

# "THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Weekly Bulletin*

*O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!*

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

**Glory to Jesus Christ!** (*responded with: Glory forever!*) Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*) We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

### UPCOMING SERVICES

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 19 #TheGreatFast

Holy 42 Martyrs of Ammoreia

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in East Pittsburgh

**ALL SERVICES WILL NOW BE IN ALLISON PARK**

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with community meal following

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 24 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

#### ALL-SOULS SATURDAY, MARCH 25 #TheGreatFast

9:30am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (*3<sup>rd</sup> of 5*)  
(*Zadušna Subota*)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 26 #TheGreatFast

Sainted Nicephoros

9:30 Divine Liturgy in Allison Park

Tone 8; Liturgical Color: **Purple**

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in RANKIN

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with community meal following

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 31 #TheGreatFast

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast

10 am Diocesan Retreat at St. Nicholas

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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service

### RELOCATION UPDATE

#### WELCOME TO ALLISON PARK!

#### GLORY TO GOD! SLAVA BOHU!



**First** – Thank You to His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory, who rearranged his schedule and joined us this past Friday morning for the Presanctified Liturgy and deconsecration of our long-time home on the North Side. We look forward to inviting him to Allison Park after some work is done. We ask God's continued blessings for our guiding shepherd and teacher. Many Years!

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**Second** – Thank You to the over 40 people who helped yesterday in this amazing example of your stewardship to our church! Many Years!

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**Third** – Thank You to our founders and benefactors who offered your stewardship (of time, talent, and treasures) to St. John the Baptist! Many Years!

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**\*\*\* 16 Steps** – As we begin having services in Allison Park, we will not be in the Nave (to the left of the main entrance after walking in from the parking lot), but in the hall downstairs. As you enter from the parking lot (*the bathrooms are on the right*), straight ahead there are 8 steps going down to a landing and then another 8 steps to the hall. This is temporary as work will be done upstairs.

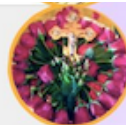
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**\* The Transition Schedule from the NS to the NH: Week of March 20** – Cleaning up on the NS after the moving day. ALSO, Moving the remaining pieces of the iconostasis and last miscellaneous items (please contact Fr Dave if able to help through the week)

**Friday, March 24** – Last day to get items moved.

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3rd Sunday of Lent  
**MARCH 19th**



### VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

HALF WAY TO PASCHA!

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6  
Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!

4th Sunday of Lent  
**MARCH 26th**



### ST JOHN of the LADDER

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20  
Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!

### Did You Know???

- ✘ We “swapped” churches with the Allison Park Church of God. They will now rent our old building to an East African Burundi Christian congregation. California Ave. stays a church.
  - ✘ We will *not* be taking a loan from a bank to make this move! May God bless you in your generosity!
  - ✘ Our phone number will stay the same (*we use Google Voice, an online service*)
  - ✘ The stained glass window company will be taking the windows out, crating, and transporting them.
- Please share questions with Fr Dave or a Parish Council member as they come up!** (If you are thinking it, someone else might be as well...)

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**Construction Committee** – Please contact Fr. Dave or Larry Martin if you are interested in being added to the *Construction Committee*.

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**May God continue to guide our journey at 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, PA 15101**

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### BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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**\* Great Lent 2023: Our Journey To Pascha** – Please reach out to Fr. Dave with your questions about this important fasting period that has arrived.

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**Thank You** to everyone who brought in yummy food for our luncheon on Friday following the Last Liturgy. It was a blessing (and filling) to see such a beautiful spread!

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**\*\*\* Anderson Candy Sale – LAST CALL** for this year's candy sale. Orders are due by **March 24<sup>th</sup>**. Please see Tim Martin with any questions.

*This Bulletin Is Sponsored*

In Memory Of

+Andrew Hudak (*15-year Anniversary*)

May his memory be eternal!

