

# THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

March 2020, Vol. 28, Issue 3

## FIRST WEEK OF HOLY AND GREAT LENT

*The Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*

*Where shall I begin to lament the deeds of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation?  
But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sin.*

THE EXPERIENCE of Holy and Great Lent is a spiritual journey whose purpose is to transfer us from one spiritual state to another, a dynamic passage. For this reason the Church begins Lent with the great penitential *Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete*. This penitential lamentation conveys to us the scope and depth of sin, shaking the soul with self-realization, repentance, and hope.

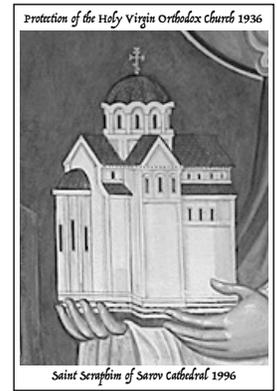
The only times it is appointed to be sung in Church are the first four nights of Great Lent (Clean Monday through to Clean Thursday during Great Compline) and at Matins for Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent, when it is read in its entirety (when we also hear the entire life of Saint Mary of Egypt). This complex poem of nine odes was written in the early 700's by St. Andrew of Crete. The odes are a "walk through the Bible," beginning with Adam and Eve and culminating with the New Testament.

Father Alexander Schmemmann says about this great Canon of repentance that: "...with a unique art, Saint Andrew interwove the great biblical themes—Adam and Eve, Paradise and the Fall, the Patriarchs, Noah and the Flood, David, the Promised Land, and ultimately Christ and the Church—with confession and repentance. The events of sacred history are revealed as events in my life, God's acts in the past as acts aimed at me and my salvation, the tragedy of sin and betrayal as my personal tragedy. My life is shown to me as part of the great and all embracing fight between God and the powers of darkness which rebel against Him... The Canon begins on a deeply

personal note... One after another, my sins are revealed in their deep connection with the continuous drama of man's relation to God; the story of man's fall is my story..." Fr. Alexander writes that for many modern people, sin "is thought of primarily as a natural 'weakness' due usually to a maladjustment, which has in turn social roots and, therefore, can be eliminated by a better social and economic organization. For this reason even when he confesses his sins, the modern man no longer repents... [he] shares his problems with the confessor—expecting from religion some therapeutic treatment which will make him happy again and well-adjusted."

However, the great Canon, says Father Alexander, reintroduces us to the truth about sin and our sinfulness. It directs us back to the culture of creation, fall, and redemption where we may have chance at once again to recall our experience and existential failures within our life, therefore repentance from sin is: "...the shock of man who, seeing in himself the 'image of the ineffable glory,' realizes that he has defiled, betrayed and rejected it in his life; repentance as regret coming from the ultimate depth of man's consciousness; as the desire to return; as surrender to God's love and mercy... [allows confession to become] meaningful only if sin is understood and experienced in all of its depth and sadness," as the rejection of communion with God..."

This religious poem, beloved by the Eastern Orthodox Church, lets us overhear a conversation between Saint Andrew and his soul, and at other times, Christ and an old man who knows he will soon die and then face judgment on all the deeds of his life. —*borrowed*



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| • Mon., Tues., Thurs. March 2–March 5: | 8 AM, <i>Matins (about 1.5 hr in length)</i><br>7 PM, <i>Canon of St. Andrew and Great Compline</i>               |
| • Wed., March 4:                       | 8 AM, <i>Canon of St. Andrew</i><br>5 PM <i>Confessions</i> , 6:15 PM, <i>Presanctified with a meal following</i> |
| • Fri., March 6:                       | 10:30 AM, <i>Presanctified</i><br>6 PM, <i>Small Compline and Akathist to the Theotokos</i>                       |

Parish of the Protection of the Holy Virgin

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## SELF-KNOWLEDGE: Sorrow and Joy

...There is a remarkable passage in the writings of John of Kronstadt, a Russian priest of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, in which he says that God does not reveal to us the ugliness of our souls unless he can see in us sufficient faith and sufficient hope for us not to be broken by the vision of our own sins. In other words, whenever we see ourselves with our dark side, whenever this knowledge of ourselves increases, we can then understand ourselves more clearly in the light of God, that is, in the light of the divine judgement. This means two things: it means that we are saddened to discover our own ugliness, indeed, but also that we can rejoice at the same time, since God has granted us his trust. He has entrusted to us a new knowledge of ourselves as we are, as he himself always saw us and as, at times, he did not allow us to see ourselves, because we could not bear the sight of truth.

