
SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



Convert, become as little children

In Matthew 18:3, in response to His disciples' questions about "who would be the greatest," our Lord told them that "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." What did Jesus mean? Children exist in a state of simplicity, innocence, and guilelessness: "children follow their father, love their mother, do not know how to wish ill on their neighbor, show no concern for wealth, are not proud, do not hate, do not lie, believe what has been said and hold what they hear as truth." (St. Hilary of Poitiers). These childlike virtues are palatable to most Christians, but there is one virtue children have by nature that is repulsive to most of us: total dependency.

Adam and Eve were totally dependent on God in the Garden of Delights. When Eve saw the beauty of the fruit and reached beyond God's commandment, she became

the first human being to assert independence from God. God, because of Adam and Eve's unwillingness to take responsibility for their action (everyone wants independence, no one wants responsibility), gave Adam and Eve over to their desired freedom. They were free to self-actualize, to think, to feel, and to act in and of themselves separate from the will and grace of God. The only cost of this new independence is that life apart from God's sustaining energies leads to corruption, slavery to sin, death, and the devil.

Our Lord Jesus Christ took responsibility for the sin of Adam and Eve when He died on the Cross. In doing so, he restored us to the place where we could again be free from corruption, slavery to sin, death, and the devil. God has provided all things for our salvation. However, as followers of the self-emptying God we have to be willing to

our fallen spiritual independence. This is where most of our problems in the faith will start. Most of us like making our own decisions apart from God. We like the idea of having our own opinions, being self-made, and being self-sufficient. As one bumper sticker suggests, we want God as our co-pilot and we would prefer our co-pilot not to be a demanding "backseat driver."

What would it take for us to make the transition from being self-reliant with God as our co-pilot to becoming faithfully filled and guided by God in all things? In preparation for Lent, I was reading over Met. Kallistos Ware's article, *The True Nature of Fasting*, and I came across this paragraph:

The primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of our dependence upon God. If practiced seriously, the Lenten abstinence from food - particularly in the opening days - involves a considerable measure of real hunger, and also a feeling of tiredness and physical exhaustion. The purpose of this is to lead us in turn to a sense of inward brokenness and contrition; to bring us, that is, to the point where we appreciate the full force of Christ's statement, 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15: 5). If we always take our fill of food and drink, we easily grow over-confident in our own abilities, acquiring a false sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency. The observance of a physical fast undermines this sinful complacency. Stripping from us the specious assurance of the Pharisee - who fasted, it is true, but not in the right spirit - Lenten abstinence gives us the saving self-dissatisfaction of the Publican (Luke 18: 10-13). Such is the function of the hunger and the tiredness: to make us 'poor in spirit', aware of our helplessness and of our dependence on God's aid.

<https://www.goarch.org/-/the-true-nature-of-fasting>

I encourage you to read Met. Kallistos' whole article.

According to Met. Kallistos, the normal practice of Christianity should lead us to a place of conscious dependence upon God. Normal Christianity involves a sense of "inward brokenness and contrition." We are meant to come to a place where we realize that apart from Christ "we can do nothing." It is the "poor in spirit" that are blessed. Do you feel empty, broken, and poor in spirit? Good, maybe you are doing something right.

To drive these points home a little, here are some quotes from St. Ignatius Brianchaninov about being dependent on God versus being dependent on our fallen nature.

"If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies [and not as if it were his own], that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." He who acts in his own strength, acts for vainglory; he offers both himself and those who listen to him as a sacrifice to Satan." Brianchaninov, Ignatius. *The Arena*: (Kindle Locations 1172-1175).

"In our time the majority of people, proud of their progress and claiming to be Christians who do a lot of good, have been striving for the perfection of the righteousness of fallen nature and have turned their backs with scorn on the righteousness of the Gospel." (Kindle Locations 614-616)

"Do not trust your thoughts, opinions, dreams, impulses, or inclinations, even though they offer you or put before you in an attractive guise the most holy monastic (Christian) life." (Kindle Locations 720-721).