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**Mid-Lenten Checkup** – We have reached the middle of the Great Fast. How are you doing? When we want to improve – remember that we need to do some work! Have you been able to maintain your goals for increasing your prayer, fasting, and charity? If not restart today! If your goal was to read our book suggestion for Great Lent, *"The Trial of Job"* by Patrick Reardon, how is that going? Or was it the Book of Psalms (*the Psalter*). Every day try to read scripture, pray the St Ephraim Prayer, and/or Psalm 50. No matter what you do, try and do more than last year on your Lenten Spiritual Journey through the Great Fast! – *with love in Christ, Fr. Dave*

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### Deanery Lenten Mission Schedule

Confessions starting at 3:30, Vespers at 4:00, and Fellowship Meal following

**March 19 - St John's East Pittsburgh**

(211 Cable Ave., East Pittsburgh, PA 15112)

**March 26 - \*\*\* St Michael's Rankin**

(146 3rd Ave., Rankin, PA 15104)

**April 2 - \*\*\* our turn**

(2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, PA 15101)

**\*\*\* Please Note That We Swapped Mission Weeks**

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**Presanctified Liturgy Preparation** - In order to properly prepare oneself for the reception of the Holy Eucharist at the evening Presanctified Liturgy during the Lenten season, we should fast from food for at least three hours (around 3pm) but ideally from after lunch. If you have questions, please, see Father Dave.

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\* **All-Soul Saturday** (*Zadušna Subota*) Liturgies and Panachidas for 2023 will continue on Saturdays, **March 25, and June 3** (*3/18 will be rescheduled*). On these days, we especially pray for the departed loved ones of our families. If you are not working on a Saturday, come to church, pray with us, and light two candles for your living and departed loved ones. **Please inform Fr Dave if there are any additions to be made to your Commemoration Diptychs (*Hramoty*)**. Offering Envelopes and cards are available in the vestibule.

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\*\* **Diocesan Lenten Retreat** will be held on **Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>** from 10a to 5p at St. Nicholas (903 Ann St., Homestead, PA 15120). Please sign up in the hall if you will be attending.

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\* **Palms & Pussywillows** – We are collecting our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away, but they will respectfully be taken care of. *Please bring yours in so that your home will be ready for the new ones in a few weeks!*

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\*\* **31 Books of March Sale** <sup>XL</sup> – The Ancient Faith Store is offering different books for 50% off each day of the month of March! Visit the site daily (or sign up for their emails) and keep an eye out for a book that will help you along your Spiritual Journey! Visit: [store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/](http://store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/)

*If You Are Looking To Add A Couple Dollars To Your Order To Get Free Shipping, Please Call or Text Father Dave As He Has A Couple Suggestions That Would Be Helpful To Our Church.*

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\*\* **Fellowship Meals** - Got Soup? A 't'radition in many Orthodox parishes is to have soup (or other light meal) following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast. We will have this meal after our Wednesday evening services. Contact Fr Dave if you will be bringing food.

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**Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at: [www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar) (Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

**Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online: [www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)

### OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 272
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 88
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 1072
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 1432</b>
<b>Capital Improvement Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 125</b>
<b>Relocation Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>

**Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials** were offered last week by Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Mary Jane Hudak; Eleanor Sanger; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis

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**The Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Cindy Pavilonis in memory of her dad's birthday. May His Memory Be Eternal! *Vičnaya Pamyat!*

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\*\* **Paschal Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used during Holy Week and Pascha as Special Intentions: *anonymously, for the health of OR in memory of departed loved ones*. Please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule **by Palm Sunday (April 9)** and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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\*\*\* **Window Company** – If anyone works with windows or has a good connection with someone who does or has a recommended company, please let Larry or Fr. Dave know. Thank you!

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### ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK

**Antimins** – (*Gr: Antimension* meaning “instead of the table”) is among the most important furnishings of the altar in Orthodox Christian liturgical traditions. It is a rectangular piece of cloth, of either linen or silk, typically decorated with representations of the entombment of Christ, the four Evangelists, and scriptural passages related to the Eucharist [Holy Communion]. A small relic of a martyr is sewn into it [ours is from Saint Euphemia]. The Eucharist cannot be celebrated without an antimins... The antimins is consecrated and signed by our bishop. *Read more at: <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Antimension>*

### SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6*

**Jesus the Great High Priest**

<sup>14</sup>Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

<sup>5</sup>For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup>He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup>Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. <sup>4</sup>And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was.

