

- CLEAN WEEK:

This week we fast as strictly as we can on the first three days of Lent. On Wednesday evening we will have an opportunity to receive Holy Communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Those who will receive are asked to prepare themselves by fasting (at least from noon), praying the *Prayers before Communion* and a recent confession. Confession is available from 5–6 PM, and then again throughout most of the Presanctified. On Friday at 10 AM we will again have the Presanctified with the wonderful commemoration of [St. Theodore the Recruit and the Koliva](#). In the evening at 6 PM we will chant Small Compline with a portion of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos.

- ON PRAYER:

There are many virtues that are required of a good Christian, but above all else he must pray; for nothing can ever be achieved without prayer. Otherwise he cannot find his way to God, he cannot grasp the truth, he cannot crucify the flesh with all its passions and desires, find the Light of Christ in his heart and be united to our Lord. Frequent prayer must precede all these things before they can be brought about. I say “frequent” because the perfection and the correctness of prayer is beyond our power. “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” says the Apostle Paul. Therefore we ought to pray often, to pray at all times, for this alone lies within our power and leads us to purity of prayer, which is the mother of all spiritual good. As St. Isaac the Syrian says: “Win the mother and she will bear you children,” so must you first of all attain the power of prayer, and then all other virtues will be easily practiced afterwards. All this is scarcely mentioned by those who have had no personal experience, but only a superficial knowledge of the most mysterious teaching of the Holy Fathers.

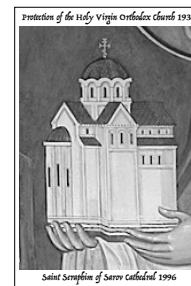
—from *The Way of a Pilgrim*

- HOUSE BLESSINGS:

This year Fr Nicholas and I had the great honor and joy of blessing over seventy-five homes. The sanctified water—blessed rain from Paradise to us—has now been dispersed across our city. May it be for healing, cleansing of the soul, comfort in times of trial and spiritual refreshment. Let us keep our homes a place of holiness.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



March 14, 2021

Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death; to the thief, Thou didst open Paradise. For the Myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy Disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

- 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, March 13: 3:30 PM, Catechism (*On the Holy Eucharist*)
5 PM, Vigil & Confessions

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- Sunday, March 14: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 PM, Vespers of Forgiveness ~ Lent begins
- Mon./Tues./Thurs.: 8 AM, Matins
7 PM, Great Compline/Canon of St. Andrew
- Wed. March 17: 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew
5–6 PM, Confession (continue during the service)
6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified
- Friday, March 19: 10 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified with Canon to St. Theodore the Recruit
6 PM, Small Compline and *Akathist to the Theotokos*
- Saturday, March 20: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Confession*
5 PM, Vigil & Confessions
- Sunday, March 21: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy—Procession with icons

ON-LINE LINKS: [Hymns For Praying at Home](#)
[Scripture Readings for Sunday](#)

- THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. —*1 Cor. 9:24*

- PRACTICALITY OF LENT:

It's in practical ways that we draw closer to our Savior. With the help of the Holy Spirit we fast, and thereby tame our appetites—we have so many appetites. We do works of mercy, and thereby discover some humility as well as practice compassion for the less fortunate—which is mostly everyone in this world—and thereby God cures our exaggerated self-love, self-care, self-pity, or even self-loathing. We pray more and enter into some silence, in order to silence the incessant and intrusive thoughts. St. Nikolai Velimirovic said that we are to “convert our cares into prayers, as ice is

changed into flowing water.” In all this we hopefully find comfort in the life of Christ, and we discover trust in God. Let's be careful about our lives. We only have what God has given. —*Fr Lawrence*

- THE SUNDAY BEFORE LENT — FORGIVENESS SUNDAY:

The last of the preparatory Sundays has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and it is also the Sunday of Forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of the Great Fast. One of the primary images in the *Triodion* is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise:

O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty, tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight, glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints, with the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all: May He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression, and may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life, and of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before. [Hymn from Vespers].

Note how the *Triodion* speaks here not of “Adam” but of “me”: “May He open unto me the gates which I closed.” Here, as throughout the *Triodion*, the events of sacred history are not treated as happenings in the distant past or future, but as experiences undergone by me here and now within the dimension of sacred time. The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14–21) and in the special **Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness** at the end of Vespers on Sunday.... Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. ...we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family.

—From the forward to the *Lenten Triodion*