This month's Newsletter is in memory of the Prawlocki, Gromadzky, Jovorosky and Stehnach Families and for the health of the Buttino and Prawlocki Families, donated by Sonia Buttino

Parish Contact Information
Rector: Archpriest John Udics: (315) 866-3272 – john.udics@gmail.com
Deacon Mark Bohush – markabohush@aol.com
Council President and Cemetery Director: John Ciko: (315) 866-5825 – SCiko@twcny.rr.com
Council Secretary: Subdeacon Demetrios Richards (315) 865-5382 – dwr00nhr@twcny.rr.com
Sisterhood President: Rebecca Hawranick: (315) 822-6517 – rebeccahawranick@yahoo.com

Birthdays in January
10 – Elaine Lyszczarz
11 – Olga Prawlocki
11 – Alexandra Gale
13 – David Keblish
13 – Virginia Shaftic
13 – Charlotte Gale
15 – Stanley Danielak
18 – Anna Clark
22 – Cindy Sue Sobolowski
23 – Nicholas Keblish Jr
24 – Louisa Gale
24 – Randy Hula
24 – Nellie Hrynda
24 – Dale Richards

Memory Eternal
1 - Charles Pysz (1977)
3 - Anna Ostasz (2002)
6 - Steve E Yaworski (2003)
7 - Tekla Anthony (1970)
7 - Despo Jeffries (1978)
11 - Elizabeth Spytko (1996)
13 - Andrew Hrobuchak (1994)
14 - Nicholas Kravec Sr (2007)
14 - Martha Steciak (2008)
17 - Walter Jovorosky Sr.
18 - John Burdick (1978)
19 - Mary Nichols (2007)
20 - Stephanie Eskoff (2000)
21 - John Kravec (1975)
22 - Emelia Mildred Mamrosch (1989)
22 - Steven Hrynda (1999)
23 - Philip Homyack (1976)
24 - Tekla Leve (2009)
25 - Steven Slenska (1996)
25 - Dorothy Coley
25 - Peter Mezick
25 - Sarah Eskoff
25 - Stella Eskoff
26 - Timofei Fedorenko (1981)
27 - Chester Ptasznik (1998)
27 - Mary Sterzin (2009)
29 - Anna Marochko (1986)
30 - Peter Bawolak (1979)
31 - Tillie Leve

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY
January 6     Nancy and Dale Richards
January 13
January 20
January 27
February 3
February 10
February 17
February 24
174. Who were the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees?

The scribes of Old Testament times originally were simply those men who knew how to write: secretaries, bookkeepers. Their duties were to keep records, to copy documents and decrees, and so on. In Jeremiah 36:26, the term is applied to the official who had charge of legal documents (deeds, for example) and who had a special room in the royal palace. In II Kings 22:3, the Scribe was the equivalent of a minister of finance, and another in Isaiah 36:3, was Secretary of State. So, in the time before the exile, scribes held a secular office with no particular religious significance attached to it.

However, there was another class among whom the art of writing was cultivated, though the term “scribe” was not applied to them before the Exile in Babylon. That was the priestly class, the first specialists and guardians of the Law. After the return from Exile, they showed themselves to be the ancestors of those who were called “teachers of the Law.”

During the Exile, the Law became the center of Jewish life and exiled Hebrews occupied themselves with study of the Law. These were the “wise men,” the “men of understanding”, the “just men” of Proverbs, Daniel, and Ecclesiasticus. These were the men who were responsible for the fixing of the canon of scripture. They not only were copyists, editors and guardians of the textual purity of the Law, but they came to be its protectors, students, teachers and interpreters, as well.

About the time of Ezra the Scribe (480–440 BC) the scribe came to be a distinct professional class of teachers and interpreters of the Law. Ezra is described as a “scribe skilled in the Law of Moses” (Ezra 7.6), and one who “had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel” (7.10).

The classic explanation of the scribe is given in Ecclesiasticus 38: 24-39:15.

He will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom and give thanks to the Lord in prayer. He will direct his counsel and knowledge aright, and meditate on His secrets. He will reveal instruction in his teaching, and will glory in the law of the Lord’s covenant. Many will praise his understanding, and it will never be blotted out; his memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations. Nations will declare his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise; if he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a thousand, and if he goes to rest, it is enough for him.


