

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 11, 2018

Blessing of Homes: January 8th thru February 17th
(blessings by appointment)

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 11

Meat-Fare Sunday

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Church School
12:15p.m. Annual Parish Meeting
(Less than 1 hour duration)

CHEESE-FARE MONDAY

Beginning today we do not partake of meat Products until Pascha (April 8th). On both Wednesday and Friday this week, we are permitted fish, dairy, wine and oil

CHEESE-FARE THURSDAY/FEBRUARY 15

Study Class on Great Lent: 7-8:30p.m.
"Preparation, Expectation and Realization"

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 18

Cheese-Fare Sunday, Also Called Forgiveness Sunday

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
Teen Class transferred to Feb. 25th
12:30p.m. Vespers & Rite of Forgiveness
(first service of the Great & Holy Lent)

PURE MONDAY/FEBRUARY 19

Beginning of the 40 Day, Great & Holy Fast – from today, we do not partake of fish, wine and dairy products until Pascha (April 8th)



Offerings Week of February 11

Relics Candle: in honor of St. John of San Francisco; for the parishioners of the parish; in memory of Gabriela, Floarea, Gheorghe, Elena, Petre, Aurelia, Ion, Elena, Alexandru and their family.

Olive Oil: in memory of Sarchisian and Bocai families; in memory of Evdokia; in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalie, Anastasia and Ivanna.

Wine: in thanksgiving to God for all His blessings and for life, mercy and forgiveness of sins Stefan (birthday), Mariana, Simona, Gabriel, Tabitha, Kurt, Constantin, Kathyrn, David, Maria, David, Ira-Crista and Juliana; in memory of Nameisla and Dimitri.

Flowers: in memory of Andrew (40th Day).

Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Feb. 11, 1993 Josephine Hriniaak
Feb. 11, 2007 John Jackowlew
Feb. 12, 1972 John Wislosky
Feb. 12, 1988 Xenia Fedarka
Feb. 13, 1929 Gregory Stepaniuk
Feb. 13, 1948 Christian Kozar
Feb. 13, 1957 Clement Mc Closkey
Feb. 13, 1970 Alexander Pawlik
Feb. 15, 1929 Moses Korenchik
Feb. 15, 1998 Helen Russo
Feb. 15, 1999 Zollie Pituch
Feb. 16, 1928 Athanasius Barna
Feb. 16, 1954 Abraham Yashuk
Feb. 17, 2003 Anna Peschek

Coffee Hour Schedule

Coffee Hour Hosts please prepare foods that are simple enough, so you are not absent from the Divine Liturgy. It is only after Communion, that we should leave the church and attend to food preparations.

Feb. 11 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona

Feb. 18 *No Meats*

Feb. 18 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Staina & Sarchisian

Feb. 25 *No meat, dairy or fish*

Feb. 25 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda & Sue

Counters Schedule

Feb. 11 Ciprian C. & Jill P.

Feb. 18 Irinia S. & Lisa K.

Feb. 25 Larissa M. & Paulina N.

Ushers Schedule

Feb. 11 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

Feb. 18 Dennis F. & Robert E.

Feb. 25 Edward S. & Kahka K.

Readers Schedule

Feb. 11 Austin K./ Feb. 18 Cirpian

Names Day Greetings

Feb. 11/St. Theodora: Jennifer Fetchko

Many Blessed Years!

Souper Bowl Sundays – Feb. 4th & 11th

Our parish will have participated in the Annual IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) project of supporting a local charity and local food bank.

Forth-Coming Calendar

Sunday of Orthodoxy: February 25th, at SS. Peter & Paul Church in South River. Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Michael, Metropolitan Joseph (Antiochian Archdiocese) and Archbishop John (Russian Patriarchal Church) will be at both services: 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy and 4:00p.m. Vespers. You are invited!

4th Sunday of Great Lent: March 18th. The NJ South Deanery Vespers will be hosted by our parish at 4:00p.m.

First Service of the Great & Holy Fast

Sunday, February 18th at 12:30p.m. Vespers and the Rite of Mutual Forgiveness. This is a most important service for everyone.

