



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF MARCH 4, 2007

### SUNDAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> 7:00p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

### SATURDAY, MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup> MEMORIAL SATURDAY

9:00a.m. Akathist for Departed  
6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

### SUNDAY, MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE CROSS

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Installation of Council  
Coffee Hour  
Question / Answer  
Parish Council Meeting



### Daylight Savings Time

begins this year on Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour, Saturday night, otherwise you may be late for the Hours and Divine Liturgy!

### Remember in Prayer

Isabelle Valentina who has to undergo another difficult surgery. For information regarding the procedure and Isabelle's progress, please see: <http://isabellevalentina.blogspot.com>. May the Lord help Isabelle and Jodi through this trying time!

### The Diocese of Washington and New York

now has its own website, check it out: <http://dcny.org>.



### The New Parish Council

will receive their blessing to assume their duties at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting of the new council will be following the coffee hour on this same day. All future council members are reminded to prepare themselves for this high calling and important day.

### The Saturday Evening Service

is the first service of the Resurrection. The Divine Liturgy on the following morning is the second service. Sunday begins on the evening before, just as in the Bible, "there was an evening and morning the first day." Therefore, the Vespers on Saturday evening is not only for those who are preparing to receive Holy Communion but also for all the faithful. As Orthodox Christians we know that the joy of celebrating the Resurrection should not be regulated to simply the Divine Liturgy. Rather we do well to participate in both of these services, as the righteous ones of the Old and New Testament times worshipped in the evening and morning.



### ON THE LADDER TO HEAVEN



"The ladder leading to the Kingdom of heaven is hidden within your soul. Flee from sin, dive into yourself, and in your soul you will discover the stairs by which to ascend."

*Saint Isaac the Syrian*

### The Sunday bulletin

may be picked up on Saturday evening and is also available for viewing on the parish website: [orthodoxdelmarva.org](http://orthodoxdelmarva.org)

### The March Calendar

of services can be found on the back of the February calendar. If you need a calendar please pick one up in the back of the church.

### The Directory of Parishioners and Friends of the Parish

is now available for pickup in the back of the church. If you would like your copy mailed to you, please let Fr. John know. Please see Fr. John for future updates or additions to the directory.



Corrections to the directory will be posted in next week's bulletin.



O LORD JESUS CHRIST SON OF GOD  
HAVE MERCY ON ME A SINNER



### The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Great Lent is a season of repentance, fasting, and intensified prayer, and so the Orthodox Church regards more frequent reception of Holy Communion as especially desirable at this time. However, since the Divine Liturgy has a festal or celebratory character not in keeping with the season of repentance, the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is served instead. This special Lenten service will be offered on Wednesday or Friday evenings at 7:00pm after a day of spiritual preparation and if possible total abstinence. The faithful who wish to receive Holy Communion but are unable to keep a total fast because of medical reasons, weakness, or work responsibilities, normally eat a light lenten meal in the early morning, or by 12 noon at the latest. Should you have any questions or concerns, please speak with Fr. John.

### Diocesan Clergy Retreat

Fr. John will be away from Sunday night (3/11) through Tuesday afternoon (3/13) attending a diocesan clergy retreat at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Clifton, New Jersey. If you need to reach him during this time, please do not hesitate to call him on his cell phone at 908-872-6589.

### As A Reminder

Script cards may be purchased through Kathy Parrish at the coffee hour or by phone. She has an extensive inventory of cards from a variety of stores. With these gift cards you can benefit our church each time you go to the store for your "normal" shopping, as a percentage of your purchase is donated to our Mission. Take a moment to speak with Kathy about how you can help support the church through the Script program.



### ON THE MYSTERY OF CONFESSION

*By Saint John of Kronstadt*

The person who is accustomed to give account of his life at Confession will not fear to give an answer at the terrible Judgment Seat of Christ. For this purpose was the mild tribunal of penitence instituted, that we may give an answer without shame, having been cleansed and healed through repentance here below.

The more sincerely we confess our sins, the more calm will the soul be afterwards. For sins are secret serpents, gnawing at the heart of a man, and never letting him rest; they are prickly thorns, constantly piercing the soul, they are spiritual darkness.

