

GENERAL & SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

Regarding the Temple: In our tradition, the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy. Prior to divine services, or during coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety!

Sick/Emergency Calls/Institutional Visitations: are answered as requests are received. All visitations are by request. Call to schedule an appointment.

Confessions: Are heard one half-hour before every service at Holy Assumption, and once a month at Ss. Peter & Paul. Special arrangements by necessity, and thereby, appointment only.

Sacraments of Illumination: In the case of infants, Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist are administered on ordinary Sundays of the church year, preferably in the context of Divine Liturgy. At least one sponsor must be of the Orthodox Faith and in good sacramental standing. The newly baptized must have one name that is Biblical or Christian in its origin.

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Lapsed Members: You are always welcome home, and we need you! Generally speaking, sincere Confession, Communion, and regular attendance are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Elijah for specific details.

New Members/Adult Chrismation: new members are always welcome. In the case of interested adults seeking Chrismation, a period of catechesis prescribed by the pastor is necessary before the administration of Holy Mysteries. An Orthodox sponsor is required.

Weddings: A minimum six-month notice is requested. Either Bride or Bride-groom must be an Orthodox Christian, and a parishioner in good standing. Dispensations may be required for inter-faith marriages (the marriage of an Orthodox & any non-Orthodox person). Banns of matrimony published 3 weeks before ceremony. No Weddings performed during fasting seasons!!!

Burial in Church Cemetery: Burial in consecrated ground is reserved for the Orthodox and their spouses/children. Charity burials, or odd circumstances are at the rector's discretion. It is strongly encouraged to hold viewings and visitation of the reposed in the church.

Our Stewardship of the Church: "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst 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 Thee and belongs to Thee. 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 Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Prayer When Lighting A Candle: "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

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629 Sunshine Avenue • Central City, Pa. 15926

SS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tipple Road • Goodtown, Pa. 15530



Very Rev. Archpriest Elijah J. Bremer, Rector
412 Short Cut Road • Alum Bank, Pa 15521
814-977-7397 • otets.ilya@yahoo.com

**Expulsion from Paradise/Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare
2 March 2025**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."
(Matthew 6: 16)*

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 2 - 9 MARCH 2025

“Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord.” (Joel 1: 14)

**Sunday
2 March
Tone 3** **Forgiveness/Cheesefare Sunday** **8:40 am**, Hours (CC)
Epistle: Romans 13: 11 – 14: 4 **9:00 am**, Liturgy (CC)
Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21 * The Great Lent Begins at Sunset!

Clean-week is observed this week: the Lenten Fast begins in earnest with meat, dairy, fish (with backbones), wine, and olive oil excluded!

**Friday
7 March** **1st Friday of Great Fast** **6:00 pm**, Presanctified Liturgy (CC)
(Liturgy of St. Gregory)

*Unless otherwise stated, **Presanctified Liturgy** will be celebrated every Friday evening of the Great Fast.*

**Sunday
9 March
Tone 4** **1st Sunday of Great Fast** **8:40 am**, Hours of Prayer (CC)
The Triumph of Orthodoxy **9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy (CC)
Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 11:32-12:2
Gospel: John 1:43-51

~Important Considerations ~

All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.

THE CONDITION PRIOR TO ENTERING THE 40 DAY FAST

Beloved brethren! We have already reached the very gates of the holy fast! They are even now about to open before us! Already, according to the typicon of the Holy Church, we hear the instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ read to us today in the Holy Gospels about the correct way to begin the *podvig* of fasting.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, says the Gospel reading for today, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt. 6:14–15). The holy Church greets us with this announcement at the gates of the fast! This is the requirement the Church offers us on the very threshold of the spiritual chamber of repentance. We intend to prove our repentance for various sinful distractions through various deprivations and wearing out of the body. The Gospels requires mercy from us before sacrifice, so that the sacrifice would be pleasing to God.

All who wish to begin this *podvig* of fasting and prayer, all who wish to reap abundant fruits of your repentance! Hear the word of God, hear God's commandment, and let go, forgive your neighbors their sins against you. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Amen.*

*St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)
Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*

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Lenten Charity Projects: *this Lenten Season, we will collect dog and cat treats for the Somerset County Humane Society, and monetary donations (which will be used to purchase supplies) for the Woman's Help Center in Johnstown. Everyone is encouraged to participate as a form of Lenten almsgiving. Thank you!*

Schedule Adjustments: *thank you for your patience and flexibility during schedule changes caused by the recent winter weather. Every effort is being made to provide services, and we will continue to adjust only in the event of truly dangerous conditions.*

Meatfare Dinner Thank You: *many thanks to all who attended and provided food for our annual dinner. In the end, approximately 20 people attended. Glory to God for this blessing, and for all of you!*

Lenten Mission Vespers: *the schedule for Deanery Lenten Vespers is as follows... 3/16 still to be determined, 3/23 St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral 5pm, 3/30 St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Madera 5 pm, and 4/6 St. Nicholas Orthodox Church DuBois 5pm. All are welcome!*

Meeting of Officers: *the officers of Holy Assumption will meet during coffee social on 2 March. This will be our first quarterly meeting of 2025. In addition, the Altar Society will also have a brief meeting.*