Like Ezra, the scribes of the restoration were drawn from the families of the priests and Levites, forming themselves into a guild or caste. According to rabbinic tradition, the period following the restoration was characterized by the rule of the men of the Great Synagogue. The identity of these legendary figures cannot be certain, but it seems likely that they were scribes or leaders of the people drawn from among the scribes. At the time of the Seleucid Hellenizing of Israel (312 – 63 BC), it was a “synagogue of the scribes” who provided the religious backbone of the movement of popular resistance which ended in the Maccabean Revolt (I Macc 7:11-17). They belonged to the Hasidim, “the pious” or “the loyalists” for the law; and they formed the spearhead of the Hasidean movement.
It was sometime early in the Greek period that an influential group of lay scribes succeeded in forming a popular, democratic political party, consisting of themselves at its head, with adherents and partisans from the people; they came to be known as the Pharisees. The history of the scribes, or at least, of the most influential section of them, the Pharisaic scribes, comes from now on to be the history of the Pharisaic party.

The references to the Scribes in the New Testament are usually in connection with another group. “Scribes and the Pharisees” is one such phrase. The scribes are often associated with the Chief Priests and Elders. This clearly implies that there were scribes who were not Pharisees, that there were Pharisees who were not scribes, and that in the Sanhedrin, the rulers of the people (consisting of the Chief priests, scribes and elders), some of the scribes were members of the Pharisee party. Some scholars claim that the Sanhedrin’s Chief Priests were all members of the Sadducee party, that most of the scribes were Pharisees, but that there was a large minority of Sadducee adherents among the scribes.

The main business of the scribes was teaching and interpreting the Law. This consisted mainly in the transmission of traditional legal judgments, “halachah”, distinguished from “haggadah” edifying religious discourse. The scribes’ real interest - and this applied especially to the Pharisaic scribes - was less in the plain meaning of the text than in the preservation of the legal system built upon it.

Their authority, but not their example, is recognized at Matthew 23.2-3. There are, however, also more spiritually minded scribes in the Gospels (Matthew 8.19 = Luke 9.57), and the gospel portrait of the scribes, as well as Pharisees, requires to some extent to be corrected. It was to their faithful transmission of the religion of Israel in the Greek and Roman periods that we owe the preservation of our Old Testament scriptures, together with the foundations in Judaism of the Christian religion.

The ‘Perushin’ or ‘separated ones’ in Hebrew, were a Jewish religious party. The Greek form of the name is ‘Farisaioi’.

Josephus (Antiq. XIII v.9) records the existence of the Pharisees as a distinct group in the time of Jonathan Maccabaeus, c. 145 BC, though some scholars say that the term is here applied retrospectively. They opposed John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BC) for religious reasons and instigated a revolt against Alexander Janaeus (103-76 BC), but they were favored by Alexander’s widow, Alexandra (76-67 BC). They refused to swear allegiance to Herod on one occasion, but were respected by him. Unlike the Sadducees, who tried to apply the Mosaic Law precisely as it was given, the Pharisees allowed some interpretation of it to make it more applicable to different situations, and they regarded these oral interpretations as of the same level of importance as the Law itself. They exerted their influence through the development of education, and fostered synagogue worship. They gradually secured a large following among the common people, who admitted their austerity and shared their hatred of the pagan rulers and the sacerdotal caste.

In the Gospels, the Pharisees appear as the chief opponents of the Lord. They attacked Him e.g. for forgiving sins, for breaking the Sabbath, and for consorting with sinners. Christ repeatedly denounced their purely external observance of the Law, their multitude of formalistic precepts which even they themselves could not keep, and their self-righteousness. During the Passion, they remained in the background, and their place was taken by the Sadducees. After the Resurrection, they appear less hostile to the nascent Church than the Sadducees; they share its belief in the resurrection and retribution in the next world, in angels, in human freedom and Divine Providence, and it was a Pharisee, Gamaliel, who publicly defended the Apostles before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5.34-40).

After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Pharisees disappear from history, but their influence survived in the teachings of the Rabbis and the Mishnah (the collection of oral laws forming the basic
part of the Talmud which is the body of Jewish traditional ceremonial and civil law). Several modern scholars have questioned whether the Pharisees depicted in the Gospels were representative of the Party as a whole.

