

“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)

FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY!

APRIL 5th
 GREAT WEEK BEGINS



GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

APRIL 10th



FEAST OF FEASTS!

APRIL 12th
 NO FASTING!



GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9
 Gospel: John 12:1-18

Place your palm branches
 and pussywillows behind
 an icon at home
 and in your car!

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS
 CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR
 ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE

Refrain from TV, Internet &
 Phones to honor Christ's Death.

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 BRIGHT WEEK

HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17

Greet everyone with
 "CHRIST IS RISEN!"
 & say it before
 good morning and goodnight!

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UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2026 #PALM(FLOWERY)SUNDAY VOL. XI

FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Blessing of Branches (Palms and Willows)

Church School

12:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

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Mystery of Confession – Father is available for Confessions
 after every service or by appointment through Holy Wednesday

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GREAT AND HOLY PASSION WEEK

HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 6 #HolyWeek

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
 with fellowship meal following

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 7 #HolyWeek

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

6:00 pm Vespertal Liturgy of St. John

HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 #HolyWeek

* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*

6:00 pm Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction)
 with community meal following

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 9 #HolyWeek

9:30 am Mystical (Last) Supper Vespertal Liturgy,
 Institution of the Eucharist

6:00 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels

*** *then setting of the Lord's Tomb*

HOLY & GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 10 #HolyWeek

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

9:30 am Royal Hours

*** *then decorating the Lord's Tomb*

6:00 pm Vespers and outdoor Burial Procession

with the Holy Shroud (*Plaschanitsa*)

then Reading of the Psalter until 10 pm

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 11 #HolyWeek

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

8:00 am Reading of the Psalter

9:30 am Vespertal Liturgy of the Resurrection

*** *then changing from dark to light colors*

*** *Please let Fr. Dave know if you are able to assist after the
 Thursday, Friday, or Saturday services*

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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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SUNDAY, APRIL 12 #Pascha, THE FEAST OF FEASTS

9:00 am Resurrection Matins with outdoor procession

~9:40 am Paschal Divine Liturgy

Liturgical Color: **White**

Blessing of Artos Bread (*with children assisting*)

Blessing of Paschal Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)

Paschal Potluck Meal

Candy Hunt

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BRIGHT WEEK: A FAST FREE WEEK

MONDAY, APRIL 13 #BRIGHTWEEK

9:30 am Paschal Liturgy with outdoor Procession

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15 #BRIGHTWEEK

6:00 pm Akathist to the Holy Resurrection

6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting (*All are welcome
 to come and listen to the discussions at the meeting*)

FRIDAY, APRIL 17 #BRIGHTWEEK

9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy

11:00 am Bacon Breakfast (*See Father Dave*)

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** **Great Lent 2026** – Let's walk with Christ through His
 Passion Week – the holiest week of the year. You will spiritually
 miss out on A LOT if you come to church for the Feast of the
 Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem and then come back for
 Pascha. Don't cut yourself short! Come to the services this week.

Remember: 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. This is an opportunity,
 not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually
 beautiful one together! Please reach out to Fr. Dave if you have
 questions ... 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/

*** **Minimum Fasting guidelines for Holy Week** - The entire Great & Holy Week are days of abstinence from meat products. Holy Friday and Holy Saturday are Strict Fast days, meaning no meat or dairy products. The fast is broken with the receiving of the Holy Eucharist at the Divine Liturgy on Pascha.

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** **Red Eggs** – The suggestion was previously made to hard boil eggs for the parishioners during Holy Week. (They will naturally be dyed red.) If you are able to bring any HOME-GROWN eggs to the church, please let Fr. Dave know as soon as you can.

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*** **Initiation of the Catechumen** – Yesterday Diana was enrolled into the catechumenate. She begins her next steps in becoming a member of the Orthodox Church. Let us continue to keep Diana in our personal prayers! (**When previous catechumens were received into the church, these prayers were done at the time of their reception into the Faith. Separating the prayers is becoming a more common practice.*)

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* **Lenten Coin Box Reminder** – This collection to support our Community Outreach, OCMC, is to be brought in during Holy Week. More information is available at 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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* **Preparing for Presanctified** – If planning to receive the Eucharist (Holy Communion) at the evening Presanctified Liturgy, the teaching of the Church is to abstain from food for at least 3 hours prior, starting at 3pm. (*It would be better if one was to abstain from food from after the lunch meal until after the reception of the Holy Gifts.*) Did you ever wonder why we gather for a meal after the service? This allows us to have dinner (together) before taking the time to drive home. (Having a later dinner is also why we start the service at 6:00 instead of our usual evening start time.) Be sure to take part in this opportunity to receive the Eucharist mid-week during the Lenten Season! *If 6pm in Allison Park is not good for your schedule, check websites of nearby Orthodox Churches for their times or ask Fr. Dave.*