Digital Media Available: *anyone who would like a copy of the Christmas program that aired on 12/25/24 can provide Fr. Elijah with a blank flash drive (aka a USB drive, or a "thumb" drive). He will copy it for you and return it within a week.*

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Thanks to Sheryl Rayner

08-03-2012

WHEN HOARDERS LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

BECAUSE YOU ASKED:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE EAST IN THEIR OBSERVATION OF LENT

Source: Fr. Geoff Harvey, Good Shepherd Orthodox Church



At Rome Holy Week was included as part of the forty days. However, in calculating the number forty all Sundays were excluded from the reckoning, Sundays being considered feast days. This produced a six-week fast of six days in each week, constituting a total of thirty-six days. To make up the full measure of forty days, four further days of fasting were then added at the beginning, with the result that Lent in the West commences on a Wednesday (Ash

Wednesday). Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, was a day when Christians made a special point of self-examination consulting with their spiritual Father on matters requiring repentance and amendment. The word “shrove” means to hear a person’s acknowledgement of sin and assure of forgiveness. The term survives in ordinary usage in the expression “short shrift” by which we mean: paying little attention to a person’s excuses or problems. The day was also for thrifty housewives to use up fat and dairy produce by making pancakes so preparing for the Lenten fast.

At Constantinople, on the other hand, Holy Week - together with the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday - was not regarded as part of the forty-day fast in the strict sense. At Vespers on Friday evening in the sixth week, immediately preceding the Saturday of Lazarus, the distinction between the forty days and Holy Week is very clearly marked in the existing text of the Triodion: Fasting did of course continue during Holy Week!

Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul, we beseech Thee in Thy love for man: grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion...

(Sticheron from Great Lent season)

Thus the forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks. So it is that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in Western Christendom, while commencing in the East two days earlier on Monday.

Fasting, neither above nor below your ability, will help you in your vigil. One should not ponder divine matters on a full stomach, say the ascetics. For the well-fed, even the most superficial secrets of the Trinity lie hidden. Christ Himself set the example with His long fast; when He drove out the devil He had fasted for forty days. Are we better than He? Behold angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11) they are waiting to minister to you too.

(Tito Colliander, Way of the Ascetics)

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up”

– James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Scott	Jon
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Matthew
Michelle N.	Mike	Hannah	Mike	Lubomyr
				Tom

Do you have prayer intentions? Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!



THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

by: Fr. James Guirguis



On this beautiful Sunday, just a day before we jump into the lovely waters of Great and Holy Lent, the Church as a wise mother gives us this reading which comes in fact from the Sermon on the Mount. These are precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ and they remind us that what is contained within the 4 gospels is more important than anything that has ever been written in history. In fact, these gospels are the very foundations of our society. Some might wonder why the gospel book on the table is wrapped in gold plated material. It is to remind us that what is contained within the 4 books of the holy gospels is nothing less than gold! In actuality it is so much more precious than gold. If I gave a man on the street the choice between a block of gold and the 4 books of the gospels there is little doubt that he would take the gold brick and run. But in actuality what is within the gospels can make us truly rich people. It can change lives and it can help to give us an inheritance that makes the gold brick look like a mere speck of dust in comparison.

The message given to us today in this most precious gospel is that before we begin our Lenten struggle to grow closer to Jesus Christ, and to His Father, we should first be reconciled to everyone else. Just like the wise builder we are forced by our Lord to ensure that the foundations of our repentance are built on rock solid ground. And how do we know that in fact our repentance is built on solid ground? We know it when we have forgiven everyone of everything wrong that they have ever done towards us. It might make some of us wonder and say “what does this have to do with our own repentance with God?” The short answer is “everything.” When someone comes to their senses and leaves their life of sin and darkness and comes to Christ, the first thing that they do is fall on their knees and beg God to forgive them of all their many sins. We come to God in a broken state and we have nothing to offer Him. Yet He is generous with us and offers us what is needed to make a new start, that is, His divine forgiveness. With this sense of forgiveness we begin again and we stand up straight, no longer bowed down with the extreme weight of our sins.

This Sunday is our reminder that we were once estranged from God and yet He accepted us back into His heart. If we have known this forgiveness the only logical outcome is that we will also pour out this kind of radical forgiveness on those who seek it from us. In fact the worst possible scenario is one in

which we continually remember the faults and wrongdoings of others even after they have asked or begged for our forgiveness. If we don't forgive them there can be little doubt that our prayers won't even be heard by God. And we actually say this every day when we recite the Lord's prayer “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.” That is a bold statement and we would do well not to pray it unless we believe it and practice it. St. Mark the ascetic says that “The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”

One cannot help but think about the state of our society and the way that it is quickly degenerating. This is a sign of our turn away from Christian teaching and from belief that God truly exists. One sign of this is that many people feel themselves to be victims. They believe that they have been wronged and they seek revenge or justice. Everyone is keeping score all the time. One is a victim of this “ism”, another is a victim of that “ism.” I wonder what would happen if we turned from keeping score of all the wrongdoing against us and started to practice radical forgiveness? We might not even think this is a possibility for us. I wonder what might happen if we decided that the story that defined our lives wasn't about victimhood but about our love for our enemies, both actual and perceived? That would be a radical departure from the current trends that lead to division and it would no doubt, set the world on fire with the love of God.

