

“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

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101
 www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (Talk or Text) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

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, APRIL 2 #TheGreatFast

Holy Martyress Photini (Svetlana)
 4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 #TheGreatFast

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 #TheGreatFast

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
 9:30am Vespereal Liturgy

SATURDAY, APRIL 8 #LAZARUS SATURDAY

9:30 am Divine Liturgy
 Palm Cross Making following
 11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard
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SUNDAY, APRIL 9 #PALM (FLOWERY) SUNDAY

FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM
 St. Matrona (4th c.)
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy
 Blessing of Branches (Palms and Willows)
 Tone 2; Liturgical Color: **Gold**
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GREAT AND HOLY PASSION WEEK

MONDAY, APRIL 10 #HOLY WEEK

6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and confessions

TUESDAY, APRIL 11 #HOLY WEEK

6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and confessions

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 #HOLY WEEK

6:30 pm Mystery of Holy Unction (Anointing)

* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*

THURSDAY, APRIL 13 #HOLY WEEK

9:30 am Vespereal Liturgy (*Mystical Last Supper*)
 6:30 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels
 Setting of the Lord’s Tomb follows

FRIDAY, APRIL 14 #HOLY WEEK

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING
 9:30am Royal Hours
 6:30 pm Vespers & Procession of the Holy Shroud

SATURDAY, APRIL 15 #HOLY WEEK

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING
 9:30 am Vespereal Liturgy
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SUNDAY, APRIL 16 #PASCHA

THE FEAST OF FEASTS
9:00 am Resurrection Matins
 ~9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy
 Blessing of Paschal Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)
 Paschal Potluck Meal
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***Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service thru Holy Wednesday

***Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:
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/

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
 Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
 FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
 Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
 YouTube: youtube.com/acroddiocese

5th Sunday of Lent
APRIL 2nd



ST MARY of EGYPT

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14
 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Ask the Theotokos to offer you
 and the world pure thoughts
 and ideas this week.

FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY!

APRIL 9th

GREAT WEEK BEGINS



GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9
 Gospel: John 12:1-18

Place your palm branches
 and pussywillows behind
 an icon at home
 and in your car!

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)



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/

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*** **Upstairs** – Through the Grace of God and people’s hard work, starting this afternoon we will temporarily be upstairs in the nave of the church until after Pascha (and when the contractor is ready to start on lowering the sanctuary floor).

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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 **NEXT WEEK, Palm Sunday (April 9)** and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church. Only a couple items have been offered for. MANY items remain. Please email Fr. Dave if you are unable to sign up in person.

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*** **Pot-Luck Paschal Meal** – Just as after our Last Liturgy on the North Side, we will have a community meal following the Divine Liturgy on Pascha. All families are encouraged to bring something to share.

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*** **Bulk Coffee** – We are running out of regular and decaf coffee. If you are out at Costco or Sam’s Club, please consider picking up a coffee (in bulk) for the church.

This Bulletin Is Sponsored
 In Memory Of
 +Donald Shelpman
 May his memory be eternal!

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*** **Palm Crosses** – On **Saturday, April 8th**, following the Divine Liturgy, we will be making crosses out of palms. This activity is geared towards the youth, but all are welcome to come!

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** **Landscape Ministry Crew** – Please contact Fr. Dave or Kathy Schrmack if you are interested in being added to the *Landscape Ministry Crew*.

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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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** **Tree Service Company** – If anyone works with tree trimming 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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*** **Bookstore** – Would you be interested in leading our bookstore? We are looking for someone to handle the display cases. Please contact Fr. Dave if interested.

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*** **Bulletin Mailing** – We are looking for someone to mail our weekly bulletin to those who desire to receive the hard copy but cannot make it to church. Please contact Fr. Dave if interested.

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Please share questions about our relocation 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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**** 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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***** Panachida Offerings** – Reminder: Panachidas (Memorial Services for the Departed) *cannot* be served on the Major Feast Days of our Lord including Palm Sunday, Holy Pascha, as well as Lazarus Saturday.

