nazareth this summer. Don't delay! If financial assistance is needed, please let Fr. Dave know. Let's get our kids to camp!

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\* **31 Books of March Sale** <sup>XL</sup> – The Ancient Faith Store will be offering different books for 50% off each day of the month of March! Visit the site daily (or sign up for their emails) and keep an eye out for a book that will help you along your Spiritual Journey! (Contact Fr Dave with any questions.) Visit: [store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/](http://store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/) Another option to consider is to borrow books from our Lending Library in the Multi-Purpose Room

If you would like to buy something for the church library or if you are looking to add a couple dollars to your order to get free shipping, please call or text Fr Dave before ordering as he has a couple small suggestions that would be helpful to our church.

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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... A general guideline for the Great Fast is this: Try to do more than last year. Please reach out to Fr. Dave if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one!

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\* **Read the Psalter this Lent** - Our diocese has shared a calendar for reading the Book of Psalms throughout the Great Fast. This is a wonderful way to increase our prayer during this time! The Book of Psalms in our Orthodox Study Bible is perfect to use for this occasion. If you wish, you can search *Psalter* or *Psalms* at <https://store.ancientfaith.com/> for other wonderful translations to use. See Fr Dave for a copy of the schedule.

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\* **Palms & Pussywillows** – Make your home ready for Palm Sunday! In the vestibule we are collecting our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away but respectfully disposed of. [*\*For those with trees at home – are they ready to be harvested?*]

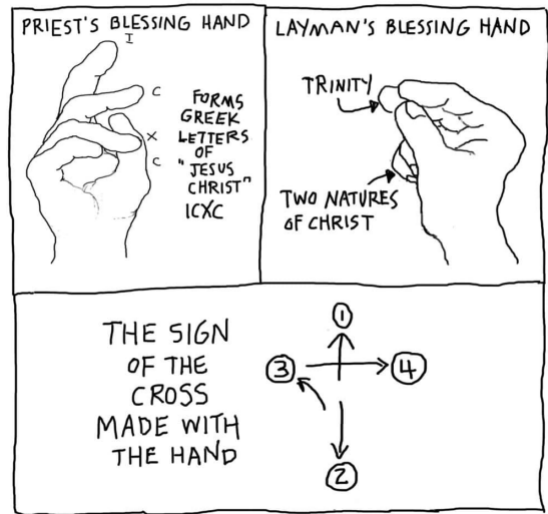
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**OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD**

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 396
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 42
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 455
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 893</b>
<b>Capital Improvement Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 165</b>
Participating Souls at: <i>Sunday's Liturgy: 35</i>	
<i>Wednesday PM Presanctified at Holy Trinity: 125</i>	
<i>Friday PM Paraklis Service: 7(9)</i>	
<i>Saturday All-Soul's Liturgy: 5</i>	

**Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials** were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Tim Martin; Mary Jane Hudak; Kathy Schmack; Cindy Pavilonis

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**ORTHODOX - TRINITARIAN, CHALCEDONIAN**



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**SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6*

Jesus the Great High Priest

<sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

<sup>15</sup> For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

<sup>5</sup> For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. <sup>4</sup> And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was.

<sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee";

<sup>6</sup> as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchiz'edek."

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*Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1*

<sup>34</sup> And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his life? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." <sup>9</sup> <sup>1</sup> And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

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## PRAYER CORNER

### *For the Health of...*

Evelyn, Theresa, Janet, Matthew, Maxwell, Trona, Mioara, Tatiana, John, Anthony, Edward, Valerie, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Jason, Barbara, Paul, Juliana, and Michael ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer*

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### *For the souls of the newly departed...*

+Frank Rolley (3/13), +Theodore Mozes, the Priest (3/9), +Irene (Labas) Dzubak (3/6), +Karen Davis, +Milutin Lazich (2/9), +Jane Benedetti (2/7), +Jeffrey Leake (2/7) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory!*



Icon by: K. Tikhonovskaya

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\*\*\* *A tip for keeping track of doing the triplet four times:*

*With your left hand, place your thumb on your pointer finger for the 1<sup>st</sup> triplet, middle finger for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, ring finger for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, then pinky for the 4<sup>th</sup>*

## PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

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

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]*

## 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.

## ONLINE BONUSES

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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE  
Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddiocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddiocese](https://youtube.com/acroddiocese)

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**Online Community** - Please email Fr. Dave at [OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com](mailto:OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com) to receive the weekly bulletin (along with other announcements) via email each week.

