

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 19, 2012

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 26

Cheese-Fare Sunday (Tone 4)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour with Bake Sale

Question & Answer Period

6:30p.m. Vespers and Rite of Forgiveness –
First Lenten Service

PURE MONDAY/FEBRUARY 27

Beginning of the 40 Day Great Lent

7:00p.m. Compline and Canon of St. Andrew

TUESDAY/FEBRUARY 28

7:00p.m. Compline and Canon of St. Andrew

WEDNESDAY/FEBRUARY 29

7:00p.m. Compline and Canon of St. Andrew

THURSDAY/MARCH 1

7:00p.m. Compline and Canon of St. Andrew;
Confessions

FRIDAY/MARCH 2

6:30p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy with Canon to St.
Theodore and Blessing of Boiled Wheat

SATURDAY/MARCH 4

St. Theodore of Tyro & St. Raphael of Brooklyn

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Raphael; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/MARCH 5

First Sunday of Great Lent – “Triumph of Orthodoxy” (Tone 5)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

4:00p.m. Vespers at Holy Ghost Church, Manville

4:00p.m. Vespers at Ss. Peter & Paul Church,
Passaic

**End of the 1st and beginning of 2nd week of
the Great & Holy Fast**



ABOUT SAINT EPHREM'S PRAYER

The famous lenten prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian summarizes our entire struggle during the forty day fast – that of turning from vice to virtue, sin to holiness, and self-love to love of God and neighbor.

This powerful prayer is said every day of Great Lent, except on Saturdays and Sundays. It should be part of our morning and evening prayers, but may also be said at any other time throughout the day – especially in time of temptation.

THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. (*Prostration*)

But grant rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to thy servant. (*Prostration*)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. (*Prostration*)

O God, cleanse Thou me a sinner. (*12 times, with as many bows, and then again the whole prayer from the beginning to end, and after that one great prostration*)

Note: If one cannot make prostrations, then make bows, or simply the sign of the Cross.

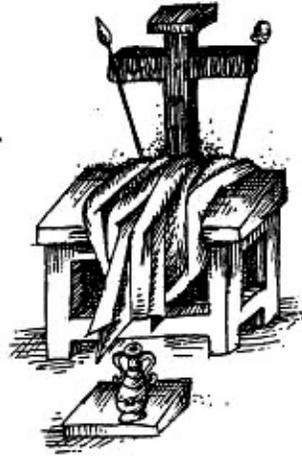
Offerings for the week of February 26

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina, in memory of Vaschen and Emilia.; in memory of Sandy and Joan.

Wine – for the health of Proto-deacon Paul (birthday).

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

Feb. 26, 1969 John Semoskovich
Feb. 28, 1983 Anna Cimpko
Feb. 28, 1992 John Lapchuk
Feb. 29, 1944 John Marchisin
Feb. 29, 1960 Fr. Jacob Grigorieff
Mar.01, 1962 Constantine Bobich
Mar.02, 1917 George Bekzar
Mar.02, 1919 Peter Palomar
Mar.02, 1994 Traiko Josiovich
Mar.02, 2005 Helen Rzeszowski
Mar.03, 1953 Xenia Kozich
Mar.03, 1961 Pauline Leich
Mar.03, 1962 Joseph Legedza
Mar.03, 1969 Fr. Theodore Labowsy
(rector 1962-1969)
Mar.03, 1970 Samuel Savastinuk



Coffee Hour Hosting

Coffee Hour Hosts are reminded that in the Great and Holy Lent we do not serve meat, dairy or fish.

Feb. 26 - Motoviloff, Torrisi, Kachek and Stone
(meat-fast on Feb. 26)

Mar. 04 - Combs, Mantzafos, Parsells, Sokol

Mar. 11 - Hunchar, Erkman and Turri

Ushers Schedule

Feb. 26 - E. Sarchisian & L. Khuzaurashvili

Mar .04 - T. Smith & P. Bakaletz

Mar .11 - T. Gorbatuk & J. Stone

Namesday Greetings – Many Years!

St. Daniel/Mar. 4: Daniel Torrisi;

Many Blessed Years!

Hosting of Deanery Clergy Meeting

Our parish will host a luncheon for the meeting of the New Jersey Deanery Clergy, with Bishop Michael on Monday, March 12th at 10:00a.m. Each month the clergy of our deanery (21 parishes) meets with our bishop to discuss pertinent matters.

Lenten Sunday Vespers

All Vespers Services are at 4:00p.m.

- 1st Sunday of Great Lent/Mar. 4
Holy Ghost church in Manville &
Ss. Peter & Paul Cathedral in Passaic
- 2nd Sunday of Great Lent/Mar.11
St. Gregory Church in Glen Gardner
(Bishop Michael present)
- 3rd Sunday of Great Lent/Mar. 18
Mother of God Church in Mays Landing
- 4th Sunday of Great Lent/Mar. 25
Annunciation Church in Brick
(Bishop Michael present)
- 5th Sunday of Great Lent/Apr. 1
Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Bayonne

Easter Candy Sale

Is presently underway. Catalogues are on the vestibule stand. **Sunday, March 4th is the deadline.**

Boiled Wheat Is Sought

Mar. 2nd/Friday – St. Theodore Commemoration at 6:30p.m.

