

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 1, 2009

SUNDAY/MARCH 1st

Cheese-Fare or Forgiveness Sunday
The Expulsion of Adam From Paradise

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour; Church School

Book-for-the-Month From Library

6:30p.m. Vespers and Rite of Forgiveness

PURE MONDAY/MARCH 2nd

Beginning of the Great and Holy 40 Day Fast

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

TUESDAY/MARCH 3rd

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

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4th

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

THURSDAY/MARCH 5th

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

FRIDAY/MARCH 6th

6:30p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy and blessing of
boiled wheat: commemorating the Miracle of St.
Theodore the Tyro

SATURDAY/MARCH 7th

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/MARCH 8th

****DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS****

1st Sunday of the Great & Holy Fast:

Sunday of Orthodoxy (Tone 5)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour; Church School;

Teen Discussion Class

4:00p.m. Deanery Vespers at Ss. Peter & Paul
Church in Jersey City

**End of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd
week of Great Lent**



"The Expulsion of Adam and Eve" by Photios Kontoglou, 1960

Adam was driven out of paradise because in disobedience he partook of food; but Moses was granted a vision of God because he had cleansed the eyes of his soul by fasting. If, then, we long to dwell again in paradise, let us abstain from all needless food. If we desire to see God, let us like Moses fast forty days.

With sincerity let us persevere in prayer and intercession; let us subdue the rebellious instincts of the flesh...O Son of God, Life-giver, in Thee we set our hope: count us worthy of a place with the angels, by the intercessions of the Mother who bore Thee. O Christ, of the Apostles and the Martyrs and of all the Saints

Fasting Norms for Great Lent

A Fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil products daily. On Saturdays and Sundays, wine and oil are permitted. We should strive to keep both the rule and spirit of what constitutes a true Fast.

The Annual Easter Candy Sale

Is currently underway. Order forms may be found on the vestibule stand. Please return no later than Sunday, March 15th.

Pussywillows Sought

Please bring them to the lower hall.

Parish Council Notations

The installation of the New Council will take place on Sunday, March 15th at the Divine Liturgy. The next Parish Council meeting will be Thursday, March 19th at 7:00p.m.

Tikhonaire - \$5 Donation to St. Tikhon's Seminary

Please print your name on the sheet on the vestibule stand and place \$5 offering in the attached envelope.

Namesday Greetings

St. Daniel/Mar. 4: Daniel Torrisi; Many Blessed Years!

Back in Print and on Sale

The official OCA Prayer Book at \$12.00. Paperback black covered, at the vestibule stand.

Cell Phones

Please be sure they are off before you enter the church for services.

Fasting for the Evening Pre-Sanctified Liturgies

While the normal fast for the evening Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is a total fast for the entire day, that is from sunrise to the evening; the Holy Synod of Bishops permit a mitigated but total fast from at least the noon hour in preparation for Holy Communion. Medicines of course, may be taken any time.

Offerings for the week of March 1st

Olive Oil - in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; in memory of Joan.

Parish Synodicon - Memory Eternal!

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|-------|-----|------|---|
| March | 01, | 1962 | Constantine Bobich |
| March | 02, | 1917 | George Bekzar |
| March | 02, | 1919 | Peter Palomar |
| March | 02, | 1994 | Traiko Josifovich |
| March | 02, | 2005 | Helen Rzeszowski |
| March | 03, | 1953 | Xenia Kozich |
| March | 03, | 1961 | Pauline Leich |
| March | 03, | 1962 | Joseph Legedza |
| March | 03, | 1969 | Fr. Theodore Labowsky (rector 1962-1969) |
| March | 03, | 1970 | Samuel Savastinuk |
| March | 04, | 1935 | Anna Klimovich |
| March | 04, | 1959 | Sedor Dezko |
| March | 05, | 1981 | Gregory Grenther |
| March | 05, | 1989 | Joan Balogh |
| March | 06, | 1972 | Joseph Lebedz |

Seeking Preparers for Boiled Wheat or Boiled Rice

For St. Theodore Feast (Mar. 6) 6:30p.m. and for Memorial Saturdays (Mar. 14, 21, 28) 9:30a.m. Please let Fr. James know if you are willing to prepare this offering and for what date.

