

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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WELCOME BISHOP MICHAEL!

BULLETIN OF NOVEMBER 21, 2010

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 21

**26th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 8)
Presentation of the Theotokos in the
Temple (One of "the 12 Great Feasts")**

9:00a.m. Entrance of Bishop Michael & Hours

9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; followed by Festal
Luncheon



MONDAY/NOVEMBER 22

7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to
St. Alexander Nevsky (Nov. 23)

TUESDAY/NOVEMBER 23

6:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to

St. Katherine (Nov. 24)

Anointing with oil from her tomb

7:00p.m. Georgian Service for the

Great-Martyr George

THURSDAY/NOVEMBER 25

Holiday of Thanksgiving

9:30a.m. Akathist "Glory to God
For All Things"

SATURDAY/NOVEMBER 27

Kursk-Root Icon of Theotokos

9:30a.m. Akathist to Theotokos; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 28

27th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 1)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour and Question/Answer Period

Lessons in Divine & Christian love (33)

Let us look now at the beginning of the beginnings of human daughters. While Eve had the love of God in herself, she was entirely devoted to God. And she loved God with a divine love, with all the love in her heart, spirit and mind. The love for her husband, as well as love for all the beauties of Paradise paled before her love for God. Everything else that she loved for the sake of God and through God, but anything not seen within the radiance of her well-loved Creator, she deemed not worthy of her love. And all her soul was lightly dressed, transparent, imperceptible to the eye of the body, filled with inexpressible sweetness and delight from the love of God. In her love for the Lord God she could compete with the cherubim. Any desire whatever for someone outside of God did not enter into her heart, nor did she put her mind to it. With love towards God she loved, breathed, and rejoiced. Such was the ancestors, the mother of mankind. Such also was the first ancestor, Adam.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Nov. 21, 1997 George Zvonchenko
Nov. 21, 2004 Ann Zeban
Nov. 23, 1968 Daniel Podobed
Nov. 25, 1968 Michael Spotts
Nov. 25, 1971 Julia Hansen
Nov. 26, 1950 Metrophan Saffron
Nov. 26, 1953 Sauka Greunther
Nov. 26, 2002 Mary Gavlick
Nov. 27, 1979 John Skwarla
Nov. 27, 1992 Mary Bozinta



Coffee Hour Hosting Teams

Nov. 21 - No Coffee Hour (Luncheon instead)
Nov. 28 - Combs, Mantzafos, Parsells, Sokol
Dec. 05 - Hunchar, Erkman, Turri

The Nativity Fast: Nov. 15-Dec. 25

A fast is held from all meat, dairy, fish and wine products. Certain days allow for a relaxation of the rule, as here indicated.

Nov. 21 Sun - Fast (fish, wine & oil)
Nov. 22 Mon - Fast (
Nov. 23 Tue. - Fast (wine & oil)
Nov. 24 Wed. - Fast
Nov. 25 Thurs.- Fast (wine & oil)
Nov. 26 Fri. - Fast
Nov. 27 Sat. - Fast (fish, wine & oil)
Nov. 28 Sun. - Fast (fish, wine & oil)

Offerings for the week of November 21

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Emilia; in memory of Joan; in memory of Panteleimon; for the health of Cornelia.

Wine: in memory of of Fr. George Calciu.

Flowers: in memory of Richard and Ralph.

Community Nativity Greeting (\$10)

This festal greeting will be sent in early December to all members and friends of our parish on our mailing lists. If you would like to participate, please take one of the special envelopes with listing attachment found on the vestibule stand. Print your name(s) on the slip as you would like them listed on the greeting. The deadline is Sunday, November 21st. The \$10 offering is for the benefit of St. Philaret Society, our parish charity that helps parishioners as well as non-parishioners.



Namesday Greetings

St. Alexander/Nov. 23: Alexander Torrisi
St. Katherine/Nov. 24: Kathryn Motoviloff, Catherine Gorbatuk, Ekatrina Bayer; Ekatherine Margiani; Katherine Mantzafos;
Many Blessed Years!

Seminarian Wish List for St. Nicholas Day

Currently we are gathering contributions for our adopted seminarian family from St. Tikhon's Seminary. Please speak with Maria Torrisi if you wish to make a donation (no later than Sunday, November 28th). Thank you for your help.

NY-NJ Diocesan Assembly of Nov. 9th

The Diocesan Website www.dnynjoca.org has posted documents, a slide show of the assembly as well as a video presentation of the Address of Bishop Michael. A report of the Assembly was presented to the Parish Council on Nov. 18th by Fr. James and Theodora Combs.