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## GREAT LENT



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## ORTHODOX ETIQUETTE

### How and When to Make the Sign of the Cross

*The Cross is perhaps the most well-known symbol in all of Christendom. Even non-Christians recognize it. And we all understand and agree on what the Cross means (on the surface, at least). But the way Christians make the sign of the Cross differs depending on which Christian community you encounter. So, in this post, we explain specifically how and when Christians in the Orthodox Church make the sign of the Cross.*

#### A SYMBOL OF VICTORY

As the instrument Christ chose to bring about His ever-memorable and life-creating death, the Cross holds a special place in the heart of every Orthodox Christian. We understand that this symbol, once a primitive means of torture and capital punishment, now reminds us of Christ's victory over death. Orthodox Christians make the sign of the Cross because it affirms what we believe about Christ as the Incarnate Son of God and all that He did for us. It is an outward manifestation that illustrates our view of God in Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and our belief in the two natures of Christ (fully God and fully Man). It is, in essence, a physical form of prayer.

Because of our love for the sign of the Cross, the Orthodox use it daily. Not only do we use it during worship, but also before and after meals, during personal prayer, and in moments of worry or need. The saints, and Christ Himself, make this sign in holy icons. We love the cross perhaps just as much as we love the Theotokos, if not more. Because Christ used it to bring about our salvation. To show our love and devotion to Christ, during any given service or liturgy, the faithful may cross themselves close to one-hundred times!

#### HOW TO MAKE THE SIGN

If you've ever come to an Orthodox service and looked around, you probably saw someone crossing themselves at some point. To newcomers and inquirers, this can be a bit strange, since we cross ourselves differently than other Christians. Let's walk through the Orthodox way of making the sign of the cross, step by step.

#### How to Make the Sign of the Cross

1. **Join the thumb, index, and middle fingers of your right hand.**
2. **Rest the other two fingers of your right hand down against your palm.**
3. **Take that hand and touch your joined fingertips to your forehead.**  
*Let your fingers rest there for a moment.*
4. **Then bring your fingertips down to your abdomen.**  
*Again, let your fingers rest here a moment. Some people bring their fingers only as far as the chest, while others reach down to their navel. Either of these is acceptable.*
5. **Move your fingertips to touch the front of your right shoulder.**
6. **Finally, touch your fingertips to the front of your left shoulder.**

Note a couple differences between the Orthodox sign and that of Roman Catholics and Protestants. First, Roman Catholics cross themselves from left to right and typically keep all five fingers straight. Secondly, Protestant practice in making the sign of the cross, much like Protestantism itself, varies. Protestantism does not prohibit it, but they do not necessarily encourage it either, because there is no Biblical command to use the sign of the cross.

#### VARIATIONS OF THE SIGN

You may also have noticed some people make the sign three times in a row, while others only do it once. Some make large sweeping motions, while others keep things simple and small. All these variations! But, which way is the *right* way?

Put simply, there isn't one. Crossing yourself is not an issue of dogma (belief necessary for salvation) in Orthodoxy. Instead, it is a matter of personal piety. In other words, aside from the arrangement of the fingers and direction of the movement, all else is up to you. If you feel moved to always make the sign of the cross in three's, you may do so. If you wish to venerate icons in a slightly different manner than another parishioner, you can. Each Orthodox Christian can express his or her faith in whatever physical ways they feel necessary, as long as they do so out of love for God. (If you do things instead to bring attention to yourself and feed your pride, you should reflect upon that.)

#### WHEN TO MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Because crossing yourself is an issue of personal piety, the Orthodox do not have strict guidelines about when you should and should not cross yourself. In the Orthodox tradition, we cross ourselves on many occasions. Below is a list of times when you *should* cross yourself:

- ✘ Whenever the priest, chanter, reader, or choir invokes or alludes to the name of the Holy Trinity
- ✘ At the beginning and/or end of personal (and communal) prayer
- ✘ Upon entering and leaving the church
- ✘ When venerating holy icons, relics, the cross, or the Gospel
- ✘ Before receiving Communion\*
- ✘ Whenever you pass in front of the Holy Altar, whether the doors are open or closed

This is by no means an exhaustive list! We cross ourselves many other times as well. Again, it all comes down to personal choice. If the Holy Spirit moves you to express your piety in a particular way, no one will judge you or look at you strangely for it.