"It is a terrible business, out of self-opinion and on one's own authority, to take upon oneself duties that can be carried out only by order of the Holy Spirit and by the action of the Spirit." (Kindle Locations 1048-1049).

For the average modern Christian person, the quotes and sensibilities above are challenging. Culturally, we have been taught the self-help version of the Gospel. Christianity has never been about self-empowerment. The first step to transformation is always seeing things clearly. Our Lord asks us to become like little children. During the rest of this fast, we have an opportunity to grow in simplicity, innocence, and guilelessness by watching what we put into our souls. Let's set, as our ultimate aim, to empty ourselves of our fallen self-reliance so that we can become children of the Living God. It is only in becoming dependent on God that we will find joy and spiritual consolation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

See Calendar below for the schedule of services and happenings at St. Innocent Church. You can also find this calendar by signing into Realm, on our Google calendar, and our website.

MANY YEARS!

Birthdays 1 Molly Croft
2 Paul Guest
5 Mark Dorogy
12 David Marble
14 Lana Hough
16 Kimberly Lloyd
19 Thomas Kehayes
22 Eliza Buck
Anniversaries 19 Gary & Dora Cox

LENTEN ENCOURAGEMENT

Instead of making decisions to change our normal activities during Lent, many seem satisfied to continue life as in any other period. They go to church on Sunday, they don't participate in the additional Lenten services, their social life proceeds as normal, and they even ignore the fast.

What does it mean to take Lent seriously? It means we engage in it wholeheartedly as a spiritual challenge

and opportunity. This means we make special plans to make an extra effort during this period. We find on the church calendar many additional services. If we are serious about Lent we will make plans to participate in them, increasing our time devoted to prayer. This requires a decision and extra effort.

If we are serious about Lent we will choose not to follow the norm. We will instead reduce our level of activity to make room for silence and inner reflection. We should reduce the use of TV, internet surfing, video watching and games, as well as other forms of entertainment and pastimes. This does not have to be a complete absence but a reduced one.... We want to make more time for spiritual reading, listening to spiritual talks, and prayer. We should try to create an atmosphere in our homes that encourages spiritual enrichment during this period. We want gain the experience of what is important for the true life that comes from faith and a life lived by this faith.

Let's become serious about Lent, let's attend the extra services, let's fast, let's reduce our social activities, let's limit our time spent on Internet surfing, videos and games. Instead, let's make time for inner introspection that leads us to repentance, nurturing our soul, and deepening our relationship with God.

<http://www.holytrinityaugusta.org/lent/>

Pragmatically, what can I do to take Lent more seriously?

- Prayer - Make provision to be in church for some of the Lenten services. Assume or resume a regular Rule of Prayer in your home. Read the psalms and other Scripture carefully and prayerfully. Pray for others.
- Charity - Open your heart to your neighbor. If you believe that Christ dwells within you, then try to see Christ in your neighbor. Make your presence for the "other" encouraging and supportive. Restrain your "ego" for the sake of your neighbor. Help someone in a concrete manner this Great Lent.
- Fasting - Set domestic goals about the manner in which you will observe the fast. Test yourselves. Resist minimalism. If you "break" the fast, do not get discouraged or "give up," but start over.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/ CONFESSION

The sacrament of penance is our formal act of reconciliation with God in the Church when sin has severed us from the Church's life. Because penance is the way to communion with God when that communion has been broken by sin, it is often referred to in Church Tradition as the renewal of baptism, or as the reestablishment of that condition of life with God which was given to men in the basic sacraments of inauguration into the Christian life.