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** **Fasting Before Holy Anointing** – It is not uncommon around the Orthodox world to fast prior to the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction). Please follow the minimum 3-hour fast as we do prior to the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts before coming to the Unction Service on Holy Wednesday. We will have a community meal afterwards.

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* **Grave Watch or Guarding the Tomb** – Different churches refer to this in different ways, but all are coming to the church to pray. Faithful are asked to sign up and commit to *reading the Psalms at the Tomb of our Lord*. We will begin, as we did last year, right after the Burial Vespers on Good Friday, continue until 10 pm, then restart Holy Saturday morning at 8 am until the start of the Vespers Liturgy (at 9:30 am). Shifts will be 20-minutes long. *May these words from the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane inspire all of us: And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not keep awake with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:40-41)*

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*** **Bright Friday Bacon Breakfast** – What is this Bacon Breakfast? A couple years ago after the Friday Paschal Liturgy, all those in attendance went out for breakfast. Being Friday of Bright Week, there was no fasting, so we jokingly called it the Bright Friday Bacon Breakfast. Come join us this year!

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*** **Pro-Life March and Rally** – The First Pittsburgh Pro-Life March will be held on **Bright Saturday, April 18**. More information can be found at: www.pittsburghprolifemarch.com. The schedule will be as follows:

10:00 am – Pre-rally music and pro-life tables in Schenley Plaza (4100 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15260)

11:00 am – Orthodox participants gather on the green space at St. Nicholas Cathedral (419 S Dithridge St.)

12:00 pm – Pittsburgh Pro-Life March through Oakland
Following the march, a Moleben (Prayer Service) will be held on the green space at St. Nicholas.

Faithful are asked to bring icons, banners, and other Orthodox accoutrements for the march. This inaugural event is being organized by many organizations with the Orthodox participation organized by the Orthodox Christians for Life (ministry at St. Alexander Nevsky) and the Pittsburgh Clergy Brotherhood. *Celebrating Life in our City* is a great opportunity for Pittsburgh to see Orthodox unity and to participate in promoting life. *Parking will not be available at St. Nicholas. Suggested lots are Soldiers and Sailors Parking Garage (4390 Bigelow Blvd.) or Forbes Semple Garage (210 Meyran Ave.)*

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* **Bright Bites** – Join the Pittsburgh IOCC for a night of fellowship and celebration of Pascha around the world with Greek, Italian, and Middle Eastern hors d’oeuvres, as well as red and white wines, for *Bright Bites: Food & Fellowship* on **Sunday, April 19** from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at Stamoolis Brothers (2020 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Tickets are \$35. Register Online at ioccc.org/pittsburgh by April 14. (Walk in guests are also welcome).

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* **Orthodoxy On Tap** – On **Sunday, April 19** at 5:00 pm, Jonathan Cader will present “The Science of Hymnology: Dissecting the Faith Through Sacred Hymns” at Monterey Pub (1227 Monterey St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212). Following the presentation, plan to stay and enjoy the fellowship and discussion with other young adults. Contact Fr Dave with any questions.

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

- ✘ *** **River Rock** was spread around the periphery of the church during our maintenance morning.
- ✘ ** the **laminated floor** in the front of the nave now extends all the way to the walls (under the heat enclosures)

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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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**** Blessing of Graves** – Our annual grave blessings at the N.S. cemeteries have not been scheduled yet. (Thomas Sunday will not work for Fr. Dave this year.) If you have a suggested Saturday or Sunday to have this, please talk with Fr. Dave. ***** If your loved ones are not at one of the two cemeteries on the North Side, please schedule a time with Fr. Dave to meet (if possible) before the Feast of Ascension.**