Church Websites for your bookmarks

Mystagogy The website of John Sanidopoulos

www.jonsanidopoulos.com

Orthodoxy Today www.orthodoxytoday.com

Orthodoxy Cognate Page

www.theorthodoxchurch.info

Fr. Ted's Blog: www.frted.wordpress.com

American Orthodox Institute: www.aoiusa.org

These are four very great sites for you to visit. The sites have a wealth of information and commentary.

The Mysteries of Confession and Communion

In the period of this Nativity Fast, all the faithful ought to prepare for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord (Dec. 25th), by making a heartfelt Confession and receiving the Holy Gifts of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In a very real sense, our fasting, prayers, charitable works and cultivation of a spirit of repentance (spiritual change) culminates in the receiving of these grace-filled Mysteries. This is the most perfect way to celebrate the Nativity of Christ. Let us make due preparation for these Holy Gifts.

Is Thanksgiving Just One Day a Year?

In the United States of America, the fourth Thursday of each November is set aside as a national day of Thanksgiving. In school, our children make paper hats and learn that the Pilgrims hosted “the first Thanksgiving” to celebrate a bountiful harvest following a terrible year, during which many of the Pilgrim settlers died. The Pilgrims thanked the Native Americans for their help and instruction in planting corn and pumpkins, and invited them to a feast, during which they thanked God for preserving their settlement and for giving them new friends in a rich land — for all His blessings and His great mercy. Thanking God is part of our national identity. It is also part of our identity as Orthodox Christians, quite apart from the traditional American feast that marks the beginning of the secular holiday season each year.



Thank God for His Blessings

Orthodox Christians give thanks to God every Sunday during the Divine Liturgy. The priest tells God (and reminds us) why and for what we are grateful just before the remembrance of the Last Supper — where our Lord gave His disciples the Eucharist, and commanded his followers to partake — and the calling-down of the Holy Spirit to make the bread and wine offered into His Body and Blood.

“It is meet and right to sing to You, to bless You, to praise You, to thank You, to worship You in every place of Your dominion. For You are God ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing and yet eternally the same, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. You brought us out of non-existence into being and, when we had fallen away, You raised us up again, and left nothing undone to lead us to heaven and grant us Your kingdom which is to come. For all this we give thanks to You and to Your only-begotten Son and to Your Holy Spirit, for all the things of which we know and of which we know not, both seen and unseen.

“We thank You also for this liturgy which You have deigned to accept at our hands,

though there stand by You thousands of archangels and hosts of angels, the cherubim and the seraphim, six-winged and many eyed, who soar aloft... with these blessed powers, O Lord and Lover of mankind, we too cry aloud and say: holy are You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and all-holy and magnificent is Your glory!" (from the prayer before the Anaphora, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

We, as the Church and individuals, thank God for:

- His gift of life, that He created us from nothing and made us in His image and likeness;
- His interest in our salvation, even after we rejected Him;
- His work in history to make our salvation possible, as He gave us the Law and the prophets, and ultimately His Own Son; (Some of what He has done, we know about; much more of what He has done has not been revealed to us.)
- His willingness to accept thanks and praise, and hear our petitions, even though we are unworthy; and
- His guidance in the Holy Gospel and His Body, the Church, in how to worship and live according to His commandments.

We are also thankful to God for peace and peaceful governments, that allow us to worship Him without fear of persecution; for the protection and comfort He provides in time of need; the bounty He provides on the earth for our use, for food, clothing, and shelter; and for the talents He gives us as individuals. During the litanies of every Church service, we thank Him and ask Him to continue blessing us.

Thanks is Expected by God

Every part of creation is expected to thank Almighty God for what He has done, does, and will do, as proclaimed in the Old Testament processional song:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with exultation. Know that the Lord He is God; He has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with hymns; give thanks to Him, praise His name. For the Lord is good, His mercy is forever; and His truth endures to generation and generation. (**Psalm 99 LXX**)

God expects mankind to acknowledge Him and His good works, and then to offer thanks appropriately for every blessing. In fact, He takes note and is dismayed when He is not thanked:

"Then as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, master, have mercy on us!' So when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?'" (**Luke 17:11-18**)

CONCERNING THE HOLY NATIVITY FAST

Now we have entered the Nativity fast, and we thank God that once again we are preparing to participate in the mystery of the coming to earth of our Saviour. In the words of St. Theophanus the Recluse, during this lent we must partake of the Blood and Body of Christ, in order to comprehend with our entire being that the Word has become flesh, and that the Lord has taken on our flesh and blood, becoming one of us.