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***** Blessing of Graves** – Our annual grave blessings at the cemeteries will be on **Thomas Sunday, April 23**. We will celebrate a Panachida after Liturgy and then head to the cemeteries after the coffee social. **** If your loved ones are not at one of the two cemeteries on the North Side, please schedule a time with Fr. Dave to meet (if possible) before the Feast of Ascension.*

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 1080
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 78
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 375
Community Outreach:	\$ 85
Closing Rebate (PWSA):	\$ 494.05
Total Collections:	\$ 2112.05

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Tim Martin; John Radick; Fred and Juliana Anton; Carol and Tom Lorenzi; Rich and Renee Mirilovich; Carol Fucsko; Cindy Pavilonis

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Bulletin Sponsor – If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (short Memorial Service) for them.*



On-Line Giving is available from our parish website to donate to the: *General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund.* The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

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Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³² And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; ³⁴ and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise.”

The Request of James and John

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zeb’edee, came forward to him, and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶ And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³⁷ And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” ³⁹ And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” ⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. ⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Holy Martyress Photina (Svetlana) The Samaritan Woman, Her Sons Victor Named Photinos And Josiah; And The Martyress-Sisters: Anatolia, Photo, Photida, Paraskeva, Kyriakia, Domnina; And The Martyr Sebastian:

Commemorated on April 2 / March 20

The Holy Martyress Photina (Svetlana) the Samaritan Woman, her sons Victor named Photinos and Josiah; and the Martyress-Sisters: Anatolia, Photo, Photida, Paraskeva, Kyriakia, Domnina; and the Martyr Sebastian: The holy Martyress Photina was that selfsame Samaritan Woman, with whom the Saviour conversed at Jacob's Well (Jn. 4: 5-42).

During the time of the emperor Nero (54-68), who displayed an excessive cruelty in his struggle against Christianity, Saint Photina lived in Carthage with her younger son Josiah and fearlessly preached the

Gospel there. Her older son Victor fought bravely in the Roman army against barbarians, and for his meritorious service was appointed military commander in the city of Attalia (Asia Minor).

The Attalia city governor Sebastian upon meeting Saint Victor said to him: "I quite verily do know, that thou, thy mother and thy brother – art followers of the teachings of Christ. But as a friend I advise thee – submit to the will of the emperor, and thou canst receive the wealth of any Christians, which thou mightest inform on for us. Thou mother and thy brother I shalt write, that they not preach Christ openly. Let them secretly confess their faith". Saint Victor replied: "I myself want to be a preacher of Christianity, just like my mother and brother". To this Sebastian answered: "O Victor, we all do well know what woes await thee, and thine mother and brother, in this". After these words Sebastian suddenly sense a sharp pain in his eyes, and he became dumbfounded and his face sombre.

For three days he lay there blind, and not uttering a word. On the fourth day he loudly declared: "Only the faith of the Christians is true, and there be no other true faith". To Saint Victor, who came there next beside him, Sebastian said: "Christ doth call unto me". Soon he was baptised and immediately regained his sight. The servants of Saint Sebastian, witnessing the miracle, were themselves then baptised on the example of their master.

Reports of the occurrence reached Nero, and he commanded that the Christians be brought to him for trial ar Rome. Then the Lord Himself appeared to the confessors and said: "I shalt be with ye, and Nero wilt be vanquished, and all who serve him". To Saint Victor the Lord announced: "From this day henceforth thy name wilt be Photinos – "Lightning-flash", since that many, enlightened by thee, wilt turn to Me". To Saint Sebastian the Lord spake in encouragement: "Blest be he that endureth to the end". Saint Photina, having been informed by the Saviour concerning the forthcoming sufferings, herself set off in the company of several Christians from Carthage to Rome and joined in with the confessors

At Rome the emperor gave orders to bring him the saints and he asked them, whether actually and truly

they believed in Christ. All the confessors resolutely refused to renounce the Saviour. Then the emperor gave orders to smash the palms of the hands of the holy martyrs. But at the time of the torments the confessors sensed no pain, and the hands of the Martyress Photina remained unharmed. Nero ordered that Saints Sebastian, Photinos and Josiah be blinded and locked up in prison, and Saint Photina with her five sisters – Anatolia, Photo, Photida, Paraskeva and Kyriakia – be sent off to the imperial court under the supervision of Nero's daughter Domnina. But Saint Photina converted to Christ both Domnina and all her servants, who then accepted holy Baptism. She also converted to Christ a sorcerer, who had brought poisoned food to kill her.

