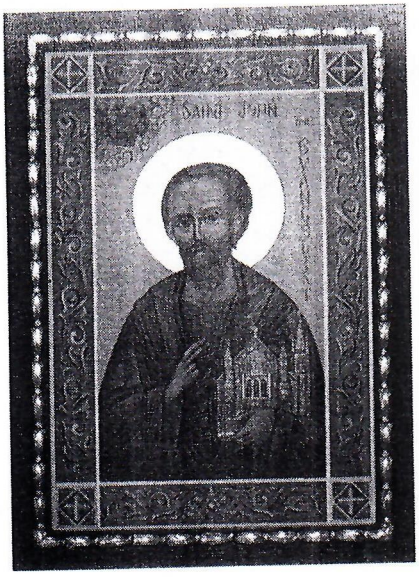
March 5, 2023



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1501 8TH AVENUE

BEAVER FALLS, PA. 15010

(724) 847-1111

WWW.SAINTJOHNCHURCH.ORG

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ANTONIOS (PATRIARCHAL VICOR),

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK AND METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA

HIS GRACE BISHOP THOMAS

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND , AND MID-ATLANTIC

PASTOR: REVEREND FATHER STEVEN SHAHEEN

We take this opportunity to welcome those guests praying with us.

Anyone wishing to request prayers for Health and Well-being, or a Trisagion prayer, please contact Fr. Steven

The Orthodox Church understands that the sacraments we experience are a fundamental part of the sacred life of a worshipping community that shares in "one body...one faith". (Eph. 4:5). Thus, we can only share Communion with those who are Orthodox and who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and Confession. If you are not Orthodox, or are not properly prepared, you are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing and then to take a piece of the blessed bread. Please see Father Steven after Divine Liturgy.

SUNDAY, March 5, 2023
Tone 5 Eothinon 5
First Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)
Hieromartyr Konon of Isauria; Martyrs Archelaos and his 152 companions in Egypt

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty. The Lord is robed; He is girded with strength. For He has established the world so that it shall never be moved.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Who shall tell of the mighty acts of the Lord? Who shall make all of His praises to be heard? Let the redeemed by the Lord say so, whom He has delivered from the hand of the enemy. (Refrain) Glory... Both now... (Refrain)

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Let them acknowledge the Lord for His mercies, and for His wondrous works for the sons of men. Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

Let them exalt Him in the church of the faithful, and in the assembly of the presbyters. (Refrain) The eyes of the Lord are upon those that fear Him, upon those that hope in His mercy; to hear the mourning of those in captivity, and to loose the sons of those appointed to death. (Refrain) Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Let the heavens and the earth praise Him. This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord my God, I will acknowledge Thee forever.

Receiving Communion: If you aren't able to come to Divine Liturgy and would like to receive communion, please contact Father Steven @ Fr.Steven.SaintJohnChurch.Org or 724 847 1111

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

APOLYTIKION OF FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT IN TONE TWO

Thy pure image do we venerate, O good One, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God; for by Thine own will Thou didst ascend the Cross in Thy body, to save Thy creatures from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to thee: Thou hast verily filled all with joy, since Thou didst come, O our Savior, to save the world.

TROPARIAN OF SAINT JOHN

O Apostle John, speaker of deity, the beloved of Christ our God, hasten to deliver your people, powerless in speech, for He on Whose bosom you lean accepts you as an intercessor. Beseech Him therefore to disperse the darkness of ignorance, and pray for peace and great mercy to be shown upon us.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT

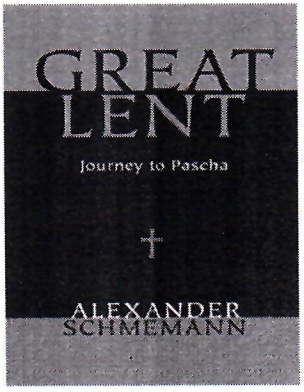
To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

THE ESPISTLE

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:24-26, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the recompense of reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and all the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, and turned to flight armies of the aliens. Women received their dead by resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a witness through their faith, did not receive the promise, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.