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**** Icon Workshops** – Archangel Icons-Michael Kapeluck is offering five Intensive Icon Workshops in 2026 (**April 20-24; May 18-22; June 15-19; July 13-17; August 17-21**). There will only be 6 students per workshop which are open to beginners as well as more experienced students. All workshops will take place in his studio in Carnegie, PA. Each workshop will create a 12"x16" icon using JoSonja acrylic techniques. Classes will also include prayer, discussions on technique, history, and theology of the icon. Students will also have access to the studio's 300+ book library. The workshop fee is \$600 and includes 40 hours of instruction and all materials. (Meals are not included.) If you are interested, please contact Fr. Dave for more information or visit: www.archangelicons.com

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**** Spring Fundraiser Gala** – Join us on **Thursday, April 30** from 7:00 - 10:00 pm for an evening celebrating the *light at work* in the hearts of the students at *The Saint Constantine School of Pittsburgh*. This benefit event ensures that the mission of *Education in Pursuit of Virtue, Wisdom, and Joy* remains accessible to all families who desire it. Magical entertainment, beautiful music, a moving program, buffet dinner, cash bar, and childcare are all provided at this *formal* gala for adults ages 18+ at Holy Trinity Center (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh). Cost break down is: Single ticket is \$150; Multiple tickets bought together are \$125 each. Thank you for helping us to form young minds and souls. For more information on the school, visit: <https://pittsburgh.saintconstantine.org>. Please let Fr. Dave know if you are interested in attending.

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*** Pittsburgh Marathon - Walk or Run with Team IOCC** - Help change lives around the world! Join us on **Saturday, May 2** 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 at ioccc.org/pgh. Contact Fr. Dave for more info.

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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 presentations, church services, time for fellowship, and great evening events. His Eminence, Met. 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://2026.SeniorRetreat.org) to register for the event. Visit campnazareth.org or acrod.org 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**)

***** Spring Maintenance Morning/Afternoon** – THANK YOU to everyone who came out to help around the parish yesterday! It was amazing to watch the teamwork and accomplishments that happened throughout the day! May God grant you many years!

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD	
Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 475
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 77
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 280
Community Outreach:	\$ 105
Total Collections:	\$ 937
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 253
Participating Souls at: <i>Sunday's Liturgy:</i> 46	
<i>Wednesday PM Presanctified:</i> 22	
<i>Friday PM Vespers:</i> 9	
<i>Lazarus Saturday Liturgy:</i> 12	
<i>(Maintenance Morning: 15)</i>	

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Rich & Renee Mirilovich; Cindy Pavilonis

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The **Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Kathy Schrmack in memory of +Fred Anton. May His Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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Financial Reports	March	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 6433.64	\$ 54,365
* Expenses	\$ 6111.20	\$ 47,239
Yield +/-	\$ 322.44	\$ 7,126
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 2180.00	\$ 22,010
<i>Sunday Participation Average</i>	45	40

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

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**** Panachida Offerings** – Reminder: Panachidas (Memorial Services for the Departed) cannot be served on the Major Feast Days of our Lord including Palm Sunday and Holy Pascha (as well as Lazarus Saturday).

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

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Gospel: John 12:1-18

Mary Anoints Jesus

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Laz'arus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Laz'arus was one of those at table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with

her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii [a day's wage] and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. ⁷ Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

⁹ When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Laz'arus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests planned to put Laz'arus also to death, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

¹² The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

¹⁴ And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written,

¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!"

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Laz'arus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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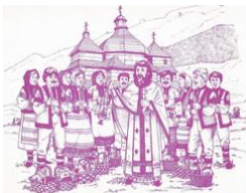


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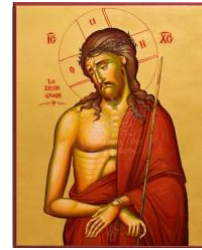
*** **Why Guard the Tomb?** – An ancient tradition in the Orthodox Church is the Vigil at the tomb of Christ. *After our Lord died on the Cross, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, bound it in linen cloths with spices and buried Him in a new tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat opposite the tomb watching as their Lord was buried.* The Church over the centuries has joined with these two women in keeping watch over Jesus' tomb.

The Vigil at Christ's tomb is our opportunity to help keep watch over the Lord's Body as He descends into hell to loosen the bonds of death. There is no better way to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus than to participate in the Vigil by His tomb. A sign-up sheet to participate and read the Psalter (readings will be prepared and available for you) before the tomb is on the curator desk in the vestibule. Times are set up in 20-minute blocks. Do not pass up this wonderful opportunity and blessing.

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*** **Blessing of Baskets** - Information for putting together a Paschal Basket is found in the online section of the bulletin. Contact Fr. Dave if you need a basket or have any questions!



