

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 16, 2020

**BLESSING OF HOMES SEASON:
JANUARY 7 THRU FEBRUARY 23
BY APPOINTMENT**

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

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

Church School & Teen Class

THURSDAY/FEBRUARY 20

7-8:30p.m. Study Class: *"Great Lent:
Purpose, Features, and Discipline"*

SATURDAY/FEBRUARY 22

Memorial Saturday

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

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 23

Meat-Fare Sunday/ Last Judgment

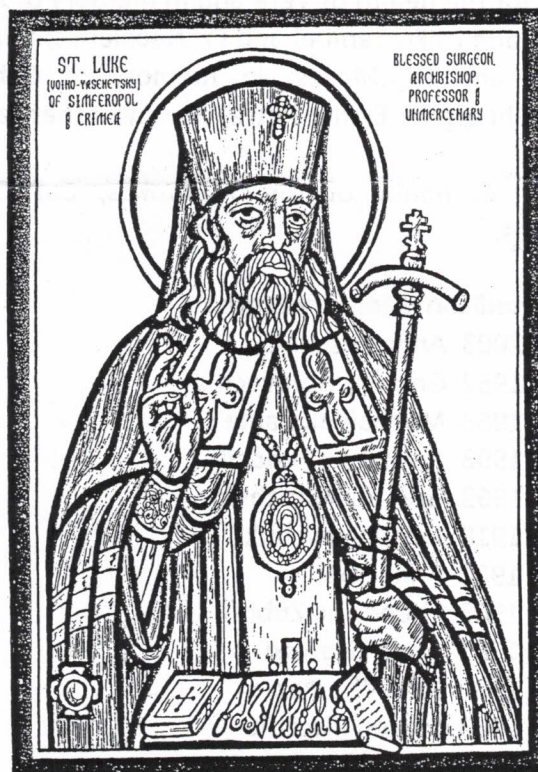
Last Day for Meat Products

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

Church School

MONDAY/FEBRUARY 24

Cheese-Fare Monday: beginning today we do not partake of meats until Holy Pascha, April 19th. On Wed. & Fri. (Feb. 26 & 28) Dairy, fish, wine and oil are permitted.



Instructions of St. Luke

Every time before Christ healed someone, he asked if he believed. And only if he believes, He performed the miracle.

Every time a miracle occurs, the Holy Spirit acts, and for someone to receive the Holy Spirit an open heart is necessary, and it is made open by faith. Just as the reception of radio waves necessarily requires an antenna, similarly for the reception of divine grace a pure heart full of faith is needed.

Faith is the most valuable treasure on earth and we must guard it more than anything else.

The rose doesn't speak but it gives off a strong fragrance. We also need to be fragrant, to emit a spiritual aroma, the aroma of Christ. Let the scent of our actions be heard from afar – good, pure, just and full of love. Only this way can the Kingdom of God that exists in our hearts be revealed, manifesting itself not with words but with power.

Offerings Week of February 16

Relic Candle: in memory of Ivanna; for the health of Alexia; in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalie, Anastasia, Melania, and Ivanna; for the health of Alexia; in memory of Nicholas, Eleanore, John, Ann-Marie and Jerome; for the health of Stephanie & Anastasia.

Olive Oil: in memory of Vaschen, Emilia; Virginia and Eugenia; for the health of Vera and in memory of John; for the health of Fr. Samuel and Fr. Necolenes; Deacon Nectarios and Fr. Moses; in memory of Gabriel, Floarea, Gheorghe, Elena, Petre, Ilie and other family members.