Today!

During Coffee Hour we will read a chapter a week During Lent, so we can learn while we have fellowship at coffee hour! It should take 15-20 minutes to go through one chapter, and by the end of Lent, we will have read the entire book!

THE GOSPEL

(For Sunday of Forgiveness)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:43-51)

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Prayers Offered

Trisagion prayers are offered in memory of: None today

Prayers are offered for the health and well-being of : Metropolitan SABA, Bishop JOSEPH, Darius, Kh. Pat, Mary, Janis, Patricia, Patty, the Sassic Family and For the preservation of all victims of the recent natural disaster in Syria and Turkey.

Prayers are offered in memory of: Margie, Ronald, Sh. Peggy. Nash, and All the victims of the recent natural disaster in Syria and Turkey.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Be the guardian of the eye that it might not look about in the manner of a thief; be the guardian of the ear, that it might not perceive falsehood. Be the guardian of the lips that slander, judgment, criticism and idle words might not come forth from them. Be the guardian of the heart that it might not be inclined to evil and might not work iniquity." - St Ephraim the Syrian

CALENDAR LENTEN SERVICES

Sat. Mar. 04	Saturday of the Souls – Miracle of Kollyva – 10AM
Sat. Mar. 04	Great Vespers 5PM
Sun. Mar. 05	Sunday of Orthodoxy: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM
	Sunday of Orthodoxy Pan-Orthodox Vespers – St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral 4:30PM (With Met. Savas– GOA)
Mon. Mar. 06	Fr. Steven at retreat in Oakland Cathedral
Wed. Mar. 08	Presanctified Liturgy 6PM
Fri. Mar. 10	Little Compline with the Akathist Canon / Akathist Hymn 6PM
Sat. Mar. 11	Great Vespers 5PM
Sun. Mar. 12	Gregory Palamas: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM; Parish Council Meeting 12:15 PM
Wed. Mar. 15	Presanctified Liturgy 6PM
*Mar. 16 thru-18	Fr. Steven @ Antiochian Village for Diocesen Ministry Council Meetings.
Fri. Mar. 17	No Akathist service this evening.
Sat. Mar. 18	Community Breakfast 8:30 AM ; Great Vespers Readers Service 5PM
Sun. Mar. 19	Veneration of the Cross - Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM (Flowers for Cross)
Wed. Mar. 22	Presanctified Liturgy 6PM
Fri. Mar. 24	Vespers Service with 4th Stasis of Akathist Hymn 6PM
Sat. Mar. 25	Annunciation of Most Holy Theotokos– Festal Orthos 9AM; Festal Divine Liturgy 10AM followed by Special Lenten meal.
Sat. Mar 25	Great Vespers 5PM
Sun. Mar. 26	John of the Ladder: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM
Wed. Mar. 29	Presanctified Liturgy 6PM

Thur. Mar. 30	Little Compline with Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete and Life of St. Mary of Egypt 6PM
Fri. Mar. 31	Little Compline with Akathist Canon / Akathist Hymn 6PM
Sat. Apr. 01	Great Vespers 5PM
Sun. Apr. 02	Mary of Egypt: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM. Parish Council Meeting 12:15PM
Wed. Apr. 05	Presanctified Liturgy 6PM
Fri. Apr 07	Little Compline with Canon of the Raising of Lazarus 6PM
Sat. Apr. 08	Lazarus Saturday: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM
Sat. Apr. 08	Great Vespers for Palm Sunday 5PM
Sun. Apr. 09	Palm Sunday: Orthos 9AM; Divine Liturgy 10AM
Sun. Apr. 09	Evening Bridegroom Orthos for Holy Monday 6PM
Mon. Apr. 10	Evening Bridegroom Orthos for Holy Tuesday 6PM
Tues. Apr. 11	Evening Bridegroom Orthos for Holy Wednesday 6PM
Wed. Apr. 12	Evening Holy Unction Service 6PM
Thur. Apr. 13	Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10AM
Thur. Apr. 13	Evening Orthos with the Twelve Passion Gospels for Holy Friday 6PM
Fri. Apr. 14	Holy Friday Morning: The Great Royal Hours & Typika 10AM
Fri. Apr. 14	Great Vespers for Holy Saturday 5PM
Fri. Apr. 14	Evening Orthos with the Lamentations for Holy Saturday 6PM
Sat. Apr. 15	Morning Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9AM
Sat. Apr. 15	Starting at 10PM "VIGIL OF PASCHA": Midnight Office, Resurrection (Rush) Service, Paschal Orthos and Paschal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom – offered uninterrupted in succession. At completion of the service, everyone is welcomed to join us in our Hall for Fellowship and an Easter meal prepared by our parishioners.
Sun. Apr. 16	PASCHA : AGAPE VESPERS 12 NOON

