



St. John Chrysostom Church

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
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April SJCC News

My Joy in the Lord,

I have been informed that many of you did not receive the March edition of the newsletter. I am sorry, I wish I had known. For you I repeat the news that I put in regarding our Archdiocese and Diocese. I have made a few edits to add what little has become known.

In the meantime, Great Lent is almost over. Note that Great Lent lasts 40 days – beginning on Clean Monday and ending on the Friday of Palm Week (6th week of Lent). (look at a calendar and count the days – it is exactly 40!) The rest of the Fasting period is made up of Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week (Holy Monday through Holy Saturday). We should have at least two services every day for these 8 days, but human frailty – both physical and the need for regular income – means that I must limit my activity.

On Lazarus Saturday, as is my custom, I will do a teaching Liturgy. This year the Teen SOYOs of the deanery will be having a mini- retreat at St. John's in conjunction with the Liturgy. It is open to all – of course – and I hope that you might come and take part.

I do hope that all of you can take at least the morning of Bright Monday off from work and come to Liturgy and to our (Masha's and my) house afterwards to continue celebrating Pascha. It is such a joyous feast, one hates to just leave it to Sundays. I will enclose a map in the Paschal edition of this Newsletter that will go out in two weeks. Please come.

With love, in Christ,
Fr. Seraphim

Inquirer's Class is suspended until after Pascha. There are too many other services and events for me to prepare for the class properly. I expect to begin again in May.

Sign-up sheet for the Paschal Meal is on the Refrigerator at church!! Please sign up. Bring your favorite food.

Please look carefully at the Holy Week schedule and come to as many services as you can.

FFHP – Food For Hungry People. We are continuing to make the Lenten Collections as we have in the past. Boxes are available at church. The daily donation list is available at church. On the other hand – if you don't want to bother with the list – make a check out for \$20, \$30, \$40 or \$50 and give it to the Treasurer. **ALL BOXES AND/OR CHECKS ARE DUE IN NO LATER THAN PALM SUNDAY!!!! PLEASE!!**

Blessing of Palms and Pussywillows – will be done at Vespers on Lazarus Saturday. I will be happy to teach anyone who is interested in the art of making Palm crosses after the blessing. Both Palms and Pussywillows will be available on Palm Sunday as well, of course.

Why pussywillows? Northern Slavs (not just Russians) did not have Palms available to them. Taking the words of the Gospel that both Palms and branches were carried by the crowd greeting our Lord, the Slavs picked the branches that were beginning to bloom in the far North at the time of Palm Sunday – which happened to be from the pussywillow bush/tree – and carried them instead. The custom of pussywillows became so ingrained that in the 19th century, Russians in Jerusalem would import pussywillows from Russia for “Pussywillow” Sunday (they actually still do it today!). For us in America, it is easy to get Palms, hard to get pussywillows, but I have always liked being able to carry both palms and branches, as the gospel records, on this Holy Day of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Parish Life Conference

The Parish Life Conference will be in Wichita from June 10-13. Everyone is invited. Reservations can be made at the Airport Hilton in Wichita. Details are available at the back of the church, next to the refrigerator. It would be nice if we could put together an adult Bible Bowl team (three people). Details for the Bible Bowl are in a flyer at the back of the church. The cost is \$125 (before May 22) per person plus hotel and meals, though the hospitality room often has enough food that no additional meals need be purchased. The Conference begins at 6 pm on June 10 and ends with the Liturgy on Saturday – though all are invited to stay over until after the Sunday liturgy. (I will be returning back to Denver for our services, though no Vespers that Saturday).

The Conference will have the following workshops (open to all)

1. Challenges in the Orthodox Mission
2. Pilgrimage along the Apophatic Way
3. Young Adults in the Church: “Where do I fit in?”
4. Orthodox Christian Music for Children
5. The Stories Icons Tell
6. Boast of America: The Life of St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
7. The Hauran Connection
8. A Guide to St. Stephen's Course in Orthodox Theology
9. A workshop on a pertinent aspect of Orthodox Literature (only a working title)
10. Mental health Issues and Counseling in the Orthodox Parish Setting
11. Chanters' Workshop
12. Choir Workshop
13. Bible Study sessions

This is what I wrote last month to you

I write this tonight with a heavy heart.