Celebrating the Nation of Georgia: Its Faith, People and Culture

On Saturday May 2nd, our parish will hold a special celebration celebrating the Georgian Peoples. Future announcements will provide the program for this mid-day celebration. Mark your calendar now and be sure to invite friends.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim

(said at evening and morning prayers, except on Saturdays and Sundays)

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power And idle talk. (prostration)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. (prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. (prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (12 times with small bows)

Then the entire Prayer of St. Ephraim is read as a whole and a single prostration is made at the end.



Love and Judgment

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world'" (John 9:39)

"I did not come to judge the world, but to save it" (John 12:47)



Reflections in Christ

"Thoughts In
Christ"
by Fr. Vladimir
Berzonsky

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It appears to be a contradiction -- Jesus first tells us that He came for judgment, and later in the same gospel He said that He did not come to judge to world but to save it. How can He judge without judging, or not judge and yet judge? Even earlier in John 5:22 we read: *"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son."* Compound all that with the famous separation of sheep and goats in chapter 25:31-46 of the Matthew gospel, when the Son of Man, the King, will come in all His glory and separate the people the way a shepherd divides his sheep from his goats.

Clearly there will be a final judgment and sorting out of those who are invited to share in the glory of the Kingdom of heaven and those left outside; but who is doing the judging? Not the Father, for that is the purpose of sending His Son. However, the Son of God Jesus Christ is saying that He really came to save the world, not to judge it. Yet there's no contradiction.

Imagine you have a passion for classical music. You live for the beauty of listening to grand operas. Then you meet somebody with whom you fall in love. You ask her out on a date, and you want to surprise her with the joy that you find especially when you hear a superb orchestra and singers perform an opera. The tickets are difficult to obtain and more than you hoped to pay; however, you want to share what is glorious in your life with somebody you feel exceptional. But as the opera begins, she fidgets and seems bored. You cannot enjoy the performance because you are made aware of her boredom. It's not the fault of the opera, orchestra or performers. You need not question your taste in music nor your first impression of her. Your love of opera was not misplaced. Nor was your infatuation with her that you may have even thought of as love. You had not judged her. She has judged herself.

The analogy weakens at this point because you may reconsider how important it is for you to select a partner who is not in tune with your interests. You may scratch her name from your phone directory or take her from your cell phone list and not call for a second date, but the heavenly Father never stops loving us regardless of our inability or lack of desire to respond to His love for us. He sent His only-begotten Son to invite us to the Kingdom, but it's ours to accept or refuse the invitation. The wonderful and renowned phrase nearly all Christians know: *"For God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16) goes on to add: *"God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him"* (3:17).

Christ came as Light to lead us to the heavenly light; however, there are those who prefer darkness to light because they do evil deeds and do not want their deeds to be exposed. They choose, and by their choice they judge themselves. When I read these texts in the gospel of John, they frighten me because they are stated so simply. The author uses such clear, short words and phrases that the reader has a difficult time trying to pretend that he doesn't understand. And that pretense is also a judgment.

Interrogatory

NRO's Q&A



Getting Serious for 40 Days

An introduction to the Great Canon of St. Andrew.

An NRO Q&A by Kathryn Jean Lopez

Frederica Mathewes-Green, frequent National Review Online movie reviewer, is author of many books, on a variety of topics. Also a columnist for Beliefnet.com, her latest book comes just in time for the Christian holy season of Lent. It's called *First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty-Day Journey Through the Canon of St. Andrew*. Frederica had a pre-Ash Wednesday conversation about the book with NRO editor Kathryn Lopez.

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ: What is "the Great Canon of St. Andrew" and what's so great about it?

FREDERICA MATHEWES-GREEN: This complex poem (actually a chanted hymn) was written in the early 700's, and it picked up the adjective "Great" for two reasons: it's extra-long (about 250 verses), and it's majestic. The Great Canon was written by St. Andrew of Crete, a bishop who was initially a monk in Jerusalem. My new book, *First Fruits of Prayer*, divides the Great Canon into 40 readings; this way readers can explore it as a spiritual retreat, during Lent or at any time.

