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February 18, 2007

SUNDAY/FEB. 18th (Tone 3)
Cheese-Fare or Forgiveness Sunday

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vespers and Rite of Forgiveness –
First Lenten Service

Beginning of the 1st week of Great Lent

PURE MONDAY/FEB. 19th
**Beginning of the Great and Holy Fast of
Forty Days**

7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

TUESDAY/FEB. 20th

7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 21st

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Passion of Christ;
Confession
7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

THURSDAY/FEB. 22nd

7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew of Crete;
Confession

FRIDAY/FEB. 23rd

6:30p.m. Presanctified Liturgy & Blessing of
Wheat in honor of St. Theodore

SATURDAY/FEB. 24th (wine & oil)
**St. Theodore Saturday; First & Second
Findings of the Head of St. John the
Baptist**

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Baptist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/FEB. 25th (Tone 4) (wine & oil)
Sunday of Orthodoxy: 1st Sun. of the Fast

9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour;
Church School & Q. and A. Period
4:00p.m. Vespers at Christ the Saviour Church
Paramus with Metropolitan Herman



**For Consideration at the Beginning
Of the Great and Holy Fast**

The Apostle Paul speaks to me personally when he says: "You know that the time has come for you to wake up from your sleep" (Romans 13:11). I know that every hour is the hour of decision. Every hour can be an opportunity for new life. But because of my forgetfulness, carelessness and laziness, not every hour is the hour of decision, not every hour is an opportunity for deeper communion with Christ. Thus the call of Great Lent resounds with power and promise: Awaken from sleep! Take up the weapons of Christ! Put on newness! The question to my soul is: Are you spiritually alive or asleep? If alive, thank the Lord. If asleep, when do you plan to awaken? If not during Great Lent, then when? May the Lord help me to die to my old self that I might live again in the newness of Christ's Resurrection.





**ORTHODOX
CHURCH in
AMERICA**

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Archpastoral message of Metropolitan Herman at the beginning of Great Lent

Article posted: 2/13/2007 11:40 AM

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

One of the most beautiful hymns of the Divine Liturgy is the Cherubic Hymn. In it, we find a phrase that is deeply powerful and equally comforting: "Let us... now lay aside all earthly cares."

It is not uncommon to find ourselves engulfed by earthly cares. We worry about such radically diverse things as the economy, politics, our children and their future, the price of gas, terrorism, our health, and "making ends meet." Despite our sincere efforts to the contrary, we are so surrounded by the world in which we live that we easily can be consumed by it.

The laying aside of our earthly cares is something that we are especially called to do during the Church's lenten seasons, and specifically during Great Lent. In John 17:15-16, Jesus tells His disciples – and us – that, while they are to be in the world, they are not of the world. Notice that Our Lord does not pray to His Father to take us out of the world; rather, He prays that the Father will keep us from the evil one, that He will keep them safe, that He will allow them to live in the world while focusing on the "cares" that guide us into "the life of the world to come." And elsewhere in Scripture, Our Lord reveals the keys to maintaining our focus: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the very disciplines we are called to live during Great Lent.

Far from being a time of gloom or "added burdens," Great Lent is a time to free ourselves from our earthly cares, to focus on "the one thing needful," and to change our hearts and our minds, our vision and our spiritual direction, through the spirit of repentance. Thus, we lighten the earthly cares and "baggage" we so often carry. We allow Our Lord to loosen, and ultimately remove, those things that have become yokes. We refrain from worldly concerns and earthly food in order to "taste and see how good the Lord is." We recommit ourselves to carrying out, each of us in our own unique way, Our Lord's mission in and to the world, while we reaffirm that He has indeed conquered the world by His selfless love for us.

As we take the first step in this year's lenten journey on Forgiveness Sunday, let us above all ask one another for forgiveness, especially for those "earthly cares" with which we have burdened others. Let us seek Our Lord's forgiveness, fully acknowledging that He knows our hearts and our intentions. And, having had our burdens lightened by His loving kindness and mercy, let us cling all the more to the One Who is our only Helper and Protector in a world that indeed can consume us unawares.