By decision of Metropolitan Philip and with the concurrence of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of Antioch, the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America is no more. (*Edit: - Actually I was wrong about this the Diocese has been retained.*)

Bishop Basil (together with all of the other Antiochian diocesan bishops of North America) has been removed as our diocesan bishop.

This is an action that violates (*Edit: the spirit of*) a number of canons but is within the prerogatives of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of Antioch. It also puts in jeopardy the structure of the Antiochian Archdiocese in the US – but that's a matter for the lawyers to deal with.

I have no further information to share with you. The details of how this will transpire and what will be the future of the Church will be made clear in the coming weeks/months.

What this means for our community is not clear. In some respects – nothing will change. Some will be so subtle that most of you will not notice. Some will be more obvious. Our schedule of services will not change. Our normal Christian life will continue. The Sacraments will continue unchanged. The changes that will happen will affect me more than you.

For now, I ask that you remember both Metropolitan Philip and Bishops Basil, Mark, Alexander, Joseph, Thomas, and Antoun in your prayers.

On the other hand, Lent has started. A joyous sadness and a sad joy. A time for repentance. I ask your forgiveness for my many sins and please remember to pray for all of us as we begin this journey to the Resurrection of our Lord.

Ways of Praying: Part 2 (I repeat this for all of you who did not receive it!!) Please read this carefully.....

From the very beginning of the history of the Church, indeed, from Jewish antecedents, prayer for individuals was part of the worship of the Church.

In the Old Covenant, when you went to the temple to pray – whether for yourself or for your family, children, parents, etc. - you took an offering. As we know from the story of Christ's visit to the temple, an offering of two pigeons or turtledoves was made for Him on His first visit to the Temple.

In the same way, the Early Church adopted the same tradition – when we came to church to pray, we brought an offering – bread, wine, food - some of which was used in the service, and the rest was kept to be distributed to the poor.

Over the centuries, the offering became simplified and became an offering of bread to be used in the service. Some to become the Body of Christ, the rest to be distributed to all in church. In the Russian church, this bread was sold in the entrance of the church to anyone who wanted to buy a loaf and present it to the priest. Thus, everyone could make an offering at every Liturgy and have themselves and their friends and loved ones prayed for. In the Greek church, the tradition became simpler – every (extended) family was assigned (or signed up for) a Sunday or Festal Liturgy and would bake and bring their offering on that day. They and their friends and family would be prayed for at that Liturgy.

In the Russian church, the names would be mentioned during the Litany of Fervent Supplication, which is the Litany which the Church developed for individualized prayers. It is there that we add petitions in times of war or drought or flood or any need. In the Greek church, the Litany of Fervent supplication fell into disuse at the Liturgy, and the commemorations came to be moved into the Great Entrance – but since the number of names was much smaller this was feasible.

But in both cases, the concept of an offering to be made with the request for prayers remained the same.

And the offering was also the same – bread, to be used in the Liturgy. Over the centuries, the Greek church made a distinction between the bread which is used in the Proskomede, and a portion of which will become the Body of our Lord, and the bread which is used in the Antidoron, the bread which is distributed at the end of the Liturgy (and, in some cases, is given immediately to those receiving Communion). While the instruction for the Proskomede has been unchanged since apostolic times (nothing may be used except water, white flour - not bleached, but the best quality and definitely not whole wheat - yeast and salt), the custom for the Antidoron became “muddy”. Spices, sugar, even raisins and whole wheat kernels came to be added to that bread. Also, a separate prayer came to be said over the

Antidoron, blessing it separately from the more extensive prayers that are used in the Proskomede to sanctify the offering bread, a portion of which becomes the Body of our Lord.

Then there is the question: who gets prayed for and when? The answer is simple and complex. In the Russian church, people usually pray for all of their immediate family members every Liturgy. They will add friends and family on their birthdays, anniversaries, namesdays, when they are traveling or are ill, when they are in difficulty, and when they are asked to pray for someone. As you can imagine the list can get very long. In the Greek church, the same holds true, except that since the opportunities for offering prayer are less, the list is usually more general, family and friends rather than focusing on the life events as they are happening.