Now, while the Church is reminding us of the necessity for fasting and prayer, it would be well to note that although the Nativity fast is not so strict in terms of external demands, it still requires a reasonable attitude towards it. First of all, we must keep this fast of course, but as Saint Isaac the Syrian says, there is a proper measure of fasting. We must understand that all church regulations should accord with the measure of each specific individual, depending on his bodily strength, age, health and other characteristics.

St. Isaac says that inordinate fasting is more harmful than too little fasting. This refers primarily to those devotees of fasting who wish to quickly ascend to a very high degree, exhibiting outward abstinence that is, however, not counter-balanced by their inner spiritual state. Why is inordinate fasting more harmful than too little fasting? Because, says the holy one, from a state of inadequate fasting a man can still proceed to a correctly-established spiritual life, while the corruption of spirit that arises from immoderate fasting can lead to spiritual disorder which is much harder to rectify.

Lent, being a spiritual manifestation, always bares our perception of both good and evil, and so each one of us must remember that during lent there naturally arise special temptations, and we can either draw nearer to God or become alienated from Him as a result of the increase in the temptations we suffer. Saint Sinclética says that external fasting which does not correspond to the measure of our spiritual state is more harmful than beneficial, because it primarily incites us to vanity and a feeling of superiority over others. That is to say, external fasting alone does not bring us closer to God and other people, but, on the contrary, alienates us from them. And all the other passions – irritation, anger, and everything else that is characteristic of us, can flare up very intensely during lent.

Thus, the main thing of which the Church reminds us during lent is that when we partake of bodily abstinence, our body, which separates us from the invisible world, becomes thinner and we become more sensitive to the spiritual world. And if our heart is not purified, then, naturally, our contacts with this spiritual world are primarily connected with the evil forces. This gives rise to all the temptations and passions which only proceed to increase during lent.

Let us ponder this. From year to year we are used to fasting too externally, too formally, often focusing only on keeping to a certain dietary regimen, without adding prayer and without delving deeper into a realization of our path to Christ, a realization of the mystery which is being revealed to us during this time. Christ truly approaches each one of us; therefore, let us realize that the worst thing that can happen to us is for us to be spiritually lukewarm, to be observing only a formal and external fast. Let us try to deepen our fast from the very beginning (and not only at the end), drawing nearer to Christ not only through the reading of the Holy Scriptures, not only through the reading of prayers and a more frequent attendance of church services (although all of it is essential and necessary), but specifically through a communion with the most important thing that there is in Christ – His love, His unity with the suffering and fate of each individual, so that the mystery of Christ's incarnation would become a living experience for us during this lent. Amen.

Protopriest Alexander Shargunov





THE THREE DEGREES OF EATING **from A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel,** **by St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain (Chapter 6)**

According to St. Gregory the Sinaite there are three degrees in eating: temperance, sufficiency, and satiety. Temperance is when someone wants to eat some more food but abstains, rising from the table still somewhat hungry. Sufficiency is when someone eats what is needed and sufficient for normal nourishment. Satiety is when someone eats more than enough and is more than satisfied.

Now if you cannot keep the first two degrees and you proceed to the third, then, at least, do not become a glutton, remembering the words of the Lord: "Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger" (Lk 6:25). Remember also that rich man who ate in this present life sumptuously every day, but who was deprived of the desired bosom of Abraham in the next life, simply because of this sumptuous eating.

Remember how he longed to refresh his tongue with a drop of water. St. Basil not only did not forgive the young people who ate to satiety but also those who ate until satisfied; he preferred that all eat temperately. He said, "Nothing subdues and controls the body as does the practice of temperance. It is this temperance that serves as a control to those youthful passions and desires."

St. Gregory the Theologian has also noted in his poetry: "No satiety has brought forth prudent behavior; for it is in the nature of fire to consume matter. And a filled stomach expels refined thoughts; it is the tendency of opposites to oppose each other." Job, too, assuming that one could fall into sin through eating, offered sacrifice to God for his sons who were feasting among themselves. "And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said: 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts'" (Jb 1:5-8). In interpreting this passage Olympiodoros wrote: "We learn from this that we ought to avoid such feasts which can bring on sinfulness.

We must also purify ourselves after they have been concluded, even if these are conducted for the sake of concord and brotherly love as in the case of the sons of Job." Surely then, if the sons of Job were not at a feast but in prayer or some other spiritual activity, the devil would not have dared to destroy the house and them, as Origen interpreted the passage: "The devil was looking for an opportunity to destroy them. Had he found them reading, he would not have touched the house, having no reason to put them to death. Had he found them in prayer, he would not have had any power to do anything against them. But when he found an opportune time, he was powerful.

What was the opportune time? It was the time of feasting and drinking." Do you see then, dear reader, how many evils are brought forth by luxurious foods and feasting in general?