



St. John Chrysostom Church

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
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February 2010 SJCC News

My Joy in the Lord,

The Lenten Spring has come. The time for repentance and for fasting. When Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) of San Francisco was asked what the “real” method of fasting should be, he answered, “Stop gnawing on one another.” So often we become irritable from the sameness of our food, and the demands on our time – more church, more prayer, and more temptations. The devil does not cease his attentions just because it is Lent, if anything he increases his attempts to derail us from our efforts. If we make the fast all about food – reading labels, being picky, we will fail, because the fast is supposed to be about love. The idea of limiting our food was originally derived from the idea of giving more to charity. The simpler our fare was, the more we could give. At the same time, the less time we spent in the kitchen or at meals, the more time we could devote to prayer and to others. This is the basis of Great Lent, not efforts at cuisine, but rather efforts at love – to God and to others. We are so used to not having weekday services except perhaps once a week, that when Lent comes – with the Presanctified liturgies and other services – we think of the Church putting forth an extra effort. But, historically, the opposite was true – the time of Lent was a time FEWER services not more. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday Liturgies were eliminated, Vespers and Matins were different. The Church, in company with all of her members, gave more time for charity and for individual prayer to each individual.

In the spirit of saving time, one of the most effective methods of fasting that I have found, is giving up the TV. You may be surprised by what this simple act can give you. First, if you use it for background noise, you will have time to hear your thoughts and your heart. Second, it can give you hours every day to do something positive for yourself – read the Bible or just a good book, take a walk, clean out your closet. It is said that charity begins at home – do not forget yourself during Lent.

Because of my work situation, I am limited in the number of services that I can do during the week in Lent. As a result I have only scheduled Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies every week. In one sense, I am following the early Church and giving you more time for family, for prayer and for charity – use it wisely. The other Lenten services are:

Monday of the 1st week – Compline with the 1st part of the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

The Great Canon will be done following the Presanctified potluck on the 5th Wed of Great Lent

Friday of the 5th Week – Compline with the Complete Akathist to the Theotokos

If there is a group (even two) who wish to do some of the other services as reader services (the Friday evening “medaia” - Compline with portions of the Akathist to the Theotokos) or daily Vespers on given days of the week, I will be happy to give instructions on how to do them, make the church available, and publicize the schedule. There is nothing which prevents, any of you who wish to gather to worship our Lord, from doing so just because I cannot be with you.

With love, in Christ,
Fr. Seraphim

Sunday of Orthodoxy (Feb 21)

This year all three bishops (Metropolitan Isaiah, (our) Bishop Basil, and Bishop Benjamin) will be serving the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at Assumption Cathedral in Denver. Archbishop Dimitri, when he was diocesan bishop for the OCA Diocese of the South, began the custom of the three local hierarchs from the OCA, Antiochian Archdiocese and Greek Archdiocese to concelebrate together on the 1st Sunday of Lent. This year it is Denver's turn. I hope you can all mark your calendars and make a special effort to come together for this service.

Clean Monday retreat

The annual Clean Monday retreat will be held at St. Catherine's as usual. 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. Fr. George Dokos of Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Boulder will lead the Retreat this year. See the flyer on the last page of this newsletter.

Lazarus Saturday Teaching Liturgy

The customary Teaching Liturgy will take place at our church on Lazarus Saturday (March 27). This liturgy is done in front of the iconostasis and is interrupted by explanations of various parts of the service. It takes significantly longer than a normal Liturgy, as a result. But most people find it instructive and worth the time spent.

POTLUCK follows

Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat with Fr. Meletios (Webber)

"Renewing the Heart" -- Through Forgiveness, Confession & the Jesus Prayer

Saturday, March 6, 9 am to ~3 pm

St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church

Cost: \$15 (lunch included)

Schedule/Topics:

9 am, *Morning Prayers*;

9:30 am, *Talk #1*, Forgiveness + Q/A;

~10:45 am, *Talk #2*, Confession + Q/A;

~12 pm, *Lunch* (catered);

~1:15 pm, *Talk #3*, Jesus Prayer + Q/A and Open Forum;

~3 pm, *Closing Prayer*

Please Contact/RSVP by Wed, March 3: Alina at St. Catherine's: alina@stcatherinechurch.org

Fasting Discipline during Great Lent

Fasting rules, no matter what anyone says, are not simple. (Monks do not have fasting rules, they have feasting rules – all monastic rules deal with how to celebrate a day, not with how to fast on a given day.) Fasting exists to create a rhythm to our life. So, a few suggestions:

Children under 5 should not fast foodwise, they can fast from TV, they can fast from candy, but they should eat whatever their bodies need for nourishment.

After 5, they can start fasting – but not for the entire period of Great Lent. It is suggested that they fast more strictly during the 1st, 4th and last (7th / Holy) weeks of Lent. By the time they are teenagers, they can participate fully in the fasting disciplines.

For those with health issues. Do whatever you need to do for your health, find something else to abstain from rather than food, or choose particular foods rather than types of foods. If your doctor tells you, you need to eat meat, eat chicken rather than beef, thighs rather than breasts, etc. Do NOT endanger your health for the sake of fasting!

The general fasting rule is no meat or dairy or eggs (no flesh of warm blooded animals or products of warm blooded animals) should be eaten during the Great Fast. Fish (cold blooded animals) may be eaten on certain days. Oil and wine, in Greek practice are, also, only allowed on certain days, in Slavic practice they are allowed all of Lent (olive oil is called “Fasting butter” since it was rarely used outside of the fasting periods – olive trees don't grow well north of the Mediterranean / Adriatic / Aegean Seas ...)

