

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God for all things!

March 6, 2011	Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
March 7	Monday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 8	Tuesday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 9	Wednesday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 10	Thursday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 11	Friday	Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
March 12	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
March 13	Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: The 42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia, including: Constantine, Aetius, Theophilus, Theodore, Melissenus, Callistus, Basoes, and others (845). Venerable Job (Joshua in Schema) of Solovki (1720). The uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by Empress Saint Helen (326). Monk-martyrs Conon and his son Conon of Iconium (270-275). Venerable Monk Arcadius, of Cyprus (361) and his Disciples Julian and Bulius. Translation of the relics (1230) of Martyr Abraham of Bulgaria (1229). Venerable Abbot Fridolin, enlightener of the Upper Rhine (538). Martyrs Cyriacus and Twelve Companions, who suffered under Diocletian in Augsburg (304). Translation of the relics of Saints Cyneswitha and Cyneburga, Abbesses of Caistor, and Saint Tibba, Nun, of Rynall. Monk-martyr Maximus. Martyr Euphrosynus. Martyrs Julian and Eubulus. Venerable Monk Hesychius the Wonderworker. Saint Baldred of Glasgow, Bishop (756). Saint Balthar, Priest-monk of Tinningham (756).

A Lenten sermon by +Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: © 16 March 1980

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. One by one the weeks of Lent pass, and having started this journey with enthusiasm, feeling in ourselves the strength to complete it, when we approach the end, and often long before the end, we begin to feel that we have achieved nothing of what we hoped to achieve. We hoped to fast strictly and honestly, we hoped to pray, we hoped to tear ourselves away from those things that have enslaved all our lives - our interests, our concerns - and then a moment comes when the end of the journey is in sight, and suddenly we realise that nothing, or practically nothing, has been achieved of what we'd hoped.

This is the moment when we may be attacked by the destructive spirit of despondency which undermines our last ounce of strength: how can I enter the days of the Passion? How can I encounter the glory and triumph of Christ's Resurrection? This is where we must evince both Christian wisdom and our trust in God. It is not by the fact that we strive and achieve some sort of result that we are saved; we are saved by our soul's longing which draws us towards the living God, by the love which draws us to Christ. And even when we fail (as, incidentally, in human relationships) we must not forget that just as the apostle Peter, after thrice denying Christ was able to answer Christ's threefold question, we can say "Lord, you know everything, you know my weakness, my lapses, my uncertainty, my inconstancy, but you also know that I love you, that that is the final deepest thing in me."

Then we can go farther, as Peter followed Christ, knowing that God believes in this love, that God believes us and believes in us. And we can go on with faltering steps, with uncertain tread, with ups and downs, if only our hearts do not break away from God; if only we carry on, so that one day, in a week or two, we may find ourselves face to face with the Lord's passion, with the manifestation of the love with which He loves us. To endure what He endured for our sakes can be done only through inexhaustible, bottomless love. And so if we cannot unite ourselves to Christ in a more mysterious way by communing to the way of the Cross through prayer, contemplation and ascetic effort, let us at least stand at the roadside, beside this way of the Cross and with the awe and tenderness of a shaken soul - or perhaps one incapable of awe and tenderness - look upon what it means to love as God is capable of loving us. And let us say to Him, if we cannot say anything else, "Thank you, Lord, that you love me, dead, stony, devoid of feeling, lifeless - love me so much that the day will come when for me also will sound the words spoken to Lazarus, then four days dead, "Lazarus, come forth from the grave."

One day each one of us will hear this, not at the end of time, not at the general resurrection, as Martha thought, but now, at some unexpected moment when the voice of God shall sound, and at once we shall come alive again, alive both in time and in eternity. And we can even approach Easter conscious that we have done nothing worthy of this meeting with the triumph of the Resurrection, have achieved nothing that would give us a right to this joy. As Saint John Chrysostom says in his Easter sermon: "Those who have fasted and those who have not, those who have worked and those who have been lazy, all of you come, for the Lord receives everyone equally; to some He repays a debt, to others He makes a gift of His love." It is not likely that He will be repaying a debt to us, because we have not worked, but the gift of love is offered to each of us. Therefore whatever mood we are in, however lazy we are, however little we have striven, let us go step by step during these last weeks towards that light, as a butterfly is drawn to it: yet not to be burned by it - but rather for ourselves to burn with the glow of the Resurrection, to shine with its light, to become like the Burning Bush which burned and was not consumed in the flame of God's being. Amen.

