

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 9, 2020

A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all our visitors! It is good to have you with us!



The New Parish Council

will receive their blessing to assume their duties at the Liturgy on Sunday, March 8th. The first meeting of the new council will be after the coffee hour on this same day. All council members are asked to prepare for this high calling and important day.

Fast-free Week

During the week of the Publican & Pharisee, Feb. 9-16, we do not fast on Wednesday and Friday. Unless, of course, you want to be a Pharisee! 😊

What are Meat-fare (2/23) and Cheese-fare (3/1) Sundays?

These are the final days we partake of meat and dairy products, respectively, until Pascha. During the week before Great Lent, called Cheese-week, though we aren't partaking of meat anymore, dairy products are permitted every day, inc. Wednesday & Friday. Questions? See Fr. John.

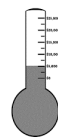


The Rite of Forgiveness – Sunday, March 1st

The day before entering 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. Don't miss it!

Budget Fact: Weekly Collection Goal

According to the 2020 budget, our weekly collection goal is \$2,204.07.



Church Entrance Project

We've raised \$11,340 of our \$30,000 goal. The funds are needed for the new church sign, entrance walls with mosaics, and lighting for the entrance drive and back of the parking lot. Please earmark your offerings for "Church Entrance". Thank you and may the Lord bless!

Our Directory of Parishioners and Friends

is currently being updated. If you attend Christ the Savior Mission even infrequently and are not yet listed in our directory, please fill out a directory form in the back of the church. An updated directory will be made available at the candle stand in early 2020. Questions, please see Nissa Nancy. Thank you!



Additional 2020 Calendars and Envelopes

are available for pickup at the candle stand if you didn't receive yours. Please ask Nissa Nancy or the ushers/greeters for assistance.



Coffee Hour

Appreciation is expressed to those who bring food for the coffee hour, especially if you do so on a consistent basis. If you haven't been bringing food, please do consider it. Thank you!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH

Publican & Pharisee

Leave-taking of the Meeting

8:40am Hours

9:00am Div. Liturgy; Coffee Hour
 Orthodox 101

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH

5:00pm No Bible Study

6:00pm Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH

Prodigal Son

8:40am Hours

9:00am Div. Liturgy; Coffee Hour

Looking Ahead:

- ❖ Feb. 23rd – Meatfare Sunday
- ❖ March 1st – Cheesefare Sunday
- ❖ March 2nd – Great Lent Begins
- ❖ March 25th – Annunciation
- ❖ April 12th – Palm Sunday
- ❖ April 17th – Holy Friday
- ❖ April 19th – Pascha



On Being Human

Birds fly, fish swim and humans pray.

St. Ephraim the Syrian

+	OPERATING			EARMARKED			ACCOUNTS		READER SCHEDULE	
	THRU 1/31	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	THRU 1/31	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR				
INCOME	9,304	2,722	12,026	250	240	490	OPERATING	8,261	2/9	Megan Wilkinson
EXPENSE	9,551	9,551	19,102	0	0	0	EARMARKED	13,680	2/16	Rdr. George Kaloroumakis
NET	-247	-6,829	-7,076	0	240	490	SAVINGS	12,458	2/23	Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia
							BUILDING	4,961	3/1	Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

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 Pascha, "the Feast of Feasts." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Pascha, for it reveals something very essential, crucial about our Christian faith and life.

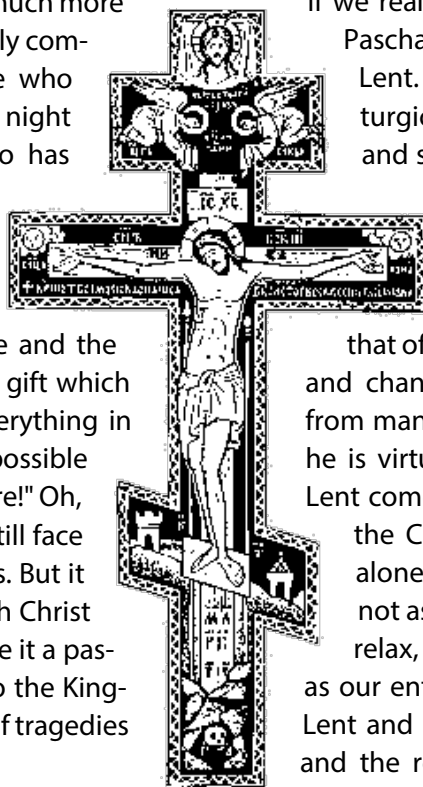
Is it necessary to explain that Pascha is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Pascha we celebrate Christ's 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 Pascha 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 Pascha 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 Pascha are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

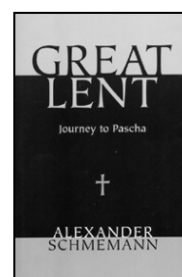
A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far away — the destination. It is the joy of Pascha, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Pascha, that makes Lent's sadness bright and 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!"



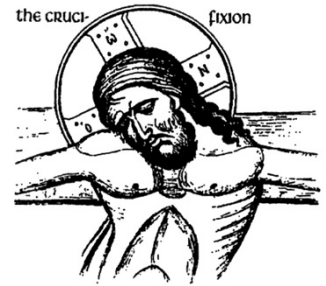
Suggested Reading: Great Lent

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."



ASK FATHER: 2 QUESTIONS / 2 ANSWERS



Question: If God sees suffering and allows it, is He a God worthy of worship?

