

## **SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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### **BULLETIN OF MARCH 22, 2009**

#### **SUNDAY/MARCH 22nd**

**3rd Sunday of the Great & Holy Fast:  
Veneration of the Holy Cross (Tone 7)**

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

Church School

4:00p.m. Vespers in Trenton

**End of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th  
Week of Great Lent**

#### **MONDAY/MARCH 23rd**

7:00p.m. Vespers

#### **TUESDAY/MARCH 24th**

7:00p.m. Vigil; Confession

#### **WEDNESDAY/MARCH 25th**

**ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS**

**(One of "the 12 Great Feasts")**

*Fish, Wine & Oil Permitted*

9:30a.m. Vespers and Divine Liturgy

#### **THURSDAY/MARCH 26th**

7:00p.m. Vespers

#### **FRIDAY/MARCH 27th**

7:00p.m. Vespers; Confession

#### **MEMORIAL SATURDAY/MARCH 28th**

9:30a.m. Akathist for Departed; Confession

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

#### **SUNDAY/MARCH 29th**

**4th Sunday of the Great & Holy Fast:  
St. John of the Ladder (Tone 8)**

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

Coffee Hour; Question & Answer Period

4:00p.m. Vespers at Assumption Church in  
Clifton with Metropolitan Jonah

**End of the 4th and beginning of the 5th  
week of Great Lent**



### **Hymns for the Fourth Week**

As we reach today the middle of the Great and Holy Fast, by the power of the Cross let us praise Him who was raised upon it in the midst of the earth; and let us glorify Him as our mighty Saviour and our God, crying aloud: Grant us to behold, O Master, Thy Passion and Thy holy Resurrection, and bestow on us forgiveness and great mercy.

Clothed in glory by the virtues and cleansed by abstinence, let us draw near and venerate the precious Cross, crying aloud: Sanctify our souls and bodies, O only God of all, and count us worthy to celebrate Thy most pure Passion, granting us Thy mercy.

### **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.

### ***Pussywillows Sought***

We have enough! Thanks!

### ***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.

### ***Lenten Charitable Offerings***

OCMC Coin Boxes which provide for missionary work in the USA and abroad. Boxes may be picked up on the vestibule stand.

Poor Basket in the center of the church which provides funding for St. Philaret Society, the charitable arm of our parish caring for our own and others.

St. Mary Magdalen Church in Jerusalem. Each year we make an offering for the benefit of this holy church in the Holy Land.

### ***A Sale of Select Religious Items***

Is taking place for the next couple of weeks in the Conference Room after the Divine. Icons, crosses, Easter eggs and other items are in stock.

### ***Visitation to the homes of those that are home bound with the Mysteries of Holy Confession & Holy Communion***

Will take place during the week of March 29th thru April 3rd. If you are shut-in and cannot make it to church for the Sacraments, please be sure you schedule a visit with Fr. James.

### ***Green Tips***

- 1) Check out your bathroom, Use low-flow faucets, showerheads and toilets.
- 2) Wash towels after several uses.
- 3) Do full loads of laundry and set the rinse cycle to "cold".

### ***Parish Synodicon - Memory Eternal!***

March	23,	1925	Peter Chabra
March	23,	1975	Anna Yalsh
March	24,	1959	Alexander Gromack
March	24,	1970	Julia Zorzi
March	24,	1974	Xenia Poletelo
March	25,	1954	John Holovach
March	25,	1984	Stephen Szwhala
March	26,	1931	Anna Mogilevsky
March	26,	1958	Henry Knaff
March	27,	1971	Anna Shwhala
March	27,	1985	Steven Pawlik

### ***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.

### ***The Parish Bulletin Board***

Has posted announcements, press releases and other information that doesn't make it into the Sunday Bulletin. Check it out at Coffee Hour.

### ***Fellowship Consideration***

Why not venture out beyond your "comfort zone?" If you don't come to the Sunday Coffee Hour, come and meet and mix with your fellow "saints." If you do come to Coffee Hour, move around and sit with someone you don't know and can get to know.

### ***Even the Geese Can Teach Us***

Geese fly in the V-formation because when each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following it. By flying in the V-formation, the whole flock can fly at least 71% further than if each bird flew on its own. Christians who share a common direction and sense of community can also get where they are going quicker and easier because they are travelling on the thrust and uplift of one another. What a great image for great Lent!

### ***Candle Lighting After Services Begin***

If you are late - try not to be - please light your candles at times the Royal Doors are closed.