100 Reasons to go to Church

Compiled by students of the St. Nicholas William Spyropoulos School

1. Connect with God
2. Receive Holy Communion
3. Pray to Goel
4. To be a true Christian
5. Learn about God
6. Pray for those that passed
7. To be blessed
8. Keep God in our heorts
9. For forgiveness of sins
10. Purify our souls
11. Spend time with family
12. Spend time with Goel
13. Show God we love Him
14. To become holy
15. Pray for the sick
16. Visit God's home
17. To say thank you to God
18. To never forget God
19. Support the Church
20. Listen to Gods teachings
21. To feel safe
22. To become the Church
23. To honor Goel
24. Pray for mercy
25. Repentance
26. To be a Christian family
27. To share His teachings
28. Pray for the world
29. Fight temptation
30. For our salvation
31. Help us through struggles
32. For Jesus to enter our life
33. Its the day of Resurrection
34. To unite with God
35. The gates of Heaven open
36. Worship God
37. Sing to God
38. Grow closer to God
39. Show respect for God
40. Hear the Gospel reading
41. Give back to God
42. Obey God
43. Be faithful to God
44. Serve God
45. Believe in God
46. Learn the hymns
47. Follow His commandments
48. Protection from the devil
49. To be responsible Christians
50. Aquire Humility
51. Silence & stillness
52. Focus on God
53. Participate in Jesus' life
54. Feel Gods presence
55. Appreciate His sacrifice
56. Offer our lives to God
57. Enjoy Gods compony
58. Accept Goel
59. Ask for help
60. Prepare us for Heaven
61. To become better people
62. To please God
63. To follow Jesus' example
64. To put God first in life
65. Sacrifice a little for Jesus
66. To pass down our faith
67. Be with Jesus no matter what
68. Pray to Panagia & the Saints
69. Help the poor
70. To keep carrying your cross
71. Limit evil in our lives
72. Become a companion with God
73. To Resurrect with Jesus
74. Sharpen our conscience
75. To Be inspired
76. Don't give up on Jesus
77. See the world with Gods eyes
78. Strengthen our faith
79. See everyone as Gods kids
80. Take a break from technology
81. To know we are not alone
82. Honor our Baptism
83. To be at peace
84. To feel real joy
85. Learn to pray
86. Experience Gods Grace
87. To become a Saint
88. To be in a community
89. Remember why we exist
90. To reset our life
91. Prioritize what is important
92. Be with other Christians
93. Attend Sunday School
94. Learn lessons for our life
95. Honor our parents
96. Ask for the Saints prayers
97. Dedicate one day to Goel
98. To show love for each other
99. To get up when we foll

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2023

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week **FEBRUARY 5th**	*TRIODION WEEKS* **Publican and the Pharisee** Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week **FEBRUARY 12th**	**The Prodigal Son Returns!** Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare **FEBRUARY 19th** FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	**The Last Judgement** Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare **FEBRUARY 26th** FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	**Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!** *FORGIVENESS SUNDAY* Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent **MARCH 5th**	*GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS* **SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY** Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent **MARCH 12th**	**ST GREGORY PALAMAS** Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent **MARCH 19th**	**VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS** *HALF WAY TO PASCHA!* Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent **MARCH 26th**	**ST JOHN of the LADDER** Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent **APRIL 2nd**	**ST MARY of EGYPT** Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! **APRIL 9th** GREAT WEEK BEGINS	*GREAT AND HOLY WEEK* **ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM** Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY **APRIL 14th**	**GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY** *JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS* CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! **APRIL 16th** NO FASTING!	*BRIGHT WEEK* **HOLY PASCHA! (*CHRIST IS RISEN!*)** Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