<sup>5</sup>So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “*Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee*”; <sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place, “*Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchiz'edek.*”

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*Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1*

<sup>34</sup>And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? <sup>37</sup>For what can a man give in return for his life? <sup>38</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” <sup>9</sup> <sup>1</sup>And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

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### LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**The Czestochowa Icon Of The Mother Of God**

*Commemorated on March 19/6*

*We have this icon for veneration.*

*It has the silver cover to it.*



The Chenstokhovsk (Czestochowa) Icon of the Mother of God, by tradition, is regarded as among the 70 icons of the done by the holy Evangelist Luk (Comm. 18 October). It was written at Jerusalem, in the Mount Zion section (where it was that the Last Suppe

occurred in the Cenacle, or common dining room). In the years 66-67, during the time of the assault on Jerusalem by Roman forces under the leadership of Vespasian and Titus, the Christians fled Jerusalem, going to the local of Pella. Together with other holy things, they preserved in caves also the Chenstokhovsk Image of the Mother of God. In the year 326, when the holy Empress Helena went about through Jerusalem for veneration at the holy places and found the Cross of the Lord, she received also this icon as a gift from Christians, which she conveyed to Constantinople and placed in a court chapel, where it remained over the course of five centuries.

The wonderworking image was brought to Russia with great reverence by the founder of the city of Lvov (Lemberg – 1268-1270), the Galitsko-Volynsk prince Lev Danilovich, and it was placed in the Bel'zsk castle under the supervision of Orthodox clergy.

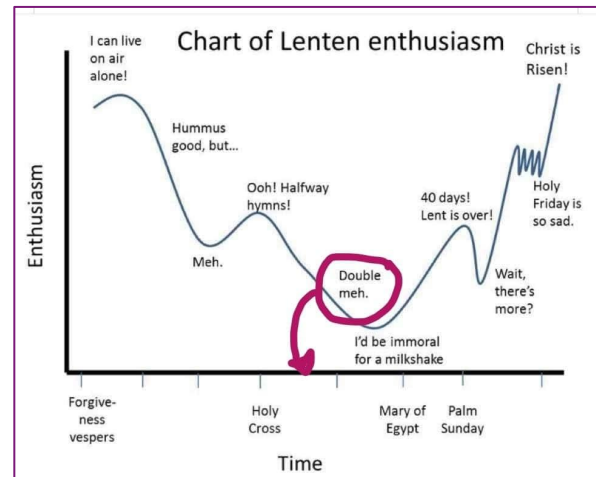
Later on, during the conquest of Western Ukraine by the Polish, the wonderworking icon came into the possession of the Polish governor prince Vladislav Opol'skii. The Tatars (Mongols), bursting in upon the expanse of Russia, and set siege to the Bel'zsk castle Hoping on the help of the Mother of God, prince Vladislav brought out the venerable icon from church and installed it upon the city wall. Pierced by an enemy arrow, the wonderworking image preserved henceforth traces of a trickle of blood. A pernicious mist then falling upon the Tatar forces compelled them to lift their siege of the castle and withdraw to their own territories. The Heavenly Mediatrix in a dream vision commanded the prince to transfer the wonderworking icon to the Chenstokhovsk Mount Yasna. The monastery on Mount Yasna – (the Mount of "Witnessing" – as they termed it

from the many miracles happening there), was founded in 1352. Prince Vladislav conveyed thither the sacred image and entrusted it into the care of monks of the Paulinian Order. Some years later, ruffians plundered the monastery. Having looted it of all its valuables, they wanted to snatch also the wonderworking image, but an invisible force held back the horses, and the sleigh-cart with the icon would not budge from the spot. In a rage one of the robbers flung down the holy icon upon the ground, and another struck at it on the face. Herewith a proper punishment befell all: the first burst into pieces, the hand of the second withered off, and the others either fell down dead or were struck blind.

In the mid XVII Century the Swedish king Charles X Gustavus, having captured Warsaw and Cracow (Krakov), suffered a blow beneath the Chenstokhovsk monastery at Mount Yasna. The help and intercession of the Heavenly Queen gave courage to the Polish, and king Jan Cazimir, returning to L'vov, promulgated a declaration, in which he entrusted his realm to the protection of the Mother of God, calling Her Chenstokhovsk Image the "Polish Queen". The war with the Swedes ended successfully for the Polish in the year 1656.

The many miracles from the Chestokhovsk Wonderworking Image were recorded in a special book, kept in the church of the Chenstokhovsk monastery. Many a copy was made from this icon, both for Catholic and also for Orthodox churches.

In the year 1813, the wonderworking image was transferred to Saint Peterburg and placed in the Kazan cathedral.