Not every sin requires the necessity of formal penance through sacramental ritual. This is obvious because Christians are never completely without sin. Certain grave sins or the prolonged separation from Holy Communion, however, do call for the act of sacramental penance. Also, Christians living in communion with Christ are expected to make use of this sacrament periodically in order to humble themselves consciously before God and to receive guidance in the Christian life from their pastor in the Church. It is the teaching of the Orthodox Church that sacramental penance is necessary for those receiving Holy Communion when they have committed grave sins or when they have been separated from the Eucharistic meal for a long time...
<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-sacraments/penance>

There are three main elements to the act of formal penance:

1. sincere sorrow for sin for the breaking of communion with God and neighbor.
2. an open and heartfelt confession in the presence of the priest who stands on behalf of the whole community.
3. the prayer of absolution by the priest through which the forgiveness of God is sacramentally bestowed upon the repentant sinner



CONFESSION AT ST. INNOCENT

One of the most important aspects of our Lenten journey is the Sacrament of Penance. This is the season of repentance and therefore every Orthodox Christian should prepare to make a good confession during these days.

Fr. Theophan will hear confessions before or after the weekday Lenten services or at any other time by appointment. On Sunday mornings between 9am -9:30am. If Fr. Theophan is behind the icon screen come and get him.

NOTE: Please make every effort to come to confession before March 31 - Lazarus Saturday. Procrastination is not a virtue.

In general practice, the anointing on Holy Wednesday presupposes that one has recently confessed their sins.



Update! Tithes, offerings, and donations through Realm

We now can accept donations through Realm. This can be done as a guest or through your own personal profile. Once you have claimed your profile you can sign in and donate.

When you donate through Realm, your payment information (credit card number or bank account number) remains private (between you and Realm) and is not viewed by anyone in the parish. You can make your payment recurring and easily cancel at any time. The giving link in Realm gives you the option to choose which fund you would like to donate to.

- Donate by Automatic Bank Withdrawal - Simply put in your banks routing number and your account and set it up for a one time or recurring donation. This carries the lowest fee for the parish, less than 1%
- Donate by Debit or Credit Card - simply put in your debit or credit card info and set it up for a one time or recurring donation. This comes with a standard fee for the parish of 2.6%
- Donate by Text message - Text siocmacon \$50 to 73256 to give to Tithes & Offerings using your text messaging. Standard text message rates do apply.

By far, outside of physically donating by check or cash, the best way to give to St. Innocent is through Automatic Bank Withdrawal where there are hardly any fees.

Realm Update!

Things we need from you

- Please, claim your profile and make sure your information is correct. To claim your profile you must do so on a personal computer. You cannot claim your profile from the app.
- Please, upload a picture. This is our new picture directory.
- Set your notices and privacy.
- Please, put in a year for your birthday, the year remains private but helps us with general statistical categories.

Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/58-2418134 and Amazon donates to St Innocent Orthodox Christian Church.



Now your support
goes 3 times as far

From Mar 12 – 31, Amazon will triple the donation rate to 1.5% on your first eligible purchase at smile.amazon.com.

 **amazonsmile**

Important services during Lent

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

On most Wednesdays of Great Lent at 6:30pm. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn Lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. There is no consecration of the eucharistic gifts at the presanctified liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the eucharistic gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, hence its name of "presanctified." It comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. The faithful who are unable to make the effort of total fasting because of weakness or work, however, normally eat a light Lenten meal in the early morning.

The Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

On Wednesday, March 21st at 6:30pm. This is the only time in the year when the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read in its entirety, along with the canon to St. Mary of Egypt. This canon contains every motivation toward fasting and repentance. The Church has this service to encourage us and inspire us with renewed strength to finish the course of the fast. The Life of St. Mary of Egypt is also read to that end—to motivate us to be attentive and repent.



The Great Feast of Annunciation

On Saturday, March 24th Vigil or Great Vespers at 6pm. This Feast falls on a Sunday this year. The feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary comes nine months before Christmas on the twenty-fifth of March. It is the celebration of the announcing of the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary as recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke.

Lazarus Saturday

We will serve Matins, Friday, March 30th at 6:30pm and on Saturday, the Festal Divine Liturgy at 10am. Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrectional service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as "the Resurrection and the Life" who, by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before His own suffering and death. Technically, Lent ends and Holy Week begins on Lazarus Saturday. This year Lazarus Saturday falls on one of St. Innocent's feast days!

