

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 7, 2010

SUNDAY/MARCH 7

Third Sunday of Great Lent (Tone 6)

Procession of the Holy Cross

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

Installation of New Parish Council

Coffee Hour

End of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th

Week of the Great & Holy Fast

4:00p.m. Deanery Vespers at Holy Annunciation
Church in Brick

MONDAY/MARCH 8

7:00p.m. Vespers

TUESDAY/MARCH 9

40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste

7:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 10

9:30a.m. Akathist to Holy Cross; Confessions

6:30p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at

**Holy Ghost Church, 6th Ave. & Roosevelt,
Manville**



THURSDAY/MARCH 11

3:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

FRIDAY/MARCH 12

7:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SATURDAY/MARCH 13

Memorial Saturday

9:30a.m. General Memorial Service; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/MARCH 14

****Day Light Savings Time Begins****

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent (Tone 7)

St. John of Mt. Sinai

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

Coffee Hour; Church School; Teen Discussion

12:00p.m. Movie: "The Return of the Icon"

End of the 4th and beginning of the 5th

Week of the Great & Holy Fast

4:00p.m. Deanery Vespers at Holy Assumption
Church in Clifton

As we celebrate today the joyful veneration of Thy life-giving Cross, O Christ our Saviour, we prepare ourselves for Thy most holy Passion; for Thou in Thine almighty power hast brought to pass the salvation of the world.

What shall we offer to Thee, O Christ? For Thou hast given us Thy Precious Cross to venerate, on which Thy holy Blood was shed, to which Thy flesh was fixed by nails. With love we kiss it and give thanks to Thee.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Mar. 08, 1974	John Wigodinski
Mar. 08, 1976	Sophie Rose
Mar. 08, 1990	Henry Olszyk
Mar. 09, 1919	Elizabeth Demstor
Mar. 09, 1956	Michael Hnatuk
Mar. 09, 1956	Anna Makowski
Mar. 09, 1957	John Makowski
Mar. 09, 1976	Daria Karanevich
Mar. 10, 1936	Jacob Voliakim
Mar. 10, 1963	William Zaleski
Mar. 11, 1961	Paraska Holowach
Mar. 11, 1972	Alex Smagley
Mar. 12, 1924	Nicholas Semashkevich
Mar. 12, 1966	Leo Stachowsky
Mar. 13, 1929	Theodore Malko
Mar. 13, 1969	Telka Barnosky
Mar. 13, 1973	Paul Swidonovich
Mar. 13, 1974	Helen Lysy
Mar. 13, 1994	Nicolai Dimitirew
Mar. 13, 1996	Joseph Zydiak



Offerings for the week of March 7

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

Wine – for the health of Robert (birthday); for the health and salvation of Daniel (birthday); in memory of Merab Tukahveli.

Movie Presentation – “The Return of the Icon”

In the summer of 2004, the Icon of the Tikhvin Mother of God - one of several attributed to the hand of St. Luke – was returned to Russia after 60 years in the USA. The story begins in a Chicago house and ends in the Monastery of Tikhvin, east of St. Petersburg. The film examines the history of the icon through the centuries and her miraculous escape from both the Nazis and Communists. A wonderful film of one of the most famous icons of the Virgin Mary. The film will be show:

Mar. 14, Sun at 12:00p.m. and Mar. 16, Tues at 7:30p.m. Bring someone along with you!

Outreach Meeting

To be held on Monday, Mar. 15th at 7:30p.m.

NJ Deanery Lenten Vespers – Mar. 21st

Will be held at our church here in Manville. The clergy and faithful from other parishes will gather with us for Vespers (4:00p.m.) and a light Lenten meal. To help out with food preparation, please speak with Diaconissa Patricia Sokol.

Consecration of Bishop-Elect Michael

Will take place on May 8th, Saturday at 9:30a.m. at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Jersey City. All of our parishioners are encouraged to participate in this very special service.

A festal banquet will also be held in Jersey City after the Liturgy at a nearby hotel. A sign-up sheet for a table from our parish is posted on the Bulletin Board. The cost is \$75 per person. The deadlines for tickets is Mar. 31st. For more information please speak with Protodeacon Paul.