The Church is the society of God. So we as a group are the first to model the behavior that is taught to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so important to us that we will even come together tonight to truly ask forgiveness of one another. Let's not lose this opportunity. If anyone has done you wrong, forgive them quickly from the bottom of your heart. Whether the one who has sinned or upset you was your friend or your brother or sister, your son or daughter, your father or mother, forgive them all in a way that confirms without a shadow of a doubt, that you understand what Christ has done to forgive you. Let the beginning of this holy season be a time to ask forgiveness of others and to accept others requests for our forgiveness. This is what the love of Jesus Christ looks like. May this love also be ours. Glory be to God forever, AMEN.

BECAUSE YOU ASKED: WHY CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL DURING LENT?



The Liturgy of St. Basil is primarily celebrated during Lent because its longer and more penitential prayers are considered particularly appropriate for the season of reflection and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter, aligning with the theme of deep introspection and repentance associated with Lent; in the Orthodox tradition, the Liturgy of St. Basil is used on the five Sundays of Great Lent, along with a few other specific occasions throughout the year like Christmas Eve and the Eve of Theophany.

The key points about the Liturgy of St. Basil and Lent are the **longer prayers** and **penitential focus**. Compared to the standard Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil features more extended prayers, allowing for deeper contemplation and expression of penitence. The prayers within the Liturgy of St. Basil often emphasize themes of sin, forgiveness, and renewal, which resonate strongly with the Lenten season.

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Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul, we beseech Thee in Thy love for man: grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion...

(Sticheron from Great Lent season)

Thus the forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks. So it is that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in Western Christendom, while commencing in the East two days earlier on Monday.

Fasting, neither above nor below your ability, will help you in your vigil. One should not ponder divine matters on a full stomach, say the ascetics. For the well-fed, even the most superficial secrets of the Trinity lie hidden. Christ Himself set the example with His long fast; when He drove out the devil He had fasted for forty days. Are we better than He? Behold angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11) they are waiting to minister to you too.

(Tito Colliander, Way of the Ascetics)

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up”

– James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara
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THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

by: Fr. James Guirguis



On this beautiful Sunday, just a day before we jump into the lovely waters of Great and Holy Lent, the Church as a wise mother gives us this reading which comes in fact from the Sermon on the Mount. These are precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ and they remind us that what is contained within the 4 gospels is more important than anything that has ever been written in history. In fact, these gospels are the very foundations of our society. Some might wonder why the gospel book on the table is wrapped in gold plated material. It is to remind us that what is contained within the 4 books of the holy gospels is nothing less than gold! In actuality it is so much more precious than gold. If I gave a man on the street the choice between a block of gold and the 4 books of the gospels there is little doubt that he would take the gold brick and run. But in actuality what is within the gospels can make us truly rich people. It can change lives and it can help to give us an inheritance that makes the gold brick look like a mere speck of dust in comparison.

The message given to us today in this most precious gospel is that before we begin our Lenten struggle to grow closer to Jesus Christ, and to His Father, we should first be reconciled to everyone else. Just like the wise builder we are forced by our Lord to ensure that the foundations of our repentance are built on rock solid ground. And how do we know that in fact our repentance is built on solid ground? We know it when we have forgiven everyone of everything wrong that they have ever done towards us. It might make some of us wonder and say “what does this have to do with our own repentance with God?” The short answer is “everything.” When someone comes to their senses and leaves their life of sin and darkness and comes to Christ, the first thing that they do is fall on their knees and beg God to forgive them of all their many sins. We come to God in a broken state and we have nothing to offer Him. Yet He is generous with us and offers us what is needed to make a new start, that is, His divine forgiveness. With this sense of forgiveness we begin again and we stand up straight, no longer bowed down with the extreme weight of our sins.

This Sunday is our reminder that we were once estranged from God and yet He accepted us back into His heart. If we have known this forgiveness the only logical outcome is that we will also pour out this kind of radical forgiveness on those who seek it from us. In fact the worst possible scenario is one in

which we continually remember the faults and wrongdoings of others even after they have asked or begged for our forgiveness. If we don't forgive them there can be little doubt that our prayers won't even be heard by God. And we actually say this every day when we recite the Lord's prayer “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.” That is a bold statement and we would do well not to pray it unless we believe it and practice it. St. Mark the ascetic says that “The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”

One cannot help but think about the state of our society and the way that it is quickly degenerating. This is a sign of our turn away from Christian teaching and from belief that God truly exists. One sign of this is that many people feel themselves to be victims. They believe that they have been wronged and they seek revenge or justice. Everyone is keeping score all the time. One is a victim of this “ism”, another is a victim of that “ism.” I wonder what would happen if we turned from keeping score of all the wrongdoing against us and started to practice radical forgiveness? We might not even think this is a possibility for us. I wonder what might happen if we decided that the story that defined our lives wasn't about victimhood but about our love for our enemies, both actual and perceived? That would be a radical departure from the current trends that lead to division and it would no doubt, set the world on fire with the love of God.