"On Fasting" Abridged from homilies by Saint John Chrysostom

Fasting is a medicine. But medicine, as beneficial as it is, becomes useless because of the inexperience of the user. He has to know the appropriate time that the medicine should be taken and the right amount of medicine and the condition of the body which is to take it, the weather conditions and the season of the year and the appropriate diet of the sick and many other things. If any of these things are overlooked, the medicine will do more harm than good. So, if one who is going to heal the body needs so much accuracy, when we care for the soul and are concerned about healing it from bad thoughts, it is necessary to examine and observe everything with every possible detail

Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins. Therefore, whoever limits the fast to the deprivation of food, he is the one who, in reality, abhors and ridicules the fast. Are you fasting? Show me your fast with your works. Which works? If you see someone who is poor, show him mercy. If you see an enemy, reconcile with him. If you see a friend who is becoming successful, do not be jealous of him! If you see a beautiful woman on the street, pass her by.

In other words, not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well. Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness. Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others. You are not eating meat, are you? You should not eat debauchery with your eyes as well. Let your hearing also fast. The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations.

Let the mouth fast from disgraceful and abusive words, because, what gain is there when, on the one hand we avoid eating chicken and fish and, on the other, we chew-up and consume our brothers? He who condemns and blasphemes is as if he has eaten brotherly meat, as if he has bitten into the flesh of his fellow man. It is because of this that Paul frightened us, saying: "If you chew up and consume one another be careful that you do not annihilate yourselves."

You did not thrust your teeth into the flesh (of your neighbor) but you thrust bad talk in his soul; you wounded it by spreading dis fame, causing unestimatable damage both to yourself, to him, and to many others. If you cannot go without eating all day because of an ailment of the body, beloved one, no logical man will be able to criticize you for that. Besides, we have a Lord who is meek and loving (philanthropic) and who does not ask for anything beyond our power. Because he neither requires the abstinence from foods, neither that the fast take place for the simple sake of fasting, neither is its aim that we remain with empty stomachs, but that we fast to offer our entire selves to the dedication of spiritual things, having distanced ourselves from secular things. If we regulated our life with a sober mind and directed all of our interest toward spiritual things, and if we ate as much as we needed to satisfy our necessary needs and offered our entire lives to good works, we would not have any need of the help rendered by the fast. But because human nature is indifferent and gives itself over mostly to comforts and gratifications, for this reason the philanthropic Lord, like a loving and caring father, devised the therapy of the fast for us, so that our gratifications would be completely stopped and that our worldly cares be transferred to spiritual works. So, if there are some who have gathered here and who are hindered by bodily ailments and cannot remain without food, I advise them to nullify the bodily ailment and not to deprive themselves from this spiritual teaching, but to care for it even more.

For there exist, there really exist, ways which are even more important than abstinence from food which can open the gates which lead to God with boldness. He, therefore, who eats and cannot fast, let him display richer almsgiving, let him pray more, let him have a more intense desire to hear divine words. In this, our somatic illness is not a hindrance. Let him become reconciled with his enemies, let him distance from his soul every resentment. If he wants to accomplish these things, then he has done the true fast, which is what the Lord asks of us more than anything else. It is for this reason that he asks us to abstain from food, in order to place the flesh in subjection to the fulfillment of his commandments, whereby curbing its impetuousness. But if we are not about to offer to ourselves the help rendered by the fast because of bodily illness and at the same time display greater indifference, we will see ourselves in an unusual exaggerated way. For if the fast does not help us when all the aforementioned accomplishments are missing so much is the case when we display greater indifference because we cannot even use the medicine of fasting. Since you have learned these things from us, I pardon you, those who can, fast and you yourselves increase your acuteness and praiseworthy desire as much as possible.

To the brothers, though, who cannot fast because of bodily illness, encourage them not to abandon this spiritual word, teaching them and passing on to them all the things we say here, showing them that he who eats and drinks with moderation is not unworthy to hear these things but he who is indifferent and slack. You should tell them the bold and daring saying that "he who eats for the glory of the Lord eats and he who does not eat for the glory of the Lord does not eat and pleases God." For he who fasts pleases God because he has the strength to endure the fatigue of the fast and he that eats also pleases God because nothing of this sort can harm the salvation of his soul, as long as he does not want it to. Because our philanthropic God showed us so many ways by which we can, if we desire, take part in God's power that it is impossible to mention them all.

We have said enough about those who are missing, being that we want to eliminate them from the excuse of shame. For they should not be ashamed because food does not bring on shame but the act of some wrongdoing. Sin is a great shame. If we commit it not only should we feel ashamed but we should cover ourselves exactly the same way those who are wounded do. Even then we should not forsake ourselves but rush to confession and thanksgiving. We have such a Lord who asks nothing of us but to confess our sins, after the commitment of a sin which was due to our indifference, and to stop at that point and not to fall into the same one again. If we eat with moderation we should never be ashamed, because the Creator gave us such a body which cannot be supported in any other way except by receiving food. Let us only stop excessive food because that attributes a great deal to the health and well-being of the body.