**WHEN NOT TO MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS**

Though the Orthodox make the sign of the cross rather liberally, there are a couple times when we should not make the sign of the cross during services:

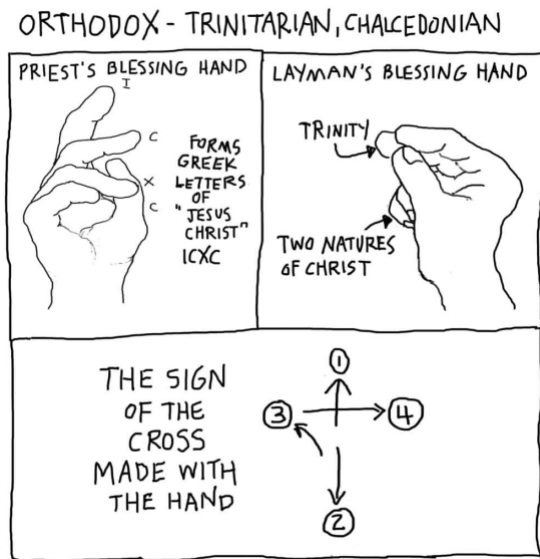
- At the chalice before or after taking Holy Communion\*
- Whenever a bishop or priest blesses the congregation with his hand and says, "Peace be to all." Here, we merely give a slight bow and receive the blessing.
- The same is true when the bishop, priest, or deacon censes the congregation (after censuring the iconostasis) – simply bow to receive the blessing.

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, the Orthodox cross themselves the way Christians have for millennia. Additionally, we have guidelines for when we should and should not cross ourselves during worship. However, we don't force them on anyone who decides to come and worship with us. If you aren't Orthodox and do visit a local parish, please don't feel as if you must make the sign of the cross. We make the sign out of love for God, as a way of expressing with our bodies our faith in Him. You need not make the sign until you, too, feel such conviction.

\* Notice we mentioned Communion in both lists? Here's why! If you cross yourself too close to the chalice, you might hit the chalice with your hand, or cause some of the Body and Blood of Christ to spill. However, it is okay for you to cross yourself before approaching the chalice and after backing away to receive blessed bread.

source: [www.saintjohnchurch.org/how-to-make-the-sign-of-the-cross/](http://www.saintjohnchurch.org/how-to-make-the-sign-of-the-cross/)



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**LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH**

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**3rd Sunday of Great Lent:  
Veneration of the Cross**

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the Lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption

and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt.10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor.1:24)

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**AN EXPLANATION OF THE THREE-BAR CROSS**

Through the Cross came our Salvation. We are constantly reminded that Christ died for us, and that He rose from the dead. The image of the crucified Lord reminds us of this.

On the Cross is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Note that He does not wear a crown of thorns, and that His feet are nailed with two nails. Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are a lance (which pierced Him) and a sponge (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing forth from His side. Below the feet of Christ are four Slavonic letters meaning: "The place of the skull became Paradise". Hidden in a cave under the earth is 'the skull of Adam'. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for He was crucified outside the city walls.

The top bar is the title-board which Pilate ordered to be hung in mockery over Christ's head on the Cross. On this board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials 'INBI' or the Latin initials 'INRI' in the Western tradition). This is replaced with the Christian inscription: "King of Glory" – below the knees of the angels. On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek. In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: 'NIKA', which in Greek means: "He conquers" or "He is victorious." Frequently, we see these last two inscriptions together: 'IC XC NIKA', meaning: "Jesus Christ is victorious" (over death and sin).

The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun (left) and the moon (right), for "The sun hid its light, and the moon turned to blood." (Joel 2:31) The inscription: "Son of God" is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.

The slanted bottom bar is the foot-rest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words [Let us] worship the footstool of His feet... (Ps. 98:5).

