



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), Father Stephen Ivanoff, 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, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

REMINDER: Slickville Ecumenical Services begin Thursday night at 7 PM—First Presbyterian Church is our host and Father Sam Lamendola will speak. Please come and join us as we continue our Lenten journey towards Pascha!

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 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 Paouncic

Thursday, March 22 Slickville Ecumenical Service 7:00 PM
Saint Sylvester Roman Catholic Church—Fr. Bob speaking

Sunday, March 25 Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 10:30 AM
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—OF THE LADDER OF
DIVINE ASCENT**

**SAINT THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR OF SIGRIANE; RIGHTEOUS PHINEAS-
GRANDSON IF AARON; SAINT GREGORY DIALOGUS-POPE OF ROME; SAINT SYMEON
THE NEW THEOLOGIAN**

Tone 8

Hebrews 6:13-20

Mark 9:17-31

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Helen & Frank Riznow—Riznow Family

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 11 MARCH 2012

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**

TROPARION—TONE 8

O Light of Orthodoxy! Teacher of the Church! Its confirmation!

O Ideal of Monks and invincible Champion of Theologians!
O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and Preacher of Grace!
Always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 4

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors!
So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:
Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea;
But forgive us, O Master of All,
So that we may receive the incorruptible crowns.

PROKEIMENON—TONE 5

READER: Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever!

**PEOPLE: Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever!**

READER: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

**PEOPLE: Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever!**

READER: Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us.

PEOPLE: From this generation forever!

ALLELUIA VERSES

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!

The righteous will be remembered forever; he is not afraid of evil things!

On Fasting

The Orthodox Church has rules. Rules about how we dress, about how we cross ourselves, about when we can and cannot be married, about how to bow, how to stand, about our moral life and about our human interactions. It is not surprising, since we follow an unbroken 2,000 year tradition.

All of these little things that we do are good and valuable, but simply because there are so many of them we often have a tendency to ignore many of them. "I'll just do the main things," many people say.

The problem is that when it comes to a discussion of what the "main things" are, it usually ends up being the personal opinion of the person involved which is the deciding factor. We have many people in the Orthodox Church who honestly and guilelessly believe that the "main thing" is to

attend services a few times a year, not kill anyone (except perhaps through abortion), and be a "nice guy." The only problem is that this is not Christianity.

Fasting is one of the things which has generally fallen by the wayside in our North American Orthodox life. Although fasting is a serious matter for both Christ (read the 6th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, for example) and the Church (one of the earliest Christian documents, the Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, gives specific instructions regarding fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays) we, in our twenty-first century wisdom, often feel free to abandon this practice.

According to the practice of the Orthodox Church, which has been fine tuned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by 2,000 years of trial and error, Orthodox Christians should refrain from eating meat and dairy products as follows:

- a) on all Wednesdays and Fridays during the year (with the exception of the four fast free weeks);
- b) during the entire duration of the Great Fast, the Nativity Fast, the Apostles' Fast and the Dormition Fast, and
- c) on the feasts of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Fasting consists not only of refraining from meat and dairy products, but in limiting the amount of food consumed, refraining from excessive talking, gossip, loud music and dancing.

One of the excuses given for ignoring the rule of fasting is that "we are not legalistic about our fasting." Being legalistic is a very specific attitude. It means that we think that if we fulfill this or that rule we will be saved. This is obviously false. We do not fast, or pray, or help the poor, or attend services because if we do so we will automatically go to heaven. Although we have many rules, we should never do anything which is "legalistic." The Old Testament Law was replaced with the Grace of Christ. In practice, however, when people say they are not being legalistic about fasting it often means "I know we have rules about fasting, but I do not think there is anything wrong with ignoring them."

To see the absurdity of this attitude let us look at other spheres of our life. Let us not be "legalistic" about our marriages. "Sure, I made a vow never to commit adultery, but I am not going to be legalistic about it!" and the marriage is destroyed. Let us not be legalistic about prayer or the sacramental life. "I am not concerned about praying morning and evening, and all these rules about receiving Holy Communion are stupid!" and my relationship with God is destroyed. "I am not going to interpret the red light at the corner legalistically, it is just there as a guide for those who need it" and my car, and perhaps my life, are "negatively impacted."

Rules exist for a reason, and if I do not understand why a particular rule exists, I should try to find out. Fasting is central to our spiritual discipline. Every religion practices some type of fasting. There is no more fundamental act than putting food in our mouths. If we can control what and how much we put into our mouth chances are we have the discipline to be disciples. How could I stand up to those who would persecute, torture or kill me for my faith if I am not able to do something as simple as keep the fast? How can I expect my son or daughter to say no to sex in the back seat of a car on Saturday night if they cannot say no to a hamburger on Friday?

Fasting does not save us, but it does help develop the discipline necessary to make those important decisions which do.

Fasting gives us spiritual strength. This is reiterated again and again in the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus fasts and prays before beginning His ministry. He tells the apostles that they can only cast out a certain demon by "prayer and fasting." If Christ must fast, how is it possible that one who bears His name, a Christian, does not need to?

