



## **Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**

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## **\*\*\*\*\*GREAT LENT\*\*\*\*\***

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Archbishop Antony, Bishop Robert, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Archimandrite Lev, Father Nestor Kowal, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father Silouan Rolando, Hieromonk Vasyl (Janick), Deacon Dennis Lapushanski, Joshua Agosto and his family, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 4-year-old with a brain tumor, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George & Mika Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Doris Artman, Nancy Barylak, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [4-year-old with cancer], Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Charles & Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Glenn Miller, Vince Ferro, Michael Pawlyshyn, Dorothy Lednovich, Kristin Batch Vaughn, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Woloschak, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Nellie Patsko, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne

Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Pete Niederberger, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Lloyd Sheakley [Pani Gina's uncle], Diane McDaniel, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Theodore Demopoulos, Jillian Bowman [10-year old with cancer], Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Evan Elliott, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Shirley Tkacik, Sabrina Sudol, Doug Smith [Millie Kerr's son-in-law], Bonnie Blair [Pani Gina's mother], Mel & Charlotte Malik, Paula Pasquinelli, David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our March babies: John Paouncic on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sonia Luciow on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Walter Anthony Burlack on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Mary Shirley on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Judy Previc on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and Mike Holupka on the 25<sup>th</sup>. May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'Nohaya Lita!**

**Please remember James John Logue, George Senita, John Kirkowski, Matthew Machak, Michael Repasky, and ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Debbie Paouncic’s class. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP!**

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

**AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.**

#### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**Sunday, March 4                      Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great    10:30 AM  
FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY**

**SAINT LEO-BISHOP OF CATANIA IN SICILY; HIEROMARTYR SADOC-BISHOP OF PERSIA; SAINT AGATHO-POPE OF ROME; BLESSED YAROSLAV THE WISE OF KIEV; SAINT AGATHO-WONDERWORKER OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 5*

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

John 1:43-51

*Litany in Blessed Memory of John Metrick, Mary Smith, Andrew Hanczar, Anna Lawrence, Michael Cicio, Chuck Shumski, Terry Reinhart, Joseph Vangrin, & Frank Riznow—Fr. Bob*

*Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charles Batch—Harry Batch*

**TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOX CELEBRATION—4:00 PM**

**SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, OAKLAND**

**Sunday, March 11**

**Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 10:30 AM**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS-ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA**

**SYNAXIS OF THE ALL-VENERABLE FATHERS OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; SAINT PROCOPIUS THE CONFESSOR OF DECAPOLIS; SAINT THALELAIUS-HERMIT OF SYRIA; SAINT TITUS THE SOLDIER & SAINT TITUS THE PRESBYTER—OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 6*

Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Mark 2:1-12

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Walter Burlack [Walt & Evelyn's Anniversary is 3-12], Jacob [birthday] & Katarina Burlack—Evelyn Burlack*

**Thursday, March 15**

**Slickville Ecumenical Service**

**7:00 PM**

**First Presbyterian Church—Father Sam Lamendola speaking**

**Sunday, March 18**

**Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 10:30 AM**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—ADORATION OF THE MOST HOLY LIFE-GIVING CROSS**

**MARTYRS CONON & ONISIUS OF ISAURIA; MARTYR CONON THE GARDENER OF PAMPHYLIA; VIRGIN-MARTYR IRAIS OF ANTINOE, MARTYR ARCHELAUX, & 152 MARTYRS WITH THEM IN EGYPT; MARTYR EULAMPIUS & EULOGIUS OF PALESTINE; SAINT MARK THE FASTER OF EGYPT; SAINT HESYCHIUS THE FASTER OF BITHYNIA**

*Tone 7*

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Mark 8:34-9:1

*Parastas in Blessed Memory of Tillie Kuzman—Debbie & John Pauncic*

# **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 04 MARCH 2012**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY  
SAINT LEO-BISHOP OF CATANIA IN SICILY; HIEROMARTYR SADOC-  
BISHOP OF PERSIA; SAINT AGATHO-POPE OF ROME; BLESSED  
YAROSLAV THE WISE OF KIEV; SAINT AGATHO-WONDERWORKER  
OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

## **TROPARION—TONE 2**

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One,  
And ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.  
Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh  
And deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the enemy.  
Therefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:  
Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,  
For thou didst come to save the world

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,  
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## **KONTAKION—TONE 8**

No one could describe the Word of the Father  
But when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos,  
He accepted to be described  
And restored the fallen image to its former state  
By uniting it to divine beauty.  
We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images

## **PROKEIMENON—TONE 4**

**READER:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

**PEOPLE:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

**READER:** For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

**PEOPLE:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

**READER:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers

**PEOPLE:** And praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

## **ALLELUIA VERSES**

Moses and Aaron are among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His name.