Here again, judgment becomes joy, because although we discover what is wrong, yet the discovery is conditioned by the knowledge that God has seen enough faith, enough hope and enough fortitude in us to allow us to see these things, because he knows that now we are able to act. All this is important if we want to understand that joy and Lent can go together. Otherwise the constant,

insistent effort of the Church—and of the Word of God—to make us aware of what is wrong in us can lead us to despair and to darkness, until finally we have been brought so low that we are no longer capable of meeting the Resurrection of Christ with joy, because we realize—or imagine that we realize—that the Resurrection has nothing to do with us. We are in darkness, God is in light. We see nothing but our judgement and condemnation at the very moment when we should be emerging out of darkness into the saving act of God, which is both our judgement and our salvation. —*Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Sourozh magazine 1987*

## MARCH 25—PASCHA BEFORE PASCHA

THE JOYFUL FEAST of the Annunciation—the announcement of the Good News—is celebrated on March 25. Read Gospel of St. Luke (1:26-38) for the account. *We confess, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and a body, begotten before all ages from the Father in his Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary the Virgin according to his humanity, one and the same consubstantial with the Father in Godhead and consubstantial with us in humanity, for a union of two natures took place. Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be the Mother of God because God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her (Council of Ephesus, 431 AD).* **The Vigil for the Feast will be served on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:15 PM, and the Vespertal Liturgy on Wednesday, March 25, at 5 PM.** A festal fish dinner will be served following the Liturgy. Those who are not able to arrive at the Service precisely at 5 PM, “let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss” to quote from the Paschal homily of St. John. In other words, arrive as soon as you able, and receive the Holy Mysteries if you are prepared. —*Fr. Lawrence*

## Attention—Men of Saint Seraphim Cathedral:

You are invited to come to a retreat at the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco during Lent:

**Friday, March 13th–Sunday, March 15th**

(we will arrive on Friday and return home on Sunday)

Time and transportation details to come

See Father Nicolas to sign up for the retreat, or email him at [LANTERNINE@gmail.com](mailto:LANTERNINE@gmail.com)

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CONFESSIONS ON FRIDAYS:** Unless the Calendar indicates otherwise, I will be available on Fridays to hear confessions from 11:30 AM–1 PM. No appointment needed. —Fr. Lawrence
- **THE JESUS PRAYER** service takes place every Tuesday evening at 5 PM in the Protection Church.
- The **ANGELS UNAWARES** ministry will be on Thursday, March 5. Speak with Michael or Rachel Dovey for details.
- **THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK** is held on the second Wednesday each month—April 10. Volunteers, please arrive around 5 PM to help set up. This Food Bank is an important way in which our parish does outreach to the community. Come and participate.
- **ON WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT** we serve the Presanctified Liturgy. Each Sunday at the Divine Liturgy we save a portion of the Holy Mysteries which will be distributed on Wednesday and Friday at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Since we will receive Holy Communion we fast strictly beforehand (no food or liquids, coffee or cigarettes, etc.), usually a fast of about six hours. Please try to begin your strict fast no later than Noon on Wednesdays. Parents should obviously moderate this fasting for kids based on their ages.
- **A CALL FOR BELL RINGERS:** Anyone interested in learning how to ring the church bells is invited to a short introductory session on Sunday, March 15, at 12:45 PM. I will give a five minute talk on the importance and meaning of church bells, followed by a brief hands-on lesson.
- **MEETINGS IN MARCH:** Master Planning—March 12 at 7 PM / Sisterhood—March 22 at 12:45 PM / Parish Council—March 26 at 7 PM. Planning for the Future: finances, health and housing, funeral—presented by Amy Ramirez, Nick Nicholson and Peter Tennyson—Sunday, March 29, during lunch.
- **THE PARISH** will hold a retreat for women on Saturday, April 4. Flyers are posted.
- **CONCERT IN ST. SERAPHIM:** A concert of choral music by Tomás Luís de Victoria (c.1548–1611) will be presented on Saturday, March 28 at 8 PM and Sunday, March 29 at 3 PM by the Green Mountain Consort. For tickets visit the Sonoma Bach website at [www.sonomabach.org](http://www.sonomabach.org)
- **IF YOU ARE ILL** or feeling under the weather, please do not come to Church. Some helpful suggestions will be posted shortly regarding health and the corona virus.