Perhaps most important, and most overlooked, is the fact that when we fast God blesses us.

Fasting is not necessarily easy, but we are taught that this life is a struggle, and in our struggles we will be saved. We are athletes for God (this is where the word *asceticism* comes from), and when we eat at God's training table God blesses us, makes us healthier, and increases our spiritual capabilities.

Many people who do hold to the fast in their homes feel uncomfortable following the fast in public, or when entertaining guests. The Nativity fast is probably the most difficult fasting period of the year, as we are surrounded by friends and relatives holding Christmas parties and dinners, and it sometimes becomes difficult or uncomfortable not to not partake of what we are offered.

We should remember, however, that there are many people in our society who do not eat meat or milk products for philosophical reasons. They are called vegetarians if they do not eat meat, and vegans if they do not eat any animal products—milk, eggs, or fish. I notice that in general people who follow such diets, as well as pious Jews, Hindus and Moslems who hold strictly to their religious dietary laws are treated with great respect by friends, colleagues, and strangers. We Orthodox should not be afraid of following our own religious practice for fear of being thought of as "religious cranks."

Bearing in mind that there is both a "spirit" as well as a "letter" to the law, besides fasting from food we might also limit our entertainment. When

fasting it is beneficial to limit time spent in front of the television, the movie screen or listening to music, and replace these amusements with reading spiritually edifying books, listening to recorded spiritual talks or lectures, etc. As it is much of what is shown on television nowadays (even in the afternoon) would have been censured as pornographic 40 or 50 years ago. Just as we are careful about what we put into our mouth when fasting we should be careful about what we feed our brain through our eyes and ears.

If you do not follow the fasting rules of the Church it is never too late to begin. If you're not sure what to do or how to do it ask a spiritual father or pious layperson who themselves follow the fast (it is not wise to ask advice from people who have no experience of what they are talking about) how you might start. Even children can and should learn to fast from an early age. Delicious and nutritious meals do not necessarily need to include meat or animal products, and the example of Daniel and the three children in Babylon, as well as the counsel of doctors and nutritionists show us that we can easily follow the fasts of the Church without compromising our health.

Let us do our best to make our homes not only houses of prayer, but houses of fasting as well.

And then let us see how God will bless us and strengthen us, both individually and as a Church.

From: Northopraxis or From Pastoral Life, Fr Bohdan Hladio

The Sunday of Orthodoxy—John 1:43-51

The following day Jesus wanted 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 Nathaniel 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." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathaniel said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathaniel answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.'" And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Jesus said to Philip: "Follow Me." Each Christian elects to follow Jesus at the time of Holy Baptism. The commitment to follow Christ requires renewal throughout life.

The initial commitment to Christ is intended to be complete and long-lasting. Daily renewal of the commitment is required for Christ to live in the heart, the mind and soul.

Believers face temptations, trials and diversions during the course of life. Remaining steadfast on the narrow path(Mt.7:13-14) is the expectation. When a believer deviates from the narrow way, repentance is necessary. Great Lent is the opportunity for the believer to return to the full life in Christ. Great Lent is the time to firmly reject the way of sin. Great Lent is the time to train the body for use for Christ.

Great Lent is a time to welcome the nourishment of Christ that is everywhere. The warmth of the sun, the light of the moon, the freshness of the air are blessings from God.

The content of the Divine services of the Church guide the believer to the narrow path during Great Lent. Nathaniel called Jesus the Son of God. Personal views about Jesus are revealed in the way individuals live each day.

Great Lent is a definite period of time set aside by the Church. The structure of the Church helps believers to draw closer to Christ and to experience the presence of Christ.

Following Christ is a completely voluntary decision. The faithful Holy Apostles chose to follow Christ. Judas chose to violate his relationship with Christ.

Each person exiting the baptismal font on a daily basis determines the degree of faithfulness to Christ as King and as God. Faithful believers experience continued joy in Christ.

The Holy Apostle Peter expressed the value of following Christ when he said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."(Jn.6:68)

Great Lent began recently. The days ahead hold great value for individuals choosing to invest in Great Lent and honor Great Lent. Individuals benefit from Great Lent to the degree they invest in Great Lent. There is a saying that applies to athletes and musicians: "You play as you practice." The same thought has value regarding the Church. If a person is faithful each day to Christ, the life in Christ becomes better.

Holy Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2Cor.3:18)

Homes change when the family members honor Great Lent. Family members change for the better by honoring Great Lent. Relationships improve when believers honor Great Lent.

Believers honoring Great Lent do everything possible to reject the way of sin and turn to Christ. Believers honoring Great Lent increase the amount of prayer and the attentiveness to prayer.

Honoring Great Lent involves honoring the fast as set forth by the Church. The value of the fast is embraced and the fast is welcomed by serious believers.

The words of the Divine services during Great Lent remind believers of sins committed and of the mercy of Christ. Forgiveness is possible for each person wanting to rise from the depths of sin.

New beginnings take place in Great Lent as believers repent and open their hearts, minds and souls to the loving God. Comfort and strength exist in knowing that the Lenten journey is being taken by other believers.