Mark Your Calendar – Sunday, May 16th “The Spirit of Orthodoxy – Concert & Reception”

This Outreach program will be held in the late afternoon (about 4:30). Reserve the date and plan to bring friends with you to see our church; hear the choir and delight in wonderful refreshments.

Spring Church Cleaning – Come!

Mar. 20th, Sat. 11:00a.m.

Pussywillows

Please bring them to the lower hall. Thanks!

Holy Gifts to Those Who Shut-ins

Visitations to their homes for Confession & Holy Communion will take place the week of Mar. 14th. Please call Father James to arrange a time.

IOCC Relief Kits

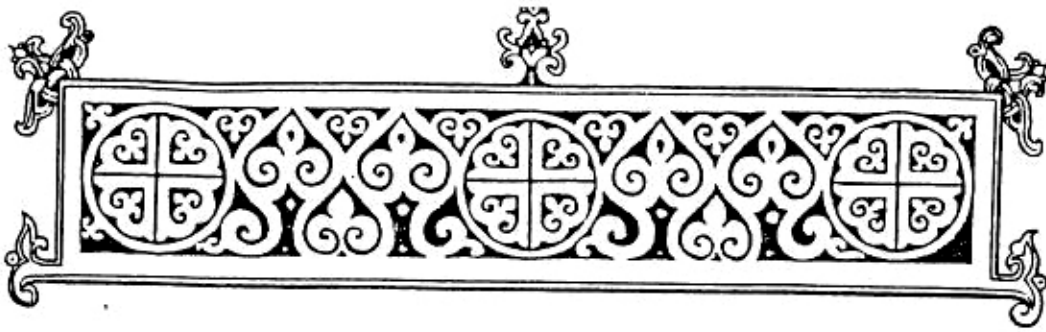
May be brought to the church no later than Friday, March 19th.

Lipstick

Should not leave smears on the Holy Cross or Icons. Let us honor holy things.

Remember in Prayer

Charles (Basil) Kachek.



APPROACHING SICKNESS

This perspective can be briefly stated in eleven propositions.

1. Evil is a condition. Ultimate reality, God, is good and the source of all good. God is the Uncreated and is the only pure good. All creation is good only inasmuch as it participates and communes with God. Evil comes into being with the deliberate renunciation of communion with God; it is therefore understood in Orthodox Christianity as "the absence of the good." The fallen condition of the created world therefore, by definition, means that much of existence is evil. This does not mean that the creation itself is evil. Because of its broken relationship with God, nature is in fact "unnatural," and human beings are in fact "less than human." We are born into this fallen, unnatural, and less than fully human condition.

2. Sickness is an evil. Because of the fallen condition in which humanity finds itself, everything is subject to corruption. This does not mean that everything is totally corrupt or that there cannot be in the fallen condition a significant proportion of the human experience which is good. Nevertheless, only the fully natural is good. Since evil is a privation of the good, evil is by definition unnatural. An aspect of this reality is illness. Sickness, as a result, is fundamentally seen as part of a global disharmony, disorientation, and disorder; it is perceived as a fundamental evil integral to the fallen experience of humanity and therefore unavoidable.

3. The goal of life as God-likeness transforms illness. Yet evil, and illness as a particular evil, are within the parameters of the work of salvation of Jesus Christ. The saving work of Christ in Eastern Orthodoxy is seen as victory over the enemies of true human existence. Sickness, a discontinuity with the presence and energies of God, can be transformed into an instrument for the fulfillment of human purpose, which is to realize as fully as possible the image and likeness of God in human life.

4. Sickness is a testing. When the Christian suffers an illness, he or she is being tested. Illness is seen not as an absolute evil but as an evil capable of redemption, if it enhances communion with God and growth in full God-like personhood. Its proper use is the issue. In the same manner, health is not an absolute good but a test. It, too, provides opportunities either for good or for evil.