## PRAYER CORNER

**For the Health of...** Marjorie, David, Karen, David, Donna, George, Beverly, Kelly, Marie, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, and Michael ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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**For the souls of the newly departed...** Anna Mae Pcholinsky (3/5), Paul Shoemaker (2/27) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

### A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.



### VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddioecese](http://www.facebook.com/acroddioecese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](http://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioecese](http://youtube.com/acroddioecese)

## THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

*(in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St. Peter Mogila's 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik))*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. + [Prostration]

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. + [Prostration]

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + [Prostration]

*The following triplet is recited 4 times  
(making a total of 12 bows):*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. [bow]

O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. [bow]

O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many. [bow]

*Then the prayer again with only one prostration:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + [Prostration]

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### The Jesus Prayer

*(Inhale)* O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
*(Exhale)* have mercy on me, a sinner!

*(Repeat until your heart is calm ...)*

## A Prayer Of Repentance (Psalm 50/51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, And done this evil before You. That You might be justified in Your words, And prevail when You judge. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, And in sins did my mother bear me.

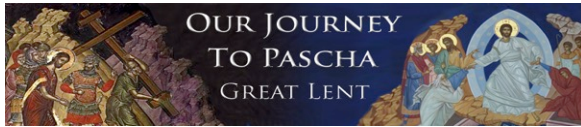
For behold, You have loved truth; The hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made clear to me. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear joy and gladness, The bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And with Your governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, who are the God of my salvation, My tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; With whole burnt offerings You shall not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, A heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; And let the walls of Jerusalem be built Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings; Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

## ONLINE BULLETIN BONUSES



To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at:

[www.acrod.org/prayercorner/lentenresources/](http://www.acrod.org/prayercorner/lentenresources/)  
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**How and When to Make the Sign of the Cross**  
The Cross is perhaps the most well-known symbol in all of Christendom. Even non-Christians recognize it. And we all understand and agree on what the Cross means (on the surface, at least). But the way Christians make the sign of the Cross differs depending on which Christian community you encounter. So, in this post, we explain specifically how and when Christians in the Orthodox Church make the sign of the Cross.

### A SYMBOL OF VICTORY

As the instrument Christ chose to bring about His ever-memorable and life-creating death, the Cross holds a special place in the heart of every Orthodox Christian. We understand that this symbol, once a primitive means of torture and capital punishment, now reminds us of Christ's victory over death. Orthodox Christians make the sign of the Cross because it affirms what we believe about Christ as the Incarnate Son of God and all that He did for us. It is an outward manifestation that illustrates our view of God in Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and our belief in the two natures of Christ (fully God and fully Man). It is, in essence, a physical form of prayer.

Because of our love for the sign of the Cross, the Orthodox use it daily. Not only do we use it during worship, but also before and after meals, during personal prayer, and in moments of worry or need. The saints, and Christ Himself, make this sign in holy icons. We love the cross perhaps just as much as we love the Theotokos, if not more. Because Christ used it to bring about our salvation. To show our love and devotion to Christ, during any given service or

liturgy, the faithful may cross themselves close to one-hundred times!

### HOW TO MAKE THE SIGN

If you've ever come to an Orthodox service and looked around, you probably saw someone crossing themselves at some point. To newcomers and inquirers, this can be a bit strange, since we cross ourselves differently than other Christians. Let's walk through the Orthodox way of making the sign of the cross, step by step.

How to Make the Sign of the Cross

1. **Join the thumb, index, and middle fingers of your right hand.**
2. **Rest the other two fingers of your right hand down against your palm.**
3. **Take that hand and touch your joined fingertips to your forehead.**
4. **Then bring your fingertips down to your abdomen.**

Let your fingers rest there for a moment.

5. **Move your fingertips to touch the front of your right shoulder.**
6. **Finally, touch your fingertips to the front of your left shoulder.**

Note a couple differences between the Orthodox sign and that of Roman Catholics and Protestants. First, Roman Catholics cross themselves from left to right and typically keep all five fingers straight. Secondly, Protestant practice in making the sign of the cross, much like Protestantism itself, varies. Protestantism does not prohibit it, but they do not necessarily encourage it either, because there is no Biblical command to use the sign of the cross.