The soul needs regular nourishment as does the body. The Gospel provides nourishment for the soul. Holy Communion provides nourishment for the soul.

The present Gospel message takes minds back more than twenty centuries. The invitation from Jesus to follow Him has remained strong through more than twenty centuries.

The Holy Apostle Paul made his position clear that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Rom.8:39)

St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Carmichaels, Pennsylvania. February 20/March 4, 2012. Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. Leo of Catania.

Father Rodney Torbic

Nothing is so useful to the beginner as insults. The beginner who bears insults is like a tree that is watered every day. *Abba Isaiah*

An Athonite spiritual father and confessor named Benjamin, when a person who had come to him for confession was talking only about others and criticizing his brothers, would send the "penitent" away until he could correct himself and change his attitude.

The most simple Dionysiatan monk, Elder David, would tell his visitors about criticism: "Be careful; do not say one person does this and the other does that. If you do so, you lose Christ's grace. Even if you see a person acting like an ass, do not criticize. Love your neighbor as you would your own self. This is what Christ tells us to do." *from An Athonite Gerontikon*

From Abbot Nikon in *Letters to Spiritual Children:*

My dear one!

You become despondent and lost at the least temptation. The Lord allows this to happen so that you might discover your weakness and understand how much lies hidden in a person's soul, and that labor is necessary in order to cleanse oneself of passions, to become the temple of the Living God and to achieve salvation. When your human frailty becomes apparent to you, then you will fall down before the Lord and from the bottom of your heart cry out to Him, like the Apostle Peter when he was drowning. Then you will receive the Lord's help and realize how close the Lord is to those who call out His name from the depths of their heart. Then you will fall in gratitude at His feet and weep over your sins through which you have grieved the Lord. Then your heart will be humbled and you will cease accusing others, endeavoring instead to have your past sins forgiven and to avoid future transgressions of the Lord's commandments. You will also come to understand the vanity of everything worldly, and how very insignificant is your attachment to this earth, its disputes, its disappointments. It is not worth becoming dismayed over such things, as they rob you of spiritual peace and even, perhaps, your salvation.

All that is bad—all the passions, the devil's snares, all misfortunes and sufferings—all these are conquered through humility. And humility arises through saying to the Lord from the depths of our heart, "I receive the due reward for my deeds. Remember me, Lord, in Thy Kingdom," (Luke 23:41). If we are able to say this in all of life's circumstances, without grumbling at the Lord or at people, then immediately our burden will be lightened and we will find ourselves on the correct spiritual path. If we do complain or blame someone for our misfortune, then we must humble ourselves even further and say, Lord, I really am worth nothing, only You can save me. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," said the leper who had lost all hope of being healed. "I will, be thou clean," said the Lord, touching him, and the leper was free of his affliction. And so it is with us—if we, realizing the full extent of our feebleness and spiritual poverty, turn to the Lord our only Savior, and from a contrite heart say, "Lord, if You desire it, You can heal and cleanse me," we will hear the same reply from the Lord, Who suffered for us on the Cross, "I will, be thou clean."

Our soul will clearly hear this reply and we will receive the strength to bear all of life's difficulties with thanksgiving, just as the repentant thief bore great sufferings without grumbling, as he remained hanging on the cross until evening. May God help you to understand this, to humble yourself and give yourself over into God's hands. Constantly say, "Lord, may Your holy will be done. Lord, do with me what You will, just do not allow me to grumble at You, and grant me salvation."

So far you have only read and heard about spiritual warfare, about tears and suffering of heart. God is allowing you to discover from experience just where it is you stand. Will you be able to persevere and bear hardships

without murmuring but thinking of the Lord, or will you begin complaining and then—what is worse—sink into despondency?

Decide for yourself. "Give blood and receive the Spirit." The time of childhood is over, it is time to begin the work of an adult. *A contrite and humble heart the Lord will not despise*, and, "The snares of the devil do not touch one who is humble," (from a vision of Saint Anthony the Great about snares.)

If you give in to complaining and begin to blame people and circumstances for your hardships, then you will eventually come to murmur against God and may become totally despondent. May the Lord preserve you from this!

May the Lord grant you spiritual peace, humility and wisdom, and may He give you patience and strength to carry the burden of both your own passions and of those with whom you come in contact...

Fasting is acceptable to God when abstention from food is accompanied by refraining from sins, from envy, from hatred, from calumny, from vainglory, from wordiness, from other evils. He who is fasting the true fast "that is agreeable" to God ought to shun all these things with all his strength and zeal, and remain impregnable and unshakeable against all the attacks of the evil one that are planned from that quarter. On the other hand, he who practices abstention from food, but does not keep self-control in the face of the aforesaid passions, is like unto one who lays down splendid foundations for a house, yet takes serpents and scorpions and vipers as fellow-dwellers therein. *St. Photios the Great*

SPECIAL COFFEE HOUR TREAT TODAY: In honor of Judy Previc's 60th birthday yesterday, Martha, Nick, and the entire Behun clan have assembled a sumptuous treat for everyone downstairs—please plan to stay and wish Judy a happy birthday and M'Nohaya Lita!