

to fast from sin. A great virtue in fasting is that through abjuring food, which is so simple yet necessary—we may show obedience to God and His will, rather than be led by our own will all the time.

• HYMN FROM WEDNESDAY BEFORE THE GREAT FAST:

If thou dost fast from food, my soul, yet dost not cleanse thyself from passions, thou dost rejoice in vain over thine abstinence. For if thy purpose is not turned towards amendment of life, as a liar thou art hateful in God's sight, and thou dost resemble the evil demons who never eat at all. Do not by sinning make the fast worthless, but firmly resist all wicked impulses. Picture to thyself that thou art standing beside the crucified Savior, or rather, that thou art thyself crucified with Him who was crucified for thee; and cry out to Him: Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.

• READING FROM PROPHET JOEL before the Great Fast:

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and make not thy heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" —*from Joel 2*

• SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATION HERE:

Both Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel will arrive for the Divine Liturgy on March 1 at 9:30 AM. Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Archdiocese, Bishop Maxim of the Serbian Diocese, and many priests and faithful of area parishes are expected to arrive here at 5 PM. Monk Patrick will give a talk on the Fresco plan and its theology to the assembled group. Vespers begins at 6 PM. The service will have a splendid procession around the Church with hymns commemorating the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Following Vespers, the Parish Sisterhood will host a reception with lenten refreshments.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 22 ~ Forgiveness Sunday

The Casting out of Adam & Eve from Paradise

• KONTAKION OF FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, Tone Six

O Master, Guide to wisdom, Giver of prudent counsel, Instructor of the foolish and Champion of the poor, make firm my heart and grant it understanding. O Word of the Father, give me words, for see, I shall not stop my lips from crying out to Thee: I am fallen, on Thy compassion have mercy on me.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 21: 3:30 PM, Catechism (*On Death and the Funeral*)  
5 PM, VIGIL & Confessions
- Sunday, March 17: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
Noon, Agape Meal  
1:15 PM, Vespers of Forgiveness ~ Lent begins
- Mon./Tues./Thurs.: 8 AM, Matins  
7 PM, Great Compline with Canon of St. Andrew
- Wed. March 20: 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew  
5–6 PM, Confession  
6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified & Meal
- Friday, March 22: 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified  
6 PM, Akathist to the Theotokos

• FORGIVENESS SUNDAY:

On Sunday afternoon at 1:15 PM we begin the Great Fast with *Forgiveness Sunday Vespers*, so-called because at the conclusion of the Service, while the choir quietly sings Lenten and Paschal hymns, we ask and give forgiveness. I would remind you that as we approach one another, please do so in an

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orderly and quiet manner, without laughing, conversation and back-slapping. As we bow, we each say: “Forgive me.” We each answer: “God forgives.” **Without fail**, every parishioner of the Parish should attend this unique service of common forgiveness and thus begin the journey to Pascha.

- LENT AS A TITHE OF THE YEAR, Fr. Thomas Hopko:

In Orthodox Church tradition, the season of Great Lent is called, in the liturgical books, the “tithe of the year.” We know that in the Bible the believers were obliged to give ten percent of their possessions, their time, their crop, their money to the Lord, to the temple. The rule of the tithe wasn’t at all because ninety percent of our possessions are our own and ten percent belong to God. The tithe was to remind the people of God that **they** belonged to God, that He had saved them, He had delivered them from Egypt, that He was their God. And so that they would never forget that God is God and they were to keep his ordinances and commandments and that all things belonged to Him and that they possessed things as gifts from Him, they were obliged to this rule of ten percent. Of course in the New Testament when the Lord Christ came, the teaching was if you will be perfect, you give everything, and you follow me. And as some of the saints like John Chrysostom say: “We speak about giving all and then we don’t even give the ten percent.” Now this Lenten Season, as far as time is concerned, is *about* ten percent of the year. ...the Lenten Season is that time of the year when believers, Christian believers, try to be what they ought always to be, and to do what they ought always to do, but don’t. It’s not a time for a special pious devotional activity. It’s a time for normal Christian life and normal Christian activity, the way it should be lived all year round, but is not. So the season of repentance, the *Lenten Spring* as it’s often called, this “tithe of the year” is when the believers mobilize themselves individually and together, corporately, to try to be God’s people, to be Christian, to be human, to be persons; ...to know that we were not simply brought out of Egypt into Palestine. We were brought from death to life, Earth to Heaven. We are in the new Passover. We belong to God, not simply because He delivered us from earthly bondage, but we belong to Him because we were bought by the Blood of Christ, redeemed from Hell itself, from death itself, in order to live forever with

God. [See the following link to listen to Fr. Tom]:

[http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/lent\\_the\\_tithe\\_of\\_the\\_year](http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/lent_the_tithe_of_the_year)

- FROM THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM—*Fr. Alexander Men*:  
“*Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother.*” You understand this. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself. We are extremely careful—I would say observant and even psychologically sophisticated—when we are considering the sins of our neighbors or the sins of other people. Here we display maximum knowledge of all moral laws in all their subtleties. Here we act like strict judges, although we have no right to do so, since we ourselves are guilty of the very things of which we condemn others. You ask me: perhaps this is appeasement and compromise with evil? Under no circumstances. Never. We must call evil by its name. But we must have compassion for the person who falls into this sin. This is the essence of this prayer read daily with prostrations during Great Lent. *From the lecture “Great Lent,” delivered on April 1, 1989 the year before he was martyred—with an ax—on his way to serve Divine Liturgy.*

- LENTEN GUIDELINES:

While circumstances for each person or family may differ to some degree (health requirements, nursing mothers, age of children, work situation, etc.) there are some basic Lenten fasting rules that we all ought to follow as closely as possible: abstain from all meat, dairy and eggs until Pascha; abstain from alcoholic beverages during weekdays. Wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays. Shellfish may be eaten on any day.

***Fasting in preparation for receiving Communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts:*** On Wednesday, in preparation for receiving Communion at the evening Liturgy, we fast strictly from all foods and liquids for six hours (obviously, medication and health may dictate otherwise). If you can fast all day, do so. On Friday, when the Presanctified is served early, simply fast from the time of arising in the morning. Fasting will do a person no good at all if it is undertaken without first forgiving all persons who may have offended us. It will do no good at all if it is not joined with prayer. That’s just dieting. On the other hand, if we fast from food and pray for strength, we might, with the grace of God, also be able