### VARIATIONS OF THE SIGN

You may also have noticed some people make the sign three times in a row, while others only do it once. Some make large sweeping motions, while others keep things simple and small. All these variations! But, which way is the *right* way?

Put simply, there isn't one. Crossing yourself is not an issue of dogma (belief necessary for salvation) in Orthodoxy. Instead, it is a matter of personal piety. In other words, aside from the arrangement of the fingers and direction of the movement, all else is up to you. If you feel moved to always make the sign of the cross in three's, you may do so. If you wish to venerate icons in a slightly different manner than another parishioner, you can. Each Orthodox Christian can express his or her faith in whatever physical ways they feel necessary, as long as they do so out of love for God. (If you do things instead to bring attention to yourself and feed your pride, you should reflect upon that.)

### WHEN TO MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Because crossing yourself is an issue of personal piety, the Orthodox do not have strict guidelines about when you should and should not cross yourself. In the Orthodox tradition, we cross ourselves on many occasions. Below is a list of times when you *should* cross yourself:

- Whenever the priest, chanter, reader, or choir invokes or alludes to the name of the Holy Trinity
  - At the beginning and/or end of personal (and communal) prayer
  - Upon entering and leaving the church
  - When venerating holy icons, relics, the cross, or the Gospel
  - Before receiving Communion\*
  - Whenever you pass in front of the Holy Altar, whether the doors are open or closed
- This is by no means an exhaustive list! We cross ourselves many other times as well. Again, it all comes down to personal choice. If the Holy Spirit moves you to express your piety in a particular way, no one will judge you or look at you strangely for it.

### WHEN NOT TO MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Though the Orthodox make the sign of the cross rather liberally, there are a couple times when we should not make the sign of the cross during services:

- At the chalice before or after taking Holy Communion\*
- Whenever a bishop or priest blesses the congregation with his hand and says, "Peace be to

all." Here, we merely give a slight bow and receive the blessing.

### CONCLUSION

In summary, the Orthodox cross themselves the way Christians have for millennia. Additionally, we have guidelines for when we should and should not cross ourselves during worship. However, we don't force them on anyone who decides to come and worship with us. If you aren't Orthodox and do visit a local parish, please don't feel as if you must make the sign of the cross. We make the sign out of love for God, a way of expressing with our bodies our faith in Him. You need not make the sign until you, too, feel such conviction.

*\*Notice we mentioned Communion in both lists. Here's why! If you cross yourself too close to the chalice, you might hit the chalice with your hand, or cause some of the Body and Blood of Christ to spill. However, it is okay for you to cross yourself before approaching the chalice and after backing away to receive blessed bread.*

**Source:** [www.saintjohnchurch.org/how-to-make-the-sign-of-the-cross/](http://www.saintjohnchurch.org/how-to-make-the-sign-of-the-cross/)

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### SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):

We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time...

#### PRAYER:

- ✘ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.
- ✘ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).
- ✘ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.
- ✘ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

#### FASTING:

- ✘ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, March 8. This is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, strict fast on Great & Holy Friday (4/22) and Great & Holy Saturday (4/23)

✘ The tradition of the Orthodox Church is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) by all of the faithful for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.

✘ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:

- a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
- b) fast only from meat;
- c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
- d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week (*April 18-23*).

✘ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!

✘ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular "midnight Fast" is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great*)

✘ The sick and infirm are not bound by the fast at any time.

✘ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician's instructions.

✘ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a "40 day diet program" or simply a "dietary adjustment" (or "label Lent").

#### ALMSGIVING:

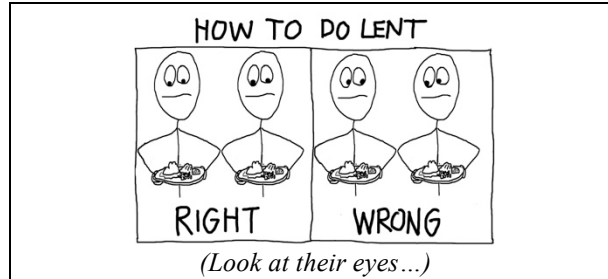
✘ Find a way to give more of your time, talent, and treasures.

A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:

Try to do more than last year.

Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one! – *Fr. Dave*

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#### Being an Orthodox Christian

The Orthodox Church is not just another organization, club or fraternal society. It is the Body of Christ, and a life-giving relationship with God. The Orthodox Church is a continuation of the Christian Church from the time of Christ until the present. As Orthodox Christians, we do not have a relationship with Christ in isolation, but alongside other Orthodox Christians. With these things in mind, Orthodox Christians are expected to:

- ✘ Strive daily to live a Christian life, according to the teachings of Our Lord in the Gospels, and the tradition of the Church.
- ✘ Regularly participate in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays (and on holy days as permitted by your employment).
  - *Those who are homebound and/or physically unable to attend services on a regular basis are asked to spiritually join in prayer on Sundays and holy days. The priest will visit with the Sacraments periodically throughout the year, as requested.*
- ✘ Regularly receive Holy Communion and participate in the Mystery of Holy Confession. (The minimum is no less than once a year for each, but at least four times a year is better.)
- ✘ Offer your whole life to Christ, and offer the "Three T's" - time, talent and treasure - to sustain the church (your stewardship).
  - Participate in parish ministries and activities.
  - Volunteer to help.
  - Give monetary support.
  - Our parish does not survive on stewardship, we "thrive" on this form of voluntary giving of who we are. If we are unable to donate monetarily,

there are many other ways to give with time and talents.

If you have any questions about Stewardship or any of the above, please reach out to Fr Dave or Larry Martin (Parish Council President)

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#### A Note About The Mystery Of Confession

Confessions will be heard in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard *following every* service, from **11am – 1pm** on most Saturdays during Great Lent, and at other times by appointment: please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this. If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! Confessions will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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### MARCH SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**CLEAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with community meal following

**CLEAN THURSDAY, MARCH 2** #TheGreatFast

9:30am The Great Canon of Repentance

**CLEAN FRIDAY, MARCH 3** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**ALL-SOULS SATURDAY, MARCH 4** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (2<sup>nd</sup> of 5)

(Zadušna Subota) **Please note the date change**

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5** #TheGreatFast

9:30 Divine Liturgy (and Church School)

Procession of Icons (*Bring an icon to church*)

4:30 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Service at St. George

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

with community meal following

**THURSDAY, MARCH 9** #TheGreatFast

FEAST OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> FINDINGS OF THE HEAD OF ST JOHN

**FRIDAY, MARCH 10** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12** #TheGreatFast

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

9:30 Divine Liturgy

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Ambridge

**TUESDAY, MARCH 14** #TheGreatFast

7:00pm Blessing of Our New Church (Allison Park)

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on the North Side with community meal following

**FRIDAY, MARCH 17** #TheGreatFast

10:00 am Last Liturgy on the North Side with

Metropolitan Gregory: Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with deconsecration following

**All Services Going Forward Are In Allison Park**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 19** #TheGreatFast

9:30 Divine Liturgy, Youth Sunday, & Church School

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in East Pittsburgh

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with community meal following

**FRIDAY, MARCH 24** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**ALL-SOULS SATURDAY, MARCH 25** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (3<sup>rd</sup> of 5) (Zadušna Subota)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

**SUNDAY, MARCH 26** #TheGreatFast

9:30 Divine Liturgy

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with community meal following

**FRIDAY, MARCH 31** #TheGreatFast

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

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### FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

**First (4 C.) & Second (452) Discovery Of The Head Of The Prophet, Forerunner And Baptist John**

*Commemorated on March 9 / February 24*

After the cutting off of the Head of the Prophet ForeRunner and Baptist John (Comm. 29 August), his body was buried by disciples in the Samaritan city of Sebasteia, and the venerable head was hidden by Herodias in an unclean place. Pious Joanna, wife of king Herod's steward Chuza (there is made mention about him by the holy evangelist Luke – Lk 8: 3) secretly took the holy head and placed it into a vessel

and buried it on the Mount of Olives – in one of the properties of Herod. After many years this property passed into the possession of the dignitary Innocentius, who began to build a church there. When they dug a trench for the foundation, the vessel with the venerable head of John the Baptist was uncovered. Innocentius recognised the great holiness of it from the signs of grace occurring from it. Thus occurred the First Discovery of the Head. Innocentius preserved it with great piety, but before his own death, fearful so that the holy relic should not be abused by unbelievers, he again hid it in that same place, where it was found...Upon his death the church fell into ruin and was destroyed.