Flowers: in honor of the Theotokos, our Great Protectress.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Feb. 17, 2003 Anna Peschek
Feb. 18, 1952 Gregory Holovach
Feb. 18, 1963 Magdalena Padla
Feb. 18, 1993 Josephine Fedchin
Feb. 19, 1963 Gregory Klimchuk
Feb. 20, 1918 Jacob Shevchuk
Feb. 20, 1920 Anna Sbat
Feb. 20, 1963 Theodosia Zuboff
Feb. 20, 1981 Anna Lisowski
Feb. 21, 1939 John Cherkan
Feb. 21, 1963 Steven Piscadlo
Feb. 21, 1976 Anna Sharshon
Feb. 21, 2011 Ludmila Tjaden
Feb. 22, 1931 Stephen Blisak
Feb. 22, 1931 Olga Yaskovky
Feb. 22, 1977 Stella Honchar
Feb. 22, 1989 Gertrude Huzinec
Feb. 22, 2011 Michael Warin

Coffee Hour Hosting

Feb. 16 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Staina
& Sarchisian
Feb. 23 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda
& Sue

Counters Schedule

Feb. 16 Irina S. &
Feb. 23 Larissa M. & Paulina N.

Ushers Schedule

Feb. 16 Dennis F. & Nicholas T.
Feb. 23 Edward S. & Kahka K.

Readers Schedule

Feb. 16 Ciprian C. / Feb. 23 Daniel T.

Blessing of Homes: Jan. 7 thru Feb. 23

Homes are presently being blessed. To schedule your home blessing, contact Father James.

Enlarging Your Circle of Friendship

Oftentimes when we come to church we find ourselves mingling with the same group of people; people with whom we may have a special affinity or perhaps people with whom we may have formed lasting friendships – and this is a wonderful thing! Yet, at the same time, we ought not to pass up the opportunity to interact with and get to know folks outside our circle of friends. There is nothing better than a unified parish, whose circle of friendship includes everyone. Take a moment each Sunday, especially at Coffee Hour, to get to know someone different – you won't regret it!

Forth-Coming

Feb. 27/Thurs. St. Raphael of Brooklyn 8:00 Liturgy
Feb. 27/Thurs. Study Class 7-8:30 "John 13:34-35"
Mar. 01/Sun. Cheese-Fare – last day for dairy products until Pascha, April 19th.
Mar. 01/Sun. Forgiveness Vespers 12:30p.m.
Mar. 02/Mon. 40 Day Great & Holy Fast Begins

Appreciation is Expressed

We had a good Parish Meeting last Sunday. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this event. If you missed it, Annual Meeting Reports are on the vestibule stand.

Orthodox Christian Cemetery of Ss. Peter & Paul

A digital map of the cemetery plots and listing of names of those buried in the cemetery has been created and may be viewed on the parish website: www.ssppco.org/cemetery as well as the website of the cemetery: www.orthodoxchristiancemetery.org

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

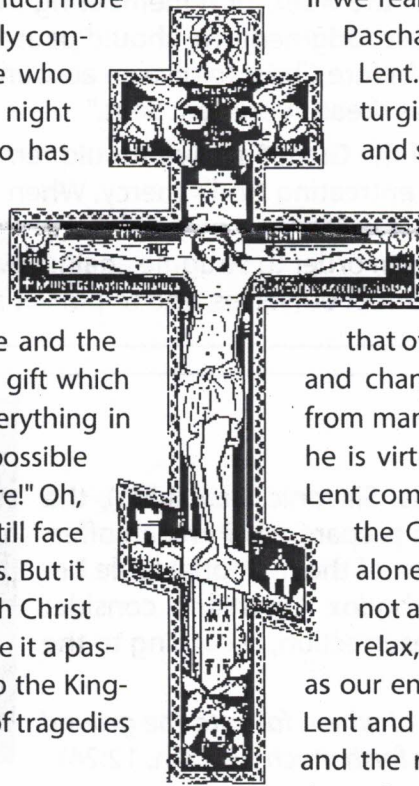
journey toward a meaningless end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness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

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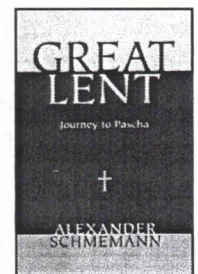
A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far away — the destination. It is the joy of Pascha, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Pascha, that makes Lent's sadness bright and 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!"