Mar. 10th, 17th and 24th – Memorial Saturdays at 9:30a.m.

The church will supply cups, spoons and napkins. Please speak with Fr. James.

Pussy Willows Are Sought

Please deposit them in the lower hall. Thanks!

The Bulletin Board in the Lower Hall

On this board, you will find information on events, retreats, art exhibitions, local parish happenings, etc that do not make it into the Sunday Bulletin. Check it out when you are at Coffee Hour.

Incense Fragrances In Usage

Week of Feb. 26 – “Nazareth”

Week of Mar. 04 - “Hyssop”

Week of Mar. 11 - “Constantinople”

Your comments on fragrances is welcomed.

On Vestibule Stand – Please Take!

OCMC Lenten Mission Boxes

2012 Annual Parish Meeting Reports

2012 Parish Wall Calendars

Jacob’s Well (Diocesan Publication)

ARCHPASTORAL LETTER FOR THE GREAT FAST 2012

Beloved Concelebrants at the Holy Altar and Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

Christ is in our midst! – He is and ever shall be!

Abba Sisoës was one of the best loved and holiest of the Desert Fathers. When it came time for him to die, the brothers gathered around his bed. Some of them saw that his lips were moving. “Who are you talking to, Father?” they asked him. “See,” he replied, “the angels have come to take me, and I am asking them for more time – more time to repent.” His disciples said, “You have no need to repent.” But the old man said, “Truly, I am not sure whether I have even begun to repent.”

This story from the Egyptian desert emphasizes one of the many prominent themes of the Great Fast of Lent – that of repentance. We hear this word “repentance” often in the Church: “O Immortal King, accept the repentance of me, a sinner ...” “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2) ... and during Lent, “Open unto me, O Giver of life, the gates of repentance.”

What is repentance? Godly sorrow for the sins we have committed. This sorrow is not like the worldly sorrow that leads to guilt and despair. Rather, godly sorrow leads to repentance, and repentance to forgiveness, and forgiveness leads to salvation, and salvation establishes the kingdom of God – the rule of God, the reign of God in our hearts. Where there is no repentance, no godly sorrow for our sins, the kingdom of God will never come. For, we cannot have the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the evil one ruling in our heart at the same time.

But repentance is not merely a negative experience of battling against sin and evil. Also, and primarily, it is a positive progress toward God. Repentance is preparing your heart for God to enter – for God came to establish residence in our hearts. This is what Christ meant when He said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

So, although we so often think of repentance and confession as painful or shameful, indeed it is something positive, something life-saving, something soul-saving. That is how so many persons we read about in Scripture saw it and experienced it – first-hand. They saw it, and we too must see it, as a chance to start over from our mistakes as we can nowhere else in our lives. In the business world, for instance, if we fail to seal the deal, saying, “I’m sorry! Let me try again!” – it won’t work. In sports, the batter cannot say, “I didn’t mean to strike out. Can I start over, and try again?” This simply is not the way of the world.

But with God, we have that chance – through true repentance – to confess our sins, our sorrow, and start over. The stories from Scripture that we hear – beginning a few weeks ago, running into Holy Week and beyond – remind us of that. Zacchaeus, the dishonest tax collector, was allowed to start all over when He met Christ and confessed his sins. The unnamed publican praying in the temple was justified from a life of sin, with a confession of genuine repentance – the humble prayer, “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” The Prodigal Son made a U-turn from his life of sin and returned to his Father. In Holy Week, we will see how Peter cursed and denied his Master three times, and then wept tears of repentance. And on the cross, the thief will have the chance to repent, be forgiven and be with Our Lord in paradise. On the road to Damascus, Paul will be able to make a complete about-face, and

turn from persecutor to apostle. And who could forget King David, whose double sin of adultery and murder, became the occasion for the beautiful words of repentance in Psalm 50?

God gives us the chance to live life over again – a new direction, a new life, if we sincerely repent of our sins and turn to Him and His ways. But repentance is more than just feeling sorry for what we have done. It must be more – a genuine return to God; a complete about-face to His way of living. When the Prodigal Son repented, he didn't just sit there and feel sorry for his sins. He didn't stay where he was – among the swine. He got up and left; he changed the direction of his life. He said, "I will arise and go to my Father." And he did so promptly.

Saint Isaac the Syrian tells us, "This life has been given to you for repentance ... Do not waste it on other things." God gives us the chance to repent, to confess our sins, to start over ... a chance He did not give to the angels. They had one chance, one choice, one moment – that determined their eternity: heaven or hell. Thank God that He gives us the chance to repent, through the sacrament of confession, over and over and over again.

So often we think of repentance and confession in a negative way. We don't want to do it. Or we do it out of obligation, or with reluctance, or with indifference. But we should embrace it as our second chance – once again – with joy! We should thank God for the opportunity to start over again, a chance He did not give to angels ... the opportunity to begin anew, with the eternal effects of our mistakes erased, a chance the world would never give us.