Let us therefore in every way cast off every destructive madness so that we may gain the goods which have been promised to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lenten Homily by Father John Parker

Your pantries are full; empty them to the hungry.
The belly enslaves us, let no one be dominated thereby.
Enter all of you into the Great Fast;
Stripped of heavenly wealth by sin, all draw near to God's rich loving-kindness!
Let no one despair in his sinfulness,
For the Bridegroom comes at midnight.
Weep all of you for your iniquities,
And draw near to the life-giving Cross of our Lord.
Let no one put confidence in the flesh,
For the Devil has deceived us all thereby, and therewith enslaves us to sin.

By turning from God, we are made captives.
We have called good evil and evil good, and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.
And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry:
Woe to those who put darkness for light, and light for darkness!

We are embittered, for we are banned from Eden.
We are embittered, but it is we who have mocked God.
We are embittered, for now we shall surely die.
We are embittered, for we have succumbed to the serpent.
We are embittered, for we are fettered in chains.
We partook of a fruit, and met the deceiver.
We were entrusted with paradise, but we chose Hell.
Our eyes were opened to see the nakedness of sin.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver us!
O Lord, make haste to help us!

This is the acceptable time, let us repent!
This is the day of salvation, let us crucify the passions!
The end is at hand and destruction hangs over us!
The end draws nigh, let us come again to our senses!
The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, what first-fruit shall we offer?
Let us delay not, lest we remain dead in the grave, sold under sin!
For God desires not the death of the sinner, but that he should turn from his wickedness and live!
So, let us choose life, and live, for the mercy of God endures forever!
To Him be glory and dominion
Unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE GREAT FAST begins tomorrow

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Herkimer, New York.

Glorify to Jesus Christ!

I'm sure you know that the Great Fast begins tomorrow. I'm sure you know how we fast – abstaining from all meat, cheese, milk and eggs. I'm fairly sure you know that it's not enough to fast according to the letter of the Law, and that the Fast is based on Biblical precepts – Prayer and Fasting being the way Our Lord taught us for defeating and casting out devils. The Church helps us to Pray during Great Lent by providing the prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, the Presanctified Liturgies and Akathist Services and Saturday Liturgies for the Commemoration of the Departed. We encourage ourselves by this effort to increase our prayer life at home. We fast in order to discipline ourselves, and the food we don't eat, we give to those who are needy. We fast by not 'eating' each other spiritually. We add Repentance to our spiritual discipline and we prepare for Confession, studying the depths of our souls and confessing our sins and deficiencies. And having turned away from wickedness, we exercise our newly cleansed hearts by doing good for others. Perhaps our alms may not be financial or physical, but are supportive of others in some other way – visiting the sick and shut ins, the elderly, the hospitalized, something we may not have done the rest of the year. And we avoid any and all excess, turning off the television, not going to the movies, staying off the internet, avoiding 'entertainment' in favor of getting serious about God and our selves, and avoiding all luxuries – and keeping silence so that we may be prepared to hear God when He speaks to us.

I'm sure that you know all this, having heard it at least once before. But what are you doing to fulfill it?

In view of our fasting and alms, you should know that at the Rectory here in Herkimer, we receive at least two phone calls per week from people who have no food or money and Father has to say, 'sorry, we don't have a food pantry.' Because the need of those starving people is so great and so basic, feeding the hungry is one way we can do something useful in our fasting. There are five food pantries in Herkimer, three in Little Falls, one in Ilion – we posted their info on the bulletin boards. We ought to be making regular donations of food or cash or elbow grease in support of these efforts. In the past our parish was a collection spot for canned goods and dried foods, or your financial donations – why did it stop?

It is most important for us Orthodox Christians to make Lent real for ourselves. Our Lord teaches us that the two most important commandments are **TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND STRENGTH AND SOUL AND MIND** and **TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE**

YOURSELF. Our Lord commands us to **FEED THE HUNGRY, GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY, CLOTHE THE NAKED AND VISIT THOSE SICK AND IN PRISONS.**

Feeding the hungry is first on the list. It is the easiest to do, it doesn't require great intelligence. But too often it's something we don't do. These commands of Our Lord are not suggestions or options. They are orders given to us directly and we need to respond **NOW**, especially during the Great Fast. As a Parish, this is something that we can, should and **MUST** do.