THE EASTERN DIOCESES MINISTRY COUNCIL OF THE
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE

INVITES ALL TO

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL SPRING RETREAT

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

March 17-19, 2023

Antiochian Village Conference & Retreat Center

Bolivar, PA

Featuring:

- Pilgrimage to St. Raphael's resting place
- Organizational Meetings & Events
- Youth Activities with Fr. Joshua Makoul from St. George Orthodox Cathedral in Pittsburgh and Fr. Chris Shadid & the Antiochian Village Camp staff
- Book signing with our Keynote Speaker

Key Note Speaker

The Very Rev. Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick

Learn more about Father Andrew by clicking here!

The Very Rev. Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick is Chief Content Officer of Ancient Faith Ministries, the former pastor of St. Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church of Emmaus, Pennsylvania, and author of Arise, O God, Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy, An Introduction to God, and Bearing God, all from Ancient Faith Publishing.

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- What do Demons have to do with the Gospel.
- What do Angels have to do with the Gospel.

Space Limited for this Event!
Register Early by clicking the Link Below!!

Click Here to Register!

Or type the Link below in your browser

https://registration.antiochianvillage.org/SpringRetreat2023

St. JOHN Family Pascha Card

Enrichment is sponsoring the 'St. John Family Pascha Card'. It is a wonderful and simple idea. Here is how it works:

For a donation, your name will be included on the card, along with all other parish members who participate. The card is mailed to the entire parish, letting them know that we are thinking of them during this Holy Season.

With the funds received from the card supporters, Enrichment can help fund its programs and ministry here at St. John. Some of the ministries include: monthly community breakfasts, holiday meals, and the St. John (BCOCM) Food Pantry, It is that simple, and it is a wonderful opportunity. We want to include everyone's name on the card – so complete the form and mail it into the Church Office TO-DAY!

We set a deadline of **Friday, March 31st** to receive all names and donations. Please let us include your name on our ST. JOHN PASCHA CARD!

ST. JOHN FAMILY PASCHA CARD 2023

Please include my name on this year's Pascha Card.

(Write your Name below as you wish it to appear on the card. Please Print.)

YOUR NAME _

Please accept my donation of $ _____to be used in support of the work of Enrichment.

Make checks payable to: St. JOHN Church – Enrichment

Deadline – Friday March 31, 2023

THE MEANING OF GREAT LENT

If Great Lent is a journey, we need first to know our destination in order to properly understand that journey. So, the first Sunday we need to talk about when we discuss the meaning of Great Lent is Great and Holy Pascha.

Pascha is the feast of feasts, the greatest of the 12 feasts, the event that radically alters how we see the world and life itself (and death itself as well). Pascha changes everything for us- we see that death is destroyed and the tragedy of tragedies is turned into the ultimate victory. We see that death leads to life- that the tomb becomes a womb bearing us into eternal life. We see that "Christ is Risen and life reigneth and not one dead remains in the grave" as the hymn says. We see that love conquers- that humble, selfless love is what leads to the kingdom. We see that unity is our destiny.

This gives us new life- new life here on earth. It transforms the way that we see our life. If our life was a novel it would be called, "My life in Christ", and the introduction to that novel takes place here on earth (only the introduction). The rest of the story takes place in the kingdom of heaven for our story is a heavenly story. This is the new perspective on life that Pascha brings us.

It gives us a renewed definition of life- life as a journey towards the kingdom of heaven, a journey towards oneness with God.