Answer: Physical suffering is the result of sin - our individual or collective choice to sin, both ancestrally and at present. God's one command was not to sin so that we would not know suffering: "Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of God and evil for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

All the subsequent commandments given in the Law lead us away from sin and suffering and to righteousness and life. King David summarizes this when he writes "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin."

The Prophets likewise foretold that God would take our sin and suffering upon Himself to put an end to them once and for all. This God did in Christ - and for this alone He is more than worthy of our worship.

Question: But why does God still allow suffering then?

If we still suffer, it is because we still sin, individually and collectively.

Yet, the Christian understands that physical suffering, even biological death, is nothing compared to being in the unbearable state of broken communion with God.

For the worldly man, avoidance of physical suffering is most important concern and biological death most burdensome sentence. But by God's patient allowance of both (before He ends them with the general Resurrection), such men will be forced to look for the cause of their suffering and mortality and be motivated to turn back to Him, if initially for no other reason than because without Him they are biologically dying. Of course, no matter the initial reason, turning back to God, who is Life, is good for them. In time, they will, by keeping His commandments, come to know virtue and goodness through communion with Him, and gradually realize that union with God is not only true and eternal life but that this more abundant life is also worth suffering and even physically dying for.



ON THE TORMENTS OF HELL

St. Isaac the Syrian

Those who are tormented in hell are tormented by the invasion of love. What is there more bitter and violent than the pains of love? Those who feel they have sinned against love bear in themselves a damnation much heavier than the most dreaded punishments. The suffering with which sinning against love afflicts the heart is more keenly felt than any other torment. It is absurd to assume that the sinners in hell are deprived of God's love. Love is offered to all impartially. But by its very power it acts in two ways. It torments sinners, as happens here on earth when we are tormented by the presence of a friend to whom we have been unfaithful. And it gives joy to those who have been faithful.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

The Mystery of Repentance and Confession is one of reconciliation with God, bringing about not only a clearing of the conscience through the remission of sins, but also a healing of the soul through our recommitment to Christ. This Sacrament should therefore be received by all Orthodox Christians during each of the fasting seasons and whenever else is needed. For those who wish to receive Holy Communion, the Sacrament of Confession is indispensable and absolutely necessary to maintaining our spiritual health and well-being.

Fr. John is available to hear confessions following any service or at any other time by appointment.



ON HOW A TRUE CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS HATRED IN THE WORLD

From the Prologue of Ochrid

"And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake" (Luke 21:17).

All those who love themselves more than they love God will hate the followers of the Lord Jesus. All those who love the body more than they love the soul will hate the followers of the Lord Jesus. All those who love this world more than they love the Eternal Kingdom of God will hate the followers of the Lord Jesus. All those who love sin more than they love virtue will hate the followers of the Lord Jesus.

The number of those who hate the name of Jesus is sometimes greater and sometimes smaller. However great their number is, brethren, do not be afraid, for the number of angels and saints is myriad. The number of your kinsmen in heaven, i.e., those who love the Lord Jesus, exceeds the number of stars in the firmament and the grains of sand by the sea. Oh, do not be afraid; Christ is with you, and that means that you are always mightier than those who hate you. When the All-Powerful One is on your side, you are always more numerous, for you are always stronger than any number of your adversaries. O Lord Jesus, Lord All-powerful, always be with us and help us that we may be inseparably with Thee always, and then our fear will vanish. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



KING DAVID'S ACCEPTABLE OFFERING

From Parish Publishing LLC

King David was truly remarkable in the depth of his devotion to God, but no less remarkable was the distance he was able to fall away from God at times. At one point fairly late in his reign, David ordered a census to be taken of the population of his kingdom. For reasons that are not clear from Scriptures, this census was a sin against God.

The Bible does not even hint at why this aroused God's anger, but we may assume that the wrongness of the act was so obvious at the time that the biblical author did not feel that he needed to explain it.

It was so clearly wrong that even Joab, the commander-in-chief of David's army, strongly advised the king not to do it, but David ordered it done anyway. Soon thereafter, a plague, which was understood to be God's punishment for David's sin, killed 70,000 men in Israel in three days. The plague ended before Jerusalem itself was touched by it, and David was deeply repentant of his sin.

David's Sacrifice

The prophet Gad came to David with God's instruction. David was to offer a sacrifice at the place where the angel of death stopped. That spot happened to be the farm of a Jebusite named Araunah.

Araunah was working at his threshing floor harvesting grain when David approached and asked to purchase the threshing floor to build an altar unto the Lord. Araunah felt that it would be a great honor to serve the king and offered to give David not only the threshing floor for the location, but also his oxen for the sacrificial animals and the threshing sleds and ox yoke for the firewood.

But David replied, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price; I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing."

The gift must cost the giver

II Samuel 24:18-25 speaks loudly to us of honoring God. David could have accepted Araunah's generous offer but in so doing he would have dishonored God and himself. The kingdom of God requires sacrificial devotion, and that can only be so when the gift costs the giver.

David knew that the sacrifice would have far less value and meaning if he offered to God that which belonged to another. It was meaningful only if it cost him. David knew something that Christians often overlook... that stewardship, which is another name for honoring God, is not an optional part of our faith, but an integral element of it. In fact, without stewardship, the rest of our Christian witness is devalued; just as David's sacrifice would have been had he not paid for it.