The Wednesday & Friday of Cheese-Fare Week – Feb. 14 & 16 – Have Lenten Features

On these two days the Divine Liturgy may not be celebrated. In church and at home on these two days we recite the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem...”O Lord & Master of my life...” with morning and evening prayers.



GENERAL RULES OF FASTING FOR THE GREAT AND HOLY LENT

Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat. Let us purify our soul and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion.

The Orthodox idea of fasting is first of all that of an ascetical effort. It is the effort to subdue the physical, the fleshly man to the spiritual one, the "natural" to the "supernatural." Limitations in food are instrumental; they are not ends in themselves. Fasting thus is but a means of reaching a spiritual goal and, therefore, an integral part of a wide spiritual effort. Fasting, in the Orthodox understanding, includes more than abstinence from certain types of food. It implies prayer, silence, an internal disposition of mind, an attempt to be charitable, kind, and - in one word - spiritual. "Brethren, while fasting bodily, let us also fast spiritually..."

And because of this the Orthodox doctrine of fasting excludes the evaluation of fasting in terms of a "maximum" or "minimum." Everyone must find his or her maximum, weigh his or her conscience and find in it his or her "pattern of fasting." But this pattern must necessarily include the spiritual as well as the "bodily" elements. The Typikon and the canons of the Church give the description of an ideal fast: no meat, no dairy products, total abstinence on certain days. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew 19:12). But whatever is our measure - our fasting must be a total effort of our total being.

Keeping this in mind we should fast in order to achieve the goal of prayer, repentance, and forgiveness. To fast means abstaining not only from certain foods, but most importantly from passions, bad habits, overindulgence, rudeness and selfishness. It means also that we should abstain from everything that might take the focus of our life away from the spiritual effort. Among these things are every kind of entertainment, such as going to the movies, watching TV or going on spring vacations. For married couples it will also imply abstaining from intimacy.

The fundamental meaning of the fasting effort is to discover the true values of our life, to discover that we live not for our own sake but in the context of our relationship with each other and with the living God. So we fast not in terms of our individual piety but by linking our life with that of the Church. In essence, fasting is an exercise in being faithful: to each other in observing the same rules and sharing in the same hardship, and to our Lord Himself Who has given us fasting as a school of love.

By Protospesbyter Alexander Schmemmann



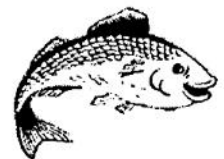
Meat is not permitted on any day.



Dairy is not permitted on any day.



Wine and oil are permitted on weekends, and on a few other days (see your wall calendar)



Fish is permitted only on the Annunciation (March 25th) and on Palm Sunday.

AN INTRODUCTION TO GREAT LENT

Excerpts from Fr Alexander Schememann's *Great Lent*

When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Pascha, "the Feast of Feasts." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Pascha, for it reveals something very essential, crucial about our Christian faith and life.

Is it necessary to explain that Pascha is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Pascha we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory.

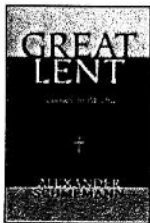
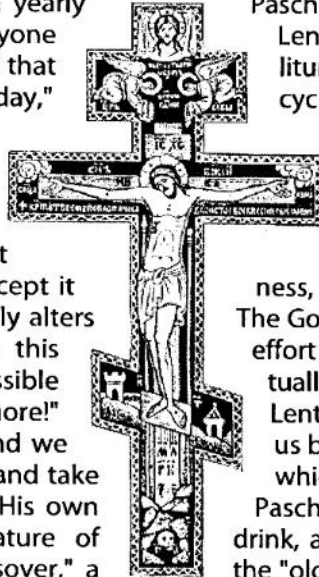
Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? [...] We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and ultimately meaningless — a meaningless journey toward a meaningless

end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

If we realize this, then we may understand what Pascha is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. [...] This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Pascha not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new."

[...] For each year Lent and Pascha are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Pascha, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Pascha, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!"