The Sadducees were a Jewish politico-religious sect, opposed to the Pharisees. The name is probably derived from the high priest Zadok (2 Sam 8.17). The party originated at the time of the Hasmonaeans (167 – 37 BC) and stood for the interests of the priestly aristocracy and the rich. Though never popular, they exercised a great political influence from the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-104 BC) onwards, and in the time of Christ, they were of particular importance in Jerusalem and in the Temple. Little can be recovered of their beliefs, but they rejected the oral tradition of interpretation as developed among the Pharisees and accepted the written Law only. Thus they rejected belief in retribution in an afterlife and in the resurrection of the body, and also the existence of angels and spirits. In the New Testament they appear to have taken a leading part against Jesus, perhaps because they feared trouble with the Roman power, and in any case because they opposed His doctrines. They also repeatedly attacked the Apostles for teaching the Resurrection of Christ. After the fall of Jerusalem, they too seem to disappear from history.

It may be true that the Pharisees and Sadducees have disappeared from history, but their thinking and behavior have not vanished. The legacy of the scribes and Hasidim continues today, not only in Judaism, but in the Christian Church, as well. Don’t we know teachers who can swallow elephants but who have difficulty getting down a bean, teachers who would enforce the law to the letter, but who don’t worry about creating schisms, teachers who complain about others living in difficult times, and disapproving of how they solve their problems in impossible conditions, but who don’t notice the beam (their own moral history) in their eyes...?

See The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible and The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.

176. First I heard that priestly vestments were the street clothes of the Romans of the age. Now someone tells me they’re a development of the garments of the Hebrew priesthood. What’s the story?

Vestments in the Old Testament are simple. The 28th and 29th chapters of the Book of Exodus describe in detail the ritual clothing worn by priests in the ancient temple. The robes consist of a breastplate (hoshen), an ephod, a robe (me’il), a tunic (ketonet), a cap (mitznefet), and a sash (avnet), as well as stones worn in various configurations.

In the New Testament. Our Lord taught the crowds and his disciples about hypocrites: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them….. (in Matthew 23.1-6, 12), and "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries* wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues;…those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

*boxes containing verses of Holy Scripture worn on the forehead and arm. The Pharisees tried to show off by making the boxes bigger than necessary. The Jewish people were also taught to wear tassels on the four corners of their robes to show their love for God.

This passage concerns hypocrisy and not priestly vestments. In fact, it concerns what we call street clothes.

The Fathers of the Church say little about vestments.
In the Orthodox Church, any member of the clergy, of whatever rank, will be vested when serving his particular function during the Divine Liturgy or other service. In addition to these functions, most vestments carry a symbolic meaning as well. These symbolic meanings are often indicated by the prayer that the priest says as he clothes himself in each item. These prayers are verses taken directly from the Old Testament, usually the Psalms.

For example, the prayer for the Sticharion is from Isaiah 61:10: My soul will rejoice in the Lord, for he has clothed me with a garment of salvation and wrapped me in a robe of gladness; he has placed a crown on my head as on a bridegroom, and adorned me with beauty as a bride. [2]

Sticharion (Greek στιχάριον): Actually a form of the garment worn at baptism, this is the one vestment worn by all clergy. It is also used by non-ordained persons carrying out a liturgical function, such as altar servers. For priests and bishops, it is made of lightweight material, usually white. It corresponds most closely with the Western alb (see above).

Orarion (Greek οράριον): A long narrow strip of cloth worn by deacons over the left shoulder and reaching to the ankle in both front and back. It is also worn by subdeacons and, in some places of the Greek tradition, by tonsured altar servers. It corresponds to the Western stole.

Epitrachelion (Greek ἐπιτραχήλιον, "over the neck"): This stole is worn by priests and bishops as the symbol of their priesthood. It is worn around the neck with the two adjacent sides sewn or buttoned together, leaving enough space through which to place the head. It corresponds to the Western stole.

Epimanikia (Greek ἐπιμανίκια): Cuffs bound with laces. The deacon wears them beneath the sticharion, priests and bishops above. They are not used by any lower rank.

Zone (Greek ζώνη): Cloth belt worn by priests and bishops over the epitrachelion. Corresponds to the Western cincture.

Phelonion (Greek φαιλόνιον or φελόνιον): Large conical sleeveless garment worn by priests over all other vestments, with the front largely cut away to free the hands. Early Byzantine rite Bishops may also wear the phelonion when not serving according to hierarchical rubrics. Corresponds to the Western chasuble.