Christ the Bridegroom

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HOLY WEEK from: www.orthodoxwiki.org/Holy_Week

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK is the week from the conclusion of [Great Lent](#) on the [Saturday of Lazarus](#) to the celebration of [Pascha](#). It is emphasized that the services of Holy Week follow the ecclesiastical day, that is from sundown to sundown. Thus Saturday of Lazarus ends at sundown on Saturday.

HISTORY

While little is recorded of the development of the celebrations of the Holy Week during the early years of the Church, it apparently had very early origins. By the fourth century the celebration of the week appears well-founded and to be similar to our celebrations today. The pilgrim [Egeria](#) to Jerusalem in the latter part of the fourth century described the events of the week after the services of the Saturday of Lazarus, "...began the week of the Pasch, which they called here the Great Week", noting the procession commemorating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the first day of the week. It is during this week that we remember Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.

THE HOLY WEEK

[Lazarus Saturday](#) concludes [Great Lent](#). This celebration remembers Christ's raising of Lazarus from the dead and the promise of universal [resurrection](#) for all. Lazarus Saturday provides a bridge to Holy Week during which the Church services remember Christ's last week before his crucifixion and resurrection, his [passion](#). During this week the [Matins](#) services for the upcoming day are celebrated the evening before, and Vespers is celebrated in the morning. This anticipation of the Church's services gives the faithful a sense that the world is in travail, upside-down, because of the passion our Lord endured for our salvation. Although this practice is unusual, it is canonical in accordance with the ancient definition that the day is from sunset to sunset.

PALM SUNDAY

The first day of Holy Week begins with [Vespers](#) of Saturday evening leading to the celebration of the services of *Our Lord's Entry into Jerusalem* the next morning, Sunday. In the western world this day is usually called [Palm Sunday](#). As Christ makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his divine kingdom on Earth is proclaimed under the branches of the palm tree.

HOLY MONDAY

The first three days of Holy Week remind us of Christ's last instructions with his disciples. These teachings are remembered in the celebration of the Great [Compline](#), [Matins](#), [Hours](#), and [Liturgy](#) during these days. The [Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts](#) celebrated these days includes readings from [Exodus](#), [Job](#), and [Matthew](#).

The [Matins](#) services of the evenings of Palm Sunday, Holy Monday, and Holy Tuesday, anticipating the events of the next day, share a common theme. These [Bridegroom](#) Services are derived from the [Parable](#) of the Ten Virgins, which calls for preparedness at the Second Coming, for the "thief comes in the middle of the night." (Matt. 26:1-13)

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Within the past two centuries, Byzantine practice has developed to include the [mystery](#) of [Holy Unction](#), which is celebrated on Holy Wednesday, commemorating Christ's anointing with myrrh. The service ends with the priest anointing the faithful with holy oil.

The services appointed by the [Typikon](#) for the evening of Holy Wednesday recall that on this day Judas betrayed Christ, which led to the tradition from [Apostolic](#) times of [fasting](#) on Wednesday throughout the year. It also focuses on the Mystical Supper, which is celebrated in the liturgy of the following day.

HOLY THURSDAY

Holy Thursday begins with the celebration of vespers and the [Divine Liturgy](#) of St. Basil, in representation of the earthly presence of Christ realized at the [Last Supper](#). In the evening, anticipating the Matins of Friday morning, the Holy Passion service of the reading of the Twelve Gospels is conducted. In these readings Christ's last instructions to his disciples are presented, as well as the prophecy of the drama of the Cross, Christ's prayer, and his new commandment.

HOLY FRIDAY

Great and Holy Friday begins with reading of the [Royal Hours](#) leading up to Vespers of Friday afternoon, at which time the removal of the Body of Christ from the Cross is commemorated. The [priest](#) removes the Body of Christ, the [Epitaphios](#), from the Cross, wraps it in a white cloth and carries it into the [altar](#). In an evening service, called the Lamentations at the Tomb, the priest carries the Epitaphios, the painted or embroidered cloth representation of Christ, from the altar around the [church](#) before placing it in the Sepulcher, a bier symbolizing the Tomb of Christ. This procession, with the faithful carrying lighted candles, represents Christ's descent into Hades.

HOLY SATURDAY

Great and [Holy Saturday](#) Vespers and a Divine Liturgy of St. Basil are served, marked with readings of [Psalms](#) and Resurrection [hymns](#) that tell of Christ's descent into Hades, celebrated as the "First Resurrection" of Adam and the conquering of Death. It is appointed by the typikon to be celebrated in the afternoon, though it is served in the morning in many places.