They cried to the Lord, and He answered them.

## **FASTING AND GREAT LENT THE TRIODION**

Great Lent is the 40-day season of spiritual preparation that comes before the most important Feast of the Christian year, Holy Pascha (which means "Passover" and is commonly called "Easter",). It is the central part of a larger time of preparation called the Triodion season.

The Triodion begins ten weeks before Easter and is divided into three main parts: three Pre-Lenten weeks of preparing our hearts, the six weeks of Lent, and Holy Week. The main theme of the Triodion is repentance-mankind's return to God, our loving Father.

This annual season of repentance is a spiritual journey with our Savior. Our goal is to meet the risen Lord Jesus, Who reunites us with God the Father. The Father is always waiting to greet us with outstretched hands. We must ask ourselves the question, "Are we willing to turn to Him?"

During Great Lent, the Church teaches us how to receive Him by using the two great means of repentance- prayer and fasting.

### **THE LENTEN FAST**

The word "fast" means not eating all or certain foods. As Orthodox Faithful, we can fast completely at certain times of great importance, and especially each time before receiving Holy Communion. Usually, fasting means limiting the number of meals and/or the type of food eaten.

The purpose of fasting is to remind us of the Scriptural teaching, "Man does not live by bread alone." The needs of the body are nothing compared to the needs of the soul. Above all else, we need God, Who provides everything for both the body and the soul. Fasting teaches us to depend on God more fully.

The first sin of our parents, Adam and Eve, was eating from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-19). We fast from food, or a food item, as a reminder that we are to fast from sinning and doing evil.

There are several benefits of fasting. Fasting helps us pray more easily. Our spirit is lighter when we are not weighed down by too much food or food that is too rich. Through fasting, we also learn to feel compassion for the poor and hungry and to save our own resources so that we can help those in need.

Fasting is more than not eating food. Saint John Chrysostom teaches that it is more important to fast from sin. For example, besides controlling what goes into our mouths, we must control what comes out of our mouths as well. Are our words pleasing to God, or do we curse God or our brother?

The other members of the body also need to fast: our eyes from seeing evil, our ears from hearing evil, our limbs from participating in anything that is not of God. Most important of all, we need to control our thoughts, for thoughts are the source of our actions, whether good or evil.

Fasting is not an end in itself. Our goal is an inner change of heart. The Lenten Fast is called "ascetic." This refers to a ctions of self-denial and spiritual training which are central to fasting.

Fasting is a spiritual exercise. It is not imposed or forced upon us. In the same way that true repentance cannot be forced upon anyone, each of us makes the choice to turn away from our sinful ways and go toward our loving, for giving Father in Heaven.

### **THE PRE-LENTEN WEEKS**

Before Great Lent begins, four Sunday lessons prepare us for the Fast. Humility is the theme of the first Sunday, called the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. The Lord's parable in Luke 18:10-14 teaches that fasting with pride is rejected by God. For this reason, there is no fasting the week following this Sunday. This includes no fasting on Wednesday and Friday that week. (Wednesdays and Fridays are usually fast days throughout the year-Wednesday's Fast recalls the betrayal of Christ by Judas; Friday's Fast commemorates the Lord's Crucifixion.)

Repentance is the theme of the second Pre-Lenten Sunday, called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Before we can return to God, we need to recognize that we are far from God because of sin. Like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), we are in a self-imposed exile. Will we come to our senses as did the Prodigal Son and return to our Father?