Three years had passed, and Nero sent to the prison for one of his servants, who had been locked up. The messengers reported to him, that Saints Sebastian, Photinos and Josiah – who had been blinded, had completely recovered, and that people were constantly visiting them to hear their preaching, and indeed the whole prison had been transformed into a bright and fragrant place wherein God was glorified. Nero then gave orders to crucify the saints and over the course of three days and also to beat them upon their bared bodies with straps. On the fourth day the emperor sent servants to see, whether the martyrs were still alive. But, approaching the place of the tortures, the servants forthwith fell blind. During this time an Angel of the Lord freed the martyrs and healed them. The saints took pity on the blinded servants and by their prayers to the Lord restored them to sight; those healed then came to believe in Christ and were soon baptised.

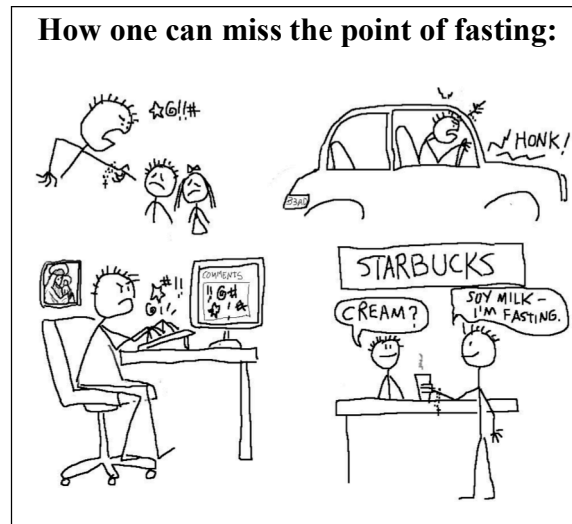
In an impotent rage Nero gave orders to flay the skin from Saint Photina and to throw the martyress down a well. The Martyrs Sebastian, Photinos and Josiah, had their legs cut off, and were thrown to dogs, and then had their skin flayed off. The sisters of Saint Photina also suffered terrible torments. Nero gave orders to cut off their breasts and then to flay their skin. An expert in cruelty, the emperor readied the fiercest execution for Saint Photida: they tied her by the feet to the tops of two bent-over trees, which when cut loose tore apart the martyress. The emperor ordered the others beheaded. Saint Photina they

extracted from the well and locked up in prison for 20 days.

After this Nero had her brought to him and asked, whether she would now give in and offer sacrifice to the idols. Saint Photina spit in the face of the emperor, and laughing at him, said: "O most impious of the blind, thou profligate and stupid man! Wouldst thou reckon me so much deluded, that I should consent to renounce my Lord Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols as blind as thee?!"

Hearing such words, Nero gave orders to again throw the martyress down the well, where she offered up her spirit to the Lord (+ c. 66).

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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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FASTING SUGGESTIONS:

(source unknown)

FAST from self-concern and
FEAST on compassion for others.

FAST from discouragement and
FEAST on hope.

FAST from lethargy and
FEAST on enthusiasm.

FAST from suspicion and
FEAST on truth.

FAST from thoughts that weaken and
FEAST on promises that inspire.

FAST from shadows of sorrow and
FEAST on the sunlight of serenity.

FAST from idle gossip and
FEAST on purposeful silence.

FAST from problems that overwhelm you and
FEAST on prayer that sustains.

FAST from criticism and
FEAST on praise.

FAST from self-pity and
FEAST on joy.

FAST from ill-temper and
FEAST on peace.

FAST from resentment and
FEAST on contentment.

FAST from jealousy and
FEAST on love.

FAST from pride and
FEAST on humility.

FAST from selfishness and
FEAST on service.

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For the souls of the newly departed... Joanne Scripp, Alex Scripp, 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 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.

**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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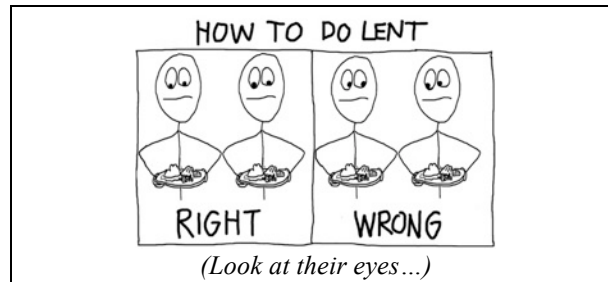
The Jesus Prayer

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)



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(Look at their eyes...)