The whole Canon is a kind of "Walk Through the Bible." St. Andrew begins with Adam and Eve and goes all the way through, exhorting himself by applying the stories and characters of the Bible. Because it is so densely packed I provide a commentary each day on the facing page, which supplies the Scripture references, explains unfamiliar ideas, and suggests questions for reflection.

Reading the Canon helps us see how Christians in the Holy Land, 1,300 years ago, understood the Scriptures. It's a way to time-travel, and actually join them in these ancient Christian devotions.

LOPEZ: Who was the Canon written for?

MATHEWES-GREEN: Some people think St. Andrew wrote it for himself, for his own private use. Throughout, he is challenging himself personally, comparing his life and behavior to that of the Bible's heroes and villains. It's pretty intimate. When the Canon became known it spread through the churches of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

The Canon is still offered as a worship service by most Eastern Orthodox Churches every year during Lent. In the first week of Lent, one-fourth of the hymn is offered each night. In the fifth week the whole Canon is chanted in its entirety — about four hours of singing!

LOPEZ: Who was St. Andrew?

MATHEWES-GREEN: He was born in Damascus about 660, and joined the Monastery of St. Saba, outside Jerusalem, at age 15. His intelligence and holiness were evident, and he soon became secretary to the patriarch of Jerusalem. He was a representative at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and then manager of ministries to the poor, elderly, and orphans in Constantinople, and by the end of his life was Bishop of Crete.

But what he was most known for was inventing a new form of hymn, a canon. It's composed of 9 sections, or "Canticles." Each canticle begins by referencing one of the songs in the Bible — for example, the song of Moses when the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-18), or the Song of the Virgin Mary when the

angel announced the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:46-55). Each canticle starts with a verse based on the biblical canticle and then takes off from it, almost like a jazz riff, developing the overall theme of the canon.

LOPEZ: What does St. Mary of Egypt have to do with Andrew and his canon?

MATHEWES-GREEN: St. Mary lived about 200 years before St. Andrew, dying perhaps in 522. Her story was very popular in Jerusalem, and it was probably St. Andrew who introduced it to the larger church. On the night the entire canon is chanted, her story is read aloud as a kind of framing device.

The story of St. Mary of Egypt begins, actually, with a monk who is spending the Lenten fast in the desert beyond the Jordan. For 20 days he has seen neither man nor beast. Then he spots a human figure, which flees from him. It turns out to be a very aged, white-haired woman, completely naked. She wraps herself in the monk's cloak, and tells him her story. It's a corker. It's in the book.

LOPEZ: Who is your book written for?

MATHEWES-GREEN: *First Fruits of Prayer* is for anyone who wants to be stretched and challenged spiritually. It's tough stuff. It seems to me that so much of contemporary Christianity is squishy and sentimental. It presents the faith like a consumer product, and is desperate to please. But go back 1,000 or 1,500 years, to a work like the Great Canon, and you don't get that at all. There is a sense of awe and mystery here — a sense of *seriousness* — that you won't find in a so-called "praise chorus."

The Great Canon is demanding, no doubt about it. But maybe what we're dealing with — life, death, evil, forgiveness, God's compassion, our joy and gratitude — is serious, too.

LOPEZ: Are there aspects of the Canon that are peculiar to the Eastern Orthodox?

MATHEWES-GREEN: There are places where the theological understanding is different than it has historically been in Western Christianity. For example, sin is not seen so much as bad deeds which make God angry, and which require a payment (Christ's blood) in order to be forgiven. Instead, St. Andrew speaks of sin as something that arises from deep inside, from a darkened and confused mind. It is like a self-inflicted wound. He speaks of God as all-compassionate, rushing toward us with healing love, like the Good Samaritan or the father of the Prodigal Son.

So there's no sense that God's justice or honor have to be satisfied by Christ's suffering before we can be forgiven. Christ's suffering, instead, is the "battle scars" of his fight to free us from Death and the Evil One.