The Church is the society of God. So we as a group are the first to model the behavior that is taught to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so important to us that we will even come together tonight to truly ask forgiveness of one another. Let's not lose this opportunity. If anyone has done you wrong, forgive them quickly from the bottom of your heart. Whether the one who has sinned or upset you was your friend or your brother or sister, your son or daughter, your father or mother, forgive them all in a way that confirms without a shadow of a doubt, that you understand what Christ has done to forgive you. Let the beginning of this holy season be a time to ask forgiveness of others and to accept others requests for our forgiveness. This is what the love of Jesus Christ looks like. May this love also be ours. Glory be to God forever, AMEN.

BECAUSE YOU ASKED: WHY CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL DURING LENT?



The Liturgy of St. Basil is primarily celebrated during Lent because its longer and more penitential prayers are considered particularly appropriate for the season of reflection and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter, aligning with the theme of deep introspection and repentance associated with Lent; in the Orthodox tradition, the Liturgy of St. Basil is used on the five Sundays of Great Lent, along with a few other specific occasions throughout the year like Christmas Eve and the Eve of Theophany.

The key points about the Liturgy of St. Basil and Lent are the **longer prayers** and **penitential focus**. Compared to the standard Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil features more extended prayers, allowing for deeper contemplation and expression of penitence. The prayers within the Liturgy of St. Basil often emphasize themes of sin, forgiveness, and renewal, which resonate strongly with the Lenten season.

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Confessions: Are heard one half-hour before every service at Holy Assumption, and once a month at Ss. Peter & Paul. Special arrangements by necessity, and thereby, appointment only.

Sacraments of Illumination: In the case of infants, Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist are administered on ordinary Sundays of the church year, preferably in the context of Divine Liturgy. At least one sponsor must be of the Orthodox Faith and in good sacramental standing. The newly baptized must have one name that is Biblical or Christian in its origin.

What is Church Membership? By regulation, active membership in the church consists not merely in the payment of a set sum, or by fulfilling a *minimum* sacramental obligation, but rather in participation in the life of the church (commensurate with your physical ability). This includes entering into the spirit of the faith through regular and frequent attendance, participation in the divine mysteries, sustained financial support (at a percentage that reflects your ability), and adherence to the parish, diocesan, and national church statutes.

Receiving Communion: while all are welcome to pray with us, we politely offer a reminder that the Orthodox Church maintains a closed communion. All are welcome to Antidoron bread following the Divine Liturgy, but only prepared Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist. Orthodox Christians do not commune in non-Orthodox churches, and the non-Orthodox are not communed in an Orthodox Church. Thank you!

Lapsed Members: You are always welcome home, and we need you! Generally speaking, sincere Confession, Communion, and regular attendance are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Elijah for specific details.

New Members/Adult Chrismation: new members are always welcome. In the case of interested adults seeking Chrismation, a period of catechesis prescribed by the pastor is necessary before the administration of Holy Mysteries. An Orthodox sponsor is required.

Weddings: A minimum six-month notice is requested. Either Bride or Bride-groom must be an Orthodox Christian, and a parishioner in good standing. Dispensations may be required for inter-faith marriages (the marriage of an Orthodox & any non-Orthodox person). Banns of matrimony published 3 weeks before ceremony. No Weddings performed during fasting seasons!!!

Burial in Church Cemetery: Burial in consecrated ground is reserved for the Orthodox and their spouses/children. Charity burials, or odd circumstances are at the rector's discretion. It is strongly encouraged to hold viewings and visitation of the reposed in the church.

Our Stewardship of the Church: "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst 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 Thee and belongs to Thee. 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 Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Prayer When Lighting A Candle: "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

HOLY ASSUMPTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

629 Sunshine Avenue • Central City, Pa. 15926

SS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tipple Road • Goodtown, Pa. 15530



Very Rev. Archpriest Elijah J. Bremer, Rector
412 Short Cut Road • Alum Bank, Pa 15521
814-977-7397 • otets.ilya@yahoo.com

**Expulsion from Paradise/Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare
2 March 2025**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."
(Matthew 6: 16)*

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 2 - 9 MARCH 2025

“Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord.” (Joel 1: 14)

**Sunday
2 March
Tone 3** **Forgiveness/Cheesefare Sunday** **8:40 am**, Hours (CC)
Epistle: Romans 13: 11 – 14: 4 **9:00 am**, Liturgy (CC)
Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21 * The Great Lent Begins at Sunset!

Clean-week is observed this week: the Lenten Fast begins in earnest with meat, dairy, fish (with backbones), wine, and olive oil excluded!

**Friday
7 March** **1st Friday of Great Fast** **6:00 pm**, Presanctified Liturgy (CC)
(Liturgy of St. Gregory)

*Unless otherwise stated, **Presanctified Liturgy** will be celebrated every Friday evening of the Great Fast.*

**Sunday
9 March
Tone 4** **1st Sunday of Great Fast** **8:40 am**, Hours of Prayer (CC)
The Triumph of Orthodoxy **9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy (CC)
Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 11:32-12:2
Gospel: John 1:43-51

~Important Considerations ~

All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.