## SOME FASTING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Pay no attention to anyone else's fast. Fast according to what the Church teaches, but, don't freak out if you cannot do it. Try a different approach. If you have health issues, are pregnant or nursing, then don't fast in the usual manner.
- 2) The demons never eat at all, so eating or not eating is not the main thing. It's a tool to help us pray and overcome sin. Fast from anger, pride, resentments, gossip, self-pity, remembrance of wrongs, wasting time, overindulgence and inattention. Pay attention to the state of your soul. If you're not praying much during Lent, then there is little benefit to fasting.
- 3) Married couples are encouraged to abstain from marital relations, as St. Paul wrote, "that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (1 Cor. 7:5). Obviously, it goes perhaps without saying, that unmarried men and women always abstain from sexual activity with others or with themselves outside of marriage.
- 4) The first week of Great Lent is called "Clean Week" and refers to a physical and spiritual cleansing. We fast not because we think the body, food, or drink is unclean, but to bring us freedom from our impulses, to affirm that God's creation, even if fallen, is good. For more on this, see "The True Nature of Fasting" by Bishop Kallistos Ware: <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-true-nature-of-fasting>
- 5) Some people try to eat but one light meal a day during Clean Week. Still others keep this same rule of one meal a day during the entirety of Lent. Others might not eat for the first three days of Lent, breaking the fast at the Presanctified on Wednesday.
- 6) We fast from noise and distractions during Lent. Turn off the TVs for Lent, or for at least the weekdays of Lent. By the first Sunday of Lent, you will understand why you shut it off. Refrain from Social Media during Lent. For Clean Week and Holy Week turn off the radios, the games, and the various distractions.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## MARCH 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 - Forgiveness Sunday</b> <i>No Matins</i> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 1 PM, Forgiveness Vespers	<b>2 - Lent Begins</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew	<b>3</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew	<b>4</b> • 8 AM, Great Canon • 6:15 PM, Presanctified and Meal	<b>5</b> • 8 AM, Matins • <b>6 PM, Angels Unawares</b> • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew	<b>6</b> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified with Canon to St. Theodore the Recruit • 6 PM, Akathist	<b>7</b> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On Confession</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions
<b>8 - Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Icon Procession • Noon, Agape Meal	<b>9 - 40 Martyrs</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>10</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 5 PM, Jesus Prayer	<b>11</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6:15 PM, Presanctified and Meal	<b>12</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>13</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Akathist  <i>Men's Retreat to Monastery in Manton</i>	<b>14</b> • 3:30 Catechism <i>On the Priesthood</i> • 4 PM, Youth Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions
<b>15 - St. Gregory Palamas</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • <i>12:45 PM, Bell Ringing Intro Lesson</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 5 PM, Jesus Prayer	<b>18</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Presanctified and Meal	<b>19</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>20</b> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified • 6 PM, Akathist	<b>21</b> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On the Marriage</i> • <b>5 PM, Vigil for the Veneration of the Cross</b>
<b>22 - Veneration of the Cross</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • <i>12:45 PM, Sisterhood Mtg</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>No Morning Service</i> • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Annunciation	<b>25 - ANNUNCIATION</b> <i>No Morning Service</i> • 5 PM, Vesperal Liturgy and Fish Dinner	<b>26</b> <i>No Morning Service</i>	<b>27</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Akathist	<b>28</b> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On Holy Unction</i> • 4 PM, Youth Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers • <i>8 PM, Choral Concert</i>
<b>29 - St. John Climakos</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal * • <i>3 PM, Choral Concert</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>31 - St. Innocent</b> • 8 AM, Festal Matins • 5 PM, Jesus Prayer	<b>APRIL 1</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Presanctified and Meal	<b>2</b> • 8 AM, Matins with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete (with the Life of St. Mary of Egypt)	<b>3</b> <i>No Morning Service</i> • 6:15 PM, Matins of the Akathist to the Theotokos	<b>4 - Theotokos Saturday</b> • <b>9:30 AM, Women's Retreat - Krista West</b> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On death and the funeral</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers

\* On Sunday, March 29, there will be a brief presentation during lunch on planning (spiritual, housing, financial and funeral). Our presenters will be Amy Ramirez, Nick Nicholson and Peter Tennyson. All are welcome.