The next Sunday is called both Meatfare Sunday and the Sunday of the Last Judgment. The second name refers to the Gospel lesson (Matthew 25:31-46) read on this day. The Lord tells us we will be judged at the end according to the love we have shown for our brother. "I was hungry..thirsty..naked...a stranger...in prison...sick... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine you did for Me." Almsgiving goes hand in hand with fasting. This Sunday is called Meatfare because it is the last day meat, fish or poultry is eaten before Easter, for those keeping the Lenten Fast.

The last Pre-Lenten Sunday is called both Cheesefare Sunday and the Sunday of Forgiveness. This is the last day dairy products are eaten before the Fast. The Gospel lesson (Matthew 6:14-21) read on this day tells us that our fast must not be hypocritical or "for show." Our work and our appearance are to continue as usual and our extra efforts are to be known only by God. The Gospel reading also reminds us that God the Father will forgive us in the same manner as we forgive our brother. With this promise of forgiveness, Great Lent begins on the next day, which is called Clean Monday. Clean Monday is a total fast day, except for a little water. No other beverages or food are taken.

### **GENERAL RULES OF THE LENTEN FAST**

The Lenten Fast rules that we observe today were established within the monasteries of the Orthodox Church during the sixth through eleventh centuries. These rules are intended for all Orthodox Christians, not just monks and nuns.

The first week of Lent is especially strict. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, a total fast is kept. In practice, very few people are able to do this. Some find it necessary to eat a little each day after sunset. Many Faithful do fast completely on Monday and then eat only uncooked food (bread, fruit, nuts) on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, the fast is kept until after the Presanctified Liturgy.

From the second through the sixth weeks of Lent, the general rules for fasting are practiced. Meat, animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard), fish (meaning fish with backbones), olive oil, and wine (all alcoholic drinks) are not consumed during the weekdays of Great Lent. Octopus and shell-fish are allowed, as is vegetable oil. On weekends, olive oil and wine are permitted.

According to what was done in the monasteries, one meal a day is eaten on weekdays and two meals on weekends of Great Lent. No restriction is placed on the amount of food during the meal, though moderation is always encouraged in all areas of one's life at all times.

Fish, oil and wine are allowed on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25/April 7) and on Palm Sunday (one week before Easter). On other feast days, such as the First

and Second Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist (February 24/March 8) , the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (March 9/22), the Forefeast of the Annunciation (March 24/April 6) and the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (March 26/April 8), wine and oil are permitted.

### **HOLY WEEK**

The week before Easter, Holy Week, is a special time of fasting separate from Great Lent. Like the first week, a strict fast is kept. Some Orthodox Christians try to keep a total fast on Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. Most eat a simple Lenten meal at the end of each day before going to the evening Church services.

On Holy Thursday, wine is allowed in remembrance of the Last Supper. Holy Friday is kept as a strict fast day, as is Holy Saturday. Holy Saturday is the only Saturday in the entire year when oil is not permitted.

In short, these are the Lenten rules for fasting. Traditionally, the Church Fathers recommend that someone new to fasting begin by resolving to faithfully do as much as he or she is able during the Lenten period. Each year as one matures as a Christian, a fuller participation can be undertaken. However, it is not recommended that a person try to create their own rules for fasting, since this would not be obedient or wise. The Faithful are encouraged to consult with their priest or bishop regarding the Fast when possible.

Personal factors such as one's health and living situation need to be considered as well. For example, an isolated Orthodox Christian required to eat meals at their place of employment, school or in prison may not be able to avoid certain foods. The Church understands this and extends leniency.

It is important to keep in mind that fasting is not a law for us-rather, a voluntary way of remembering to not sin and do evil, and to help keep our focus on prayer, repentance and doing acts of kindness, for we "are not under the law but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

### **EASTER, BRIGHT WEEK AND THE PASCHAL SEASON**

The Lenten Fast is broken following the midnight Easter service. With the proclamation, "Christ is risen!" the time of feasting begins. The week after Easter is called Bright Week and there is no fasting. For the next 40 days, the Church celebrates the Paschal (Easter) season. Joy and thanksgiving are the fulfillment of our Lenten journey.