In our church, I'm trying to find a middle ground. As you can imagine, the amount of baking the Russian church practice requires is huge and I am in no position to do it. At the same time, I don't want to limit opportunities for prayer to only those times when it is your turn to bake the offering bread as in the Greek practice. So, I have given all of you an opportunity to send me names to remember during the services without having to make an offering of bread each time. HOWEVER, I do want to encourage each of you to bake a bread and bring it as an offering for use in the service. A small loaf takes between 30 and 45 minutes to make, from start to finish. I'm not suggesting you do it every time you have some names that you want the Church to pray for, but perhaps once every 6 months or 3 months, you can bring a loaf to use. We will have a seal or two that you can borrow to stamp the bread as you are baking it.

I highly suggest that you remember people on their birthdays, namesdays, anniversaries (wedding and repose), and any time that you would like the Church to pray for them. By the way, prayers for the departed are appropriate on the birthdays and wedding anniversaries of the departed as well as of the living – just put them in the bottom half of the paper. If you need to, use more than one sheet – we're not short of paper.

The prosphora recipe is as follows:

1/16 tsp salt
1/2 tsp yeast
1/2 cup water
~2 cups flour

mix the yeast and warm (not hot not cold) water and let stand for 5 min

add 1/2 cup flour, mix well, let stand for 10 min

add salt

keep adding flour until the consistency is “rubbery” and the surface is not wet

roll out several times, shape into a round loaf,

preheat the oven to 350, flour the baking pan (DO NOT USE PAM or any other oil to grease it)

let rise for 5 - 15 min, push the seal strongly into the top of the loaf and

bake for 15-20 min

let it sit under a towel until it cools off (roughly 1 hour)

let me know ahead of time that you are bringing it to church (call me) and make sure you are in church at least 10 min before the service begins.

If you are making strictly Antidoron, you can add a little sugar, but I ask that you not add spices of any kind nor raisins, etc..

Schedule of Services and Events

April

3	Fri	7:00 pm	Lauds of the Theotokos (Akathist)	
4	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers (Inquirer's class will resume after Thomas Sunday)	
5	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	5 th Sunday of Lent – St. Mary of Egypt
7	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council meeting – Gisetti's	
8	Wed	6:30 pm	PreSanctified Liturgy + Potluck	
10	Fri	6:30 pm	PreSanctified Liturgy + Potluck (end of Great Lent – but not of Fasting!!!)	
11	Sat	9:00 am	Teaching Liturgy	Lazarus Saturday
			(Teen SOYO retreat at St.. John's)	
		5:00 pm	Vespers with blessing of Palms	
12	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Palm Sunday
13	Mon	Holy Week begins		
15	Wed	6:30 pm	Matins of Holy Thursday with Unction service	
16	Thu	3:30 pm	Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper + Potluck	
		7:00 pm	Matins of Holy Friday with the 12 Gospels	
17	Fri	8:00 am	Royal Hours	
		3:00 pm	Vespers of Holy Friday	
		7:00 pm	Matins of Holy Saturday	
18	Sat	10:00 am	Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday	
		11:30 pm	Nocturne	
19	Sun		Procession	PASCHA – The Resurrection of our Lord
			Paschal Matins	
			Paschal Liturgy	
			Paschal Meal	
		11:00 am	Agape Vespers	
20	Mon	9:00 am	Paschal Liturgy followed by Open House at Fr. & Masha's	Bright Monday
28	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	Bright Saturday
26	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Thomas Sunday

May

2	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:45	Inquirer's Class	
3	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers
9	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:45	Inquirer's Class	
10	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Paralytic
12	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council – at the Fingers	
16	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:45	Inquirer's Class	
17	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Samaritan Woman
23	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:45	Inquirer's Class	
24	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Blind Man
28	Thu	6:30 pm	Vesperal Liturgy	Ascension of our Lord
30	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:45	Inquirer's Class	
31	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Frs of the 1st Ecumenical Council