

ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



Great Lent and Its Opportunities

*By Monk Moses the
Athonite*

The period before Pascha which we are going through gives birth, or should give birth, to a special feeling within us. The most beautiful and solemn hymnography of this period, the many liturgical occasions, and the lenten fast are calling us to assemble ourselves. To stoop within us, to figure out our problems, to self-evaluate towards a sincere repentance.

Many people do not want to acknowledge the meaning of these days, continuing along in their monotonous life. Although they say life is tiring them, they do not take one step towards an essential change.

They do strict diets, but they don't fast.

They go to psychologists, and sit in front of the television for hours, but they don't go to a confessor nor to church.

People today do not want to give, but only to get, without toil or personal sacrifice. We are afraid to look ourselves in the eyes. We systematically avoid this, causing anxiety within ourselves.

Great Lent works like an X-Ray machine, like a photographic camera, like a mirror. Somehow we consider it repulsive, because it reveals our hidden reality.

Today's spirit of consumerism, comfort and pride leaves man a prisoner of the many unnecessary things that have filled his life. Great Lent is a halt to this routine and a transfiguration. A prayer said in the divine services during this entire period hundreds of times, written by Ephraim the Syrian, urges us to abandon sloth, curiosity, love of power and idle talk and gain wisdom, humility, patience and love. This beautiful and meaningful prayer ends by asking God: "Grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother." That is, to abandon gossip, over-analyzing, and the strict and continuous judgment of others, and to turn within ourselves, correcting our own mistakes.

Great Lent wants us to focus on ourselves and contribute to the healing of our spiritual diseases, which darken our minds and make our lives difficult and bitter.

If we reach this self-knowledge and repentance, then Great Lent will not be a gloomy and barren time for us, or a simple time to fulfill our "moral duties", but an opportunity to soften our hardened hearts, which will lead us to the love for people and the love for God.

Excessive rationalizing of the difficult times we live in, strives to keep us away from everything mystical, hesychastic, sacred, mysterious, supra-logical and supernatural. The result of this state has come to light. Everywhere there is melancholy and despair reigns, afflicting many. It is time to see from the depth of our hearts that we have become estranged, and the time is ripe to return to the cradle of Crucified Love.

Often during the time of Great Lent we encounter temptations, trials, tribulations and failures. These are to mature us, to help us acquire balance and a child-like nature. Let us not forget that the life of the Christian is one of the Cross. Without crucifixion there will come no resurrection.

Great Lent is a beautiful and good time for preparation, a semi-darkened corridor leading us to a chamber full of light. The foundation of this preparatory time are prayer and fasting. But prayer and fasting without humility and love bares no fruit. Fasting and prayer aim to temper our selfishness.

Let us not lose this opportunity offered once again by the Great Fast, as we are approaching... In the Church, our problems find their solution. The cold winter is followed by spring. The Triodion is followed by the Pentecostarion. The clouds are never permanent, but afterwards the sunshine is much better. And now, as a wonderful troparion says, it is the "time of repentance and the hour for prayer."



News and Announcements

- During the first week of Lent we have services every night at 6:00 pm. See the schedule below.
- Family Church School is on Sunday the 10th.
- On Sunday, March 24th, we will have a procession with icons. Don't forget to bring your family icon
- The Parish Council is meeting on Wednesday, March 13th at 7pm

Iconography Update

Our iconographer, Vladimir, is installing our first phase of icons from March 26 to April 6. In preparation for the installation, we will need volunteers in a few key areas.

- Scaffolding construction: We are going to schedule a scaffolding construction party. Dn. Columba is designing and precutting a wooden scaffold system. If you would like to help Dn. Columba do the pre-cutting reach out to him directly. On March 23rd, we are going to erect this scaffolding, so we will need people and hands for that day as well.
- We will need volunteers to prepare the church building. The iconostasis and the floors behind it will need to be covered.

Many Years!