The Great Feast of Palm Sunday

On Saturday, March 31st, Vigil or Great Vespers at 6pm. The feast of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday, is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. The services of this Sunday follow directly from those of Lazarus Saturday. The church building continues to be vested in resurrectional splendor, filled with hymns which continually repeat the Hosanna offered to Christ as the Messiah-King who comes in the name of God the Father for the salvation of the world. The main troparion of Palm Sunday is the same one sung on Lazarus Saturday.

HOLY WEEK 2018

April 2-7

Monday & Tuesday 6:30pm Bridegroom Matins

Bridegroom Matins is a service specific to the first four evenings of Holy Week (though it is often omitted on Holy Wednesday in favor of the service of Holy Unction) and commemorates the last days in the earthly life of the Lord. The services are called the "Bridegroom" services because the general theme of each of these days is the end of the world and the judgment of Christ.

Wednesday 6:30pm The Mystery of Holy Unction

The mystery of holy unction provides both physical and spiritual healing with holy oil blessed by the Holy Spirit. It is most commonly celebrated during Holy Week on Holy Wednesday evening, but private services are also common. Everyone in the parish in good ecclesiastical standing may be anointed with the holy oil for the healing of spiritual and bodily ills. As this is one of the sacraments of the Orthodox Church, it may be administered only to Orthodox Christians.

Holy Thursday 10am Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil

Holy Thursday begins with the celebration of vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. Two events shape the liturgy of the Great and Holy Thursday: The Last Supper of Christ with His disciples and the betrayal by Judas. Jesus drew His last breath of freedom on this Thursday night. Christ knew all the incidents which were about to take place and called to Him His Apostles in order to institute the Holy Eucharist for them and for the Church forever.

Holy Thursday 6:30pm Matins with Passion Readings

Good Friday celebrates the holy, saving, and awesome Passion of Christ. To take away our sins, Christ willingly endured spitting, scourging, buffeting, scorn, mocking, and purple robe; the reed, sponge, vinegar, nails, spear, and above all, the Cross and Death. The confession from the cross of the penitent thief, crucified with Christ, is celebrated. This service is long, but its content is dramatic and deeply moving for the devout Christian. Participation in the prayers and the historical sequence of the events, as related in the Gospels and hymns, provides a vivid foundation for the great events yet to come. Following are the references of the "Twelve Gospel" readings of this service

Holy Friday 10am Royal Hours

According to the Hebrew custom, the "Royal Hours," four in number, are read at this time. These services consist of hymns, psalms, and readings from the Old and New Testaments, all related prophetically and ethically to the Person of Christ. In some churches, the "Hours" are read in the afternoon, before the Vesper services.

Holy Friday 3pm Vespers w/ placing of the shroud

The Vespers, celebrated in the Church on Holy Friday afternoon, brings to mind all of the final events of the life of Christ. The trial, the sentence, the scourging and mocking, the crucifixion, the death, the taking down of His body from the Cross, and the burial. As the hymnography indicates, these events remain ever-present in the Church; they constitute the today of its life.

HOLY WEEK 2018

April 2-7

Holy Friday 6:30pm

Matins with Lamentations at the Tomb of Christ

6:30pm, April 6. On Good Friday evening the Orthodox Church celebrates the Matins Service for Holy and Great Saturday. In many ways, this service resembles a funeral for our Lord. At this service, the Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord's descent into Hades, the place of the dead. Death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated from within. "He (Christ) gave Himself as a ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the Cross . . . He loosed the bonds of death" (Liturgy of Saint Basil). At the Matins service, in place of the regular psalm reading the entire Psalm 119 is read with a verse praising the dead Saviour chanted between each of its lines. This particular psalm is the verbal icon of Jesus, the righteous man whose life is in the hands of God and who, therefore, cannot remain dead. The Praises, as the verses are called, glorify God as "the Resurrection and the Life," and marvel at his humble condescension into death.