5. Sickness is a gift. If the test of sickness is met properly, it can force us to face up to our selves, our values, our vices and virtues. It can teach us what is truly important about our lives. It can mold our character into a more God-like pattern, and as a result it can make us more fully and more completely human. Unhealed sickness or illness under therapy can be a gift that transforms human life in the direction of fulfillment.

(over)

6. Sickness is a temptation. There is nothing automatic, however, about the potential of sickness to help us achieve full human purpose as the image and likeness of God. If we do not accept it as a gift from God, it can also stand as a temptation to despair, to further distancing from God, to an even sharper division between our empirical selves and our true human nature. As such, sickness is dangerous, not only to our bodily condition but to our spiritual condition. Remarkably the same can be said about health: it too is a temptation that can lead human beings far from God and from their own humanity.

7. Illness is an occasion for witness. Propositions 4, 5, and 6 refer to the inner disposition and inner potentialities given the Christian when he or she faces illness. The bearing of illness can also serve as a witness to others. Like a new form of martyrdom, it provides a way of giving witness to others of the faith that we hold.

8. Illness affects other responsibilities. As a trial, as a gift, as a temptation, as an occasion for witness, sickness becomes in itself a "calling." It is valued as a potential instrument of God's will, and as such, it morally frees the sick person from responsibility for some other duties he or she normally has. These, of course, are not abandoned, but they may recede in importance as the Christian seeks to transform the evil of sickness into growth in God-likeness.

9. Health maintenance is a responsibility. One ought not deliberately harm one's own health. Just as early Christians were prohibited from provoking the occasions for martyrdom, so no Christian should deliberately and without proper cause put life and health to risk. Rather, because health is a good and illness an evil, one has a basic responsibility to preserve and maintain life and health. Reckless risking of health and life, abusing the body, ignoring the basic necessities of life—all constitute inappropriate behavior for the Christian.

10. It is appropriate for a Christian to seek healing when sick. Although sickness is not an absolute evil and can in fact become the occasion for growth toward fullness of life, Eastern Christianity does not teach passivity in the face of illness. We have a responsibility to seek healing, using means ranging from the purely spiritual to the purely scientific. Traditionally, both means are used without a sense of conflict. Spiritual healing methods, including prayer and sacraments, are applied in conjunction with "rational medicine" to effect healing. For the church, the true source of the good of healing is God. Christ is the "physician of our souls and bodies." In this sense, the physician is also perceived as a servant of God's will and purposes, allowing the good of health to emerge wherever possible.

11. Christians have a responsibility for the health of others. An essential dimension of Christian love, itself a chief dimension of God-likeness, is concern for the well-being of the neighbor. No one, even the most remote desert ascetic, can grow in God-likeness without caring for another who suffers affliction. Because everyone eventually suffers the affliction of illness, the care of the sick is an expression of fulfilling the image and likeness of God in relationship toward others. Christians thus have a universally acknowledged responsibility to aid others in reducing the evil of sickness in this life.



THE PATH OF REPENTANCE

"But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."'" And he arose and came to his father."

1. WHAT IS REPENTANCE AND WHAT ISN'T IT

Repentance has been called by the Fathers of the Church "a second baptism" or "the renewal of baptism". With the first baptism, we begin a course towards the kingdom of God. The love of God the Father, knowing our human weakness and the consequence of our fall, gave the second baptism, repentance, with which man can get up again from his fall, heal his wounds and continue his difficult journey. Unfortunately very few people know what repentance means and what its deeper meaning is. Most people not only don't know what repentance is, but not even for what thing we must repent.

Repentance is not, as we think, a legal procedure, which delivers man from some feelings of guilt. Nor is it a mechanical confession, which one does before the great feasts or under hard psychological conditions. The attitude and journey of the prodigal son shows something else.

As the word says it, metanoia (repentance) (meta-noo) means a complete change of life, the denial with all our heart, of sin, the change of mindset. That is, we should feel with all our being, that the path we are following doesn't lead anywhere, and we should want to return. To feel that we are living in a hay bin, outside our father's house and to say: Where are we going? Have we gone crazy? Here our father has a palace where everyone is rejoicing, and we are sitting in the mire?" And then we should decide to return, to reenter our paternal house, to be reconciled with God-the Father and our brethren.

