

Since the time of the early Church, Great Lent (*lent*, as in days *lengthen* in Spring) have been the period focused on preparing catechumens for their entrance into the Church. In the weeks before their baptismal initiation, the candidates undergo a period of intensive training, with frequent instruction, special services and fasting. Bishop Kallistos (Ware) wrote that “the existing members of the church community [are] encouraged to share with the catechumens in this prayer and abstinence, thus renewing year by year their baptismal dedication to Christ. So the forty-day fast came to involve the whole body of the faithful, and not just those preparing for Baptism.” The Great Fast of Lent is the time to struggle to acquire the Godly virtues of love, peace, joy, patience, long-suffering, mercy, kindness, and so forth. We support the catechumens in our ascetic endeavors, since each of us needs to pass through a time of preparation so that we all may also experience the full power of the Paschal joy. Metropolitan Kallistos continues: “Lent is a...time to realize afresh that, by virtue of our baptismal initiation, we are crucified, buried and risen with Christ; it is a time to reapply to ourselves the words of St. Paul, ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me’” (Gal. 2:20).

The Green Mountain Consort will sing a concert of sacred music in our cathedral on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. The group will perform Medieval, Renaissance and early Baroque compositions which tell the scriptural stories of the wall painters in our cathedral which surround the audience and singers. Featured composers will include Tomás Luís de Victoria, William Byrd, Orlande de Lassus, Hans Leo Hassler and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. Any help in moving our church furniture after Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy would be greatly appreciated. —*Fr Lawrence*

Let thy mind fast from vain thoughts; let thy memory fast from remembering evil; let thy will fast from evil desire; let thine eyes fast from bad sights: turn away thine eyes that thou mayest not see vanity; let thine ears fast from vile songs and slanderous whispers; let thy tongue fast from slander, condemnation, blasphemy, falsehood, deception, foul language and every idle and rotten word; let thy hands fast from killing and from stealing another’s goods; let thy legs fast from going to evil deeds: Turn away from evil, and do good.

—*St. Tikhon of Zadonsk*

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



March 10, 2024

Sunday of the Parable of the Last Judgment



- 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 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 9: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Holy Chrismation*
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
7:30 PM, *Concert by the Green Mountain Consort*
- Sunday, March 10: 9:45 AM, Catechumen Ceremony for Taysa Porto
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Noon, Blini Luncheon
12:30 PM, Spiritual Lesson
3 PM, *Concert by the Green Mountain Consort*
- Monday, March 11: **Begin to fast from all meat products**
- Wed. and Thurs.: 6 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*
- Fri., March 15: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
- Sat., March 16: 11:30 AM, Sisterhood Get-together
3:30 PM, Catechism, *on the Holy Eucharist*
5 PM, Vespers and Confessions
- Sunday, March 17: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday
Noon, Agape Meal
1 PM, *Vespers of Forgiveness*

On Sunday morning at 9:45 AM we have the great joy of receiving Taysa Porto as a Catechumen. Please come to pray and to support her on this momentous occasion.

We welcome Father John Dresko this weekend, formerly the rector (now retired) of St. Paul Orthodox Church in Las Vegas. Fr. John is here to participate in the Board Meeting of the *Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund* (OCCIF) on Monday, which our parish is hosting on Monday. Please offer your warm welcome to Fr. John.

The [Vespers of Forgiveness](#) will be served on Sunday March 17 at 1 PM. I encourage, exhort, implore, beseech and beg all of you to attend this blessed Vespers. I wonder, can a person enter Lent without this service? It's a great deal harder without it. This day is also called "Forgiveness Sunday"

(based on the Gospel, [Matthew 6:14ff](#)) or [Cheesefare Sunday](#) — since after this day we abstain from all dairy and eggs until Pascha. Remembering that we do not currently live in paradise, but experience ourselves and the world in a fallen and sinful condition, we must follow the Lord's command, and forgive one another. This Vespers "formalizes" forgiveness in a sober, serious and simple way with the *Mutual Rite of Forgiveness* at the end of the service. —*Fr. Lawrence*

The Great Fast of Lent begins with Forgiveness Sunday, as indicated above. The first week is referred to as "Clean Week." We make our confession, forgive, ask forgiveness, and renew our love for God and neighbor and clean our homes. This theme of being clean is set by the Old Testament reading appointed to be read at the Sixth Hour on Clean Monday (Isaiah 1:1-20), which says in part: "Wash yourselves and ye shall be clean; put away the wicked ways from your souls before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, consider the fatherless, and plead for the widow. Come then, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, I will make them white as wool" (v. 16-18).

A Hymn of Vespers on the Last Judgment: Alas, black soul! How long wilt thou continue in evil? How long wilt thou lie in idleness? Why dost thou not tremble at the dread judgement seat of the Savior? What defense wilt thou make or what wilt thou answer? Thy works will be there to accuse thee: thine actions will reproach thee and condemn thee: O my soul the time is near at hand; make haste before it is too late, and cry aloud in faith: I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against Thee; but I know Thy love for man and Thy compassion, O good Shepherd, deprive me not of a place at Thy right hand in Thy great mercy. *Listen to a performance [HERE](#).*

Many believe that to live by faith and to fulfill God's will requires grand gestures. Yet, it is in the small, seemingly trivial acts of kindness, in resisting the slightest inclinations towards evil, that our spiritual life flourishes. Just as a parched flower does not require an ocean but thrives on just half a glass of water, so does the human spirit rejuvenate with modest nourishment.

—*Archbishop John Shahovskoy, Archbishop of SF, reposed 1989*