



HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Parish Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA March 2016

MARCH—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12 (THE EQUINOX FALLS ON 20 MARCH)

THE WEEKS OF MARK

- 14 Mon *Day 1—Begin THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.*
- 16 Wed 7:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 20 Sun **SUNDAY I: CHRIST, MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN** (John 1.43–51)
 10:00 a.m. Communal Confession Rite—*first of two*
 10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Busenberg**
 6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 23 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 27 Sun **SUNDAY II: CHRIST, SOURCE OF FORGIVENESS AND HEALING** (Mark 2.1–12)
 10:00 a.m. Communal Confession Rite—*second of two*
 10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Doyle**
 6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 30 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- APRIL—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11**
- 3 Sun **SUNDAY III: CROSS OF CHRIST, COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST** (Mark 8.34–9.1)
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Ellmore**
 6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 6 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 8 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parastasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 9 Sat Saturday of Souls
- 10 Sun **SUNDAY IV: CHRIST, WITH THE FATHER, OUR SURE HOPE** (Mark 9.17–31)
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Honshul**
 6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 13 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 15 Fri 7:00 p.m. Akathist Hymn
- 16 Sat Saturday of the Akathist Hymn (*The Annunciation celebrated*)
- 17 Sun **SUNDAY V: CHRIST, SACRIFICE SEALING A NEW COVENANT** (Mark 10.32–45)
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Krisa**
 6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 22 Fri **DAY 40—END THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.**
 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 23 Sat *Saturday of Lazarus—ancient day for reintegrating penitents bound with a penance (as the Lord Jesus will say in the Gospel reading: “Unbind him and let him go...”)*
- 24 Sun **ENTRANCE OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM—KYPIAKH TΩN ΒΑΓΙΩΝ, ΗΕΡΑΛΑ ΔΕΥΕΤΟΗΟΨΙΑΑ, SUNDAY OF PALMS AND FLOWERING BRANCHES**
 9:30 a.m. Matins—Blessing and distribution of flowering branches and palms
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Matyuf**
No Penitential Vespers

RENEWAL DESCRIBED: The return to the liturgical life as the very focus of the parish, as the means of its respiration and revitalization. Parish life again begins to be centered on the Eucharist and the sacraments, on liturgical cycles. The Church begins again to be experienced as the Body of Christ. This process inevitably raises new questions, creates new difficulties.... Yet at least the motivations, the zeal, the intentions are pastoral, aimed at priceless human souls and their communion with God. It is in such parishes that the statutes are not opposed, all financial obligations are gladly met... confident and truly loving relations with the Bishop established and nurtured. It would not be difficult to prove that this renewal is rooted in a genuine interest in the true Orthodox Tradition, in the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers, the Liturgy, and above all in a deep concern for the *religious* and not merely “ethnic” or “social” orientation of the Church.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,
Theophany, 1973

As we have been doing, we will hold two communal confession rites on two consecutive Sundays: March 20 and 27.

The Pasch is coming (April 29,30,May 1) and the Church would prepare herself to celebrate the Death and Resurrection of the Lord by committing herself anew to the Baptism by which she is united to him. From time immemorial, through the reading of the Gospel, the Church has been calling her sons and daughters to renew themselves through confession and a season of penitence so that, come the Great and Holy Week, all come together with one heart and one mind in baptismal renewal with the same song on their lips.

So pick a Sunday. When we come together we evangelize one another. Come on time. Come in the right frame of mind. Bear witness to our younger members. Let us open our hearts to the word of Christ.

Regarding the Eucharistic fast for the PreSanctifieds and related matters.

As we have been doing these many years, there will be potluck meals following the PreSanctifieds. Bring what you can, *if* you can. But come. There is always plenty of food.

Regarding the fast (these are the guidelines put forward so many years ago by Bishop Basil Rodzianko) keep the Eucharistic fast as best you can. If not from morning, at least from lunchtime. (In point of fact, fasting for the entire day is not all that difficult, though some may disagree—*Ed.*) As for older children: let them have a small snack when they come home from school. (Fasting is not for younger children, the ill, or the elderly.) Common sense applies.

Keep it simple.

