



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 24, 2008

Please Remember in Prayer

Carole Boris and Jane Koshutko who are undergoing treatment. Please also remember the servants of God, Judy and Lam. If you have a prayer request, please let Fr. John know.

Monthly Calendars

for March and April are available for pickup in the back of the church. These calendars show the schedule of services and classes offered during Great Lent. As a reminder, please consult the Sunday bulletin for changes to the schedule. If you have any doubt concerning the time of a service, please call the church.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 1ST

11:00a.m. Baptism of Alexander
 6:00p.m. Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 2ND

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

8:40a.m. Hours
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
 Coffee Hour
 Choir Practice
 11:00a.m. Baptism of Allen Maxim

Choir Practice

There will be a practice following the coffee hour next Sunday, March 2nd for those who can make it. We will look at music for the Lenten season, Holy Week, and Pascha. All choir members, and those interested in joining the choir, are asked to try and attend.

The Baptism of Baby Alexander Parsells

has been scheduled for Saturday, March 1st, at 11:00am. All are invited to attend. A light lunch will be served following the baptism.

The Baptism of Baby Allen Maxim

has been scheduled for Sunday, March 2nd, at 11:00am. All are invited to attend. Allen is the son of Maxim and Svetelena Oganyan.

Special Coffee Hour

Please join us for a special coffee hour, Sunday, March 2nd to welcome babies Alexander Parsells and Allen Maxim Oganyan. There will be a light lunch served. If you have any questions or wish to bring an appetizer or dessert, please see Jen Alexion or Alice Peters.

Looking Ahead:

- ❖ March 2nd – Last day for meat
- ❖ March 9th – Last day for dairy
- ❖ March 10th – Great Lent Begins
- ❖ April 27th – Pascha

The Great Fast / The Rite of Forgiveness

Great Lent begins this year on Monday, March 10th. As we know, the Sunday before the Great Fast is called Forgiveness Sunday, for on this day we ask each other's forgiveness, remembering that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. Let us take this God-given opportunity to start afresh with the Lord, each other, our families and friends, and even our enemies. May the Lord grant us this holy desire!



READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Mar. 2nd

Hours: Sandy St. Germain
 Epistle: Sandy St. Germain

Sunday, Mar. 9th

Hours: Kathy Parrish
 Epistle: Kathy Parrish



What is the IOCC?

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) was established by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) as the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians to work in cooperation with the Orthodox Churches worldwide.



AN INTRODUCTION TO GREAT LENT

Excerpts from Fr Alexander Schememann's *Great Lent*



When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Easter, "the Feast of Feasts." It is the preparation for the "fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Easter, for it reveals something very essential, very crucial about our Christian faith and life.

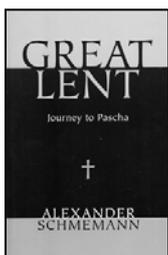
Is it necessary to explain that Easter is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory. [...]

Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? [...] We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and ultimately meaningless

— a meaningless journey toward a meaningless end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

If we realize this, then we may understand what Easter is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. [...] This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new." [...] For each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the re-discovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!"



Suggested Reading: **Great Lent**

By Fr. Alexander Schememann

Quite possibly the best book on the subject. Fr. Alexander guides the reader along the forty day pilgrimage to Pascha, revealing Great Lent as "a school of repentance to which every Christian must go each year in order to deepen his faith, to re-evaluate, and if possible, to change his life." Lent, he writes, "is a wonderful pilgrimage to the very sources of Orthodox faith — a rediscovery of the Orthodox way of life."



CONCERNING THE RADIANT OR DARK COVERING OF THE SOUL

Adapted from the writings of St. Theophan the Recluse

The soul has a "covering" whose appearance corresponds precisely to the soul's inner attitude.

While God alone knows the inner most part of our souls, the saints are aware of the general condition of the soul by the souls' "covering." This is because while God alone knows what is in the heart of man, He gives the gifts of spiritual discernment and vision to those who have become attune to the spiritual life, those who have become like the angels.

Imagine, if you will: Two people are sitting and talking. During the conversation, the soul of each person has its own disposition. Neither one sees what is in the soul of the other on account of the coarse covering of the body, beneath which the soul is concealed.

The angels and saints, however, if they were to gaze upon them, would see their souls as they are because the state of the soul is revealed by the soul's covering.

If within the soul are holy thoughts and feelings, then its covering is bright; with each holy thought or feeling giving off a certain radiance according to its character. But if the thoughts and feelings are not quite pure, then the soul's covering is likewise not bright but dark; with each impure feeling having its own characteristic gloom, which is sometimes like a fog and at other times like the gloom of night.

Suppose you were to rise up to heaven and look down upon the earth with angelic vision. Then you would see among the varied masses of people bright shades, semi-bright, hazy and murky. Some, though well dressed in worldly apparel, would appear gloomy if their souls were bad, while others who wore tatters would seem bright if their souls were pure.

This is how the saints, the angels, and our guardian angel see us, and judging by what they see, they rejoice or grieve over us.

Besides the angels and saints, there are also dark angels who though invisible to us are able to see our soul's covering. However, when the soul is bright, they are unable to look at it, like bats who fear the light. They look at it only when it begins to darken. They run in packs everywhere, and as soon as they notice a darkened soul, they immediately fall upon it, and begin to twist it to and fro with thoughts, passionate desires, and disturbance of feelings. The demons establish themselves in a turbulent way in the realm between the body and the soul, here they sit next to the soul and begin to stir it up, like dust by the wind.