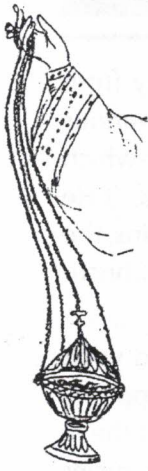


Suggested Reading: *Great Lent*

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."





MEMORIAL SATURDAY OF MEATFARE

Commemorated this year on February 22nd / From OCA.org

On the day before Meatfare Sunday, on which we remember the Last Judgment, the Orthodox Church prays for those of its members who may have died unexpectedly because of wars, plagues, starvation, or any other sort of death while they were in a foreign country, or while they were traveling by sea, by land, or by air. The Church also prays for the poor, or for those who may not have received a proper burial, or who had no one to request Memorial Services to be offered for them.

We pray for the departed on this Saturday because the Orthodox Church has established Saturday as the proper day of the week for remembering the dead. On this day before we hear the Gospel about the Last Judgment, we should pause to recall our own inescapable death when we shall appear before Christ to give an account of our lives. May we have "an acceptable defense before His dread Judgment Seat."

As we prepare for the spiritual struggles of the Great Fast, we should remember that we have been given this present life for repentance and for entreating God's mercy. When Christ comes in glory to judge the world, it will be too late then to say that we repent, or to ask for mercy. Therefore, we should make the most of the time that has been given us in order to struggle against every sinful impulse which separates us from God, to confess our sins, to correct ourselves, and to pursue a life of virtue and holiness.

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)

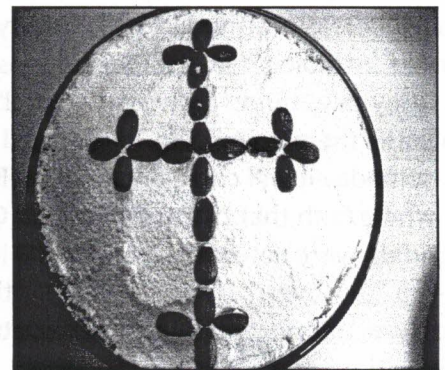
Wheat which is planted in the earth and rises in new life is symbolic of those beloved departed who have died in the hope of resurrection, in accordance with the words of Saint Paul:

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.



THE ATTRIBUTES OF A REAL CHRISTIAN By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

A true member of the Church and a real Christian is the person who has the following attributes:

First, he remains within the Church, without leaving it through atheism or heresy. He is not cut off from this living organism and does not participate in heretical sects. This means that he accepts the faith confessed in the Symbol of Faith absolutely, that he participates in the sacraments of the Church, is sanctified by them and practices asceticism in his personal life so that he will keep God's commandments. He feels that he remains within the Church in order to be saved rather than to save, because the Church does not need saviours.

Second, he feels that he is a son of God, that is, he has a father and is not an orphan. His great Father is God. Yet, the clergy are also fathers, because they are the type and place of Christ's presence. Hence, a real member of the Church is obedient to the bishops, the clergy and has a spiritual father, who guides him in his spiritual life. Of course, he also accepts the teachings of the Holy Fathers of the Church and tries to imitate their life, that is to say, their ascetic practice and witness.

Third, he feels that he belongs to a family, and, therefore, has spiritual brothers and sisters. He is not alone within the Church. This chiefly means that he loves his brothers and sisters. He does not judge them, regardless of the mistakes they may have made and he does not condemn them. He is tolerant and shows forbearance towards their chance weaknesses. In addition, he shows his love in a variety of ways. He participates in their pain and in their joy. The happiness of other people is his own happiness, their sorrow is his own sorrow, their love is a fellowship of love and their faith a unity of faith. He should feel that everything is in common. He should feel that the Church is a family, just as the first Christians felt her to be, according to the description in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:41-47). If he tries to keep God's law, but does not have love, he is not a real Christian; he is a sick member of the Church.