Bear the sufferings of the operation so that you may be restored to health – I speak of Confession. I mean that at Confession, you must declare all your shameful deeds to your confessor, without concealment, though it may well be painful, shameful, ignominious, and humiliating. Otherwise, the wound will remain unhealed, will continue to pain you, will undermine your spiritual health, and will become a cause for other spiritual weaknesses, or sinful habits or vices.

As soon as you have told the Lord your sins, with a contrite heart, they melt away; as soon as you have sighed and sorrowed for them, they are no more.

*Confession can be heard following any service or by appointment.*

*Please speak with Fr. John if you have any questions or if you would like to schedule an appointment.*

### MARCH CONGRATULATIONS!

#### Birthdays:

- 3/5 Mat. Emily Parsells
- 3/8 Monica Stoicovy
- 3/21 Fr. John Parsells
- 3/23 Ginny Borodulia
- 3/24 Mat. Dunia Hubiak
- 3/26 Megan Borodulia

#### Namesdays:

- 3/1 St. Evdokia
- Mat. Dunia Hubiak
- Karen Nichols

*If your name is not on this list and it should be, please see Fr. John, as soon as possible!*

## GO FAST FROM FOOD AND CHANGE THE WORLD

By John Kapsalis, a M.T.S from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

Admit it, no one likes to fast -- especially not for a week and definitely not for forty days. Anything past a day or two and we begin to develop headaches, our energy levels get sapped right down to nothing, and we begin to get insatiable cravings for food, even food we normally don't like. We'll take anything; just give us something other than beans and vegetables.

The Church has a lot of rules and canons about fasting, most of which were written during another time and another place. And that is part of the problem with fasting in our modern culture. It is out of vogue. There is an unspoken acceptance that perhaps fasting as a discipline is somewhat outdated, too strict, and even irrelevant to the religiosity of a Christian. Even those Christians who do fast quite faithfully usually only garner attacks of hypocrisy thrown at them from the rest of us. It seems fasting has become another throwaway discipline of our contemporary lifestyle, even though the ancient temptation to eat is what drowned out God's voice and brought about our ruin.

Food disguises what only fasting can reveal. Food can cover a multitude of wrongs, but when we go without food for a while our anger, bitterness, jealousy and pride all come to the surface and show us for what we really are. By fasting we are tested and discover that there is ugliness in our hearts. We find out that we are not that interested in God after all, but we are rather slaves to food, television, gossip, and constant background noise.



St. Nectarios of Aegina declared that prayer and fasting "serve as means of self-study, of discernment of our true moral state, of an accurate estimation of our sins and of a knowledge of their true character." Fasting humbles us by revealing our true nature. Fasting reminds us that we've probably been acting like Christians for all the wrong reasons. Fasting exposes the frailty of our lives and our dependence on God. Fasting opens our eyes to the misery that most of the world suffers each night as they go to bed hungry. And fasting teaches us that only Christ can satisfy -- we need His flesh and blood to live. We are spiritual anorexics without Christ no matter how much we feast on external forms of religion.

As Christians we want rules. We want to have everything laid out for us in black and white. That's

because it is less painful for us to follow some rules of not eating, than it is to care for orphans and widows, to show mercy and kindness, and not to scheme against each other. It means we can feel holy without actually being holy.

We would much rather avoid eating our chicken and ribs for a while than to have to risk serving God. We want rules that control external behavior rather than repentance that controls our hearts and minds. We prefer the ease of external piety rather than the risk of authentic Christianity. We demand adherence to religious laws and rituals rather than devotion to the love of God. Maybe this is why the world sees through our fasting. We are professionals at religiosity but amateurs at holiness.



Fasting however is but the means to the goal not the goal itself, which is why fasting, is always interconnected with prayer and service to the poor. It is the only way to keep us from senseless boasting. There is no fasting without prayer and service, and there is no foundation for prayer and charity without fasting.

Listening to the words of God spoken through the prophet Isaiah we can see how severely our superficial fasting is contrasted with the true expectations of God:

"You are fasting to please yourselves. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? ... This kind of fast will never get you anywhere with me. You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance ... Do you really think this will please the Lord?"