Suggested Reading: *Great Lent*

By Fr. Alexander Schememann

Quite possibly the best book on the subject. Fr. Alexander guides the reader along the forty day pilgrimage to Pascha, revealing Great Lent as "a school of repentance to which every Christian must go each year in order to deepen his faith, to re-evaluate, and if possible, to change his life." "Lent," he writes, "is a wonderful pilgrimage to the very sources of Orthodox faith — a rediscovery of the Orthodox way of life."

The Slow Road to Heaven – Why the Spiritual Life Doesn't "Work"

Source: Glory to God for All Things <<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2018/01/30/slow-road-heaven-spiritual-life-doesnt-work/#comments>>

ARCHPRIEST STEPHEN FREEMAN <http://www.pravmir.com/author/user_1269841205/> | 07 FEBRUARY 2018

We live in a world of practicality, a fact that has produced the marvels of technology that power us along and connect the world in its web. I have a nearly two-year-old grandson who has grasped some of this connection for many months now. He loves buttons – not the ones on your shirt – but the ones on any device. If there is a button in reach, he will mash it. He's not alone, I've seen the same phenomenon throughout the herd of children that crowd my parish. Push a button; make something happen. If a toddler grasps the magic of a button, so, too, do adults. It is something of an icon our culture. If there is a problem, from cancer to poverty, we want solutions. This is also true of our spiritual expectations. But it is worth asking, "Does the spiritual life work?"

Chapter 3 in AA's Big Book is entitled, "How it works." It describes the 12-Steps with a commentary. It also assures that its program "works." And it does, for a portion of those who participate. One set of statistics from peer reviewed studies put the AA success rate at less than 10 percent <<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/03/the-surprising-failures-of-12-steps/284616/>>. AA sets it higher – perhaps as much as 33 percent. I endorse their program and encourage anyone with an addiction to participate in a 12-Step program. The numbers, however, are of interest. What I understand from these studies is that addiction is a very powerful force in some lives and can meet with failure in the face of well-designed cures.

I have wondered how the "success" of the spiritual life would be measured? I could imagine that the number of persons Baptized might be compared to the number of the Baptized who fall short of salvation – but there is no way to discover such a thing. In lieu of that, we often set up our own way of measuring – some expectation of "success" that we use to judge the spiritual life. "I tried Christianity..." the now self-described agnostic relates, "and found that it did not live up to its claims."

To my mind, the entire question is a little like complaining about your hammer because it doesn't work well as a screw-driver. The problem is that the spiritual life doesn't "work," and was never supposed to. It is not something that "works," it is something that "lives." And this is an extremely important distinction.

In 1859, Samuel Smiles, a Scottish author and government reformer, published the book, *Self-Help*, the first self-proclaimed work on self-improvement. His opening line is famous, "God helps those who help themselves." Indeed, many modern people are under the impression that this statement comes from Scripture (it does not). It is not at all accidental that Smiles' thought should echo that of the Scottish Enlightenment itself. We can build a better world, and do so more effectively by building better humans. Christianity was to be harnessed in this great progressive drive.

We look to our faith to solve problems. Whether we suffer from psychological wounds, or simple poverty and failure, we look to God for help. The spiritual life, and the "techniques" we imagine to be associated with it, are the means by which we "help ourselves" (God will do the rest).

This narrative is simply not part of the Christian faith. The progress/improvement/better-life scenario does not jibe with the account of the Christian life as given in the New Testament and the Tradition. Verses, such as, John 10:10 ("that they might have life more abundantly"), are "cherry-picked" and drafted into the false narrative of an improved existence. Consider instead this word from St. Isaac of Syria: "...without tribulations befalling us, God's providence cannot be perceived."

St. Isaac's statement is fully in line with the New Testament. There, we are not presented with the solution to our problems, nor with the promise of a better world. Rather, we are taught how to live in repentance and participate daily in the life of the Kingdom of God. That the life of the Kingdom of God is full of joy and transcendence is not at all the same thing as success or improvement. The lives of the saints are filled with information of an opposite sort.