But it is hard to remember this new life. It is hard to remember this life is only the introduction to our story. It is hard to see our fully story. It is hard to see God's plan for us amidst the chaos of this world and all the false advertising and social media that sell us different stories/different ideas of what life is about. We become so immersed, we simply forget because we are so busy.

As Father Schmemman says, "Is it not our daily experience that… 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 and because we forget we fail. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness, and tragedy of our nominal Christianity… And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin our life becomes old again- petty dark and meaningless ".

This brings us to Great Lent- Our Return From Exile- Our Rediscovery Of Life In Christ- Our Rediscovery Of The New Life We Have Been Given, Our Return to Life Lived In The Victory of Pascha, Our Life As An Entrance Towards The Kingdom.

Acquiring the Fruit

"How sad that people misunderstand the significance of the Lenten spring. How distressing that so many take this time "given by our God, the crucified Christ" as a season for sentimental devotions, anxious introspection, and pietistic pseudo-sufferings "together with Jesus"...The Lenten Spring is welcomed by Christians in the Church not as the time for self-inflicted agony or self-improving therapy. It is greeted as the sanctified season consecrated to the correction, purification, and enlightenment of the total person through the fulfillment of the commandments of the crucified God. It is received as the time for battling with evil spirits and blossoming with the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22). It is accepted as the "great and saving forty days" set apart for complete and total dedication to the things of God." - Fr. Thomas Hopko, The Lenten Spring

I really love the quote above because it truly puts into perspective the whole purpose of Great Lent, which is to dedicate our entire selves to God. This important understanding of Lent can very easily get lost in all of the minutiae of the time. We tend to get lost in the rules and the "how to's" of Great Lent. In doing so, we may miss.the whole purpose for the season, which is to be united with Christ and therefore to be closer to who we are called to be as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. In the above quote, Fr. Thomas alludes to an easy way to tell the difference between focusing on the minutiae of the season and focusing on uniting to Christ.

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord warns, "By their fruits you will know them." In this context He is talking about being able to clearly discern whether or not a person is a true or a false prophet. The saying can be applied to any number of situations, however. One of them can even be Great Lent. Oftentimes, when we focus only on the minutiae of the fast, the fruit we tend to bear is: judgment against others for how they are following the rules, or more likely, not following the rules; anger and bitterness because we are tired and hungry and annoyed that we are having to give up so many different things that we would really just rather not; pride when we are seemingly able to live up to the strict letter of the law or even to meet the requirements that were placed upon us by our confessor. None of those fruit are very profitable for our spiritual life and for our life in Christ.

In the quote above, Fr. Thomas lays out the easy way for us to know if we are truly bearing the proper fruit of Great Lent. That proper fruit is what St. Paul calls "the Fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If you've been attending our Wednesday evening Bible Study you are familiar with these fruit of the Spirit! These are the special fruit which reveal our inner heart. As human beings created in the image and likeness of God, we are created to be like God. Each of those fruit are specific characteristics of who God truly IS and how He reveals Himself to His creature through His actions throughout time. It is not only within the potential of each and every person to live up to those characteristics, to do so is truly how we are created to be. In his book, Fellow Workers with God, Norman Russell says, "The image gives us the capacity for a conscious relationship, finite as we are, with the infinite God. The likeness is our dynamic realization of that capacity within the life of ecclesial communion. It is our mirroring of God's beauty, holiness and love in our mind and will. And because God has no limit, we shall continue to grow into the likeness of God for all eternity."

In the actions and activities of Great Lent, the hope is that we follow the fast, attend the many extra services, increase our home prayer life, give alms to the poor, and any of the other disciplines of Lent, for the sole purpose of becoming like God and bearing the appropriate fruit to show it! Ideally, during Lent, we find ourselves being more loving; having more joy, peace and patience; excelling in treating

others kindly and with the gentleness and goodness of God; increasing in our faith; and a willingness to exhibit self-control. If these are not the fruit of our Lenten journey, then perhaps we are going about the season of Lent improperly.

