

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
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Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Choir Director: Wash King

Sunday, March 14, 2021
40th Sunday after Pentecost
Forgiveness Sunday

Glory Be To Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

Sun...March 14 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Forgiveness Sunday Vespers
Tues...March 16 5:00 PM – Canon of St. Andrew
Thurs...March 18 5:00 PM – Canon of St. Andrew
Sun...March 21 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Archbishop Mark celebrating Orthodoxy Sunday
Wed...March 24 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
Sun ... March 28 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Parastas

Candles (March 14):

7-Day Vigils/Altar... For the Health of Walter Rosahac offered by Ted Bogosh
Altar Candles... For the Health of Aunt Olga Hebda offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Eternal Lamp... In memory of Peter Wyshosky, Jr. offered by Julia Forte
Vigil Crosses ... In memory of Mother, Mary Lutash offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the Health of Gloria Bench & Family offered by Ted Bogosh
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod...For the Good Health of George Yurchak, Jr. offered by
Helen & George Yurchak

Prayer List: *HEAVENLY FATHER ... Physician of our souls and bodies, Who has sent your only begotten Son to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit us and heal us, Your servants, from all physical and spiritual ailments through the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ; grant to us patience in this sickness, strength of body and spirit, and recovery of health. Lord, You have taught us through Your word to pray for each other that we may be healed. You are the source of healing and to You, we give glory; to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic,
Andrew Balliet, Michael Birozik, Clark Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Cecil Buchanan, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan, Evanna Jane Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Irene Davis, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Olga Hebda, John King, Claire Kononchuk, Michael Kulick, John Kushnir, Nancy Lorchak, MaryAnn Macenka, Mary Maholick, Mildred O'Shura, Anna Pisko, Olga Sidoriak, Helen Suda, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Nancy Vanno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, & Richard York.

March Birthdays: 1- Logan Leatherman, 6- Marie Kalavritinos, 16- Anthony Vavra, 21- Mildred O'Shura, 24- Neil Skripnek, Tracy Skripnek, Zachary King, Olga Sidoriak (99) 29- Sandra Zuber

If anyone is in need of a priest please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772.
Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Financials 3/1-7/21: *Operating Acct:* Candles 50 - Altar Candles 20 - Offerings 867 - Non-Envelope 170 - Holy Days 35 = Total \$1,142.00; - Building Fund 40.- Cemetery Fund 50.
Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

Please use Amazon Smile when ordering from Amazon.

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King

Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

**We express our deepest sympathy to the family of
Helen Suda Who fell asleep in the Lord 2/28/2021
Memory Eternal!**

CONFESSION

Holy Confession resume on Monday, March 15th with modifications due to COVID-19. Everyone will need to call the rectory at 570-645-2772 and talk to Father James for their scheduled reservation. Please call between 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Individual schedule times are spread out during the week so limited contact occurs. Husband and wife can be scheduled together. Lysol will be used between confessions.

Anyone wanting to have a confession, but has concerns of COVID-19, should contact Father James to make the appropriate accommodations. Caution in this period of time is the safe choice for many of our parishioners.

LET US CLEANSE OUR SOULS AND FLESH

Today, Orthodox Christians everywhere stand at the brink of the solemn season of Great Lent. The liturgical theme for this Sunday is FORGIVENESS, a message that will be stressed repeatedly during the ensuing weeks. In fact, this Sunday prior to Great Lent is widely known as FORGIVENESS SUNDAY.

While we are called upon to prepare our bodies for the physical challenges of Lent by abstaining from dairy products the entire week before Lent (Cheesefare Week), the Church also calls us to prepare our souls for the spiritual battles we will face for the next 40 days by making peace with our fellow man.

In our Holy Orthodox Church, a touching custom exists which affords us the opportunity to do this at the conclusion of Forgiveness Sunday Vespers. The faithful are encouraged to exchange a mutual expression of forgiveness with everyone present as they embrace one another and give each other the kiss of peace. It is traditional in some churches to sing the sticheras from Pascha while this is taking place, reminding us that we must mutually seek pardon for our offenses against one another in the name of Christ. He fasted, suffered and rose from the dead for our sake. The moving words of these verses - EVEN FROM THOSE WHO HATE US, LET US FORGIVE ALL THINGS - beautifully capture the spirit of the up-coming Lenten period.

As we prepare to enter Lent, let us recall what St. Basil the Great wrote concerning this fast: "FASTING IS NOTHING NEW, BUT IS A TREASURE HANDED DOWN FROM OUR FATHERS."