Sakkos (Greek σάκκος): Instead of the phelonion, the bishop usually wears the sakkos or Imperial dalmatic. This is a tunic reaching below the knees with wide sleeves and a distinctive pattern of trim. It is always buttoned up the sides.

Nabedrennik (Slavonic набедренникъ): A square or rectangular cloth suspended on the right side by two adjacent corners from a strap drawn over the left shoulder. This is a relatively recent Russian invention and is not used in the Greek tradition. It is an award, so it is not worn by all priests. Bishops do not use it.

Epigonation/Palitsa (Greek ἐπιγονάτιον "over the knee"; Slavonic палица, "club"): A stiff diamond-shaped cloth that hangs on the right side of the body; it is suspended by one corner from a strap drawn over the left shoulder. It is worn by all bishops and as an award for priests.

Omophorion (Greek ωμοφόριον): This is the distinctive episcopal vestment, a wide cloth band draped about the shoulders in a characteristic manner. It corresponds to the Western pallium.

Mitre (Greek Μίτρα): The Byzantine Orthodox mitre is modeled on the ancient Byzantine imperial crown; it is worn by all bishops and in some Slavic traditions also awarded to some high-ranking priests. The bishop's mitre is surmounted by a cross, but the priest's is not; both are bulbous and adorned with icons. Coptic Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox bishops also wear the Byzantine mitre. Armenian Orthodox, on the other hand, have the Byzantine mitre as part of the normal vestments worn by priests of all ranks, and their bishops are distinguished by wearing mitres after the western shape.
Mitres are not worn in the Syriac Orthodox tradition, where a decorated hood like an amice called *masnaphto*, meaning 'turban', is worn instead by prelates.

Pectoral cross: A large cross is worn around the neck by all bishops, but not necessarily by all priests. In Russian usage, the style of Pectoral cross worn indicates the rank of the priest.

Engolpion/Panagia: *Engolpion* (Greek ἐγκόλπιον) is a general term for something worn upon the bosom; here, it refers to a medallion with an icon in the center. A *Panagia* (Greek Παναγία, *All-holy*, one of the titles of the Theotokos) is an engolpion with the Virgin Mary as the subject of the icon; this is worn by all bishops. All primates and some bishops below primatial rank have the dignity of a second engolpion, which usually depicts Christ.

Mantle (Greek μανδύας): This is a sleeveless cape that fastens at the neck and the feet, worn by all monks. The usual monastic mantle is black; that worn by the bishop as he enters the church for a service but before he is vested is more elaborately colored and decorated. This is, strictly speaking, an item of street wear, not a vestment; however, in modern usage it is worn only in church.

177. In the Jerusalem translation of the Bible, they print the name of God, but not in other versions of the Bible. I was in an Orthodox Church where they used the Jerusalem version, and when the reader read the name of God, my priest said he was shocked. Why don’t we Christians read the name of God, but instead say God, or The Lord, as the Jews do?

As you know, when Jews read scripture and encounter the four letters JHWH or YHVH which represent the name of God, Jews simply pronounce ‘God,’ instead of naming Him. In Hebrew, vowels are not usually written, so the name of God, called the Tetragrammaton, which means ‘four letters’ in Greek, is spelled YHVH or JHWH. The reason for this is that the name of God is considered too holy to be uttered by anyone, and it was only pronounced by the High Priest inside the Holy of Holies (the Altar) once a year. Even the angels in heaven don’t address God by name, but sing the hymn ‘Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Hosts.’

In most translations of Holy Scripture into English, the Tetragrammaton is usually rendered by printing “the LORD” in capital letters.

Another reason for not pronouncing aloud the Name of God is that in Jewish thought, being able to name something means that you have power over it. To know and use the Name of God would mean having power over God, which is inconceivable for humans.

Some modern theologians are of the opinion that since the incarnation of Jesus, there’s no longer any reason why Christians shouldn’t pronounce the name of God. But it still makes us very uncomfortable even to think about doing it! We know the name of God’s Son, Jesus, who became a man, like us, and so it’s proper to say His name, and we know that the Holy Spirit, as a spirit, has no name, and though we know the name of God the Father, perhaps we ought to respect this ancient tradition.