And finally, I ask your forgiveness, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for the sins I have committed, and for the times in which I too have failed to lay aside the earthly cares that have so often burdened me.

Let us "begin the honorable Fast with joy," thanking Our Most Merciful Savior for yet another opportunity to experience the life of the world to come, still to be fully revealed, yet already fully present in His Holy Body, the Church.

With love in Christ,

+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Boiled Wheat is Sought

For the following services:

Memorial Saturday, Mar. 3rd, 9:30a.m.

Memorial Saturday, Mar. 10th, 9:30a.m.

Please let Fr. James know if you can prepare the wheat. Cups, spoons and napkins will be provided by the church.

February OCA Mission Appeal

You are asked to use the Mission Envelope to be found in your bi-monthly packet of envelopes.

The offering will be distributed directly to a number of OCA mission parishes by the parish council.

Winter Weather Cancellations

Will be posted on the parish website at least one hour before the scheduled service or event. You may also call the rectory.

Things to Check out

The Parish website Schedule of Services for the entire year of 2007 and the Parish Bulletin Board for information that does not make it into the Sunday Bulletins.

The New Parish Council

Will receive the Blessing to assume their duties at the Divine Liturgy Sunday, March 11th. The next parish council meeting will be Thursday, March 15th at 7:00p.m.

Metropolitan Herman Will Preside

At the Sunday of Orthodox Vespers, on Sunday, Feb. 25th at Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus. The metropolitan will also preside at the Deanery Vespers for the 4th Sunday of Great Lent at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton. Both services are at 4:00p.m.

The "Souper Bowl" Offering

For "Great Expectations," the Raritan based agency that helps unwedded pregnant mothers came to \$325. The Lord bless your offering, as well as the food items you brought for the Bridgewater Food Pantry.

Day Light Savings Time

Begins Sunday, March 11th. Go ahead 1 Hour.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

John Barsigian (40th day – March 12th) Feb. 01

Vincent Chwat (40th day – March 21st) Feb. 09

John Jackowlew (40th day – March 25th) Feb. 11

Feb. 18, 1952 Gregory Holovach

Feb. 18, 1963 Magdalena Padla

Feb. 18, 1993 Josephine Fedchin

Feb. 19, 1963 Gregory Klimchuk

Feb. 20, 1918 Jacob Shevchuk

Feb. 20, 1953 Anna Sabat

Feb. 20, 1963 Theodosia Zuboff

Feb. 20, 1981 Anna Lisowski

Feb. 21, 1939 John Cherkan

Feb. 21, 1963 Steven Piscadlo

Feb. 21, 1976 Anna Sharshon

Feb. 22, 1931 Stephen Blisak

Feb. 22, 1931 Olga Yaskovsky

Feb. 22, 1977 Stella Honochar

Feb. 22, 1989 Gertrude Huzinec

Feb. 23, 1942 Louis Potapchuk

Feb. 23, 1946 Joseph Wilhousky Sr.



Easter Candy Sale

Is presently under way. Extra order forms may be found on the vestibule stand. Pascha and Western Easter are the same date this year, April 8th. For more information please see Sandy Filippini. All orders should be in no later than March 11th.

Offerings for the Week of Feb. 18th

Olive Oil in memory of Emilia; in memory of Michael; for the health of Didya; for the health of John and Carol; for health and in thanksgiving by Laurentiu and Liliana.

Wine – for the health of Zachary (birthday); in memory of Joan; in memory of Helen and Joseph.



Lenten Charities

The Poor Basket in the center of the church. What is collected is used by the parish St. Philaret Society for needful parishioners and non-parishioners.

OCCM Boxes support Mission work in the USA and abroad. Pick-up a box from the vestibule stand and return by Palm Sunday, April 1st.