THE CONDITION PRIOR TO ENTERING THE 40 DAY FAST

Beloved brethren! We have already reached the very gates of the holy fast! They are even now about to open before us! Already, according to the typicon of the Holy Church, we hear the instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ read to us today in the Holy Gospels about the correct way to begin the *podvig* of fasting.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, says the Gospel reading for today, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt. 6:14–15). The holy Church greets us with this announcement at the gates of the fast! This is the requirement the Church offers us on the very threshold of the spiritual chamber of repentance. We intend to prove our repentance for various sinful distractions through various deprivations and wearing out of the body. The Gospels requires mercy from us before sacrifice, so that the sacrifice would be pleasing to God.

All who wish to begin this *podvig* of fasting and prayer, all who wish to reap abundant fruits of your repentance! Hear the word of God, hear God's commandment, and let go, forgive your neighbors their sins against you. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Amen.

*St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)
Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Social Today: *there will be a coffee social following Divine Liturgy this morning, all are welcome!*

Lenten Services: *the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (also known as the Liturgy of St. Gregory) will be celebrated every Friday evening of the Great Fast at 6 pm unless otherwise noted. All are encouraged to attend. Following the Presanctified this Friday, we will have a fasting appropriate meal in the church hall (decaf coffee will be served). All are welcome, and indeed, encouraged to attend the Liturgy and social.*

Lenten Charity Projects: *this Lenten Season, we will collect dog and cat treats for the Somerset County Humane Society, and monetary donations (which will be used to purchase supplies) for the Woman's Help Center in Johnstown. Everyone is encouraged to participate as a form of Lenten almsgiving. Thank you!*

Schedule Adjustments: *thank you for your patience and flexibility during schedule changes caused by the recent winter weather. Every effort is being made to provide services, and we will continue to adjust only in the event of truly dangerous conditions.*

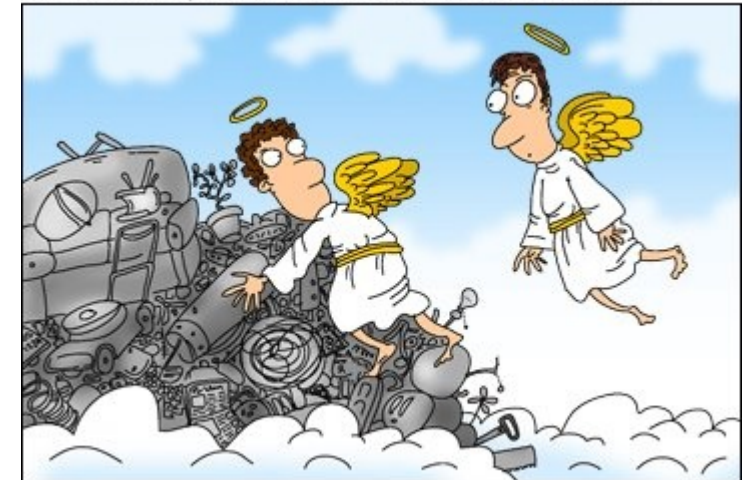
Meatfare Dinner Thank You: *many thanks to all who attended and provided food for our annual dinner. In the end, approximately 20 people attended. Glory to God for this blessing, and for all of you!*

Lenten Mission Vespers: *the schedule for Deanery Lenten Vespers is as follows... 3/16 still to be determined, 3/23 St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral 5pm, 3/30 St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Madera 5 pm, and 4/6 St. Nicholas Orthodox Church DuBois 5pm. All are welcome!*

Meeting of Officers: *the officers of Holy Assumption will meet during coffee social on 2 March. This will be our first quarterly meeting of 2025. In addition, the Altar Society will also have a brief meeting.*

Digital Media Available: *anyone who would like a copy of the Christmas program that aired on 12/25/24 can provide Fr. Elijah with a blank flash drive (aka a USB drive, or a "thumb" drive). He will copy it for you and return it within a week.*

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Thanks to Sheryl Rayner

08-03-2012

WHEN HOARDERS LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

BECAUSE YOU ASKED:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE EAST IN THEIR OBSERVATION OF LENT

Source: Fr. Geoff Harvey, Good Shepherd Orthodox Church



At Rome Holy Week was included as part of the forty days. However, in calculating the number forty all Sundays were excluded from the reckoning, Sundays being considered feast days. This produced a six-week fast of six days in each week, constituting a total of thirty-six days. To make up the full measure of forty days, four further days of fasting were then added at the beginning, with the result that Lent in the West commences on a Wednesday (Ash

Wednesday). Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, was a day when Christians made a special point of self-examination consulting with their spiritual Father on matters requiring repentance and amendment. The word “shrove” means to hear a person’s acknowledgement of sin and assure of forgiveness. The term survives in ordinary usage in the expression “short shrift” by which we mean: paying little attention to a person’s excuses or problems. The day was also for thrifty housewives to use up fat and dairy produce by making pancakes so preparing for the Lenten fast.

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Our Stewardship of the Church: "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst 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 Thee and belongs to Thee. 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 Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Prayer When Lighting A Candle: "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

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**Expulsion from Paradise/Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare
2 March 2025**

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

(Matthew 6: 16)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 2 - 9 MARCH 2025

“Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord.” (Joel 1: 14)

**Sunday
2 March
Tone 3** **Forgiveness/Cheesefare Sunday** **8:40 am**, Hours (CC)
Epistle: Romans 13: 11 – 14: 4 **9:00 am**, Liturgy (CC)
Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21 * The Great Lent Begins at Sunset!