The reason we can say that in this case the tradition of not printing or reading the name of God is more important than historically accurate translation of scripture (where God’s name is printed, so it ought to be printed in translation) is that Bibles printed for us Orthodox Christians in Slavonic or Ukrainian or Greek or other ancient translations, never print the name of God, but only write ‘God’ and, ‘the Lord.’ If, for centuries and centuries, the Orthodox Church did not print the name of God the Lord, and never pronounced the name of God aloud, then why do we, in the 20th Century, all of a sudden think it possible to change the Tradition of our Church?
The Protestant influence over the minds and behavior of our faithful Orthodox brothers and sisters is very great and very insidious (sneaky). The more we know about our faith and traditions, the more we can identify such “invasions” of ideas from outside the faith, and can fight them where necessary.

We know the given names of our parents, but we wouldn’t dare address them as anything other than Mom and Dad, Mother and Father, Ma and Pa… In the same way, though we know the name of God, we shouldn’t dare address Him by His name.

178. In the “Orthodox Church” newspaper, I read that the Holy Synod of Bishops “decided to continue the established practice of the OCA with regard to clergy awards, and approved ... medals for the “Order of Saint Innocent”. What does that mean?

In the former Russian Empire, the Church was a government Ministry, what we’d call a “cabinet post” today. The head of the Church was called the Oberprokurator. The Church was operated with a system like that of the military and the civil service. Metropolitans were ranked as generals, Archbishops and Bishops as Colonels and Majors, Priests as Lieutenants, and Deacons were ranked as Sergeants, or some parallel. Each rank was paid the same as the military or civil service equivalent. There were grades within the ranks. For the clergy, the first nagrada (award of grade) was given after five years of service, and other awards were normally awarded at varying intervals, often a period of two-years.

Deacons, given a straight orarion at ordination, were awarded the title Protodeacon (or Archdeacon for monastics) after five years of service, and a doubled orarion after seven years of service, then the purple kamilavka (black for monastics) after ten years of service as a deacon.

Priests, given a three-barred silver cross at ordination, were later awarded the purple skufia (a soft cap), the nabedrennik (square or rectangle shaped vestment worn on the right hip), which represents a sheath for a sword after five years of service - the kamilavka (cylindrical velvet-covered hat), at ten years of service - the single-barred gold cross (called the Archpriest’s cross), at twelve years of service - the title archpriest (igumen for monastics), at twenty years of service - the palitsa (diamond-shaped vestment worn at the right hip – the nabedrennik now moving over to be worn on the left hip), representing the sword at twenty-five years - the jeweled cross, then, the mitre, the title protopresbyter (archimandrite for monastics), and finally a second pectoral cross, in that order.

Bishops were often consecrated as auxiliary Bishops, with only the name of a city in their title. After a period of time, they were “elevated” to be ruling Bishops, with the name of a city and an area or region in their title, now they are awarded the rank of Archbishop with the right to wear a cross on the klobuk and skufiya (cylindrical hat covered with a black veil, or soft cap of velvet) and on their mitre. The rank of Metropolitan (with a white veil on the klobuk) is the last award in the Russian Church, while in the United States, it is the title of the head of the Church. Some Metropolitans, usually heads of Churches, wore crosses on their mitres. Also different ranks of bishops wore different colored mantiya (mandiyas): purple for bishops, light blue for metropolitans, green for the patriarch. The Patriarch of Serbia wears a red mantiya.

You should remember that in the Greek Church and those churches which follow the Byzantine way of doing things, the order of rank for Bishops, is Bishop, Metropolitan, Archbishop, Patriarch.

Also remember that heads of Churches, whether Archbishops or Metropolitans or Patriarchs, stand in first rank, together, according to the date of the creation of those Churches. You can hear this list recited in order when our Metropolitan celebrates the Divine Liturgy and the deacons chant the “dyptichs” and the choir repeats the “many years!” and when the Metropolitan commemorates all the other heads of the Church.
Perhaps our Synod of Bishops decided to follow Russian Church customs as our American Church had done from Czarist times until recently when it abolished the award of the mitre for priests. However, in our church, now some Byzantine customs are being followed: all Bishops now wear a cross on their mitres. Perhaps this is out of respect for non-Russian dioceses in the American Church, like the Albanians, Bulgarians, and Romanians.