For repentance to be true, it will have to be put into practice. Saint Kosmas Aitolos says: "Even if all spiritual fathers, the Patriarchs, the Hierarchs and all people forgive you, you are unforgivable, if you don't repent in action". If, that is, we don't wish to depart from sin and to change our life, then our repentance is not true. It is not even repentance.

Many people approach confession with enthusiasm beneath the weight of psychological or other problems. They confess with tears and promises, that from now and henceforth they will not return again to sin, that they decided to change their life etc. Something like this may not be related to repentance and should make us be suspect. Because repentance is not a firework. Time, labor, asceticism, struggle are needed under the grace of God. And it is realized with patience and secretly in man's soul. "As if a man places the seed upon the ground and it rests and he sleeps and rises night and day and the seed blossoms and lengthens when he did not see it. The ground bears fruit automatically" (Mark 4:26-28).



Finally, repentance is a work of divine grace. Man living in the darkness of sin and not knowing the beauty of divine life, cannot understand the difference between human life and theanthropic life. Only when divine grace casts the seed of divine love in his heart, can he see his spiritual emptiness. The light of the sun, when it enters into a dark room, reveals everything. Thus, when the grace of God enlightens our souls, then we see the inner emptiness, the passions, our sins. For this reason our saints, so intensely sought from God: "Grant

me complete repentance". Because this true repentance is the safe path which leads to the kingdom of God.

2. WHAT IS CONFESSION AND WHAT ISN'T IT

If repentance is the first part of the mystery, the second is confession. That is the confession of our sins before the spiritual father. Just as for repentance, thus for confession also, there is great ignorance and misunderstanding. The spiritual father most of the time feels that what he is performing is a parody of a mystery.

Many people for example feel that confession is a friendly conversation, a mechanical enumerating of certain sins. This however what relationship does it have with the mystery of repentance? If we examine the motives also which lead many of us to confession, again we will be disappointed. Others go to find a certain comfort or to be delivered of our guilts. Others out of fear of God's "punishment". Others out of duty or out of custom, as most people do before the great feasts to commune, associating confession with divine communion. All these things however, have little or no relationship with confession and repentance.

Let's say it with simple words: Confession is the emptying of poison. When one drinks poison, there is no other solution. The same thing with confession. There we take out the poison of sin. Otherwise we will be led to death.

And to use another image: When we show our wounds to the doctor, we mention our pains, our troublings, our illnesses without hiding anything, thus also in confession. We denude our soul, we reveal our wounds, we confess our illness and our personal pain. If this does not occur, we will remain unhealed. Our wounds will grow, the pollution and rotting will advance, the illness will continue undermining our being and sooner or later will lead us to death.

From all these things we realize that God does not have need of our own confession. We need it. When, that is, we confess we are not doing....a favor to God, as many think. It's another thing of course if God, as a father, awaits our return always with much love.

At this point, it is necessary to underline the following: If

in other Christian confessions, confession is an impersonal legalistic enumeration, behind some curtain, in our Orthodox Church, confession is directly associated with spiritual fatherhood, spiritual guidance and the personal relationship. Many people for example confess circumstantially, wherever they find a spiritual father and each time to a different priest. Here the same thing occurs as with physical illnesses. If each time we change doctors, then the therapy cannot be complete. Our permanent spiritual father is he who knows our "history", our journey, our previous falls and can help us effectively.

Others again have it "double-doored". They have their spiritual father, but when something graver occurs, because they are ashamed they avoid confessing to him and go to someone else. Such an action however is childlike and a mockery of the mystery. It shows how far we are from true repentance.

So it is necessary for us to pursue obtaining a spiritual father, with whom we can create a spiritual relationship. Thus our journey will be safer. Of course there are cases where we ought to change spiritual fathers. This however must occur with much care, discretion and mainly after a careful examining of our deeper motives. We should search, in other words, inside us to locate the deeper causes and find why we want to change spiritual fathers.