Clean-week is observed this week: the Lenten Fast begins in earnest with meat, dairy, fish (with backbones), wine, and olive oil excluded!

**Friday
7 March** **1st Friday of Great Fast** **6:00 pm**, Presanctified Liturgy (CC)
(Liturgy of St. Gregory)

*Unless otherwise stated, **Presanctified Liturgy** will be celebrated every Friday evening of the Great Fast.*

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9 March
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The Triumph of Orthodoxy **9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy (CC)
Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 11:32-12:2
Gospel: John 1:43-51

~Important Considerations ~

All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.

THE CONDITION PRIOR TO ENTERING THE 40 DAY FAST

Beloved brethren! We have already reached the very gates of the holy fast! They are even now about to open before us! Already, according to the typicon of the Holy Church, we hear the instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ read to us today in the Holy Gospels about the correct way to begin the *podvig* of fasting.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, says the Gospel reading for today, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt. 6:14–15). The holy Church greets us with this announcement at the gates of the fast! This is the requirement the Church offers us on the very threshold of the spiritual chamber of repentance. We intend to prove our repentance for various sinful distractions through various deprivations and wearing out of the body. The Gospels requires mercy from us before sacrifice, so that the sacrifice would be pleasing to God.

All who wish to begin this *podvig* of fasting and prayer, all who wish to reap abundant fruits of your repentance! Hear the word of God, hear God's commandment, and let go, forgive your neighbors their sins against you. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Amen.*

*St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)
Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*

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Thanks to Sheryl Rayner

08-03-2012

WHEN HOARDERS LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

BECAUSE YOU ASKED:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE EAST IN THEIR OBSERVATION OF LENT

Source: Fr. Geoff Harvey, Good Shepherd Orthodox Church



At Rome Holy Week was included as part of the forty days. However, in calculating the number forty all Sundays were excluded from the reckoning, Sundays being considered feast days. This produced a six-week fast of six days in each week, constituting a total of thirty-six days. To make up the full measure of forty days, four further days of fasting were then added at the beginning, with the result that Lent in the West commences on a Wednesday (Ash

Wednesday). Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, was a day when Christians made a special point of self-examination consulting with their spiritual Father on matters requiring repentance and amendment. The word “shrove” means to hear a person’s acknowledgement of sin and assure of forgiveness. The term survives in ordinary usage in the expression “short shrift” by which we mean: paying little attention to a person’s excuses or problems. The day was also for thrifty housewives to use up fat and dairy produce by making pancakes so preparing for the Lenten fast.

At Constantinople, on the other hand, Holy Week - together with the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday - was not regarded as part of the forty-day fast in the strict sense. At Vespers on Friday evening in the sixth week, immediately preceding the Saturday of Lazarus, the distinction between the forty days and Holy Week is very clearly marked in the existing text of the Triodion: Fasting did of course continue during Holy Week!

Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul, we beseech Thee in Thy love for man: grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion...

(Sticheron from Great Lent season)

Thus the forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks. So it is that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in Western Christendom, while commencing in the East two days earlier on Monday.

Fasting, neither above nor below your ability, will help you in your vigil. One should not ponder divine matters on a full stomach, say the ascetics. For the well-fed, even the most superficial secrets of the Trinity lie hidden. Christ Himself set the example with His long fast; when He drove out the devil He had fasted for forty days. Are we better than He? Behold angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11) they are waiting to minister to you too.

(Tito Colliander, Way of the Ascetics)

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up”

– James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Scott	Jon
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Matthew
Michelle N.	Mike	Hannah	Mike	Lubomyr
				Tom

Do you have prayer intentions? Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!



THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

by: Fr. James Guirguis



On this beautiful Sunday, just a day before we jump into the lovely waters of Great and Holy Lent, the Church as a wise mother gives us this reading which comes in fact from the Sermon on the Mount. These are precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ and they remind us that what is contained within the 4 gospels is more important than anything that has ever been written in history. In fact, these gospels are the very foundations of our society. Some might wonder why the gospel book on the table is wrapped in gold plated material. It is to remind us that what is contained within the 4 books of the holy gospels is nothing less than gold! In actuality it is so much more precious than gold. If I gave a man on the street the choice between a block of gold and the 4 books of the gospels there is little doubt that he would take the gold brick and run. But in actuality what is within the gospels can make us truly rich people. It can change lives and it can help to give us an inheritance that makes the gold brick look like a mere speck of dust in comparison.

The message given to us today in this most precious gospel is that before we begin our Lenten struggle to grow closer to Jesus Christ, and to His Father, we should first be reconciled to everyone else. Just like the wise builder we are forced by our Lord to ensure that the foundations of our repentance are built on rock solid ground. And how do we know that in fact our repentance is built on solid ground? We know it when we have forgiven everyone of everything wrong that they have ever done towards us. It might make some of us wonder and say “what does this have to do with our own repentance with God?” The short answer is “everything.” When someone comes to their senses and leaves their life of sin and darkness and comes to Christ, the first thing that they do is fall on their knees and beg God to forgive them of all their many sins. We come to God in a broken state and we have nothing to offer Him. Yet He is generous with us and offers us what is needed to make a new start, that is, His divine forgiveness. With this sense of forgiveness we begin again and we stand up straight, no longer bowed down with the extreme weight of our sins.