Here's what a modern *Priest's Service Book* (Church of Greece, Athens, 1962, pg. 211) has to say:

“The Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified, realized for the sanctification of the faithful, is served every Wednesday and Friday of the Great Forty Days,... Thursday of the Great Canon, [and] Great Monday, Great Tuesday, and Great Wednesday....

“The Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified is served always after the [Ninth] Hour, at Vespers, **because of the all-day fast**. It is done usually by a single priest, alone, without a deacon....

“While the Ninth Hour is being read, priestly ministers take leave and enter the sanctuary and put on simple **black** vestments, but **no** [pectoral] **crosses** or priestly awards....”

Apostrophe on the word *fast*.

Fast is a Germanic word. Primarily it means abstaining from food; secondarily it means eating sparingly or abstaining from some foods. It comes into the Slavic languages as *post*. The Greek word is *nēsteia* and it means the same thing: not eating, and, secondarily, not eating some foods.

Everyone knows the basic meaning of the word *fast*. The doctor tells you he wants you to come in for a blood test *fasting*, you know he means that you should eat nothing when you get up on the morning and that you will have nothing to eat until after the test. Fasting is *not eating*. And, fasting is *from the morning—not the night before*.

From antiquity Christians would keep a fast by not eating all day and then taking a meal in the evening. It's the original idea behind the Wednesday/Friday fast. This is biblical stuff.

One can imagine that whatever spiritual benefits derive from fasting would come to a person regardless of how he broke his fast, in other words, regardless of what he ate.

One can fast for a day. One can fast for a period of time. The Great Forty Days for example.

One may fast—not eat all day, then eat—Monday through Friday. One may not fast—not eat all day, then eat—on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. The Church nixes Saturdays and Sundays. Not at first, but very early in her history. It's why the Liturgy is served Sunday *mornings*—to minimize and confine the Eucharistic fast. The first ecumenical council (Nikaia, 325 A.D.) makes an exception for the Holy and Great Sabbath which, a

thousand years ago, was a day of fasting that concluded in the evening with Vespers with the Divine Liturgy during which neophytes were baptized and the Resurrection celebrated—everyone took holy Communion. (One can appreciate that the fast on this Saturday—like the eves of the Nativity and Theophany—was a *Eucharistic* fast leading into the feast.)

So. One fasts—one does not eat all day, then eats—Monday through Friday. Additionally, at the same time, one abstains from certain foods—*e.g.*, meat, dairy, *etc.* This is the only aspect of a fast period that continues over Saturday and Sunday. To use more precise language for our situation today: one *fasts*—one does not eat, then eats—and one *abstains*—one does not eat certain foods. Together they make up the Orthodox Christian notion of keeping a fast. Interestingly enough, these terms turn up in the hymnography we sing during the time of the Great Fast.

Abstinence

For most of us today what “fasting” we do is better termed *abstinence*. Abstaining from meat. Abstaining from dairy. Unfortunately this has led to label reading as an exercise in seasonal piety. Furged about it.

Fr. Meyendorff came down heavily on label reading. He called label reading phariseeism. “Do what you can,” he would say. Want to do more? Do more of what the Church's tradition urges us to do. Enter more deeply into what the Church around the world is doing. Prayer. Fasting. Almsgiving. Eschew silly notions. Like “Giving up Coke.” Or “Giving up chocolate.” Or some such. Pious solipsism. What value can there be in that? Better, think of fasting as training for the race, for the Christian life. Think of it as the nourishment for a sovereign spirit (remember? Psalm 50?): for self-control, for prudence, and perseverance

We are a community of dependent creatures. No food and we're done for. Fasting and abstinence have worthwhile spiritual and moral goals. The Orthodox world is full of SOBs who fast by the book. And they are still SOBs. Let us do everything and anything to avoid that.

One last word.

Illness brings its own asceticism.

Fasting in the strict sense, as we said, is not for the old or the very young. Neither is it for the sick and those with chronic conditions. For example, a diabetic; his/her slowed-down digestion requires a number of small meals during the course of a day to ease up on one's pancreas and help manage the disease. So, nix to fasting. But yes to the self-discipline needed to manage disease.

On the other hand, while young growing bodies and organs need nutrition, a child of 12/13 should be able to keep the Eucharistic fast on a Sunday morning. There are unofficial canons that would punish parents with a real fast for failing to observe this.

—pnh