The concepts are more extreme on both sides. Sin is not just the breaking of external laws; it's a poison that infiltrates our whole being and mind. Salvation is not just a "legal fiction" that imputes righteousness we don't really have; it is life "in Christ," saturation in the lightbearing presence of God.

LOPEZ: Is this the kind of spiritual writing that makes converts, or do you have to be pretty intensely prayerful already to get into it?

MATHEWES-GREEN: I think there was a time when this kind of writing made converts — when hard-edged challenges broke through defenses, and led from sudden tears to joy. Recently, we've been in a culture where "Pal Jesus" was mostly in the business of emotional reassurance. I see a new interest, however, in "grown-up" spirituality, that grapples honestly with the unspoken loneliness, despair, and fear right under the smiley-face surface. This is especially true of people younger than the Baby Boomers. I hope that the Great Canon will surprise some readers by confronting them with a side of Christianity they don't often see these days, one that is simultaneously tough and healing.

LOPEZ: Can you "read" a book like this?

MATHEWES-GREEN: It would be pretty dense to get through in a single sit-down reading, pretty emotionally draining. Also, St. Andrew is so exhaustive in his selection from the Scriptures that many references will be unfamiliar. That's one of the reasons why I provide a verse-by-verse commentary on the facing page each day. Orthodox Christians do experience the entire Canon all at once when it is offered that evening in the fifth week of Lent. But I think it's actually more absorbable when you're singing and praying your way through, aloud, in the company of other people, than when you're sitting reading a book.

LOPEZ: Uh, so "Forty Days," did you really write this for Lent?

MATHEWES-GREEN: Yes, that's what I had in mind. I didn't think of the parallel to Rick Warren's book, *Forty Days of Purpose*, until a reviewer mentioned it. But I also hoped people might use it any time they want to tackle a serious spiritual discipline; it doesn't *have* to be Lent.

LOPEZ: For folks who aren't into Lent, they might know it as the time when some of their friends don't drink — something along those lines. Do you "give up" stuff during Lent? How do you look at the 40 days? How do you tend to describe it to the uninitiated?

MATHEWES-GREEN: For Eastern Orthodox, all spiritual exercises are designed to heighten our perception of basic reality: Sin is much more serious than we think, and God's forgiveness is much more vast than we think. Left to ourselves, we go around with Playskool impressions of what's at stake. So the goal of all spiritual disciplines are to cultivate *charmolypti* — to use a Greek term coined by the 6th-century abbot of the monastery on Mt Sinai, St. John of the Ladder. *Charmolypti* means the kind of penitence that flips into joyous gratitude, "joy-making sorrow," repentance shot through with gold.

Orthodox don't have a tradition so much of individually choose things to give up. Instead, we all take part in a common fast from meat, dairy, eggs, and fish; basically, a vegan diet. This recalls Daniel's fast from rich foods in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. It's a strenuous discipline, and can be adapted for health or spiritual reasons.

The fast is not self-punishment or payment for sin. It's an exercise like weightlifting, designed to strengthen the willpower muscle. If you can resist a slice of pizza, you can resist the urge to yell at someone in traffic.

LOPEZ: What got you interested enough to write this book?

MATHEWES-GREEN: Every year I would go to the service of the Great Canon, and it's quite an experience: the darkened candle-lit church, incense smoke twining overhead, golden light glinting off the icons, and chanters singing the verses to ancient Byzantine melodies. After each verse everyone responds, "Have mercy on me, O God," and bows to touch the ground. It's serious, and timeless, and piercingly beautiful, and kindles humility and a yearning to be healed from all the poison within. In every way it contrasts with the image Christians (often deservedly) have in today's culture. I wanted to make it available to more people.

The Great Canon is part of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, but really, it's part of *every* Christian's tradition; we all go back to first-century Jerusalem. The Canon makes more sense when you experience it in context, as part of the continuous flow of Orthodox prayer, liturgy, fasting, and sacraments. But I wanted to offer this introductory taste in hopes that it will leave some readers hungry for more.