**Test your Knowledge on the Article on Paradise and Hell that appeared in the Sunday Bulletin of March 15th**

- 1) Paradise and Hell are two different places, True ( ) False ( )
  - 2) Those that go to Hell will never see God, True ( ) False ( )
  - 3) The fires of hell are real material fires, True ( ) False ( )
  - 4) On the Day of Judgment, only the saints will be saved, while the sinners will not be saved True ( ) False ( )
  - 5) Penances that may be given in Confession are given as (a) punishments for sins that were confessed (b) as medications, a means of healing (c) only given for big sins.
  - 6) The concept of "synergy" means that
    - a) God is responsible for everything
    - b) Man is responsible for everything
    - c) God and Man cooperate in salvation
    - d) None of the above
  - 7) In the "River of Fire" are to be found
    - a) Saints
    - b) Sinners
    - c) Saints and sinners
  - 8) The mystery of paradise and hell will be experienced at the End of the World but is also already experienced in the life of the Church in this present age True ( ) False ( )
  - 9) "Apokatastasis" or "Universal Salvation" teaches that the time will come when God will deliver everyone from Hell because of His Compassionate love this teaching is
    - a) Theologically correct
    - b) Theologically incorrect
  - 10) The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches have the same teachings about heaven and hell True ( ) False ( )
- 1) False 2) False 3) False 4) False 5) b  
6) c 7) c 8) True 9) b 10) False

An explanation of answers will be given at the Question & Answer Period on Sun., Mar. 29th.

Unfortunately, the author has a mistaken notion that is expressed in footnote #1 about the "toll-houses." The teaching about toll-houses is in fact not a heresy but part of the authentic doctrine of our Church. More about this at the Question & Answer Forum.

**Offerings for the week of March 22nd**  
**Olive Oil** – in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; in memory of Joan; in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Archimandrite Damian.  
**Wine** – for the protection in travel and forgiveness of sins of Mariana and Stefan; for the health of new-born Bradon James (Mar. 10th), and his parents, Gregory Parsells and Lorri Vukovich.

**Namesday Greetings**

St. Larissa/Mar. 26th: Larissa mattei, Larissa Teslenko and Laura Hansen; Many Blessed Years!

**Great Lent Church Cleaning**

On a couple of Saturdays, late morning, a general clean-up of the inside of the church will take place. Please speak with Protodeacon Paul or Peter Bakaletz, if you wish to help.

**April 2009 National Geographic Magazine - Russian Orthodox Church**

This issue has some wonderful photos and text by Serge Schmemmann (journalist and son of the late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann).  
<http://ngmnationalgeographic.com>

**Outreach Meeting**

The next meeting will be Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00p.m.

**The Mysteries of Confession and Communion**

- Should be received by all the faithful during the time of the 40 Days – ending April 11th.
- Confessions are not scheduled during Great and Holy Week (April 12-18).
- Parishioners wishing to make their Confession outside of the parish should speak with their parish priest first.
- Confessions at other times than what is scheduled, contact Fr. James.
- Fasting from mid-night, participation in the evening service before receiving Holy Communion and the reciting of Pre and Post Communion Prayers are all part of the good order in preparation for the Holy Gifts (Communion).

## THE ANNUNCIATION – CELEBRATED MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>

*From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

When the All-Holy Virgin completed the fourteenth year after her birth and was entering her fifteenth year, after having spent eleven years of living and serving in the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could not remain in the Temple but was required to be betrothed and enter into marriage. What a great surprise to the priests was the answer of the All-Holy Virgin that she had dedicated her life to God and that she desired to remain a Virgin until death, not wanting to enter into marriage with anyone! Then, according to Divine Providence, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, under the inspiration of God, and in agreement with the other priests, gathered twelve unwed men from the Tribe of David to betroth the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and to care for her. She was betrothed to Joseph of Nazareth who was her kinsman. In the house of Joseph, the All-Holy Virgin continued to live as she did in the Temple of Solomon, occupying her time in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in Godly-thoughts, in fasting and in handiwork. She rarely went anywhere outside the house nor was she interested in worldly things and events. She spoke very little to



anyone, if at all, and never without special need. More frequently she communicated with both of Joseph's daughters. When the fullness of time had come, as prophesied by Daniel the Prophet, and when God was pleased to fulfill His promise to the banished Adam and to the Prophets, the great Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the All-Holy Virgin and, as some priestly writers wrote, precisely at that same moment when she held open the book of the Prophet Isaiah and was contemplating his great prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son!" (Isaiah 7:13). Gabriel appeared in all of his angelic brightness and saluted her: "Rejoice, highly favored one! The Lord is with you" (St. Luke 1:28), and the rest in order as it is written in the Gospel of the saintly Luke. With this angelic annunciation and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, the salvation of mankind and restoration of all creation began. The history of the New Testament was opened by the words of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice, highly favored one" This is to imply that the New Testament was to signify joy to mankind and to all created things. It is from this that the Annunciation is considered not only a great feast, but a joyful feast as well.

## TO CONQUER THE ENEMY IS TO CONQUER OURSELVES

*By St. Leo the Great (†461)*

In the days of Saul and David, it was when the Israelites fell into sin that the Lord allowed the Philistines to oppress them. In order to regain their ascendancy over their enemies, the people were ordered to fast. The Israelites understood that there was no use for them to try to win their freedom by taking up arms; they first had to rid themselves of their sins. So they began to discipline themselves and to conquer the desire of the flesh to be able to conquer their opponents. When they fasted their oppressors gave way before them, when they indulged all their appetites the enemy held them in subjection.