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APRIL SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SEE PALM SUNDAY MONTHLY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast

10 am Diocesan Retreat at St. Nicholas

SUNDAY, APRIL 2 #TheGreatFast

Holy Martyress Photini (Svetlana)

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
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9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Palm Cross Making following

11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard

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Tone 2; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

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TUESDAY, APRIL 11 #HOLY WEEK

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* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*

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9:30 am Vespers Liturgy (*Mystical Last Supper*)

6:30 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels
followed by setting of the Lord's Tomb

FRIDAY, APRIL 14 #HOLY WEEK

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

9:30 am Royal Hours

6:30 pm Vespers and outdoor Burial Procession
with the Holy Shroud (*Plaščanitsa*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 15 #HOLY WEEK

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

9:30 am Vespers Liturgy

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SUNDAY, APRIL 16 #PASCHA

THE FEAST OF FEASTS

9:00 am Resurrection Matins

~9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy

Blessing of Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)

Paschal Potluck Meal

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BRIGHT WEEK: A FAST FREE WEEK

MONDAY, APRIL 17 #BRIGHTWEEK

9:30 am Paschal Liturgy with Gospel Procession

THURSDAY, APRIL 20 #BRIGHTWEEK

6:30 pm Paschal Vespers

FRIDAY, APRIL 21 #BRIGHTWEEK

9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 #BRIGHTWEEK

9:00 am Akathist to the Holy Resurrection of Christ
then *Parish Council Leadership Seminar*

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ST. THOMAS SUNDAY, APRIL 23

9:20 am Paschal Canon

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Breaking of the Artos Bread

Blessing of Cemetery Graves

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

3rd Sunday of Pascha; Sunday of the Myrrhbearing

Women; Joseph of Arimathea, & Nicodemus

9:20 am Paschal Canon

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

**The Annunciation Of Our Most Blessed Lady
Mother Of God And Ever-Virgin Mary**

Commemorated on April 7 / March 25

Introduction

The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on March 25 each year. The Feast commemorates the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

Biblical Story

The biblical story of the Feast of the Annunciation is found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (1:26-39). The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you." Mary was perplexed and wondered what kind of greeting this was.

The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. He said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the "Son of God."

The angel then proceeded to tell the Virgin Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age (John the Baptist), and affirmed that with God nothing is impossible.

In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word." Upon her response, the angel departed.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that Orthodox

Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, whereby He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, whereby Mary freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God's plan for our salvation. Thus, when on this and other feasts the Orthodox Church honors the Theotokos, the Mother of God, it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose to follow His will.

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The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday / Flowery Sunday)

April 9

Introduction

On the Sunday before the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha and at the beginning of Holy Week, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of its most joyous feasts of the year. Palm Sunday is the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. On this day, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord.

Biblical Story

The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a colt of a donkey, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city. People had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and were looking for Jesus, both because of His great works and teaching and because they had heard of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. When they heard that Christ was entering the city, they went out to meet Him with palm branches, laying their garments on the ground before Him, and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!"

At the outset of His public ministry Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and announced that the powers of the age to come were already active in the present age (Luke 7:18-22). His words and mighty works were performed "to produce repentance as the response to His call, a call to an inward change of mind and heart which would result in concrete changes in one's life, a call to follow Him and accept His messianic destiny. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a messianic event, through which His divine authority was declared.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the One who came to us once riding on a colt, but as the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, "to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart," as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and Resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the King, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday summons us to behold our King: the vanquisher of death and the giver of life.

Palm Sunday summons us to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our identity from Christ and His kingdom. The kingdom is Christ - His indescribable power, boundless mercy and incomprehensible abundance given freely to man. The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is a present reality as well as a future realization (Matthew 6:10). Theophan the Recluse wrote the following words about the inward rule of Christ the King: "The Kingdom of God is within us when God reigns in us, when the soul in its depths confesses God as its Master, and is obedient to Him in all its powers. Then God acts within it as master 'both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). This reign

begins as soon as we resolve to serve God in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Christian hands over to God his consciousness and freedom, which comprises the essential substance of our human life, and God accepts the sacrifice; and in this way the alliance of man with God and God with man is achieved, and the covenant with God, which was severed by the Fall and continues to be severed by our willful sins, is re-established."

The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom. He is the God-Man, Who brought God down to earth (John 1:1,14). "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not" (John 1:10-11). He was reviled and hated.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king - the Suffering Servant. We cannot understand Jesus' kingship apart from the Passion. Filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation, in His inexpressible humility Jesus accepted the infinite abasement of the Cross. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (Isaiah 53). His glorification, which was accomplished by the resurrection and the ascension, was achieved through the Cross.

