

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Have Mercy on Me, O God, Have Mercy on Me.

March 2, 2014	Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise [Cheesefare]	Liturgy	9:30 am
March 3	Monday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 4	Tuesday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 5	Wednesday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 6	Thursday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
March 7	Friday	Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
March 8	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
March 9	Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia (315). Saint Arsenius, Bishop of Tver (1409). Virgin-martyr Euthalia of Sicily (257). Martyr Troadius of Neo-Caesarea (3 c.). Venerable Monk Agatho of Egypt, (5 c.). 440 Martyrs slain by the Lombards (579). Venerable Monk Sabbatius of Tver (1434), and his Disciple Saint Euphrosynus (1460). Saints Barsanuphius (1459) and Sabbas (1467), Abbots, of Tver. Saint Chad, Bishop of Lichtfield, England (672). Righteous Father Nicholas Planas (1932). Saint Quintus of Phrygia, Confessor and Wonderworker (283). Martyr Andronicus and the Virgin Athanasia. Hieromartyrs Bishop Nestor and Deacon Tribimius of Perga in Pamphylia (250). Martyr Hesychius the Palatine of Antioch (304). New Martyr Theodore Sladich of Komogovina (1788). Saint Joachim (Papoulakis) of Vatopedi, Mount Athos and Ithaca (1868). Saint Slebhene (Slebhine), Abbot (767). Saint Cynibild (7 c). Saint Fergna the White, Abbot (637). Saint Joavan of Leon, Bishop (576). Saint Willeic, Prior (726).

Please remember in your prayers: Abducted nuns and orphans of Saint Tekla Monastery in Syria, Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Bohdan, Sergius, Jacobus, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil, Leonid. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Vincent, Archpriest Leonid, Diane, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of newly-consecrated Bishop DAVID of Sitka and Alaska were offered at Liturgy and Moleben were offered February 23, at the request of Father John Udics.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Mitred Archpriest Mark Shinn, David Albrecht, Priest Senan Taylor, Greg Udics, David Kessler and Joyce Strunk were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Metropolitan VLADIMIR of Tokyo were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Andrew Homyk were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

ARCHPASTORAL LETTER FOR THE GREAT FAST 2014

Dearly Beloved Members of our Diocesan Family:

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

As we begin the Lenten journey of the Great Fast this year, I am mindful of a question often asked of us by non-Orthodox -- "Why do you fast in Lent?" -- and a question often asked by our own fellow Orthodox Christians -- "Why do we have to fast during Great Lent?"

The answers to both questions, of course, can be found in the pages of the Holy Scripture within the deposit of Holy Tradition.

Just as the children of Israel ate the "bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3) in preparation for the Passover, so we Christians prepare ourselves for the celebration of Holy Pascha by observing the fast of Great Lent. The Bible records that Moses fasted on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28), and Elijah fasted 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.

Christ Himself instructs us, "When the Bridegroom is taken away, My disciples will fast" (Matthew 9:15). And, He presumes that His followers will fast when He teaches, in His Sermon on the Mount, "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 ... for your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:16-18).

As early as the first century, the Church set aside certain days on which she prescribed fasting to be observed. In the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (ca. 60 A.D.), we read: “He (Christ) commanded us to fast on Wednesday and Friday.” And, as 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.” Early on, the 40-day Fast of Lent was likewise observed in imitation of Our Lord’s time of prayer and fasting in the wilderness.

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 that 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, as our self-will is cut off by being obedient to the Church and her rules. in imitation of Our Lord’s time of prayer and fasting in the wilderness.

Fasting is not only physical; it is also moral. 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 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 have 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.

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 only by “prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21); and the Acts of the Apostles records that 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 our parish church.

Prayer and fasting should be accompanied by almsgiving -- by love for others expressed in practical forms. 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 this year, let our hearts sing out this hymn of our Holy 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.”

May God richly bless your journey through the holy season of Lent; and may He make us all worthy to celebrate His Resurrection together in radiance and joy.

With my prayers, my blessing and my love,

+ M I C H A E L

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

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

On Monday, 24 February, a news item on the Diocesan website reminded everyone of the two most-relevant **videos** by His Grace, our Bishop MICHAEL in light of the upcoming season: “**Great Lent ~ Our Spiritual Life**” and “**Fasting ~ 7 Questions & 7 Answers.**” These videos, part of the “Lessons in Our Faith” series, are very well-received! The installment on “Fasting” is rapidly approaching 3,000 viewings on-line. Each video is brief (8-12 minutes) and offers clear and concise teaching and guidance. The videos are available here: http://nynjoca.org/lessons_in_our_faith.html

The **2014 DDB** (Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors) initiative has been launched and the early response is very encouraging as we strive to provide much-needed financial support to vital diocesan ministries! A convenient printable DDB brochure is now available and offers a vehicle for contributors to join the DDB. It may be easily duplicated and distributed in our parishes. It is also easy for contributors to make on-line contributions. You will find all of this, and other important information, on the dedicated webpage: http://nynjoca.org/vision_for_future_2012.html

The **Commission on Mission and Evangelism [CoME]** will conduct two **Parish Team Training** sessions in Manville NJ and East Meadow NY (**22 February & 1 March**) for parishes to learn more, and do more, in the area of parish health, growth and revitalization. The tools, resources and processes used are known as Orthodox Natural Church Development. Parishes need to assemble a team of 5-6 to participate. See “news” and “upcoming events” on the diocesan website for details.