In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness:

*"Between two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to Thee."*

The meaning of this prayer is as follows: the Cross of Christ stood for a scale of justice between the two thieves: for one of

them sank in to hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the other, the wise thief, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance. The church fathers attempted to render tangible the thought of the unfaithful thief going to hell for his blasphemy through the just judgement of God (the lower end of the bar), and of the wise thief going to heaven for his repentance and his praise of God (the upper end).

*Volume IV, No. 3; May-June 1982 Living Orthodoxy was used as a source for some material on this page.*

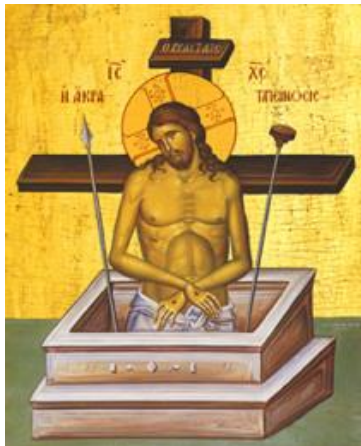
<https://www.churchofthenativity.net/orthodoxy/three-bar-cross/>

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### A Note About The Mystery Of Confession

Confessions will be heard *following every service*, on most Saturdays during Great Lent from 11am – 1pm, and at other times by appointment. It is much appreciated when you let Fr Dave know when you plan to come. Do not wait to plan for your confession! If you have a regular Spiritual Father or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but let Fr. Dave know. Confessions before Pascha will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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*Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility*

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### SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):

The Church calls us to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, & Almsgiving* during this time (it's good for our souls)

#### **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 began **Feb. 23**. Our diocesan practice is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, we strict fast on Great & Holy Friday **and** Great & Holy Saturday
- ✘ The Orthodox Monastic Charter is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) 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.

✘ 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 or infirm are not bound by the fast

✘ 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") – we should also fast from actions that are harmful for our souls.

#### **ALMSGIVING:**

✘ Find ways to be a better steward of your time, talent, and treasures

✘ *Give more of yourself to others.*

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**A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:**

✘ **Do more in each of the areas above than last year.**

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Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one! – Fr. Dave

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### SPIRITUAL VITAMIN

"As the Devil wounds the soul in an instant by presenting some unlawful desire or some unrighteous idea to the heart, so God and His guardian angel vivify the soul by an instantaneous flow of holy desires and thoughts."

+Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt

*My Life in Christ* p.504

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### LIVES OF THE SAINTS

#### **SAINTED ARSENI, BISHOP OF TVER'**

Commemorated on March 15/2

Sainted Arsenii, Bishop of Tver', was born at Tver', and in his early years took monastic vows in the Kievo-Pechersk monastery. Even among the monks of this ancient monastery, distinguished for their piety, Arsenii was noted for his saintly life – a strict keeping of the monastic vows, a knowledge of the Church *ustav*, the study of Holy Scripture, and a love for work. Under the Kiev metropolitan Kyprian (1380-1382) he served as archdeacon, and during times of the metropolitan's absence he governed the working of the Kiev metropolitanate. On 3 July 1390 he went together with Metropolitan Kyprian to Tver', where at the request of the Tver' prince Mikhail Aleksandrovich there had been convened a Sobor of Russian and Greek hierarchs for judgement upon the Tver' bishop Evphymii. The prince and the bishop were in a lengthy quarrel, and many of

the Tver' people had serious accusations against the Tver' bishop. After unsuccessful attempts to restore peace to the Tver' church, Metropolitan Kyprian "removed from the episcopacy" Evphymii and sent him off to Moscow to the Chudov monastery. Saint Arsenii was appointed to the Tver' cathedra. But he, "fearful to accept the authority at Tver', in view of the much enmity and spite there, was both troubled and terrified". Upon the return of Metropolitan Kyprian and archdeacon Arsenii to Moscow, the Tver' prince sent his boyars with a petition to the metropolitan concerning ordination of Arsenii to the Tver' cathedra. This time also Arsenii was not agreeable. In the words of the chronicle for the year 1390 "hardly even by the metropolitan's entreaty would archdeacon Arsenii be at Tver'". Under the threat of cathedral suspension metropolitan and prince finally received his assent to the ordination, which was done 15 August 1390. Among the bishops taking part in the laying on of hands was Sainted Stephen, Bishop of Perm (Comm. 26 April).