It is the same with us today. We have our own struggles and conflicts, and we can win by using the same tactics. The Israelites were attacked by human beings; we are attacked by spiritual enemies. We can conquer by bringing our lives into line with God's will for us; then our enemies will give way before us. It is not their power but our lack of self-discipline that makes a threat to us, and we shall weaken them by overcoming ourselves. We must ask God's help in this warfare, because our only means of conquering the enemy is to conquer ourselves.



## THE QUESTION OF WEIGHT: A BIG SIN AND SMALL SINS

At one time two women came to Confession to a certain elder. The first of them was burdened by one terrible sin, for which her conscience troubled her continuously, and the other had no grave sin but only the "usual" little ones.

The elder, having listened to them, ordered that they go to the orchard and bring stones from it. To her who had the one serious sin, he said: "You take the heaviest stone that you can lift and bring it to me." And to the other he said: "Here's a bag for you. Gather small stones and bring them here." When they both had fulfilled their tasks, the elder thanked them for their obedience and said: "And now, take back that which you have brought to me and put it in its previous place." The first sinner did this without difficulty, but the other lost her head and returned with virtually a full bag because she couldn't remember which stone she took from where and she was afraid to deceive the elder.



So then the elder said to her: "Look, your acquaintance has a heavy sin, but she remembers it and constantly mourns over it all the time, but the tears of repentance wash away any sin. you are unable to mourn over your sins because you don't even remember them, but the weight of your bag is no less than the weight of a big stone."

Indeed, we must all learn that all of our "small" sins, the majority of which are forgotten, in their mass form a terrible weight, which pulls us toward the underworld if we do not free our souls from them by true repentance.

## THE MEANING OF WORDS

**Penitence** - the condition of being penitent, sorrow for wrong doing.

**Contrition** - sincere sorrow for wrongs.

**Penance** - The Mystery or Sacrament of the Church, in which confessed sins before the priest are forgiven. Also called the Mystery of Repentance or Reconciliation or Confession.

- a secondary meaning of penance is that it is a specific undertaking given by the priest in Confession to a sinner to help them in awareness and struggle over sin. A penance may be certain prayers, number of prostrations, reading or charitable acts.

**Confession** - the act of revealing our sins to God, before the priest who stands as a witness. A Sacrament of the Church in which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

**Repentance** - is more than sorrow or regret, but is fundamentally a change. The conversion or turning of our whole life towards God.

**Compunction** - the state of being in awareness both of one's own sinfulness and of the forgiveness extended by God; a mingled feeling of sorrow, tenderness and joy, springing from sincere repentance.

**Worldly Sorrow** - sorrow for wrongs inasmuch as one feels guilty and unhappy.

**Godly Sorrow** - a sorrow for wrongs which nourishes the soul with the hope engendered by repentance; a gift from God.



## **STRUGGLE AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

- *From 3<sup>rd</sup> Homily of St. Macarius the Great (+390)*

One thing is required – that one should have treasure in his soul and the life which is the Lord in his mind, so that, whether he works or prays or reads, he should have that possession which cannot be lost, which is the Holy Spirit.

There are those who say that the Lord requires only visible fruits from men. The interior ones God will rectify. But this is not the way things are. For as one defends himself against the exterior man, so also he must enter into the lists and do battle against his thoughts. For the Lord demands of you that you be angry with yourself and engage in battle with your mind, neither consenting to or taking pleasure in wicked thoughts.

Still, to uproot sin and the evil that is so imbedded in our sinning can be done only by divine power, for it is impossible and outside of man's competence to uproot sin. To struggle, yes, to continue to fight, to inflict blows, and to receive setbacks is in your power. To uproot, however, belongs to God alone. If you could have done it on your own, what would have been the need for the coming of the Lord? For just as an eye cannot see without light, nor can one speak without a tongue, nor hear without ears, nor walk without feet, nor carry on works without your hands, so you cannot be saved without Jesus nor enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Suppose you say: "I do not outwardly corrupt myself by fornication or adultery nor do I commit the crime of avarice, therefore it follows that I am justified." You are completely off the mark in such thinking that you have perfectly fulfilled everything. There are not just three categories of sin against which one must guard oneself, but the number is legion. Arrogance, presumption, unbelief, hatred, envy, deceit, hypocrisy, where do these come from? Are you not obligated to war against these in your inner thoughts? If a robber invades your house, are you not at once greatly distressed? He does not allow you to be freed from anxious worries. You begin to fight back against him. You exchange blows. So ought also the soul to strike back, to resist, to strike blow for blow.

Consequently, when the will fights back in its trouble and affliction, it begins to gain the upper hand. It may fail; it rises. Then sin pounces on the soul and wages ten or twenty conflicts. It overcomes the soul and pins it down. But then the soul, after a while in a momentous struggle, overcomes sin. If the soul preserves without letting down its guard in any area, it begins to emerge victorious as it sees through the deceit of sin and so it wins the crown of victory over sin.