This service comes from the ancient liturgical tradition of the [Church of Constantinople](#) and was its primary Paschal service. The hymn "Arise O God" from the Psalms was the original primary Paschal hymn before "Christ is risen" came to take its place. Its place as the ancient Constantinopolitan Paschal celebration is what gives the service such a bright and resurrectional character.

PASCHA

[Pascha](#), the Feast of Feasts, celebrations begins just before midnight with the singing of the Odes of Lamentation as the Resurrection Vespers begins with the church in complete darkness. As midnight approaches the priest taking a light from a vigil light within the altar passes the flame to the faithful for their candles while singing "Come ye and receive light from the unwaning life, and, glorify Christ, who arose from the dead." Then the priest leads the faithful out of the church in procession. After circling the church either one or three times, as the procession nears the entrance door of the church, the priest leads in the singing of the hymn of Resurrection. "Christ has risen from the dead, by death trampling upon Death, and has bestowed life upon those in the tombs!" At this point the priest and faithful enter the well-lighted church for the remaining part of Vespers and the

breaking of the [fast](#) with the [Divine Liturgy](#). After conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, in many communities, the faithful retire to an [agape](#) meal to break the Fast together, and then return home as dawn arrives. Later in the day of Pascha the faithful again gather for prayer with lighted candles in a vespers service, singing the hymn "Christ is Risen from the Dead," and greeting each other joyously, "[Christ is risen](#)" and responding with, "Truly He is risen."

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WHY IS ORTHODOX PASCHA SOMETIMES DIFFERENT FROM WESTERN EASTER?

from: <https://stmichaeltx.org/orthodox-101/> (OCA parish)

*Fr. Dave may or may not agree with all statements in the article published on December 17, 2025

Orthodox Pascha falls on a different Sunday than Western Easter because we use a different calendar and follow different rules for calculating the date. Sometimes the dates coincide. Often they don't.

The difference comes down to two things: which calendar you use and which mathematical formula you follow. Western churches switched to the Gregorian calendar in 1582 and adjusted their Easter calculation accordingly. Orthodox churches kept the traditional method tied to the Julian calendar and the ancient paschal tables handed down from the Fathers.

THE CALENDAR QUESTION

Most Orthodox churches calculate Pascha using the Julian calendar, which runs thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar that civil society uses. That gap grows to fourteen days after 2100. When we say the vernal equinox falls on March 21st, we mean March 21st on the Julian calendar, which lands on April 3rd on your phone's calendar. Western churches use March 21st Gregorian as their baseline.

This isn't stubbornness. It's continuity with the Church's received practice.

THE RULES THAT MATTER

The First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 established the principles. Pascha must fall on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. All Christians should celebrate on the same day. And the Church's calculation should be independent, not dependent on Jewish calendar computations.

But here's where it gets specific. The Orthodox Church uses what's called the Paschalion, a set of tables and rules developed in Alexandria that approximate the full moon using a nineteen-year cycle. These are ecclesiastical calculations, not astronomical observations. The "full moon" in the Paschalion isn't necessarily the actual full moon you see rising over the refineries on I-10. It's a liturgical full moon, calculated according to ancient mathematical patterns.

Western churches adapted their formula when they adopted the Gregorian calendar. We didn't.

WHY WE HAVEN'T CHANGED

You might wonder why Orthodox churches don't just switch to make things simpler. There was actually discussion about this at a pan-Orthodox congress in Constantinople in 1923. Some churches adopted a revised Julian calendar for fixed feasts like Christmas. But Pascha stayed on the old calculation.

The reason isn't nostalgia. It's about maintaining the link to Nicea and the Fathers. Changing how we calculate Pascha isn't a minor calendrical adjustment. It's an ecclesial decision with canonical weight. The Church received this method from the councils and the tradition. We don't change it unilaterally because it would be more convenient for interfaith potlucks.

There's also a theological dimension. Pascha is the Feast of Feasts, the hinge of the entire liturgical year. Everything in the church calendar pivots around it. The fifty days of Pentecost, the Apostles' Fast, the beginning of Great Lent, all of it flows from Pascha's date. The Church measures time by her own rhythm, not by civil calendars or modern astronomical calculations.