Having come upon the cathedra, Bishop Arsenii, as a man of great prayer and peace-maker, was able to stop much of the discord in the Tver' principality. During his episcopacy, from 1390 to 1409, there were built and consecrated cathedrals in honour of the Archangel Michael at Staritsa and Mikulina, and the Saviour-Transfiguration cathedral was restored with the putting up of a cathedral bell-tower. The saint founded on the river T'maka near Tver' the Zheltikov monastery, where in similitude to the Kievo-Pechersk monastery was built a church in the names of the Monks Antonii and Theodosii of Pechersk (1394), and a stone Uspenie cathedral.

Desiring that the monks of this new monastery would always take edification from the asceticism of the Pechersk Fathers, Sainted Arsenii gave orders to compile a list from the Kievo-Pechersk Paterikon, offering the most ancient of redactions surviving into the present of this precious memorial of Russian literature, and receiving the name of the Arsen'ev Redaction.

The saint died on 2 March 1409, and was buried in the Zheltikov monastery of the Uspenie / Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, which he founded. In 1483 his relics were found undecayed and placed in the monastery cathedral. In the same year priest-monk Feodosii wrote the Life and a Kanon of the Sainted-bishop. At a Sobor of 1547 was established the celebration of Sainted Arsenii throughout all the Church.

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**REMAINING SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE GREAT FAST**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission at St Michael's

(146 Third Ave., Rankin)

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 #TheGreatFast**

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

with fellowship meal following

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27 #TheGreatFast**

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew with

reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt

followed by Orthodoxy 101 (or movie night)

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast**

Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas

(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)

10:00 am Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

11 am to 5 pm Retreat (see separate flyer)

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Church School

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's

(211 Cable Ave., East Pittsburgh)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast**

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

with fellowship meal following

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3 #TheGreatFast**

6:30 pm Vespers

followed by Orthodoxy 101 (or movie night)

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4 #LAZARUSSATURDAY**

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

11 am – 2(ish) pm Spring Maintenance Morning

11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard

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**COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY**

Check back later...

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**ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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**"Code" for reading the bulletin:**

\*\*\* = new news \*\* = 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the bulletin

\* = at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the bulletin

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**Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church services,

please pray along with our Cathedral online:

[www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)

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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear

Confessions after every service or by appointment.

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**Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:

[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar)

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\* **Calling All Scouts!** Our Scout Sunday is **being rescheduled**. For our youth in Scouting and to our Adult Leaders, please send Fr. Dave your →Unit Number, →location, →current rank, and →any office or position you hold in your organization As Soon As You Can.



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\* **Fellowship Meals** - Got Soup? A small 't' tradition in many Orthodox parishes is to have soup (*or other light meal*) following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast. We will have this meal after our Wednesday evening services at our parish and when we travel for the North Hills Pan-Orthodox service. A sign up sheet is in the church hall for those interested in bringing in food.

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\*\*\* **Pittsburgh Marathon - Walk or Run with Team IOCC** - Help change lives around the world! Join us on **Saturday, May 3** at the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend. Choose a Race as a Solo Participant or Form Your Own Team! (5K, 4-Mile Fitness Challenge, Kids Marathon, Pet Walk, Toddler Trot, Champions Mile) SIGN UP NOW AT [iocc.org/pgh](http://iocc.org/pgh). Questions? Contact Dean Stambolis at [DeanStambolis@verizon.net](mailto:DeanStambolis@verizon.net) or 412.874.9572.

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\* **Lenten Coin Boxes** - Coin boxes are available in the vestibule to collect your spare change throughout the Great Fast for our upcoming Community Outreach (OCMC). More information is available at [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org). "*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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#### SUGGESTED LENTEN READINGS

The following suggested readings for the Great Fast are available in our *Gift Shop* for a reasonable donation

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\* **Adults: Arise, O God: The Gospel of Christ's Defeat of Demons, Sin, and Death** by Fr Andrew Damick (\$7)

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\* **Youth: The Good Samaritan: A Children's Catechism** by Fr. Michael Shanbour (\$12)

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For several reasons, our "Gift Shop" is not meant to be a "Bookstore". With that in mind - there are several leftover books from previous years' suggestions that can be considered for your Lenten Reading. In addition to the above books, another option is to use our **Lending Library** located in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a great option **for our youth** as there are many books for them to take advantage of! If you have questions about any book - please do not hesitate to ask Fr. Dave!