SOME HELPFUL LENTEN HINTS

1. In the 40 days, regardless of how you fast in terms of quantity and types of food, fast every day of the 40 days.
2. Know exactly what the fasting regulations are and try to approximate them as best you can. Each Great Lent, try to be more exact in fasting.
3. Particular concerns about fasting? Age, mixed marriages, never fasted before, health issues? You have a priest, talk to him.
4. Be sure to recite the lenten prayer of St. Ephrem. It is standard for Great Lent. If you cannot make the prostrations, make bows or just cross yourself.

As Christ has taught us in the Scriptures, a pure fast means the putting away of sin, the rejection of the passions, love for God, attentiveness in prayer, tears of compunction, and acts of mercy to the poor.

5. Increase the measure of your prayers and bows and prostrations. On Saturday and Sundays, we do not make prostrations.
6. Notice that on weekends the fasting is mitigated somewhat. Wine and oil are permitted, so we "slightly" relax.
7. The lenten services and lenten tones are to be found at the liturgical services Sunday evening through Friday evening. At these services we should strive to participate in.
8. Outdoor sportplaying is great during lent. Yes, we can both benefit and enjoy it. Nothing contrary to a lenten spirit here.

O my soul, because of fasting Moses beheld God; because of fasting Elias rode in the chariot of fire, and Paul was taken up to heaven. Therefore let us fast from evil and we also shall be taken up on-high, gaining freedom from the passions.

9. In Great Lent we strive to avoid going to the movies, social parties, vacations, and other entertainments. This we do so we can have more time for services, charitable works and prayer.
10. Confession and Holy Communion are central to securing the benefits of Lent. Without fail, we should receive the Sacraments.
11. TV and Computer Time - here we need to be mindful of what we do and how much time we spend. Some give up tv for all Lent. Others strictly limit their time and watch only educational and news shows. Surfing on the web? Hit the theological sites.
12. Lent is a time to be attentive to the "inner man." What are the movements of my mind, will and heart? Are they centered upon Christ? Are they light-bearing or dark?
13. Great Lent - the time to do solid spiritual reading; the time to be charitable; the time to put things spiritual in good order. A time of work.
14. The Forty Days are ones of spiritual sweat, fasting, increased prayer, repentance, correction of ways, cultivation of virtues, uprooting of harmful passions. A great time is Lent and a great gift from God.

As soldiers of Christ let us now suffer hardship; for quickly will the time pass by and on those who have fought bravely Christ will bestow crowns of victory, when He comes in glory upon earth to judge all the world.

Miodrag Soric | www.dw-world.de | © Deutsche Welle.

Mount Athos: Where Men Meet God

Some 2,000 orthodox monks live and seek God on Mount Athos

For over a millennium, Mount Athos has been a holy place for men, yet forbidden to women. On the mountain in the Aegean Sea, Orthodox monks abandon the rest of the world to seek the presence of God.

The ferry's landing flap rests on the dock amid the morning hectic of the fishing village Ouranopolis. Dusty SUVs and dented trucks rumble along the pier, honking as they went.

Men laden with heavy backpacks wave goodbye to their wives and children. One boy cries and clings to his father as the captain shouts, "Ella, ella. Hurry, hurry!"

The captain's steel colossus can't wait. After showing our passports and papers to the policeman at the dock, we board the ferry with our small travel group and climb the steel steps to the passenger deck.

Soon the anker is hoisted and, groaning as it budes away from the dock, the ferry is on its way to Mount Athos.

Far away from "the world"

The passengers' glances rest on a group of about two dozen men who had also found seats on the ferry. Their beards flow down to their chests and their uncut hair is knotted at the back of their necks. They are dressed in dark robes and black caps. Many seem tired and their faces are pale.

These men are among the 2,000 Christian Orthodox monks that live on Mount Athos. Most come from eastern and southern Europe, some from the US, Australia, Arab countries and even Germany.