How the spiritual powers, both good and evil, see us is in fact how we really are.

THE TOP 10 LENTEN TIPS

1. Regardless of how you fast, fast every single day. This type of fasting helps wear down the passions and build spiritual endurance.
2. Know exactly what the fasting regulations are and try to approximate them as best you can. Each Lent, try to be more exact in fasting.
3. Particular concerns about fasting? Age, health issues, never fasted before, mixed-marriages? Speak with your priest.
4. Be sure to recite the lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim. If you cannot make prostrations just make bows or cross yourself.
5. On weekends, we do not make prostrations and our fasting is slightly relaxed.
6. The lenten services and tones are offered only during the week – strive to participate as much as possible in these services and the spirit of lent will rub off on you.
7. Sports and outdoor activities are not contrary to the Lenten spirit.
8. Strive to avoid going to movies, parties, vacations, and other entertainments. This we do so we can have more time to devote to spiritual things.
9. Confession and Holy Communion are central to securing the benefits of Lent. Without fail, we should receive the Sacraments during the period of Great Lent.
10. Be mindful of what we look at and how much time we spend on TV and computer. Some give up TV for all of Lent. Others strictly limit their time and watch only educational and news programs. Surfing on the web? Hit the theological sites.



THE ONLY MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS IS CONSECRATED IN THE USA

Moscow, February 13, Interfax

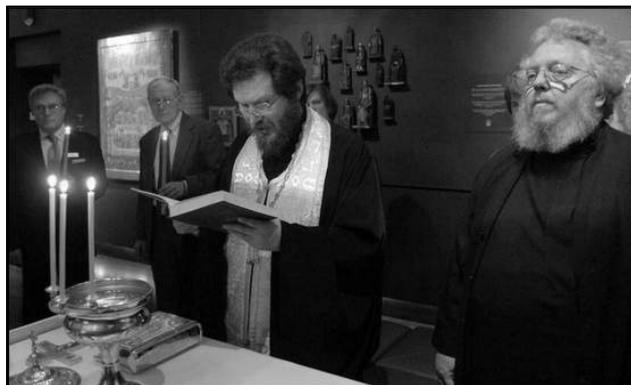
The Museum of Russian Icons housing the largest collection of the old Russian icons outside Russia was consecrated in Clinton, Massachusetts, USA.

The museum was founded in 2006 by a well-known American businessman Gordon Lankton.

For several decades he was buying age-old icons in the Soviet Union and at private auctions in Europe and North America, which later made the collection of the only museum of Russian icons in the United States.

The exhibition includes 260 icons of the 15th-21st centuries. The largest part of this collection is not available to the public yet, because first, the icons need to be published and described, reports the official site of the Moscow Patriarchate Wednesday.

Recently, the Secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate Representation in the USA Archpriest Alexander Abramov and Gordon Lankton have reached an agreement on joint work to inform the American public about the treasures of the Old Russian icon painting, including projected exchanges of exhibitions with the largest Russian galleries, such as the Russian Museum in Saint-Petersburg and the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.



ON THE CONSCIENCE

St. Theophan the Recluse

Yes, we are seen by a countless number of eyes – the saints and angels of heaven. See how many stars there are in the sky! The number of eyes that look at us is greater still.



Indeed, we ourselves are able, if not to see, then to determine what we are. Our conscience, the incorruptible judge, tells us. It may become suppressed with time, but it always manages to free itself from this yoke, and raises its voice even in those who are shameless. In those who are innocent, its voice is always pure and like a bell.

The conscience is also known as the divine voice in the human spirit. In it is also reflected whatever opinion or view the inhabitants of heaven have of us. Thus, when the conscience says we are pure in everything before God and man, then this testimony of the conscience reflects the light near our soul, and everyone in heaven sees us as bright.

If the conscience reproaches us, however, telling us that we are impure, then we appear dark. But the Guardian Angels are closer to us than anyone, and they know who is dark and who is bright, and are able to judge by the inner attitude whether it is a permanent or temporary condition.

ISLAMIC STATES WELCOME KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE

RIYADH (Reuters) - The Organisation of the Islamic Conference has welcomed Kosovo's declaration of independence, saying it would be an asset to the Muslim world.

"Kosovo has finally declared its independence after a long and determined struggle by its people. As we rejoice in this happy result, we declare our solidarity with and support to our brothers and sisters there," Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the head of the OIC, said at the opening of a meeting in Dakar on Monday. "The Islamic (nation) wishes them success in the new battle awaiting them, which is the building of a strong and prosperous state capable of satisfying its people. There is no doubt that the independence of Kosovo will be an asset to the Muslim world and further enhance joint Islamic action," he said in comments sent to Reuters.

Kosovo Albanians declared independence on Sunday, the latest drama in the tortuous break-up of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia that began nearly two decades ago. Most Albanians are Muslims. The majority Albanian territory, once ruled as a part of Serbia, has been under United Nations supervision since 1999, when NATO bombing forced a withdrawal of Serb forces that had been attacking Albanians in the province.

China, Russia, Spain, Serbia and other countries have opposed the move, some saying it will encourage separatism.