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\* **Outdoor Divine Liturgy and Annual Parish Picnic** - We will gather at *The Cabin* in North Park on **Sunday, August 30** for our end of summer outdoor Liturgy and picnic. Save The Date!

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\*\*\* **Online Bible Study Options** -

*Check back later...*

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\* **A new approach to the Coffee Social:** 4 people bring 1 item each. A modified sign-up sheet is now available. (*If someone wants to host the entire event, that is still an option - just sign your name through all 4 boxes.*) Also, the Kitchen Crew, led by Liz, will be the "point person" for signing up or any questions. **Please consider hosting a coffee social in honor of someone's Nameday, Birthday, Anniversary, or in memory of a departed loved one near their anniversary.**

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\* **Church School Participation** - Our Youth Ministry Leader, Kathy S., will be the main contact for parents to update the teachers on whether their kids will be at class. **Parents** - please update Kathy PRIOR TO each scheduled class (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays)

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\* **TO BE RESCHEDULED Caring for Others through Visitation Ministry** - A ministry of caring is an important part of parish life. Join us on POSTPONED **Sunday, January 25** during the coffee social in the MPR (Multi-Purpose Room) for a 20-minute presentation with our

guest presenter, Amy Armanious. She will lead us on ways to reach out in love to those in our church families who are homebound, coping with challenging health conditions, and/or experiencing other life difficulties. No need to sign up - just come and learn how God is opening your heart and mind to *Visitation Ministry*. We will discuss how we can make a difference through such activities as prayer, making phone calls to those who live alone, creating small gifts for the homebound, baking cookies, delivering soup, mailing cards to those who need an encouraging word, home visitation, and much more! This ministry is a way for individuals to live out the great commandment "Love one another." Come and see where God is leading you in the giving of your time & talent. We need all - young and old - for this new outreach ministry!

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**Random Tidbits...** Father Dave is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm 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 (Sacrament) of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

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**Speaking With Your Priest** - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

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#### 2025-26 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

*President:* Larry Martin

*Vice-President:* Liz Radomsky

*Treasurer:* Tim Martin, Reader

*Financial Secretary:* Rich Mirilovich

*Recording Secretary:* Gina Fall

*Chief Auditor:* Bob Fall

*Auditors:* Mary Jane Hudak, Ray Kilmer, Kim

Opsitos, Matt Opsitos, and Kathy Schrmack

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## STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



**TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES**

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### PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

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\* **Assembling A Few Items** – There is at least 7-items 3 items (benches, shelves, cabinet organizer, etc) at the church that need assembled. If this is up your alley, please let Fr Dave know. Your stewardship is needed at the church!

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### CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

*Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:*

- ✘ \* 4 new **benches** were assembled for along the back wall of the Sanctuary
- ✘ \* there is a new **shelf** for the library
- ✘ \* 4 **LED lights** were added (or replaced lights) in the hallway and classroom downstairs

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### Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, everything is coming together – one thing at a time. **Thank you!** Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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Financial Reports	February	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 4870.64	\$ 47,931
* Expenses	\$ 7163.91	\$ 41,128
Yield +/-	- \$ 2293.27	\$ 6,803
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 1288.00	\$ 19,830
<i>Sunday Participation Average</i>	35	39

*\* detailed report is on the bulletin board in the hall*

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**Giving at the Church** – The opportunities to give your stewardship treasures at SJB are to:

- ✘ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✘ drop your offering in one of multiple baskets around the church, or
- ✘ place your offering in the box in the candle stand after saying your prayers when lighting 2 candles.

*The ministries of the church cannot happen without your dedication and support.*

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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 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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 sign up on the sheet in the vestibule or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (Memorial Service) for them.*

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Stewardship of Treasure Guide													
Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?													
Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2	
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3	
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4	
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5	
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6	
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7	
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8	
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9	
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10	
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11	
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20	
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30	

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).  
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.