Before the men opted for the monks' robes, they had lived – as they call it – "in the world." There they'd worked as managers, professors, tailors, engineers, or farmers. They'd played tennis or soccer, collected stamps, gone on vacation and fallen in love. In short, they followed their own will.

Then they gave notice at work, gave away their cars and closed their bank accounts. After saying goodbye to family and friends they joined one of the 20 monasteries on Athos. Following a trial period of several years, many of the men take a vow of poverty, celibacy and obedience.

Along the coast, monastery after monastery are lined up in a row, like a chain of pearls. Our ferry passes one after the next, each with a difficult sounding name: Dochiariu, Xenophontos, Panteleimonos, Xeropotamu. Their architecture resembles that of Europe's medieval castles with high, powerful walls, towers and arrow-slits.

Bringing Athos back to life

In the Middle Ages, pirates attacked many of the monk communities and pilfered the golden chalices and valuable icons that had been gifts of spiritually-minded tsars, kings and princes.

Prior to World War One, nearly 8,000 monks lived on Athos. The monasteries fell derelict after the Second World War, as the shadow of despotism in eastern Europe was felt as far away as Athos. Stalin, Breshnev, Tito and Ceausescu murdered thousands of Orthodox monks and threw many others in prison. A new generation of monks was absent.

The situation improved with the fall of the Iron Curtain. Once again, hundreds of young Russians, Ukrainians, Romanians and Serbs, many of them well educated, entered the monasteries and renovated them, bringing Athos back to life.

Most of the monks prefer to remain in their monastery community where everything is regulated and spiritual life is encouraged. The monks' purpose in life, as they say, is having a living relationship with God. Athos is a place where generations of monks have pursued this goal, veterans coming along side newcomers.

Modern-day miracles

After two hours, our ferry reaches the port at Daphne, which consists of a dozen two-storey houses. Undemeath is a sparsely equipped coffee house that served Turkish mokka – though it isn't allowed to call it that. Next door, icons, necklaces and prayer bands are sold.

On the street, a Babylonian mix of languages fills the air: cries, calls and shouts could be heard in Greek, Russian, English, Serbian, Albanian and German.

A new customs office had recently been built directly on the wharf. Greek police officers rummage through the bags of departing Athos visitors, on the lookout for smugglers who may be trying to sneak valuable icons out of the country.

The most valuable, miraculous icons on Athos, which depict the Madonna and child, can't be sold because they are too well known in the eastern Church. Many of them date back to the first few centuries after Christ, having made their way to Athos from Jerusalem or Byzantine, and monks and tourists alike approach them with bowed head and great reverence.

Even in recent times, numerous miracles have been attributed to the icons, such as extraordinary healings.

Mobile phones and a millennium of tradition

Mercedes busses are waiting for us on land and we rush to find a seat. Half an hour later, we arrive at Karyes, the monk republic's administrative center located 400 meters (a quarter mile) above sea-level.

Consisting of just a dozen houses, small shops with food and household items, a pharmacy, a

bakery, a post office and one uninviting restaurant, Karyes is an insignificant little village – except that the Protaton, the oldest church in the monk republic, is found there. Built in the 10th century, the place of worship is reminiscent of the oldest churches in western Europe.

Despite the sense of timelessness in Karyes, mobile phones ring in its streets today. Jeeps now transport crates of rice and potatoes, which used to be the job of donkeys. And many houses now have electricity and running water.

Even Protaton, the main church, has undergone changes in recent years. It's now covered in scaffolding as part of an extensive renovation process.

Directly across from the basilica, a well-worn marble staircase leads up into Athos' parliament building, where representatives from the 20 monasteries decide when and where new streets should be built, how many pilgrims may visit the mountain each day and what kind of relationship the community should have with the European Union.