If we find this to be case, it is a great idea to come and talk about our Lenten disciplines. Perhaps we are attempting to do too much. Perhaps we are attempting to do too little. It is a great idea to speak to others about our experience so that we are not attempting to direct ourselves, but are doing what is appropriate to bear the proper fruit of this blessed time.

As we work to acquire the fruit of the Spirit, may God give us a blessed Lenten journey!!

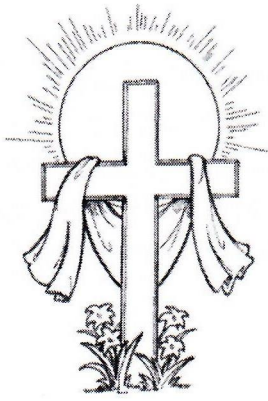
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

We begin with victory after a first week that might have been full of small losses. We might have broken a couple fasting rules and maybe got a little discouraged after all those long services calling ourselves sinners. Maybe we thought to ourselves, "Ahhhh that was only week one? How can I continue for over 40 more days?" The Church gives us little pump up speech—an inspirational push after our first tough week of Great Lent.

We celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy on this day as it was also celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent in 843. We celebrate the restoration of icons, the affirmation of the truth that God did indeed become man and can be depicted as one in an icon.

We believe the veneration of icons is not some sort of worship of wood, but in fact a veneration of the image depicted on the wood (the honor goes to the one depicted, not the wood).

The beauty of this feast lies in the unity and oneness of the faithful all together affirming the truths about God, our faith, and our life here on earth ("the faith that supports the universe"). This feast is a witness of that new life in Christ—resurrected life—where the saints are alive in heaven and depicted as so on the icons. Their story is a heavenly story and the icons give us a glimpse into this story. They give us a glimpse into the kingdom. They are a reminder of our true calling, our true homeland. In this way, this celebration fits in perfectly with the first week of Great Lent and goes right along with the Gospel for this Sunday, "You will see greater things than these… truly truly I say to you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."



PASCHA FLOWERS

Flowers for the Feast of the Cross and Holy Week, palms for the Liturgy commemorating Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and Easter lilies for Pascha are the perfect opportunity for you to make memorial and special intention offerings. The custom in this parish is that all flower offerings are acknowledged in the Easter Bulletin. May God bless you and grand all of your petitions, which are unto salvation.

NAME_____

FLOWERS, PALMS, AND EASTER LILIES

ARE OFFERED

(please print first name only)

FOR THE HEALTH OF IN MEMORY OF

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Amount $_____

Want to learn how to make Holy Bread?

Please let Father know if your interested.

We would like to have a class in MAY!

❊ ❊ ❊ OUR CHANGELESS FAITH ❊ ❊ ❊

We live in a time of tremendous change and that will certainly continue. Technological, social, political and economic change has been the hallmark of our age.

But in all this world of change, today we are reminded of something that does not change. Our faith in Christ, the Son of the Living God, has not changed; our Orthodox Faith is substantially the same as it was a hundred and a thousand years ago. On this First Sunday of Lent, called the "**Sunday of Orthodoxy**," we proclaim to this world of change the changeless Christian faith of our Church.

This is one of our main tasks as inheritors of this priceless heritage – to witness to the world our faith in the Lord. Jesus Himself said: " **Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.**" So we set forth our Faith this day for all to see.

America is a land of religious pluralism, a land of many religions and faiths. Obviously, we have a tremendous impact to make on the religious life of our land. This is especially true in our times, when the winds of the ecumenical spirit blow over the country, altering old antagonisms and fears, bringing fresh opportunities to reach out to brothers and let the Light of this ancient Lamp disperse the darkness of our age.

As we bring forth our icons this day, testifying to the triumph of the Church over those who would destroy these elements that portray the truth of the Incarnation, let us rededicate ourselves to Christ. Let us be careful not only to glory in the past, but to look forward to the challenge of our times and to make certain that the generations to come will confess the Faith of our Fathers.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.

CHECK WEBSITE FOR FEAST DAY SERVICES

WWW.SAINTJOHNCHURCH.ORG

OFFICE HOURS

By Appointment Only