### **A PRAYER FOR LENT**

The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is traditionally said many times throughout each day during Great Lent, in addition to our daily prayers:

**O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. (+)**

**But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. (+)**

**Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sin and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. (+)**

*(The "(+)" indicates that those praying make a deep bow or prostration at this point.)*

### **Drawing Closer to God**

Prayer is the continual experiencing of God and the continual quest to be united with God. Prayer is an inexhaustible subject as God is beyond

complete comprehension. Prayer is learned from the Holy Fathers and Mothers of the Church. The experiences of the Holy Fathers and Mothers are part of the history of the Church. Their experiences and writings are relevant today. Prayer is learned from the Holy Scriptures. Reading the Holy Scriptures is a form of prayer. Prayer is the exercise of the self in reaching out to God. Prayer is the reaching within the self to know God(Lk.17:21) The heart is central to the act of prayer. Believers' love of God is nurtured and experienced in the heart. The battle against evil and temptations takes place in the heart. The mind has a dominant role in prayer. Focusing the mind on God and drawing near to God involves protection against extraneous influences. The mind must be cared for to remain focused. Abuse of the body will affect functioning of the mind and detract from prayer. A mind and body affected by drugs or alcohol or weakened by gluttony are less resilient in prayer. Believers determined to be united with God in prayer must be willing to push away distractions. Strong interest in growth in Christ has the power to cut through resistance and overcome temptations. The pushes and pulls of daily life are put in proper perspective when the relationship with God is the primary interest. The Lord Jesus Christ said "Seek first the kingdom of God..."(Mt.6:33) Priorities and values in life flow from the person's relationship with God. Personal and professional relationships reflect the individual's relationship with God. Praying for an improved relationship with God and with the people in our daily lives is essential. In the Divine Liturgy the priest reads these words: "Grant also to those who pray with us, O God, growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding." Prayer is fundamental to Christian growth. The Divine services of the Church are action-oriented fostering unity with God. Personal prayer complements participation in the Divine services of the Church and is part of the continuum of Christian life. Each day is for renewal of the life with God. Each day is for appreciating the blessings of God. Each day reveals the presence of God. Opening the eyes daily to God motivates the person to be more earnest in prayer. Submitting ourselves to the will of God takes great patience and personal reflection. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray : "Thy will be done". We must be willing to joyfully accept the will of God in our lives. Continuing to focus on God in our daily lives enables us to understand more the way to live God-pleasing lives. God gives us life each day. Our lives need to reflect appreciation for the daily gift of life and for the daily blessings received.

*Father Rodney Torbic*

**A Time to Fast**



***Joel 1:14-Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God and cry out to the Lord. (NKJV)***

Fasting is a bringing of the body under control. It is a controlling of the thoughts and appetites. Fasting involves directing the body, the mind and the heart to God.

Fasting is the looking to God for direction in life. Obedience to God is essential to fasting. Opening the heart and mind to God enhance the value of the fast. Pride and judgment of others have no part in fasting.

The Pharisee in the Gospel for the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee is an example of how not to be if the desire is to draw closer to God. The humble demeanor of the tax collector was much better. Lk.18:10-14).

Fasting is to be accompanied by prayer. Fasting is strengthened by prayer. Prayer deserves to be the basis for every action and thought. Constant prayer is expected. Constant prayer is the desired goal.(I Thess.5:17)

The fast of Great Lent is for everyone. The fast of Great Lent has an impact on each individual participating. The fast of Great Lent has a collective impact on the world.

God determines the impact of fasting on the individual and the collective impact. The impact increases for the individual to the degree the person values the fast and invests in the fast.

The love of God is fundamental for every effort in fasting. Desiring to grow closer to God and increase in pleasing God have a place in every effort of fasting.

God brings joy to the heart, the soul and the mind. Fasting is a way of seeking the joy of God. Aspects of life detracting from unity with God are put aside in times of fasting.

Fasting may involve strenuous effort. Bitterness, minimization and rejection of the Church's expectations and standards of fasting greatly negate a beneficial outcome.

The joy of the Lord summons believers. The journey through Great Lent is a journey of enrichment for the soul. Great Lent offers the opportunity for cleansing of the soul and for beginning anew with Christ.

Baptism and Chrismation offered newness in Christ. Holy Confession and Holy Communion offer newness in Christ. Great Lent offers renewal in Christ.