This Sunday is our reminder that we were once estranged from God and yet He accepted us back into His heart. If we have known this forgiveness the only logical outcome is that we will also pour out this kind of radical forgiveness on those who seek it from us. In fact the worst possible scenario is one in

which we continually remember the faults and wrongdoings of others even after they have asked or begged for our forgiveness. If we don't forgive them there can be little doubt that our prayers won't even be heard by God. And we actually say this every day when we recite the Lord's prayer “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.” That is a bold statement and we would do well not to pray it unless we believe it and practice it. St. Mark the ascetic says that “The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”

One cannot help but think about the state of our society and the way that it is quickly degenerating. This is a sign of our turn away from Christian teaching and from belief that God truly exists. One sign of this is that many people feel themselves to be victims. They believe that they have been wronged and they seek revenge or justice. Everyone is keeping score all the time. One is a victim of this “ism”, another is a victim of that “ism.” I wonder what would happen if we turned from keeping score of all the wrongdoing against us and started to practice radical forgiveness? We might not even think this is a possibility for us. I wonder what might happen if we decided that the story that defined our lives wasn't about victimhood but about our love for our enemies, both actual and perceived? That would be a radical departure from the current trends that lead to division and it would no doubt, set the world on fire with the love of God.

The Church is the society of God. So we as a group are the first to model the behavior that is taught to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so important to us that we will even come together tonight to truly ask forgiveness of one another. Let's not lose this opportunity. If anyone has done you wrong, forgive them quickly from the bottom of your heart. Whether the one who has sinned or upset you was your friend or your brother or sister, your son or daughter, your father or mother, forgive them all in a way that confirms without a shadow of a doubt, that you understand what Christ has done to forgive you. Let the beginning of this holy season be a time to ask forgiveness of others and to accept others requests for our forgiveness. This is what the love of Jesus Christ looks like. May this love also be ours. Glory be to God forever, AMEN.

BECAUSE YOU ASKED: WHY CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL DURING LENT?



The Liturgy of St. Basil is primarily celebrated during Lent because its longer and more penitential prayers are considered particularly appropriate for the season of reflection and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter, aligning with the theme of deep introspection and repentance associated with Lent; in the Orthodox tradition, the Liturgy of St. Basil is used on the five Sundays of Great Lent, along with a few other specific occasions throughout the year like Christmas Eve and the Eve of Theophany.

The key points about the Liturgy of St. Basil and Lent are the **longer prayers** and **penitential focus**. Compared to the standard Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil features more extended prayers, allowing for deeper contemplation and expression of penitence. The prayers within the Liturgy of St. Basil often emphasize themes of sin, forgiveness, and renewal, which resonate strongly with the Lenten season.

GENERAL & SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

Regarding the Temple: In our tradition, the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy. Prior to divine services, or during coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety!

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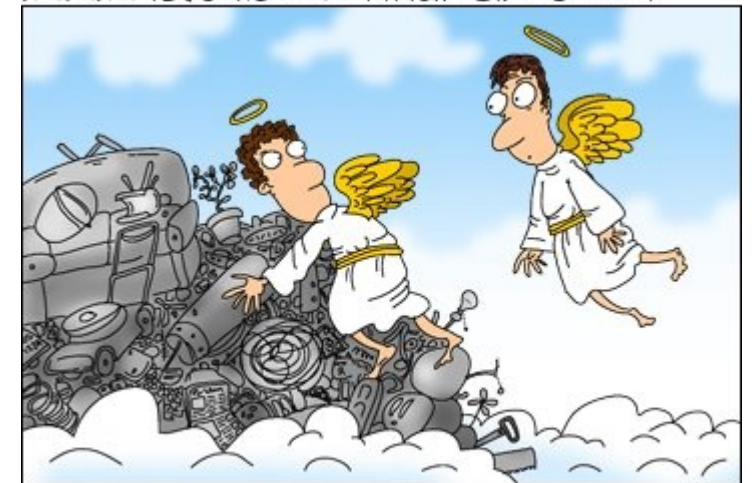
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Wednesday). Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, was a day when Christians made a special point of self-examination consulting with their spiritual Father on matters requiring repentance and amendment. The word “shrove” means to hear a person’s acknowledgement of sin and assure of forgiveness. The term survives in ordinary usage in the expression “short shrift” by which we mean: paying little attention to a person’s excuses or problems. The day was also for thrifty housewives to use up fat and dairy produce by making pancakes so preparing for the Lenten fast.

At Constantinople, on the other hand, Holy Week - together with the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday - was not regarded as part of the forty-day fast in the strict sense. At Vespers on Friday evening in the sixth week, immediately preceding the Saturday of Lazarus, the distinction between the forty days and Holy Week is very clearly marked in the existing text of the Triodion: Fasting did of course continue during Holy Week!

Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul, we beseech Thee in Thy love for man: grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion...

(Sticheron from Great Lent season)

Thus the forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks. So it is that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in Western Christendom, while commencing in the East two days earlier on Monday.

Fasting, neither above nor below your ability, will help you in your vigil. One should not ponder divine matters on a full stomach, say the ascetics. For the well-fed, even the most superficial secrets of the Trinity lie hidden. Christ Himself set the example with His long fast; when He drove out the devil He had fasted for forty days. Are we better than He? Behold angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11) they are waiting to minister to you too.

(Tito Colliander, Way of the Ascetics)

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up”

– James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Scott	Jon
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Matthew
Michelle N.	Mike	Hannah	Mike	Lubomyr
				Tom

Do you have prayer intentions? Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!



THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

by: Fr. James Guirguis



On this beautiful Sunday, just a day before we jump into the lovely waters of Great and Holy Lent, the Church as a wise mother gives us this reading which comes in fact from the Sermon on the Mount. These are precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ and they remind us that what is contained within the 4 gospels is more important than anything that has ever been written in history. In fact, these gospels are the very foundations of our society. Some might wonder why the gospel book on the table is wrapped in gold plated material. It is to remind us that what is contained within the 4 books of the holy gospels is nothing less than gold! In actuality it is so much more precious than gold. If I gave a man on the street the choice between a block of gold and the 4 books of the gospels there is little doubt that he would take the gold brick and run. But in actuality what is within the gospels can make us truly rich people. It can change lives and it can help to give us an inheritance that makes the gold brick look like a mere speck of dust in comparison.

The message given to us today in this most precious gospel is that before we begin our Lenten struggle to grow closer to Jesus Christ, and to His Father, we should first be reconciled to everyone else. Just like the wise builder we are forced by our Lord to ensure that the foundations of our repentance are built on rock solid ground. And how do we know that in fact our repentance is built on solid ground? We know it when we have forgiven everyone of everything wrong that they have ever done towards us. It might make some of us wonder and say “what does this have to do with our own repentance with God?” The short answer is “everything.” When someone comes to their senses and leaves their life of sin and darkness and comes to Christ, the first thing that they do is fall on their knees and beg God to forgive them of all their many sins. We come to God in a broken state and we have nothing to offer Him. Yet He is generous with us and offers us what is needed to make a new start, that is, His divine forgiveness. With this sense of forgiveness we begin again and we stand up straight, no longer bowed down with the extreme weight of our sins.

This Sunday is our reminder that we were once estranged from God and yet He accepted us back into His heart. If we have known this forgiveness the only logical outcome is that we will also pour out this kind of radical forgiveness on those who seek it from us. In fact the worst possible scenario is one in

which we continually remember the faults and wrongdoings of others even after they have asked or begged for our forgiveness. If we don't forgive them there can be little doubt that our prayers won't even be heard by God. And we actually say this every day when we recite the Lord's prayer “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.” That is a bold statement and we would do well not to pray it unless we believe it and practice it. St. Mark the ascetic says that “The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”

One cannot help but think about the state of our society and the way that it is quickly degenerating. This is a sign of our turn away from Christian teaching and from belief that God truly exists. One sign of this is that many people feel themselves to be victims. They believe that they have been wronged and they seek revenge or justice. Everyone is keeping score all the time. One is a victim of this “ism”, another is a victim of that “ism.” I wonder what would happen if we turned from keeping score of all the wrongdoing against us and started to practice radical forgiveness? We might not even think this is a possibility for us. I wonder what might happen if we decided that the story that defined our lives wasn't about victimhood but about our love for our enemies, both actual and perceived? That would be a radical departure from the current trends that lead to division and it would no doubt, set the world on fire with the love of God.

The Church is the society of God. So we as a group are the first to model the behavior that is taught to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so important to us that we will even come together tonight to truly ask forgiveness of one another. Let's not lose this opportunity. If anyone has done you wrong, forgive them quickly from the bottom of your heart. Whether the one who has sinned or upset you was your friend or your brother or sister, your son or daughter, your father or mother, forgive them all in a way that confirms without a shadow of a doubt, that you understand what Christ has done to forgive you. Let the beginning of this holy season be a time to ask forgiveness of others and to accept others requests for our forgiveness. This is what the love of Jesus Christ looks like. May this love also be ours. Glory be to God forever, AMEN.

BECAUSE YOU ASKED: WHY CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL DURING LENT?



The Liturgy of St. Basil is primarily celebrated during Lent because its longer and more penitential prayers are considered particularly appropriate for the season of reflection and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter, aligning with the theme of deep introspection and repentance associated with Lent; in the Orthodox tradition, the Liturgy of St. Basil is used on the five Sundays of Great Lent, along with a few other specific occasions throughout the year like Christmas Eve and the Eve of Theophany.

The key points about the Liturgy of St. Basil and Lent are the **longer prayers** and **penitential focus**. Compared to the standard Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil features more extended prayers, allowing for deeper contemplation and expression of penitence. The prayers within the Liturgy of St. Basil often emphasize themes of sin, forgiveness, and renewal, which resonate strongly with the Lenten season.