No, this is the kind of fasting I want:

Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden for those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help ... Then your salvation will come like the dawn ... Your godliness will lead you forward ... Then when you call, the Lord will answer" (Isaiah 58:3-9 NLT).

Fasting must lead us to do the opposite of what the world tells us to do; that is, we must forget about our selfishness and open our souls to God.

*Continued on page 4...*

Fasting is good and beneficial only when it is lived out with a genuine effort to change our way of thinking, the things we spend time and money on. Our fasting must help transform us into new creations. It must guide us to new, deeper-tangible--ways to serve God. John Chrysostom wisely wrote that we must abstain not only from food but from sins: "The fast should be kept not by the mouth



alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and all the members of the body."

If our fasting is motivated solely by an obligation to follow some dietary rules then all we are doing is starving ourselves for a period of time. At best, we might get some health benefits out of the exercise. But the joy of getting nearer to God through deeper prayer and greater desire for Him will be lost. And joy there must be because that is how fasting should transfigure us, into joyful Christians brimming with the knowledge that we are near God.

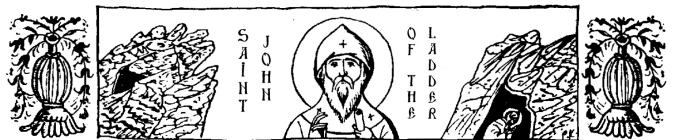
The reward of fasting is drawing nearer to God, to prepare to be in God's presence. We cannot let our faith be governed by strict rules of fasting, any more than we can say that Christianity is governed solely by an ethical code of behavior. It is our drawing nearer to God--coming closer to the light--that changes our fasting, our behavior and our hearts and minds.

It is not a question then of 'if' we should fast, but 'how.' Sometimes we like to impose our idea of religious discipline on everyone. It is an age-old problem. Yet our Church has always had, in its teachings and tradition, a more gentle approach of encouragement according to the strength of each of us. But fast we must, otherwise how can we expect to control our more sinister appetites or our judgment of others if we cannot hold on to a simple fast? The Church always challenges us, like an athlete, to push the boundaries of our prayer, discipline, and commitment to God, but it does so with a spirit of understanding for our broken condition in the world. Paul Evdokimov once wrote a poignant description of a modern, urban discipline that can help change our focus on fasting from food alone:

"Christian asceticism is only a method in the service of life, and it will seek to adapt itself to the new needs ... Today the combat is not the same. We no longer need added pain ... Asceticism would be necessary rest, the discipline of regular

periods of calm and silence, when one could regain the ability to stop for prayer and contemplation, even in the heart of all the noise of the world, and above all to listen to the presence of others. Fasting, instead of doing violence to the flesh, could be our renunciation of the superfluous, our sharing with the poor and a joyful balance in all things."

Fasting and its spiritual counterpart prayer can guide us to God's will for our lives. It can lead us towards the natural progression of humbling ourselves with fasting to the sorrow of repentance and the renewal of our lives. Christ launched His work on this earth driven in prayer and fasting for forty days. Do we honestly believe then, that we can make a difference in people's lives on a full belly? Let us go fast, then see the world change.



## HOW DO WE REACT WHEN INSULTED?

*By Archimandrite Zacharias*

In the world, people establish a ladder to spiritual accomplishment according to human criteria, and they say, "If I read one service a day, I am on the first step of the ladder. If I read two services, I am on the second step. If I read all the services, I am good and perfect." This is a psychological calculation and it is not real at all. St. John of the Ladder gives us another ladder to spiritual perfection: What is our reaction when we are insulted? If we are insulted and constrain our heart not to answer back, then we have put our feet on the first step of the ladder. If we not only do not answer back, but also pray for the one who has offended us, then we have taken the second step of divine ascent. If we not only pray for that person but also feel sorry that he suffered harm to his soul for doing that to us, and are full of compassion for him, then we are on the third step. And if we rejoice that we have been humiliated for the Lord's sake, then we are on an even higher step on the ladder. You see, he give us a system of classifying spiritual states that is infallible. The moment we take offence, we reveal where we stand. If we get angry and irritated, and we react, that means that we have not yet even set a single foot on this ladder. The Fathers knew that unless we learn to transform our state, we will never be able to ascend the ladder that leads to divine perfection.