Holy Saturday 10am

Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil

10am Saturday, April 6. On Holy Saturday itself, Vespers are served with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. This service already belongs to the Passover Sunday. Following the evening entrance which is made with the Book of the Gospels, fifteen readings from the Old Testament scriptures are read, all of which relate to God's work of creation and salvation which has been summed up and fulfilled in the coming of the predicted Messiah.

One can and must say that of all services of the Church that are inspiring, meaningful, revealing, this one: the Vespers and Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and Holy Saturday is truly the liturgical climax of the Church. If one opens one's heart and mind to it and accepts its meaning and its light, the very truth of Orthodoxy is given by it, the taste and the joy of that new life which shines forth from the grave.

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

- Saturday, April 6 at 11:30pm -Midnight Office - A little before midnight on the Blessed Sabbath the Nocturne service is chanted. The celebrant goes to the tomb and removes the winding-sheet. He carries it through the royal doors and places it on the altar table where it remains for forty days until the day of Ascension.
- 12am - Paschal Matins - The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The Paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins, the paschal verses are sung and the Paschal sermon of St. John Chrysostom is proclaimed.
- 1am - Paschal Divine Liturgy - The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha.
- Sunday, 1pm - Agape Vespers - At this service the Gospel reading (John 20:19-25) depicts the first appearance of the risen Lord to his disciples, and is recited in many languages (often as many languages as are known by those present in the congregation), symbolising that the glorious resurrection of Christ is proclaimed to all the nations of the world.

March 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 St. Gregory Palamas 9:20am 3 & 6 th Hours 9:40am Baptismal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	5	6 9am Morning Psalter	7 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	8 9am Morning Psalter 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	9	10 10am Church Cleanup 5pm Confession 6pm Vigil Ven. Cross
11 Ven. Cross 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	12	13 9am Morning Psalter	14 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	15 9am Morning Psalter 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	16	17 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers 7pm Orthodoxy 101
18 St. John Clinicus 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	19	20 9am Morning Psalter	21 6:30pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	22 9am Morning Psalter 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	23	24 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers Annunciation
25 St. Mary of Egypt 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	26	27 9am Morning Psalter	28 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	29 9am Morning Psalter 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	30 6:30pm Matins Lazarus Saturday/ St. Innocent	31 Lazarus Saturday 10am Divine Liturgy 5pm Confession 6pm Vigil Palm Sunday

April 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Palm Sunday</p> <p>9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy with palm procession 11:45am Agape</p>	<p>2 Holy Week</p> <p>6:30pm Bridgroom Matins</p>	<p>3 Holy Week</p> <p>9am Morning Psalter 6:30pm Bridgroom Matins</p>	<p>4 Holy Week</p> <p>6:30pm The Sacrament of Holy Unction</p>	<p>5 Holy Week</p> <p>10am Vesperal Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6:30pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels</p>	<p>6 Holy Week</p> <p>10am Royal Hours 12pm décor the tomb 3pm Vespers w/ the placing of the Shroud. 6:30pm Matins w/ the Lamentations</p>	<p>7 Holy Week</p> <p>10am Vesperal Divine Liturgy 11:30pm Midnight Office, Paschal Matins & Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom</p>
<p>8</p> <p><i>Great and Holy Pascha</i> 1pm Agape Vespers</p>	9	<p>10</p> <p>Bright Week Services to be announced</p>	11	12	13	14
<p>15 St. Thomas Sunday</p> <p>9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Radonitza Parikhida 12:15pm Agape</p>	16	<p>17</p> <p>9am Morning Prayers</p>	18	19	20	21
<p>22 Myrrh-bearing Women</p> <p>9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape</p>	23	<p>24</p> <p>9am Morning Prayers</p>	25	26	27	28
<p>29 Paralytic</p> <p>9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape</p>	30					