I pray that this Lent is a blessing for you, helping you to increase the measure of love that God has given you, to mature in the faith and give peace to your soul, as well as being a blessing to all you encounter.

In Christ's Name, Father John, Rector

REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

For as long as you are on earth, consider yourself a guest in the Household of Christ. If you are at the table, it is He who treats you. If you breathe air, it is His air you breathe. If you bathe, it is in His water you are bathing. If you are traveling, it is over His land that you are traveling. If you are amassing goods, it is His goods you are amassing. If you are squandering, it is His goods that you are squandering. If you are powerful, it is by His permission that you are strong. If you are in the company of men, you and the others are His guests. If you are out in nature, you are in His garden. If you are alone, He is present. If you set out or turn anywhere, He sees you. If you do anything, He remembers. He is the most considerate Householder by Whom you were ever hosted. Be careful then toward Him. In a good household, the guest is required to behave. These are all simple words but they convey to you a great truth. All the saints knew this truth and they governed their lives by it. That is why the Eternal Householder rewarded them with eternal life in heaven and glory on earth.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of daughter Adria were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Ed and Paula Redmon.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of daughter cousin Greg Udics and Father Senan Taylor were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Tatiana Keblish and Michael Steciak were offered today at Liturgy and Parastas at the request of family.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Metropolitan VLADIMIR (Nagosky) and newly-departed Priest David Shank were offered today at Liturgy and Parastas at the request of Father John Udics.

+Please remember in your prayers: newly-departed Priest David, Rachel, Michael, Jadwiga, Michael.

Please remember in your prayers: Susan, Ada, Don, Rea, Daniel, Aaron, Archpriest Jason, Priest Sergius, Dan, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Helen, Anna, Thomas, Archpriest Vincent, Mother Raphaela, John, Catherine, Ron, Albert, Michael, Gregory, Emma, Cathy, John, Mykola, Wayne, Nina, Dan, Isaiah, Robert, Robert, Kevin, Andrew, David, Warren, Michael, Archimandrite Athanasy, Archimandrite Isidore, Archimandrite Pachomy.

REMINDERS FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

- **Please make your lists for Soul Saturday commemorations** and give them to Father as soon as possible!
- **A S A P :** The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA sponsors a Mission Trip for College Students, August 4-20, 2011, supervised personally by Bishop Daniel. The Trip to 'special needs' orphanages in Znamyanka and Puhachiv, Ukraine: \$2500. For information or to apply online – www.uocyouth.org or contact Father John.
- **April 1 and 2: 2011 Lenten Youth Retreat** entitled "*Baptized into Christ: Galatians 3:2 and Romans 6:3*" sponsored by the Diocese of New York and New Jersey at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, Wayne NJ. *Ages: 7th-12th Grades.* Contact Father John for the forms necessary for participation in this year's event: Permission Slip/Release, Participants Agreement, Directions and Packing List. Retreat participants must fill out the Permission Slip/Release and the Participants Agreement. All those forms and your check must be received by March 26th.

The cost for the weekend retreat is \$35 per student. This amount covers all costs associated with the retreat. Retreat participants are required to check-in at 6:30 PM on Friday, April 1st. Pizza dinner will be served Friday evening at 7:30 PM. Parents are invited to conclude the retreat experience with their child by participating in 5:00 PM Vespers at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Wayne, NJ on Saturday evening. Pick-up is *Saturday, April 2nd at 6:00 PM.*

No one will be turned away due to cost. If you find the cost to be prohibitive, simply pay the amount that you find manageable no questions asked. This information will be kept confidential. Finally, Orthodox and non-Orthodox students are encouraged to attend. This is a great opportunity for Orthodox young people to invite a non-Orthodox friend. If you have questions, please phone (718) 767-7292 or e-mail josephwoodill@yahoo.com

A word from Saint Silouan the Athonite. Love does not depend on time, and the power of love continues always. There are some who believe that the Lord suffered death for love of man but because they do not attain to this love in their own souls it seems to them that it is an old story of bygone days. But when the soul knows the love of God by the Holy Spirit she feels without a shadow of doubt that the Lord is our Father, the closest, the best and dearest of fathers, and there is no greater happiness than to love God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all our minds, according to the Lord's commandment, and our neighbor as ourself. And when this love is in the soul, everything rejoices her; but when it is lost sight of man cannot find peace, and is troubled, and blames others as if they had done him an injury, and does not realize that he himself is at fault – he has lost his love for God and has accused or conceived a hatred for his brother.

Grace proceeds from brotherly love, and by brotherly love grace is preserved; but if we do not love our brother the grace of God will not come into our souls.