WHEN THEY LINE UP

Some years both Easters fall on the same Sunday. This happens when the Julian-based and Gregorian-based calculations happen to produce the same civil date. It's not rare, but it's not the norm either. Whether they coincide depends on how the lunar cycle and the weekday pattern align in any given year.

When they differ, Orthodox Pascha usually comes later, sometimes by a week, sometimes by five weeks. In 2025, for instance, Western Easter falls on April 20th while Orthodox Pascha is April 20th, they coincide. But in 2024 they were five weeks apart.

You can find the dates years in advance because the Paschalion is a fixed system. Nothing changes year to year in the formula itself.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

If you're inquiring into Orthodoxy and your family celebrates Easter in April while we're still in Lent, that can feel strange. You'll be fasting while they're eating ham. Or you'll be celebrating the Resurrection a month after your Baptist grandmother already had her Easter service.

It's one of those visible differences that marks Orthodox life as distinct. Not better, not worse, just different in a way that connects us to something older than the Reformation, older than the medieval papacy, older than the split between East and West. When we celebrate Pascha according to the ancient calculation, we're doing what the Church in Antioch and Alexandria and Constantinople did fifteen hundred years ago.

Fr. Thomas Hopko used to say that the Church keeps her own time. That's what this is about. We don't let civil calendars or secular convenience dictate when we celebrate the Resurrection. We follow the rhythm the Church received and has kept.

If you want to understand the actual math behind it, the OCA has a detailed statement on the Paschalion and the Nicene principles. But the short version is this: we calculate Pascha the way the Church always has, and we'll keep doing it that way until an ecumenical council says otherwise.

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PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Patti, Mary Jane, Melissa, Mary, Evelyn, Beverly, Theresa, Janet, Matthew, Trona, Mioara, Tatiana, Anthony, 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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April Namedays:

Pañi's brother Florin Popescu and *Pañi's mother* Liliana Popescu – Palm (Flowery) Sunday

Subdeacon Ryan Ferko – St. Thomas Sunday

Thomas Lorenzi – St. Thomas Sunday

...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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April Birthdays:

Sonia Kretchek (4/1), Tristan Bowser (4/5), Nicholas Thorn (4/9), Bryce Blobner (4/10), Rich Mirilovich (4/13), Kris Carlisle, Reader (4/14), Melanie Paieski (4/14), *Father's Uncle* Dan Urban (4/15), *Father's Father* Dave Urban (4/15), John Kirish (4/18), Christopher Ditmore (4/19), Lawrence Martin (4/20), Max Anton (4/22), Donald James Gavulich (4/23), Fr Peter Paproski (4/24), Donna Tongel (4/24), *Jaxson Maruscak* (4/25), Fr Jonathan Bannon (4/29), Maryhelen Hoffman (4/29), Sharon Peifer (4/29)

...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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For the souls of the newly departed...

+Frank Rolley (3/13), +James Schrmack (Jim's uncle),

+Theodore Mozes, the Priest (3/9), +Karen Davis,

+Irene (Labas) Dzubak (3/6) ...*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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*** *A tip for keeping track of doing the triplet four times: With your left hand, place your thumb on your pointer finger for the 1st triplet, middle finger for the 2nd, ring finger for the 3rd, then pinky for the 4th*

PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN 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]*

ONLINE BONUSES

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

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS

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.

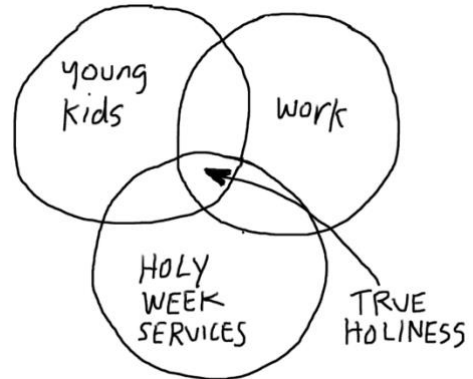
FAST from pride and
FEAST on humility.

FAST from selfishness and
FEAST on service.

GREAT LENT



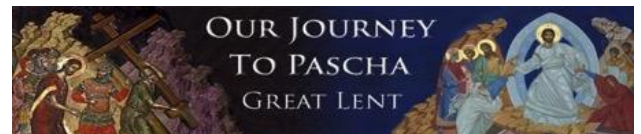
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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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Assembling A Traditional Easter Basket

One begins with a straw basket and filling with foods (that were fasted from), each holding symbolic significance:

1. Easter Bread (Pascha)

A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs and butter, symbolic of Christ "the Living Bread". Usually a round loaf with a golden crust and decorated with a braid and cross. Pascha comes from the word Pasch, meaning Passover. In English we use it to refer to the Easter season. In Slavonic the word paska is used to refer to Christ "the new lamb".