In the fleeting moments of exuberance that marked Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the world received its King, the king who was on His way to death. His Passion, however, was no morbid desire for martyrdom. Jesus' purpose was to accomplish the mission for which the Father sent Him.

"The Son and Word of the Father, like Him without beginning and eternal, has come today to the city of Jerusalem, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. From fear the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him; yet the children honor Him with palms and branches, and mystically they sing a hymn of praise: 'Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David, who has come to save from error all mankind.'" (A hymn of the Light.)

"With our souls cleansed and in spirit carrying

branches, with faith let us sing Christ's praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master: Blessed art Thou, O Savior, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse; and in Thy love for mankind Thou hast been pleased to become spiritually the new Adam. O Word, who hast ordered all things for our good, glory to Thee." (A Sessional hymn of the Orthros)

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

"To repent is not to look downward at my own shortcomings, but upward at God's love, it is not to look backward with self-reproach but forward with trustfulness, it is to see not what I have failed to be, but what by the grace of Christ I might yet become."

+St. John Climacus

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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/

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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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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:
 - o a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
 - o b) fast only from meat;
 - o c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
 - o 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:

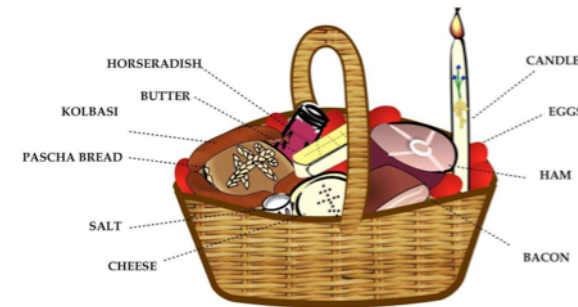
- ✘ Find a way to give more of your time, talent, and treasures.

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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Assembling A Traditional Easter Basket

One begins with a straw basket filling with foods each holding symbolic significance:

1. Easter Bread (Pascha)

A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs and butter, symbolic of Christ "the Living Bread". Usually a round loaf with a golden crust and decorated with a braid and cross. Pascha comes from the word Pasch, meaning Passover. In English we use it to refer to the Easter season. In Slavonic the word paska is used to refer to Christ "the new lamb".

2. Cheese (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec)

A special cheese made from egg and milk shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. It is often decorated with cloves in the form of a cross.

3. Ham (Šunka)

The meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolism of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer lamb or

veal.

4. Sausage (Kolbasi)

A spicy pork product flavored with garlic, indicative of God's favor and generosity.

5. Butter (Maslo)

This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a lamb or small cross. Symbolic of Christ the lamb who was offered upon the altar of the Cross for the life of the world.

6. Bacon (Slanina)

Uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.

7. Salt (Sol)

Symbolizes the Truth of the message of Christ. Just as salt preserves food, so the teaching of Christ preserves our eternal life.

8. Horseradish (Chrin)

Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bittersweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

9. Decorated Eggs (Pysankŷ)

Hard boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Eggs were always considered as symbols of the resurrection, the emergence of new life.

*** We are not limited to only having these items in our basket (nor do we have to have all of them). We fast for 40 days and a tradition is to bring what you have fasted from to the church to bless it before having some again (i.e. chocolate, or gum, or pop, or beer, etc.)



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, Ameer, 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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April Namedays:

Pañi’s brother Florin Popescu and *Pañi’s mother* Liliana Popescu – Palm (Flowery) Sunday
Subdeacon Ryan Ferko – St. Thomas Sunday
...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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April Birthdays:

Sonia Kretchek (4/1), Tristan Bowser (4/5), Milena Petrovich (4/5), Bryce James Blobner (4/10), Jenelle Christine Speca (Petrovich) (4/10), Rich Mirilovich (4/13), Melanie Paieski (4/14), *Father’s Uncle* Dan Urban (4/15), *Father’s Father* Dave Urban (4/15), John Kirish (4/18), *Father’s Brother-In-Law* Christopher Ditmore (4/19), Susan Waugh (4/19), Dr. Lawrence Martin (4/20), Max Anton (4/22), Donald J. Gavulich (4/23), Fred Anton (4/24), Fr Peter Paproski (4/24), Donna Tongel (4/24), Jaxson Maruscak (4/25), Fr Jonathan Bannon (4/29), Maryhelen Hoffman (4/29), Sharon Peifer (4/29)

...*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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April Anniversaries:

John & Theresa Sharpless (4/21)
...*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. Dzadovsky ...*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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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.



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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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.