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### A Prayer of Stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

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**ACRY NEWS**

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\* **Pop Can Tab Collection** – Join the National Jr. ACRY in supporting the Ronald McDonald House. A collection bin for *Can Tabs* has been placed in the vestibule near the bin for repurposed Greeting Cards. During the next year, please help fill the container with your pop can tabs.

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## ORTHODOXY AROUND DA ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

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- \* **Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth events this year!**
- ✘ **May 5-7** - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (age 55 & over)
- ✘ **June 5-7** - Family Camp
- ✘ **June 7** - Family Day
- ✘ **July 26 - Aug 1** - Pgh Deanery Camping Week (ages 8-18)

- ✘ **August 9-12** - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
  - ✘ **October 9-11** - Camp Alumni Weekend
  - ✘ **October 23-25** - Young Adult Fall Retreat
  - ✘ **November 6-8** - Fall Jr. Encounter (ages 8-18)
- Save the Dates and head to 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

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**FEAST DAY FEATURE**

Check back later...

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**ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK**

Check back later...

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**SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

*Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm 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 prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

**How to receive** - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

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

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time,

talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

**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 in the church. 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). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

**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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**The Jesus Prayer**

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

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**ONLINE PRAYER CORNER**

**Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions**

*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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**A Prayer For The Sick:** O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) *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 Special Intentions of...**

His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Carolyn U., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna,

George, *our diocesan seminarians*: Dcn Maximus C, Nicholas C, John B, John F, Bradley S, Clay R, Ignatios L., *and our Parish Council and Curators*: Lawrence, Elizabeth, Timothy, Rich, Robert, Gina, Mary Jane, Raymond, Kimberly, Matthew, Katherine, Kenneth 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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**March Namedays:**

Fr Dave Urban – St David of Wales (3/14)  
 Steven (John) Zerby – St John of the Ladder (3/22)  
 Bonnie Carlisle – St. Mary of Egypt (3/29)  
 ...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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**March Birthdays:**

Alisha Zak (3/1), Matthew Wensel (3/3), Lillian Fucsko (3/4), Christopher Kubis (3/6), Fr Daniel Mahler (3/6), Randall Paieski (3/09), *Father's nephew*, Michael Verbanick (3/9), *Father's God-mother*, Andrea Babbie (3/10), Allen Dzambo (3/11), Noella Gaydos (3/14), Fr David Cochran (3/18), Ameer Francken (3/18), Pañi Alison Archer (3/21), Charlotte Sikora (3/20), Avalise Marie Matolyak-Ferraz (3/26), Ken Dzadovsky (3/28), Marianne Kubis (3/29), Ben Anton (3/30)  
 ...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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**For our Catechumens & Inquirers...**

Hekuran, Tyler  
 ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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**For those preparing for Marriage...**

Nicholas & Cassie, Nicholas & Camile  
 ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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**March Anniversaries:**

Lindsay & AJ Matolyak-Ferraz (3/6/21)  
 ...*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 Pregnant Mothers...**

Kimberly (*due in March*), Lauren (*due in September*)  
 ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...**

Thomas R. Dzadovsky  
 ...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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**Special Intentions** – *Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under "For the Special Intentions of..." on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.*

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**Prayer requests** – *During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating*

*special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the "Prayer Corner" are prayed for during the Proskomedia (Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.*

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**from the Lenten Triodion**

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver; for my spirit hastens early towards Your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled; but in Your compassion purify me by Your gracious mercy. Amen.

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**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 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.

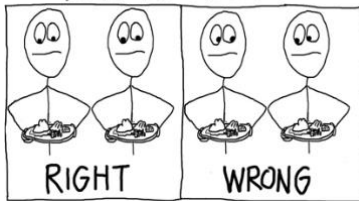
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**A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy**

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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**HOW TO DO LENT**



(Look at their eyes...)

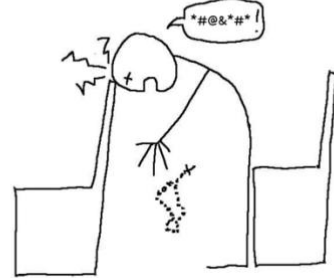
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**Orthodox Lenten Tutorial #2:**

Prostration With Pews Warning!

**WARNING!**

ATTEMPTED PROSTRATION MAY RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD AND EGO INJURY



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