"Saint Jerome one Christmas night was praying on his knees in the cave of Bethlehem. He prayed with tears. He pondered the mystery of God's love, the miracle of His incarnation. He thought of the magi who on such a night, had brought the newly born God so many gifts, rich, royal gifts. And he said:

Holy infant, what gift should I the all poor one, the unfortunate one, the sinful one give you? I don't have anything.

And nevertheless, you can, Jerome, grant me something, the voice of the Lord responded.

"What, holy infant? What can I grant you? the saint longingly asked.

"Your sins, Jerome, responded the Lord."

A WORD OF INSTRUCTION TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TO HOLY CONFESSION FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME

The Season of Great Lent is upon us. During this time of the 40 Day Fast, all Orthodox Christians partake of the Mysteries of Confession and Communion. Our Holy Mother, the Church prepares us for making a good Confession, by lenten church services, fasting, almsgiving and cultivating a spirit of repentance. Confession of sins is necessary, since we are all sinners. It doesn't matter if we are big or little sinners, we all need to be cleansed by Confession and then strengthened in newness of life by receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

It happens that some Christians - for any number of reasons, do not approach the Mysteries of Confession and Communion for long periods of time that may be even decades. This is very problematic for us spiritually. It is all but impossible to have an authentic Christian life without receiving - at least yearly - the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion.

There are ample materials available that explain what Confession and Communion are and how essential there are in our life.

Regardless of the reason or reasons we may not have been coming to Confession and Communion, we should avail ourselves of this time of Great Lent and re-establish ourselves in the Way of Salvation. What should one do?

- 1) Be sorry for one's sins, humbly confess them before God in the Mystery of Confession before the priest, who is there as a witness, not a judge. Your confession is to God Himself.
- 2) Prepare for Confession by prayer, fasting, amending bad habits, examining one's soul. Printed materials can help us. Your priest can help, just ask.
- 3) If you wish to make your confession to another priest other than one's parish priest; let your parish priest know and he will guide you in this.

It is the duty of the parish priest to remind, exhort and guide members of his flock to receive the Holy Mysteries, especially in the season of Great Lent. Please accept this timely reminder in the good spirit it is offered to you. The times of Confession are listed in the bulletins or you can make arrangements for confession at another unscheduled time. My prayers and sincere offer of help,



Meeting the Orthodox

Further Q&A on the
Orthodox Faith

Fr. John Matusiak

Proof of Confession

Q & A

If I choose a Father confessor other than my local Priest, am I required to provide written proof that I have performed an act of penitance and received absolution to my local priest.

Can he refuse me communion?

If he will accept my unlying word, how long can I receive communion before I make another confession?



In general, every Orthodox Christian should have a Father Confessor. Ideally this should be the person's parish priest. If, for some worthy reason, a person desires to confess in the presence of another priest and to consider him as his or her Father Confessor, he or she should, out of respect and in an open and honest manner, discuss his or her reasons with his or her parish priest and seek his blessing. While I have never heard of providing written proof for confessing or receiving absolution from one's Father Confessor, it stands to reason that, if one's parish priest is aware of the circumstance, one would choose to maintain communication with his or her parish priest and inform him of the occasions on which he or she went to Confession.

With regard to whether or not the parish priest can refuse to give an individual Communion, it must be understood that the priest is the guardian of the Holy Mysteries which, as the Holy Fathers warn, can be to our condemnation as well as our salvation. Technically a priest does not "refuse" to give Communion to someone; it would be more correct to say that the priest must discern, recognize, and respond to any circumstances by which an individual has cut off himself or herself from the Eucharist or any other sacrament. In other words it is not the priest who "refuses" to offer the sacrament but, rather, the circumstance in which the person is involved which makes it impossible for the priest to offer the sacrament.

Concerning the frequency of the reception of Holy Communion and its relationship to the frequency of Confession, this is a matter which must be thoroughly discussed with one's parish priest and one's Father Confessor, should they be two separate persons. There is no "standard" here, just as there is no "standard" frequency that should be followed in tending to physical ailments and needs under the guidance and direction of one's family physician.

In every instance, it is always best to discuss such concerns with one's pastor and to follow his guidance, just as one would discuss one's physical health with one's physician and follow his or her advice and direction.
