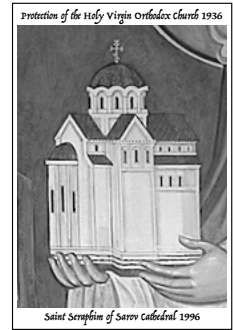


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, March 7, 2021 — Meat-fare Sunday



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee.

- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed Resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life and the God of all.

- KONTAKION OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT, Tone One:

When Thou comest, O God, upon the earth in glory, the whole world will tremble. The river of fire will bring men before Thy Judgement Seat, the Books will be opened and the secrets disclosed. Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand on Thy right hand, O Judge most righteous.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, March 6: 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy
3:30 PM, Catechism Class *On Holy Chrismation*
5 PM, Vigil and Confessions
- Sunday, March 7: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Monday, March 8: **Begin to fast from all meat products**
- Tuesday, March 9: 5 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*
7 PM, Men's Group at the Fire Pit
- Wed., March 10: 5 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*
- Thurs., March 11: 5 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*
- Fri., March 12: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
- Sat., March 13: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *on the Holy Eucharist*
5 PM, Vigil and Confessions
- Sunday, March 14: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy followed by *Vespers of Forgiveness*

- THE PROFOUND MEANING OF MEAT-FARE:

Beginning Monday, Orthodox Christians abstain from meat; has it any meaning apart from the ascetic, the disciplinary? Yes, it has, I think. There is a frightening passage in the ninth chapter of Genesis. After the flood,

when mankind has become even weaker than before, less rooted in God, more tragically alone, more tragically dependent upon the created because it has lost communion with the uncreated, God says to Noah and his people, “From now on all living creatures are delivered unto you as food; they will be your meat, and you will be their terror...” That is the relationship which human sin, the loss of God in our lives, has established between us and all the created world, but particularly, in a particularly painful, monstrous way with the animal world. And our abstention from meat in the time of Lent is our act of recognition; it is also—oh, to such a small extent!—an act of reparation. We are the terror of the created world, we are those who destroy it, we are those who mar and pollute it, yet we are called originally to be its guide into eternity, into God’s glory, into the perfect beauty which God has intended for it. We were called to make of this world of ours God’s own world, God’s own Kingdom—in the sense that it is His family, the place where He lives among His creatures, and where the creatures of God can rejoice in Him and in one another. Let us therefore, to the extent to which we are faithful to the call of the Church, remember that apart from being an act by which we try to free ourselves from slavery to the material world, our fasting is an act of recognition of our sin against the world and, however small, a real attempt to make reparation for it, bring a testimony that we understand, that we are heartbroken, and that even if we cannot live otherwise, we live with a pain and a shame, and turn to God and to the world, which we treat so atrociously, with a broken and contrite heart. Amen. —*from the great Metropolitan Anthony of London, reposed 2003*

HYMNS FROM THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT:

How shall it be in that hour and fearful day, when the Judge shall sit on his dread throne!
The books shall be opened and men’s actions shall be examined, and the secrets of darkness shall be made public. Angels shall hasten to and fro, gathering all the nations.
Come ye and hearken, kings and princes, slaves and free, sinners and righteous, rich and poor: for the Judge comes to pass sentence on the whole inhabited earth. And who shall bear to stand before his face in the presence of the angels, as they call us to account for our actions and our thoughts, whether by night or by day? How shall it be then in that hour! But before the end is here, make haste, my soul, and cry: O God who only art compassionate, turn me back and save me.

Knowing the commandments of the Lord, let this be our way of life: let us feed the hungry, let us give the thirsty drink, let us clothe the naked, let us welcome strangers, let us visit those in prison and the sick. Then the Judge of all the earth will say even to us: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.”

• REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS:

The acclaimed writer and bishop, Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of England, has expressed the meaning of repentance that is fresh and hopeful: “Correctly understood, repentance is not negative but positive. It means not self-pity or remorse but conversion, the re-centering of our whole life upon the Trinity. It is to look not backward with regret but forward with hope—not downwards at our own shortcomings but upwards at God’s love. It is to see, not what we have failed to be, but what by divine grace we can now become; and it is to act upon what we see. To repent is to open our eyes to the light. In this sense, repentance is not just a single act, at initial step, but a continuing state, an attitude of heart and will that needs to be ceaselessly renewed up to the end of life.” (*The Orthodox Way*, pp. 113-114).

• FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS—MARCH 14:

The [Vespers of Forgiveness](#) will be served on the Sunday of the “Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise” which is March 14 this year. The more popular names of that day are “Forgiveness Sunday” (based on the Gospel, [Matthew 6:14ff](#)) or [Cheese-fare Sunday](#) (we abstain from all dairy and eggs after Sunday). Archbishop Benjamin has directed, in a letter dated March 3, 2021, that all parishes are to serve the *Forgiveness Vespers* as usual “while observing all current safety protocols, but without the direct personal exchange of the kiss of peace. The priest will

ask forgiveness of the congregation from the *Amvon*.” (The *Amvon* is the elevated area in front of the iconostasis). This year we will, for obvious reasons, make other slight alterations in the Vespers. Instead of beginning the Vespers at 1 PM, we will begin after the singing of “Blessed be the Name of the Lord...” at the end of the Divine Liturgy. We will make some slight abbreviations to the Vespers. At the end of the Vespers, I will ask forgiveness of you all, and make a prostration before you. Then, maintaining good order and quiet (conversations must take place outside), each person may, if they desire, approach me so I can ask forgiveness. We will follow a “more” monastic approach, and simply bow to each other. Then each person can exit by the side door, and line up, allowing space for each person in between. And each can ask, and give, forgiveness to the other. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have questions. Practically, this means that instead of the usual “spiral of people” in the Church, we will line up outside. Ushers will be there to direct you.

• THREE FURTHER DIRECTIVES FROM THE ARCHBISHOP:

- 1) Icons may be venerated in the customary manner; the people should be advised to be attentive to their own health when doing so, e.g. people with coughs or colds should refrain from kissing the icons as they would refrain from doing at the time of any illness. [Many folks might wonder, or maybe be annoyed or feel cynical about this kind of directive: we are not irresponsible juveniles, after all. However, let’s get away from the New Hampshire state motto, “Live free or die” thinking. Our Bishop is simply giving a practical word to us., **Fr L**]
- 2) The Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers should be served in each parish separately, either directly after the Divine Liturgy or on Sunday evening (March 21), while observing all current safety protocols.
- 3) The *Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts* should be served as usual, while observing all current health protocols.

• CATECHUMENS:

Since the time of the early Church, Great Lent is the forty day period focused on preparing (training) catechumens for the experience of Baptism—the sharing of the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is also known as *Holy Illumination*. Lent is time in which the catechumens (the ENTIRE Church body participates too) seek cleansing of the soul and body by God’s grace. The well-developed, well-trodden and time-proven ascetical path provides the opportunity for that God-given cleansing to occur. Therefore: **We fast**—in order to help us pray more freely and to heal the passions (fasting from food is important, but fasting from *social media*, smart phone use and entertainment gives us time to pray and contemplate); **We do acts of mercy**—in order to minister with love to the poor, needy, lonely and hurting knowing that in them we minister to Him and to show that we trust God, not ourselves; **We increase our prayer to God**—in order to strengthen our relationship to Him, and to allow our souls to impart grace to our bodies, to pray for others and to be illumined; **We worship**—in order to glorify God and to partake of the Holy Mysteries in union with one another. All these wonderful activities prepare us for Pascha and the reviving of the baptismal grace, and prepare the catechumens for Baptism on Lazarus Saturday, April 24. Our honest Lenten effort supports the Catechumens. Please pray for the Catechumens: Amanda, Andrew, Zephyr and Anja Merriss; Daryl Charalambous; John Robert Peacock. There are also others preparing to become catechumens in the next few weeks.

• BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON (REPRINT FROM 2015):

Each hymn and psalm we chant at the Divine Services has a deep meaning for us. Let us examine a hymn we sing at Matins on the three Sundays prior to Great Lent—Psalm 136. The Psalm begins with the phrase: “By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion” (Listen [HERE to our choir](#), from 2003 sing this hymn). This psalm tells us about the Jewish people who had been taken as captive slaves to Babylon (597–538 BC) after the Temple and city of Jerusalem had been destroyed. It is a lament of exile, enslavement and bitterness, and even revenge. Pagan and brutal *Babylon* is the reality of defeat, loss, sin, humiliation and exile from God. It’s important to state that these themes link us to the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Luke 15), who is in wretched exile in a “far country” rather than Paradise, a long way from his father’s house. The ancient Jews in Babylon and the Prodigal remind us that there are many things which exile and estrange us from our Loving Father, from

“normal life” and from the Kingdom, and so we sing this Psalm—in the hopes that we will see how sin exiles us from God. In the final verse of the Psalm we hear words which express the utter frustration and devastation of having their land and home destroyed by the Babylonians. The psalm expresses the brutality of tribal warfare, and the human penchant and perversion for revenge. These are words of violence and outrageous revenge: *Happy shall he be, that shall take and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.* Of course we recoil in horror at such words. If we understand these words only historically, then, yes, they reveal the attitude of those who suffered loss, but, are no longer relevant for us. Let’s look at the underlying spiritual understanding. In that light, the Rock is Christ (see 1 Cor. 10:4), and the infants, are our “intrusive thoughts” (*logismi*) which tempt us into sin and wound us. The *little infants* which were left alive in wars would grow up to take revenge on and destroy the warrior who was so careless (just as our unchecked *logismi* can grow into passions which destroy our unseen warfare). We are not as removed from that brutal idea as we think. The basic plot of the movie *Godfather II* is that little Vito Corleone is the infant (small child in this case), whom the Sicilian Mafia boss wants to kill (having just killed the rest of Vito’s family). The boss was aware that if Vito were left alive, it could be bad for him later in life. The Great Fast offers an invitation and the tools for us to change, to reorient our lives, thoughts, words, deeds and goals toward the Kingdom and Christ’s life. The intrusive “little infant thoughts” —seemingly so harmless—that lead us to distraction, despair, confusion and sin, are thereby overcome. God empowers the soul by prayer to put the stranglehold on our unruly desires, self-pity, and self-justification. By God’s grace then, the soul alone controls who can operate in the neighborhood of our heart, and infusing our life with grace until it makes us an “offer we can’t refuse!” —*borrowed from a forgotten source*

• SCHEDULE FOR CLEAN WEEK:

In the first week of Lent, called “Clean Week” our Holy Church gives us a very special, if strenuous, course of fasting, prayer and church services. The Church is calling us to dedicate ourselves to these days. If we can embrace the ascetic labors of the week—each person will do what he or she can do—we indeed discover in the week’s “ascetic course of studies” some valuable knowledge about ourselves, how hard it is to change, an assurance of God’s love for us, a lightness and joy of soul and body, and a relief from anxiety. I highly recommend you make plans to attend at least one of the evenings of the *Canon of St. Andrew*, and of course, the *Presanctified Liturgy*, and if possible, one or two of the morning *Matins*. I hope that you are looking forward to these days as much as I do. A schedule appears below. —*Fr. Lawrence*

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| - Mon., Tues., Thurs. March 15–March 18: | 8 AM, <i>Matins</i> (about 1.5 hr in length)
7 PM, <i>Canon of St. Andrew and Great Compline</i> |
| - Wed., March 17: | 8 AM, <i>Canon of St. Andrew</i>
5 PM <i>Confessions</i> , 6:15 PM, <i>Presanctified</i> |
| - Fri., March 19: | 10 AM, <i>Presanctified with Canon to St. Theodore the Recruit</i>
6 PM, <i>Small Compline and Akathist to the Theotokos</i> |

• LATEST FRESCO

The fresco being completed now by Fathers Patrick and Moses illustrates two scenes from [St. Luke 10:38-42 and 11:27-28](#): The first scene depicts Christ at the home of Martha and Mary. We hear Christ say: “...one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” The second scene depicts the woman who cries out to the Savior “Blessed is the womb that bore Thee...But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” We have this fresco in such a prominent place because these particular passages from the Gospel are read at many of the Feast Days of the Theotokos. St. Paul summarizes the message: “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

—*Colossians 3:16*