Indeed we should embrace the mystery of repentance and confession with great joy and hope and love ... for the Father, Who "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but should have life everlasting" (John 3:16) ... this same loving Father awaits our repentance, our U-turn, our return to Him, just as He awaited the prodigal son when he said, "I have sinned ... I will arise and go to my Father." And when we, too, arise from the mire of our sins, and make that journey home to our Father, he will not say, "I told you so." He will not say, "What did you do with my inheritance?" Rather, He will proclaim, "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" (Luke 15:24).

"Repent – for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" This was the theme of Christ's first sermon and the message of all His preaching. Six centuries later, Saint John of the Ladder wrote: "We shall not be condemned at the end of our lives because we did not perform miracles. Nor because we failed to theologize ... or because we have failed to achieve the divine vision ... but because of one reason only: that we did not repent continuously." This is the kind of repentance with which Abba Sisoës, on his deathbed in the desert, inspires us.

As we begin this Lenten Season, the pilgrimage of prayer and fasting and almsgiving that leads to Holy Pascha, let us truly repent and make our confession – with joy! Let us turn back from self to God, from hatred to love, from sin to salvation, from hell to heaven, from death to life. Let us turn from self-service and self-concern, to serving the Lord and being concerned for His people. Let us turn from pride and smugness, complacency and self-appointed goodness; and instead, let us turn to dependence on God, on His grace, and on His power.

Our loving Father is waiting for us ... with the same embrace, the same ring, the same robe, the same banquet, as He lavished upon the returning prodigal. Let us, too, turn to Him now, following the words of our Saviour: "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" May this be the hallmark of our Lenten pilgrimage to Holy Pascha!

With my humble prayers, my archpastoral blessing, and my sincere love,

+ MICHAEL
Bishop of New York and the
Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Homily on "Fasting" -- Seven Questions, Seven Answers

His Grace, Michael -- Bishop of New York & the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Question #1: Why do we fast?

Answer: Just as the children of Israel ate the "bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3) in preparation for the Passover, so Christians prepare themselves for the celebration of Pascha by observing the fast of Great Lent. Moses fasted on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28), and Elijah on Mount Horeb (I Kings 19:8-12). But most importantly Our Lord fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:1-2) and we imitate His example.

Question #2: But, did Jesus really teach fasting?

Answer: Yes, He instructs us, "When the Bridegroom is taken away, My disciples will fast" (Matthew 9:15). And He presumes His followers will fast, in His Sermon on the Mount when He teaches, "When you fast ..." not if you fast. He goes on to say, "Anoint your head and wash your face so that you do not appear to be fasting before men ... your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." (Matthew 6:16-18).

Question #3: When did fasting on certain days originate?

Answer: As early as the first century, in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, we read: "He (Christ) commanded us to fast on Wednesday and Friday." The Saints explain, we fast "on Wednesday because on this day Our Lord was betrayed; and on Friday because on this day He suffered death for our salvation."

Question #4: What is the purpose of fasting?

Answer: Although fasting has many health benefits, the primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of our dependence on God. We voluntarily experience physical hunger in order to become aware of our true spiritual hunger. Another reason we fast is to subdue our passions and self-will. The Saints tell us there is no way we can control our urges for pleasure, money or power, if we cannot control our stomach. Fasting is the first step toward self-control. And our self-will is cut off by being obedient to the Church and her rules.

Question #5: Is fasting only a matter of diet?

Answer: No, it is moral as well as physical. True fasting is to be converted in heart and will; it is to return to God, to come home like the Prodigal Son to our Father's house. In the words of Saint John Chrysostom it means "abstinence not only from food but from sins." He says, "The fast should be kept not only by the mouth but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and the other members of the body." The eye must abstain from impure sights; the ear, from malicious gossip; the hands,

from acts of injustice. Saint Basil says “it is useless to fast from food and yet indulge in cruel criticism and slander: You do not eat meat but devour your brother.” And although we may return to eating meat and cheese after Pascha comes, we should of course strive NOT to return to the sins from which we struggled to abstain during the course of the Fast. We give up rich foods for Lent ... We should give up gossip and laziness and greed, forever.

Question #6: What is the inner significance of fasting?

Answer: The deepest meaning of fasting is best summed up in the triad: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Fasting is valueless if not combined with prayer. In the Gospel, Our Lord tells us that the devil is cast out by “prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21); and Acts of the Apostles records the early Christians “fasted and prayed” (Acts 13: 3). The Great Fast is certainly a time to improve our prayer life, both personally at home, and by our participation in Lenten services at church.

Question #7: And what about almsgiving?

Answer: Prayer and fasting should be accompanied by almsgiving – by love for others expressed in practical form. The second century Shepherd of Hermas insists that the money saved from abstaining from rich foods during the fast should be given to the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Lent is certainly the time to increase our works of mercy for “the least of His brethren,” for those who are in need.

So, as we begin Great Lent, let our hearts sing out this hymn of the Church:

Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat. Let us purify our soul and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion. Rejoicing in the virtues of the Spirit, may we persevere with love.