2. Cheese (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec)

A special cheese made from egg and milk shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. It is often decorated with cloves in the form of a cross.

3. Ham (Šunka)

The meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolism of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer lamb or veal.

4. Sausage (Kolbasi)

A spicy pork product flavored with garlic, indicative of God's favor and generosity.

5. Butter (Maslo)

This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a lamb or small cross. Symbolic of Christ the lamb who was offered upon the altar of the Cross for the life of the world.

6. Bacon (Slanina)

Uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.

7. Salt (Sol)

Symbolizes the Truth of the message of Christ. Just as salt preserves food, so the teaching of Christ preserves our eternal life.

8. Horseradish (Chrin)

Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bittersweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

9. Decorated Eggs (Pysankŷ)

Hard boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Eggs were always considered as symbols of the resurrection, the emergence of new life.

*** We are not limited to only having these items in our basket (nor do we have to have all of them). We fast for 40 days and a tradition is to bring what you have fasted from to the church to bless it before having some again (i.e. chocolate, or gum, or pop, or beer, etc.)

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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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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:

- o a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
- o b) fast only from meat;
- o c) fast from meat for certain weeks (Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week); or
- o 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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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE REMAINING OF THE GREAT FAST, HOLY WEEK, AND BRIGHT WEEK

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, APRIL 3 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Vespers followed by Orthodoxy 101 (or movie night)

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 #LAZARUSATURDAY

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

11 am – 2(ish) pm Spring Maintenance Morning
11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard

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SUNDAY, APRIL 5 #PALM(FLOWERY)SUNDAY
FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM
9:15 am Third Hour
Blessing of Branches (Palms and Willows)
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy
Liturgical Color: **Gold**
12:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

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GREAT AND HOLY PASSION WEEK

HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 6 #HolyWeek
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with fellowship meal following

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 7 #HolyWeek
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

6:00 pm Vespers Liturgy of St. John

HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 #HolyWeek
* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*

6:00 pm Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction)
with community meal following

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 9 #HolyWeek
9:30 am Mystical (Last) Supper Vespers Liturgy

6:00 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels
*** then setting of the Lord's Tomb

HOLY & GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 10 #HolyWeek
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

9:30 am Royal Hours
*** then decorating the Lord's Tomb

6:00 pm Vespers and outdoor Burial Procession
with the Holy Shroud (*Plašćanitsa*)
then Reading of the Psalter until 10 pm

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 11 #HolyWeek
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

8:00 am Reading of the Psalter
9:30 am Vespers Liturgy of the Resurrection
*** then changing from dark to light colors

*** Please let Fr. Dave know if you are able to assist after the
Thursday, Friday, or Saturday services

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SUNDAY, APRIL 12 #Pascha
THE FEAST OF FEASTS

9:00 am Resurrection Matins with
outdoor procession
~9:40 am Paschal Divine Liturgy

Liturgical Color: **White**
Blessing of Artos Bread (*with children assisting*)
Blessing of Paschal Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)
Paschal Potluck Meal
Candy Hunt

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BRIGHT WEEK: A FAST FREE WEEK

MONDAY, APRIL 13 #BRIGHTWEEK
9:30 am Paschal Liturgy with outdoor Procession

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15 #BRIGHTWEEK
6:00 pm Akathist to the Holy Resurrection
6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting (*All are welcome
to come and listen to the discussions at the meeting*)

FRIDAY, APRIL 17 #BRIGHTWEEK
9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy
11:00 am Bacon Breakfast (*See Father Dave*)

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SUNDAY, APRIL 19 #THOMAS SUNDAY

9:15 am Paschal Canon
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy
Breaking of the Artos
Monthly Memorial Panachida

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

National Jr. ACRY Project

Details coming soon –

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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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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"Code" for reading the bulletin:

*** = new news ** = 2nd time in the bulletin

* = at least the 3rd 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 (which broadcasts MORE THAN JUST SUNDAY MORNINGS):

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

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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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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 (1st, 3rd, & 5th 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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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

April 12: Pascha Pot-Luck

April 19: Sr. ACRY

April 26: ___? __, ___? __, ___? __, ___? __

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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 (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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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.