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE — Tone 7. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Ven. Benedict of Nursia. St. Theognostus, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia. Rt. Blv. Great Prince Rostilav (Michael), Prince of Kiev and Smolensk. St. Euschemon the Confessor, Bishop of Lampsacus. The “FEODOROVSKAYA” Icon of the Mother of God.

Kontakion — Tone 6

Master, Teacher of wisdom, / Bestower of virtue, / You teach the thoughtless and protect the poor: / Strengthen and enlighten my heart. / Word of the Father, / let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You: / Have mercy on me, a transgressor, / O merciful Lord!

Romans 13:11-14:4 (*Epistle*)

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Matthew 6:14-21 (*Gospel*)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Excerpts from *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*, by Alexander Schmemmann (SVS Press)

Lent is the time for the search for meaning: meaning of my professional life in terms of vocation; meaning of my relationship to other persons; meaning of friendship; meaning of my responsibility. There is no job, no vocation, which cannot be "transformed"-be it only a little-in terms not of greater efficiency or better organization but in those of human value ... Thousands of people think that necessary changes come only from outside, from revolutions and change in external conditions. It is for us Christians to prove that in reality everything comes from inside -from faith and life according to faith ...

One "saint"-and saint here means very simple a man taking his faith seriously all the time-will do more for changing the world than a thousand printed programs. The saint is only the revolution in this world.

Lent Observed

We can say without exaggeration that although Lent is still "observed," it has lost much of its impact on our lives, has ceased to be that bath of repentance and renewal which is meant to be in the liturgical and spiritual teaching of the Church. But then, can we rediscover it; make it again a spiritual power in the daily reality of our existence? The answer to this question depends primarily, I would say almost exclusively, on whether or not we are willing to take Lent seriously.

And indeed, it is the truth and the glory of Orthodoxy that it does not "adjust" itself to and compromise with the lower standards, that it does not make Christianity "easy." It is the glory of Orthodoxy, but certainly not of us Orthodox people.

So much in our churches is explained symbolically as interesting, colorful, and amusing customs and traditions, as something which connects us not so much with God and a new life in Him but with the past and the customs of our forefathers, that it becomes increasingly difficult to discern behind this religious folklore the utter seriousness of religion ... what survived was that which on the one hand is most colorful and on the other hand the least difficult. The spiritual danger here is that little by little one begins to understand religion itself as a system of symbols and customs rather than to understand the latter as a challenge to spiritual renewal and effort.

Lent as Spiritual Challenge

To take Lent seriously means then that we will consider it first of all on the deepest possible level-as a spiritual challenge which requires a response, a decision, a plan, a continuous effort. It is for this reason, as we know, that the weeks of preparation of Lent were established by the Church. This is the time for the response, for the decision and the planning. And the best and easiest way here is to follow the Church's guidance-be it only by meditation on the five Gospel themes offered to us on the five Sundays of the pre-Lenten season: That of desire (Zacchaeus), of humility (Publican and Pharisee), of the exile (Prodigal Son), of judgement (Last Judgement), and of forgiveness (Forgiveness Sunday). These Gospel lessons are not merely to be listened to in church; the whole point is that they are to be "taken home" and meditated upon in terms of my life, my family situation, my professional obligations, my concern for material things, my relation to the concrete human beings with whom I live. If to this meditation one adds the prayer of that pre-Lenten season, "Open to me the gates of repentance, O giver of Life..." and Psalm 137-"By the rivers of Babylon..."-one begins to understand what it means to "feel with the Church" how a liturgical season colors the daily life.

Food for the Mind

If prayer feeds our soul, our intellect also needs its food for it is precisely the intellect of man which is being destroyed today by the ceaseless hammering of TV, radio, newspapers, pictorial magazines, etc. What we suggest then, in addition to the purely spiritual effort, is an intellectual effort ... Suppose we make in advance a reasonable list of books to be read during Lent? Not all of them must necessarily be religious books; not all people are called to be theologians. Yet there is so much implicit "theology" in certain literary masterpieces, and everything which enriches our intellect, every fruit of true human creativity, is blessed by the Church and, properly used, acquires a spiritual value.

And thus, is Lent is, as we have said at the very beginning, the recovery by man of his faith, it is also his recovery of life, of its meaning, of its sacred depth...we rediscover *God Himself*-because we return to Him and in Him to all that He gave us in His infinite love and mercy.