This is only the Russian tradition of elaborate awards for clergy. There is a different and separate system current in the churches which follow the Greek tradition, also based on rewards for years of service to the Church, but paralleling the organization of the court of the ancient Byzantine emperors.

As for the Order of Saint Innocent, it is meant to be a way to reward people for outstanding work for the Church. Until now, there was only the award of the “grammota” or certificate of congratulations. The system of “orders” goes back to the time of orders of knighthood, and is common not only in the Orthodox Churches of the Greek or Byzantine tradition, but in the Russian Church as well.

Just for your information, here’s the Greek or Byzantine listing of ranks for married priests: first is “pnevmatikos” (which loosely means spiritual father, since in the Greek system after Byzantium a simple priest may not hear confessions, give penance, or give sermons - circuit riding monks did this, but may not get to your parish for five years or more, thus the development of the “forgiving” service of unction on Holy Wednesday eve, in preparation for holy communion on Holy Thursday or Saturday morning.). Then comes “sakellarios” (from the imperial storekeeper), then “oikonomos” (steward or manager). The fifth or top rank for a married priest is “protopresbyter” which would indicate “first standing” amongst the priests.

One would imagine that “pnevmatikos” and “protopresbyter” were titles for clergy, while the other two probably came in as the church took over the imperial role.

180. **Why are there certain passages omitted from daily readings? Often, these are the more meaningful, important, or interesting segments!**

The daily readings are a list for reading in the church services.

The daily readings are provided as a guide. In your private reading of scripture at home, there’s no reason why you can’t read more of Scripture than the daily readings list calls for. It may seem that certain passages are omitted, as we read along, but we discover that they may be read later in the week or later in the year.

When read in Church, the readings may not be shortened. And pastors don’t usually read more than what is listed in the rubrics.

If you follow the daily cycle of prayers, and read the Psalms as suggested in the Kathismas, and add the Old Testament readings, Epistle and Gospel readings, that’s already a lot to think about for one day. Remember, it’s quality that counts, not quantity.

181. **Are frogs legs fish or flesh?**

The fasting laws forbid eating meat during lent, and that prohibition extends to all animals which have blood, including fish. There are some days during the Fast when fish may be eaten (Annunciation and Palm Sunday). But some animals were not meant to be eaten at all. Shellfish, those sea creatures with shells and exoskeletons, and octopi and squid and other sea creatures without backbones are permitted to be eaten during Lent.

In the Old Testament dietary rules, certain animals were specifically forbidden to be used as food and are called unclean. These are often creatures which eat garbage, offal or dead animals. Pigs, snails,
fish which are bottom feeders, shell-fish, frogs, lizards, snakes, and other reptiles are counted among the unclean animals. Though Christians are not subject to Jewish dietary laws, many follow them out of piety and/or good sense (if not good taste!).

If the purpose of your question is to determine if frogs’ legs can be eaten on fasting days, and if you are strict in interpreting the fasting rules, then the answer is no. Snakes and alligator are also not permitted. These creatures have backbones and blood.

Again, when the fasting laws forbid meat and fish, then, according to the Greek rules, it is permissible to eat shellfish or other spineless seafood. However, some days call for strict fasting, and on those days, we stick to vegetables and get our dose of protein from legumes.

Father Alexander Schmemann used to remind us that switching from steak to lobster is not a kind of fasting that does anybody any good, in any case.

182. Why do we do things three times: circle the altar (or center table) three times, ask questions three times, cross yourself three times, and so on?

Certain numbers are considered special in the Scriptures. Three is such a number. Three represents holiness, completeness, and infinity among other ideas. I’m sure you can think of other numbers which are special – seven, twelve, forty, seventy-times-seven and so on. You can read about them in, for example, the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible.

185. In John 14.9, it says ‘whoever has seen me has seen the Father’. Is Jesus telling us He is perfect in love and mercy and when we see that in Him, that’s the reflection of God? Or does it mean something else?

(John 14:5-13) Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Jesus does not merely ‘reflect’ His Father, but He says clearly, “whoever has seen Me has seen the Father,” and, “I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.” Jesus is none other than the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Those who try to say that Jesus is only a reflection of His Father’s goodness and love and mercy are denying that Jesus is Himself the Son of God, begotten before all ages, true God from true God, begotten and not made, not a creature, but of one essence with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.