- Mary of Egypt is directed into the desert by the voice of the Mother of God. She lives miraculously on very little food. But she tells of seventeen years of virtual torture as she battled the temptations that had governed her previously sinful life. Our daily trials would seem as nothing in comparison.

- Silouan the Athonite related a period of 15 years in which he had no sense of God's presence, but was instead tortured by demons.
- Seraphim of Sarov spent years in prayer and fasting, was beaten, robbed and left a cripple.

Many modern readers first encounter the Jesus Prayer in the classic work, *The Way of a Pilgrim*. It is a work of pious fiction that offers some basic instruction and incentive towards the practice of the Prayer. It can also be misleading. In a *matter of months*, following instruction from a holy elder, the Pilgrim finds that the prayer has entered his heart and become "self-acting." A blind man with whom he shares the prayer masters it in even less time and gains the ability to see things at a great distance. I know of modern cases where the Prayer came in what seemed an easy manner, but those cases are not stories of technique – they are singular gifts of grace that seem directed towards a very specific purpose. Most people never have an experience of "self-acting" prayer. It is extremely rare, even among monastics.

The prayer and fasting, almsgiving and confession that are the very heart of the Orthodox way of life are not techniques or ways of self-improvement and betterment. They are the embracing of a way of life in which self-improvement and betterment are beside the point. To observe "improvement" in ourselves is to abandon the way of humility and repentance. It is the nature of the Orthodox way that we become increasingly aware of our *failures* rather than our progress.

Christ said, "...when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" (Lk. 17:10)

Accepting this represents a change of mind within the modern context. Indeed, the very word for repentance in Greek means a "change of mind" (*metanoia*). Christianity should not and properly cannot be a subset of the modern lifestyle. Most likely, if carefully followed, it will ruin all our modern plans. Well and good! The Kingdom of God will not be populated by the successful, the well-adjusted and the wise. It is the failures, the foolish, and the fragile who will enter ahead of us, or at least those who were willing to risk their lives in such a manner. The modern narrative is not only false, it creates expectations that are never truly met. Our media torments us with carefully crafted examples of those for whom self-improvement and personal progress seem to work. We can only wonder why it fails to work for us! These are false images that belie the normative struggle of human existence in every age.

If you are having a difficult time, you are not alone. It is the very nature of human life. That same struggle, however, united with Christ in His Cross, becomes transformative – not in the manner that the world expects, but in the likeness of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

MEMORIAL SERVICES AND KOLLYVA

From orthodoxwiki.org

During memorial services (Greek: Parastas, Slavonic: Panikhida), the family or friends of the departed will often prepare a Kollyva, an offering of boiled wheat, which is placed in front of the memorial table before which the service is chanted. Orthodox Christians consider Kollyva to be the symbolic of death and resurrection, according to the words of the Gospel:

Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. (Jn. 12:24)

Wheat which is planted in the earth and rises in new life is symbolic of those beloved departed who have died in the hope of resurrection, in accordance with the words of Saint Paul:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body....(1 Corinthians 15 :42-44)

Memorial services are held on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after the repose of an Orthodox Christian, as well as on the one-year anniversary. In addition, there are several Soul Saturdays during the church year (mostly during Great Lent), as well as Radonitsa (on the second Tuesday after Pascha), on each of which general commemorations are made for all the departed.

While recipes may vary widely, the primary ingredient in today's Kollyva consists of wheat kernels which have been boiled until they are soft. These are usually mixed with a variety of ingredients which may include pomegranate seeds, sesame seeds, almonds, ground walnuts, cinnamon, sugar, raisins, anise and parsley.

The Kollyva mixture is then placed on a platter and shaped into a mound or cake, to resemble a grave. The whole is then decorated with a powdered sugar covering, often with Jordan almonds, raisins, or other sweets decoratively placed on the surface. A cross is traced or created with the sweets on the top, and on its sides are placed the initials of the departed for whom the memorial is held. A candle, often placed in the center of the Kollyva, is lit at the beginning of the requiem service and extinguished at its end; the candle symbolizes the light wherewith the Christian is illumined in Baptism, and also the light of the world to come, which knows no setting.