Birthdays in March

1 Molly Croft

1 Link Scouten

2 Paul Guest

5 Mark Dorogy

7 Jeremy Pelt

10 Dena Sue Watts

11 Hannah Magnusson

11 Bede Douglas

12 David Marble

14 Lana Hough

15 Mark Olsen

19 Thomas Kehayes

22 Eliza Buck

23 Elias Werner

The Holy Mystery of Confession

One of the most important aspects of our Lenten journey is partaking of the the Sacrament of Confession. We are coming upon the season of repentance; therefore, every Orthodox Christian should prepare to confess during Great Lent.

Fr. Theophan is available to hear confessions:

- Before or after the weekday Lenten services
- On Sunday mornings between 920-9:40
- By appointment

Please plan on making your confession before Holy Week. If you struggle to identify your sins, you can make an appointment during office hours with Fr. Theophan.

Lenten Book Study

Journey to Reality: Sacramental Life in a Secular Age













by Zachary Porcu

Most books aimed at introducing Orthodoxy to the non-Orthodox begin by explaining basic points of doctrine and practice that differ from what the average reader may be familiar with. But for the average American, this approach doesn't go deep enough. In order to be able to fully understand Orthodox doctrine and practice, we have to unlearn an entire secular worldview and become participants in a sacramental worldview instead—a worldview that embraces reality as it truly is. Dr. Zachary Porcu provides a guide to this process that is easily accessible both to Western Christians and to those who lack any grounding in the Christian Faith.

We ordered ten books for the bookstore. As soon as the books arrive we will schedule our meetings, most likely on zoom but we can meet in person as well.

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 25th		<i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> 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 MARCH 3rd		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 MARCH 10th 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 MARCH 17th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY		Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> 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 24th		<i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> 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 31st		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 APRIL 7th		VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> 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 APRIL 14th		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 21st		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 28th GREAT WEEK BEGINS		<i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> 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 MAY 3rd		GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 5th NO FASTING!		<i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> 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!



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7301 Rivoli Road - Macon, Georgia 31210



MARCH 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb 25 Publican & Pharisee 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Catechism	Feb 26	Feb 27 6:00pm Akathist to St. Raphael of Brooklyn	Feb 28 Fast Free 9:00am Divine Liturgy	Feb 29	1 Fast Free	2 2-4:30pm Bonfire build 5:00pm Great Vespers followed by Bonfire Grillout
3 Prodigal Son 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Catechism	4	5	6 6:00pm Daily Vespers	7	8 6:00pm Memorial Saturday Vespers	9 9:00am Memorial Saturday Matins & Liturgy 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
10 Meatfare 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Church School			13 6:00pm Daily Vespers	14	15	16 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
17 Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Forgiveness Vespers 12:30pm Food and Fellowship	18 Great Lent Begins 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew	19 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew	20 5:45pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	21 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew	22 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	23 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
24 Sunday of Orthodoxy 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	25 ANNUNCIATION 9am Vespereal Liturgy	26 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	27 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	28 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	29 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	30 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
31 St. Innocent / St. Gregory Palamas 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	Apr 1 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	Apr 2 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	Apr 3 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	Apr 4 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	Apr 5 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	Apr 6 6:00pm Vigil for the Ven. Cross



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APRIL 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mar 31 St. Innocent / St. Gregory Palamas 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	1 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	2 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	3 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	4 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	5 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	6 6:00pm Vigil for the Ven. Cross
7 Ven. Cross 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 5:00pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers at HCGOC	8	9	10 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	11	12 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	13 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
14 St. John Climacus 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Church School	15	16	17 6:00pm The Great Canon with the Life of St. Mary	18	19 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	20 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
21 St. Mary of Egypt 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Altar Server Practice	22	23	24 5:45pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	25	26 6:00pm Lazarus Saturday Matins	27 10:00 am Lazarus Saturday Liturgy 11:30 am Pancakes & Palms party 6:00pm Vigil for Palm Sunday
28 PALM SUNDAY 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Festal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 1:15pm Bridegroom Matins	29 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	30 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	May 1 6:00pm Holy Unction	May 2 10:00am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00pm Matins with 12 Passion readings	May 3 10:00am Royal Hours 12:00pm Decorating the Bier (young ladies) 3:00pm Holy Friday Vespers 6:00pm Holy Saturday Matins	May 4 10:00am Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy 11:30pm Pascha Midnight Office