Seeking spiritual progress

Our group of pilgrims continues on to the Saint Andrew Monastery nearby, where Father Efrem is awaiting us. He is young, perhaps 35, and wears metal-rimmed glasses and a scruffy beard. We had met Father Efrem years ago while he was working as a manager in the natural gas industry in Britain. Even then, he sought not only oil fields but also the "true faith."

Shortly after his conversion to orthodoxy, he became a neophyte and then a monk on Athos. In the Saint Andrew Monastery, Father Efrem looks after the dozens of visitors who come each day.

The monastery where Father Efrem lives and prays is a construction site. Built by the Russians before World War One, the building was empty for decades and fell into decay. Several years ago, a Greek brotherhood adopted the site and is in the process of rebuilding the monastery. Roofs are being recovered, walls stabilized, unsound floorboards replaced with stone.

In the evening, we sit with Father Efrem for a long time in the monastery's garden and speak about life on Athos.

The Athos monks forgo private possessions; everything belongs to the brotherhood. Prayer is simple and concrete for the monks and mysticism is something anybody can experience. The "Fathers," as the experienced monks are called, are wary of anything abstract and strictly reject sentimentalism. They demand soberness, solemnity and effort from their "children," so that they will make spiritual progress.

Daily chores

We are awoken at three o'clock the next morning by the sound of rhythmic drumming. This is the monks' call to mass prior to beginning their day's work. Psalms are read, prayers are spoken and finally the mass is celebrated. We are proud that we are able to stay awake through the five-hour event, despite having slept for just a few hours.

Following the mass, we breakfast with the monks. The Greek mountain tea tastes marvelous and the gooey Athos honey and nuts sweeten the hard, homemade bread.

Becoming a monk on Athos means giving up meat for life. For 200 days a year, they keep a particularly strict diet. On these days they eat only fruit, vegetables, potatoes and bread and go without animal products, olive oil and alcohol.

Each day, the monks complete individually assigned chores. Some prepare the next meal while others do the washing up, clean the church, fill the oil lamps in front of the icons, make bees wax candles or tend the olive groves. Still others look after the bee hives, fish in the sea, research the medieval parchments in the library, paint icons, or – like Father Efrem – meet with the guests.

Father Nikolaj and the wild boars

Father Efrem has taken the day off to spend with us and we have made plans to visit Father Nikolaj, a Russian monk who has lived for years as a hermit in an isolated monastery cell. We have to pass through narrow underbrush and cross streams to reach Father Nikolaj's residence, and the members of our group take turns poking sticks into the bushes to scare off any poisonous snakes.

Father Nikolaj beams with joy when we arrive and offers us freshly harvested melons, apples and pears from the garden where he has just been working.

When we finish eating the fruit, he places the rinds and cores in a bucket and asks us to follow him to the front gate. He taps the bucket against the earth and several wild boars immediately storm out of the surrounding bushes, lunging for the leftover fruit. We are amazed with how at ease Father Nikolaj seems among the animals.

"They won't do anything," Father Nikolaj assures us.

Athos' "little Germany"

We continue on until we come to another hermitage directly at the ocean. Iowanica, as it is called, belongs to the Serbian monastery on Athos. Father Panteleimon, a German who joined the Serbian brotherhood as a monk 23 years ago, lives in Iowanica.

Other monks say with admiration that his fields of olive trees, grapes, onions, tomatoes and more are a "little piece of Germany on Athos." That's also true of the mass Father Panteleimon holds in German in the small chapel on his hermitage. The German pilgrims are particularly thankful to be able to attend mass in their own language. Many even stay to lend a hand in the fields during the harvest season.

Father Panteleimon, now in his mid-50s, is sober, pragmatic, humorous and diligent. Many come to Athos to ask him for advice. Perhaps that is what makes Athos so remarkable: Pilgrims find experienced teachers here and sit with them on the patio in the evenings, gazing at the ocean view and talking about God and the meaning of life.

The next morning, we take the Mercedes bus to the port and from there the ferry takes us back "into the world."