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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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:* Fr. Peter S, Dcn. Maximus C, Fr. Alexander H, Bradley S, Nicholas C, John B, John F, Spyridon R, Clay W, and 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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April Namedays:

Pañi's brother Florin Popescu and Pañi's mother Liliana Popescu – Palm (Flower) Sunday
Subdeacon Ryan Ferko – St. Thomas Sunday
Thomas Lorenzi – St. Thomas Sunday
...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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April Birthdays:

Sonia Kretchek (4/1), Tristan Bowser (4/5), Nicholas Thorn (4/9), Bryce Blobner (4/10), Rich Mirilovich (4/13), Kris Carlisle, Reader (4/14), Melanie Paieski (4/14), *Father's Uncle Dan Urban (4/15), Father's Father Dave Urban (4/15), John Kirish (4/18), Christopher Ditmore (4/19), Lawrence Martin (4/20), Max Anton (4/22), Donald James Gavulich (4/23), Fr Peter Paproski (4/24), Donna Tongel (4/24), Jaxson Maruscak (4/25), Fr Jonathan Bannon (4/29), Maryhelen Hoffman (4/29), Sharon Peifer (4/29)*
...*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

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

(*Repeat until your heart is calm...*)

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...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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**A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE
(PSALM 50/51)**

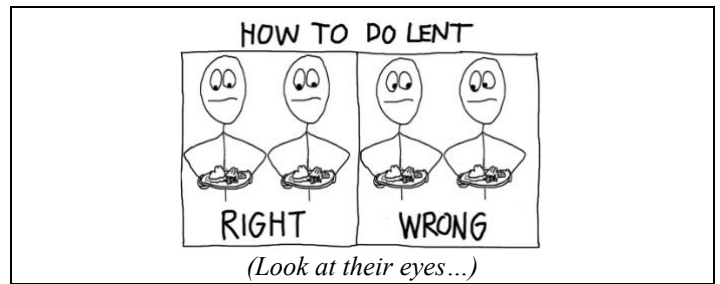
Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, 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.

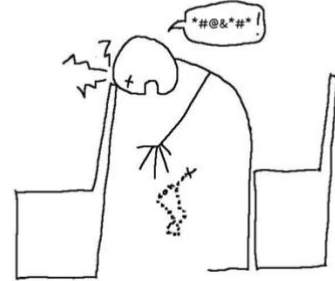


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**Orthodox Lenten Tutorial #2:
Prostration With Pews Warning!**

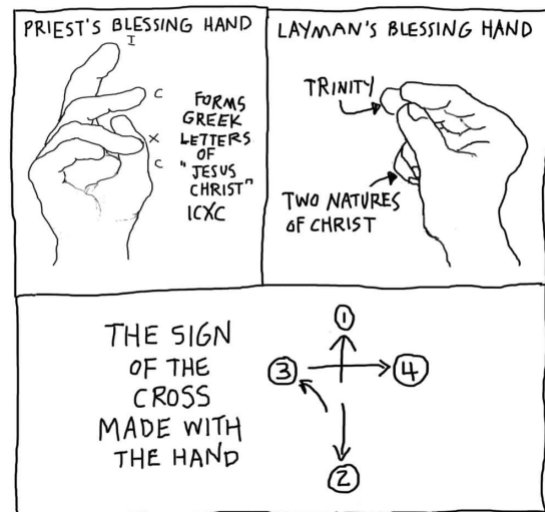
WARNING!

ATTEMPTED PROSTRATION MAY RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD AND EGO INJURY

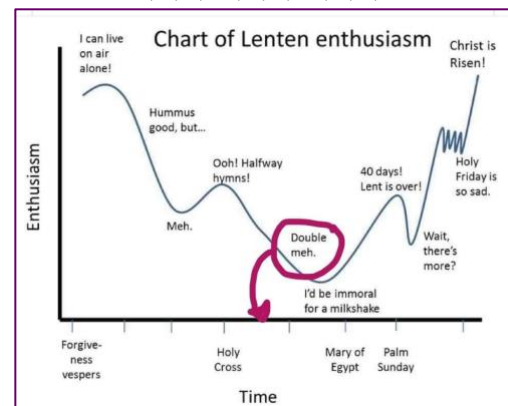


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ORTHODOX - TRINITARIAN, CHALCEDONIAN



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