During the days of Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great (+ 337, Comm. 21 May), when the Christian faith began to flourish, the holy ForeRunner himself appeared twice upon two monks journeying to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to the holy places, and he revealed the location of his venerable head. The monks uncovered the holy relic and, placing it into a sack of camel-hair, they proceeded homewards. Along the way they encountered an unnamed potter and gave him to carry the precious burden. Not knowing what he was carrying, the potter continued on his way. But the holy ForeRunner himself appeared to him and ordered him to flee from the careless and lazy monks, together with that which was in his hands. The potter concealed himself from the monks and at home he preserved the venerable head with reverence. Before his death he sealed it into a water-carrying vessel and gave it over to his sister. From that time the venerable head was successively preserved by pious christians, until the priest Eustathios infected with the Arian heresy – came into possession of it. He seduced a multitude of the infirm, healed by the holy head, adding abundance to the heresy. When his blasphemy was uncovered, he was compelled to flee. Having buried the holy relic in a cave, near Emessus, the heretic intended to afterwards return and again take possession of it for disseminating falsehood. But God did not permit this. Pious monks settled into the cave, and then at this place arose a monastery. In the year 452 Saint John the Baptist in a vision to the archimandrite of this monastery Marcellus indicated the place of

concealment of his head. This became celebrated as the Second Discovery. The holy relic was transferred to Emessus, and later to Constantinople.

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Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility

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**STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET**

**Stewardship of Treasure Guide**

Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?

Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe			Tithe			Upper Range Giving			Middle Range Giving			Lower Range Giving		
	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2	\$6	\$4	\$2
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3	\$9	\$6	\$3
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4	\$12	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5	\$15	\$10	\$5
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6	\$18	\$12	\$6
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7	\$21	\$14	\$7
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8	\$24	\$16	\$8
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9	\$27	\$18	\$9
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10	\$30	\$20	\$10
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11	\$33	\$22	\$11
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20	\$60	\$40	\$20
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30	\$90	\$60	\$30

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).  
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.

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**SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:00pm or by appointment.

**Online Community:** Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

**Parish Phone Tree** - Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

**Emergency Sick Calls** – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

**Mystery of Confession** – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

**Holy Communion/Eucharist** – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive a blessing from the chalice.

**Lapsed Members** – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

**Baptisms** – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr. Dave for more details.

**Adult Chrismation** – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

**Marriages** – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays in the church. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (before arrangements are made for the hall). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

**Church Funerals** – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

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“The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning.” - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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**PRAYER CORNER #2**

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions and Other Needs\*

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**A Prayer For The Sick:**

O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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**For the Special Intentions of...** His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. David S., Fr. Myron, Dcn. Dean, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Thomas, Samuel, Timothy,

Nicholas, Aydin, Subdeacon Seamus, Nicholas, and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee: Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth, John, Wendy, Margaret, John, Patricia, John, Todd and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

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**March Namedays:**

...May God grant them many and blessed years!

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**March Birthdays:**

Alisha Zak (3/1), Matthew Wensel (3/3), Christopher Kubis (3/6), Michael Shuster (3/6), Fr Daniel Mahler (3/6), 'Randy' Paieski (3/09), Father's nephew, Michael Verbanick (3/9), Father's God-mother, Andrea Babbie (3/10), Callum Brozell (3/10), Allen Dzambo (3/11), Noella Gaydos (3/14), Fr David Cochran (3/18), Ameer Francken (3/18), Pañi Alison Archer (3/21), Annie Jesko (3/24), Marianne Kubis (3/29), Kenneth Watson (3/29), Ben Anton (3/30) ...May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!

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**For our Catechumens & Inquirers...** Tyler, Susan ...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.

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**For those preparing for Marriage...** Francis & Alexandra, Nicole & Dustin ...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.

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**March Anniversaries:**

Lindsay & AJ Matolyak-Ferraz (3/6), Wendy & Mark Martellotti (3/7) ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas

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**For Pregnant Mothers...** Erica (due in April), Lindsay, Nicole (June) ...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.

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**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...** Thomas R. Dzadoovsky ...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.

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\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. *This prayer list is NOT limited to only Orthodox Christians.*

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**DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK**

**A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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**from the Lenten Triodion**

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver; for my spirit hastens early towards Your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled; but in Your compassion purify me by Your gracious mercy. Amen.

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**A Prayer for Peace**

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. Amen.

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