On The Vespers of Forgiveness

Introduction to the Service book of Forgiveness Vespers by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (edited)

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent - the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated - is called Forgiveness Sunday . . . On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ:

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. . . . (Mark 6: 14-15)

Then after Vespers - after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: "Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special melodies, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations - we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation, asking each other, “Forgive me.” and responding with prayer, “May God forgive!”

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a "good deed" required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O soul! For you abstain from food,
But from passions you are not purified.
If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no "enemies"? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them - in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being "polite" and "friendly" we fulfill God's commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize - be it only for one minute - that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual "recognition" which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me - we begin to realize that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists - we hear the echo of the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, "opens to us the doors of Paradise." We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage.

Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting - true fasting; our effort - true effort; our reconciliation with God - true reconciliation.

Schedule of Services and Events

February

6	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
7	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	Meatfare Sunday
8	Mon	7:00 pm Parish Council at J. Weddingfeld	
13	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
14	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	Cheesefare (Forgiveness) Sunday
15	Mon		<i>Great Lent Begins</i>
		9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Clean Monday Retreat at St. Catherine's
		7:00 pm Compline and Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	
17	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
20	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
		Open topics Discussion	
21	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	Sunday of Orthodoxy
		5:00 pm Pan Orthodox Vespers at Assumption Cathedral	
24	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
27	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
28	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	2nd Sunday of Lent
		5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Transfiguration Cathedral	

March

3	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
6	Sat	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Adult Lenten Retreat at St. Catherine's Sunday School Teachers Workshop at St. Luke's
		5:00 pm Vespers	
7	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	3rd Sunday of Lent
		5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Elias or St. Augustine	
8	Mon	7:00 pm Parish Council	
10	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
13	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
14	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	4th Sunday of Lent
		5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. Peter & Paul or St. Catherine's	
17	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
		Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	
19	Fri	7:00 pm Akathist to the Theotokos	
20	Sat	5:00 pm Vespers	
21	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	5th Sunday of Lent
		5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Herman's or St. Luke's	
24	Wed	6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck & Inquirer's Discussion	
25	Thu	6:30 pm Vesperal Liturgy	Annunciation to the Theotokos
		Potluck	
27	Sat	10:00 am	Teaching Liturgy Lazarus Saturday
		Potluck	
		5:00 pm Vespers	
28	Sun	9:00 am Liturgy	6th Sunday of Lent (Palm Sunday)
31	Wed	6:30 pm Matins of Holy Thursday and Unction Service	

April

1	Thu	4:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy of the Last Supper	
		7:00 pm Matins of Holy Friday (12 Gospels)	
2	Fri	9:00 am Royal Hours	
		3:00 pm Vespers (Burial of our Lord)	
		7:00 pm Matins of Holy Saturday (Lamentations / Descent into Hades)	
3	Sat	10:00 am	Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday (Harrowing of Hades)
		11:30 pm	Nocturne
4	Sun	Midnight	Paschal Procession
			Paschal Matins
			Paschal Liturgy
			Paschal Breaking of the Fast
		Noon	Paschal Vespers

Pan Orthodox Vespers Schedule

Pan-Orthodox Vespers Schedule for Great Lent	Central Region Parishes	North Metro Region Parishes	Northern Region Parishes
Feb 21 <i>Sunday of Orthodoxy</i>	Assumption Cathedral 4610 E. Alameda Ave. Denver, CO 80246 (303) 388-9314	Assumption Cathedral 4610 E. Alameda Ave. Denver, CO 80246 (303) 388-9314	Assumption Cathedral 4610 E. Alameda Ave. Denver, CO 80246 (303) 388-9314
Feb 28 <i>St. Gregory Palamas</i>	Transfiguration of Christ OCA Cathedral 349 E. 47th Ave. Denver, CO 80216 (303) 294-0938	Transfiguration of Christ OCA Cathedral 349 E. 47th Ave. Denver, CO 80216 (303) 294-0938	Transfiguration of Christ OCA Cathedral 349 E. 47th Ave. Denver, CO 80216 (303) 294-0938
March 7 <i>Sunday of the Cross</i>	St. Augustine WR-AOC 55 W. 3rd Ave. Denver, CO 80223 (303) 832-3657	St. Elias AOC 7580 Pierce St. Arvada, CO 80003 (303) 949-5809	St. Spyridon GOC 745 E. 5th St. Loveland, CO 80537 (970) 667-5778
March 14 <i>St. John Climacus</i>	St. Catherine GOC 5555 S. Yosemite St. Greenwood Village (303) 773-3411	Ss. Peter & Paul GOC 5640 Jay Rd. Boulder, CO 80301 (303) 581-1434	St. James AOC 2610 SE Frontage Rd. Fort Collins, CO 80525 (970) 221-4180
March 21 <i>St. Mary of Egypt</i>	St. Herman OCA 991 W. Prentice Ave. Littleton, CO 80120 (303) 798-7306	St. Luke AOC 1700 Stonehenge Dr. Lafayette, CO 80026 (303) 665-4013	Ss. Constantine & Helen GOC 501 W. 27th St. Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307) 635-5929

All Services will begin at **5 pm.**

A free-will offering will be collected for charity.

Fellowship with refreshments will follow each Service.



**LET US BEGIN OUR 2010 LENTEN
JOURNEY TOGETHER**

Please join us for our annual
Clean Monday Retreat



Monday, February 15, 2010
9:30am – 2:30pm

Sponsored by Saint Catherine Philoptochos
5555 South Yosemite Street
Greenwood Village, Colorado 80111

Clean Monday Retreat Theme
“Women of Faith: The ‘Marys’ of the Church”

Retreat Master: Father George Dokos, Proistamenos,
Sts. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Boulder, CO

Registration: \$15 Includes lunch by
Aspasia’s Catering

Please RSVP by February 7th, 2010!

Alina Buzdugan: alina@stcatherinechurch.org
303-773-3411