Giving of the self totally to God is expected at the beginning of Great Lent and throughout Great Lent. Each day of Great Lent has value. Each day is an opportunity to build upon and improve the personal relationship with God.

*St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Carmichaels, Pennsylvania. February 9/22, 2012. Apodasis of the Presentation of the Lord, Father Rodney Torbic*

Prot. No. 101: CATECHETICAL HOMILY For HOLY AND GREAT LENT  
**+ B A R T H O L O M E W**

By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome  
and Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church:

Grace and Peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
And Prayers, Blessings and Forgiveness from Us

"O faithful, let us joyfully welcome the divinely-inspired announcement of  
fasting"

**Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,**

In recent times, we observe an elevated level of concern. Many challenges arise. The world is suffering and yearns for help. Indeed, we are going through a general test. Some people call it a financial decline; others refer to it as a political crisis. So far as we are concerned, it is a matter of spiritual perversion. And a solution exists. Many resolutions are proposed and numerous viewpoints are heard. Yet, the problems persist. People feel deserted and alone. Their deeper nature is ignored. They remain in the gloom of confusion and depression.

Irrespective of the direction or solution proposed, the various answers that are offered cannot redeem humanity. For, from the outset, they render it captive to corruption and death. The Church is the divine-human Lord, who alone can liberate our soul. Upon entering the space of the Church, we enter the atmosphere of divine consolation, of reconciliation between heaven and earth. We are at home. Our spirit is calm. We discover a heavenly beauty and a spiritual maturity, "a holy fragrance capable of reaching the ends of the world." The Church knows all that we suffer. It speaks the whole truth. And it urges us to face reality as it is; to recognize that we are earth and dust.

The Great Canon of St. Andrew makes mention of repentant tears of and sorrowful mourning, namely the pain of our wounds. Nonetheless, what follows is the rest of the soul, the health of the spirit. We have our Creator and Savior. Through the abundance of His mercy, he has placed us at the intersection of incorruption and mortality. He has not forsaken us. He came to save us. Through His cross, He abolished death. He granted us incorruption of the flesh.

Since, therefore, we are planted with Christ, why are we troubled in vain? Why do we not run toward Him? The Church neither dwells on nor abandons us to corruption. It knows our deeper inclinations and comes to our support and salvation. We need nourishment. Yet, "man does not live by bread alone." (Matt. 4.4) We also need spiritual understanding; however, we are not bodiless. In the Church, we discover the fullness of life and understanding as a divine-human balance. Away from God, we are perverted and corrupted. Wherever material goods are plentiful and waste is glorified, scandalous temptation and dark confusion prevail.

Wherever human beings live with reverence and receive all things with gratitude and thanksgiving, all things are sanctified. The little is considered blessing; the corrupt is dressed with the glory of incorruption. Human beings enjoy what is ephemeral as a gift from God, while at the same time being nourished from here and now by the pledge of the future life. Not only are problems solved, but even the suffering of trials are transformed into the power of life and a reason for giving glory. When this occurs with our soul, when we find peace and salvation by committing all things to Christ our God, then our mind is illumined. We come to know ourselves and the whole world. We have faith in the One who alone is powerful. This in itself strengthens the faithful. Then, by means of an invisible radiance, it is transmitted as support to all those who hunger and thirst for the truth.

The entire world needs salvation by its Creator and Maker. The entire world needs the presence of the faith and communion of the Saints. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God for all His benefits, as well as for the present period of Holy Lent.

Behold, this is a welcome time; behold, this is a time for repentance.

May we journey through this time of the great fast with contrition and confession so that we may reach the infinite joy of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom is due all glory, honor and worship to the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy and Great Lent 2012

**+ Bartholomew of Constantinople**

Fervent supplicant for all before God

If you have free time this afternoon, the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh will host its annual Icon Show & Sale and **Triumph of Orthodoxy** celebration at **4PM** in Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, Dawson Street, Oakland section of Pittsburgh. Everyone is welcome!

**SAVE THE DATE!** Our Annual Parish Meeting will be held after the Obednitza on ***Sunday, March 26, 2012***. Please see John Pauncic, our board president, with any concerns, suggestions, or items you would like placed on the agenda or discussed at the meeting.