Fourth, in the instance of sin, he follows a therapeutic course of treatment. Man is changeable. This means that he alters and is wounded throughout his life. In consequence, he sins. The Holy Scriptures say, "Who can become clean

from filth? But no-one, even if his life on the earth is only for a day" (Job 14:4-5 *Septuagint*). St. John the Evangelist writes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

Sins are not guilty acts or simple rejections of the law; they are first and foremost wounds or sicknesses. The sinner is spiritually sick. Consequently, sin should be encountered within a therapeutic and healing framework. The priest is a healer or doctor, who practices this function in the name of the Great Physician, Christ. He cleans and dresses the wounds, intervenes surgically, if necessary, and in general, heals the wounds. Within this framework, we should look at repentance, confession and the orders of the spiritual father, i.e. what is known as penance. We must repent. We must really feel our fault and our illness, we should want to be cured, and resort to the therapist disclose our illness and reveal all the hidden and concealed points of the sickness. We will then follow the therapeutic advice of the spiritual doctor with zeal and resolve. The Church has the sacrament of repentance and of confession.

In the ancient Church when someone committed a grave sin, i.e. when he fell seriously ill, he was demoted into the order of Catechumens once again. This is why in the Catechumens, the demon possessed and the penitents are all included the category of those being purified. All these people follow an appropriate course of treatment. The sinful and repentant Christians, who have already been baptised, are, of course, not baptised again. However, they had to go through the stage of repentance and feel that the grace of God was working within their hearts again.

When the baptised Christian leaves the Church and falls into heresy, he must then go through a certain procedure before he is re-included within the Church. Repentance was required, as well as the signing of a written declaration (*libellus*), by which he denounced the heresy that he had fallen into, followed by Chrism.

From all this we realise that Baptism alone is not enough; one must also live in accordance with God's commandments in order to become a true member of the Church. If a Christian happens to fall ill, there is a special method through which he will gain his health again.





CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD

There are at least four major benefits which may be expected after partaking of Christ's Body and Blood, namely:

1. Intimate union with Christ through His love.

Through this union we mingle with God and share with Him. As God is love, when we partake of Him through Holy Communion we become partakers of His love. It should be added that these Gifts from God are truly free. He compels no one to accept, just as in true love there is no compulsion, but absolute free to either accept or reject.

2. Strengthening of the body and soul.

Eating ordinary food only nourishes a person's body; but eating Christ's Flesh and Blood strengthens and nourishes both the body and soul. When the soul is nourished, a person is better able to live, grow and develop spiritually. This means that the ability to resist sin is greatly increased, thus enhancing the desire and capacity to be more virtuous, righteous, compassionate and considerate. We can be sure that this is so since Christ said: "I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (Jn 6:35), and then: "For My Flesh is true food and My Blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55).

With these statements Christ expounded the eternal nourishment value of His Flesh and Blood. Unlike ordinary food which only temporarily strengthens the body, true Divine food strengthens the soul eternally.

The strengthening effect of these Gifts, is another indicator of Christ's great love for us. Christ gave us certain Commandments to follow if we are able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Scripture teaches that evil is spread through man by various demonic powers (Eph 6:12). Without Divine intervention man does not have the strength to fight these extremely powerful, fleshless creatures – as Christ said: "...for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Man alone does not have the strength to become perfect. Not wishing man to be condemned to hell, Christ nourishes us with His Body

and Blood – giving us a Perfect Food with which to become perfect.

3. Preparation for eternal life with God.

Partaking in Communion prepares us to share with God, an eternally joyful life after the resurrection of the dead. Christ is God and therefore lives forever – by eating His Body and Blood, we are blended with Him and will likewise live forever. This is Christ's promise when He said: "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:54).

This "life" that Christ refers to is not related to the life here on earth, since it is obvious that all men "live" here, even non-Christians. Nor does He refer to "life" of the general resurrection. Rather,

Christ refers to the glorious life which some Christians will inherit as a reward for righteous living. How necessary it is for us to partake in Christ's Body and Blood; by being with Him, our souls are washed and transformed – made beautiful – then, after death, we would not expect punishment and hell, but the unspeakable rewards of the Heavenly Kingdom.



4. Unity through love with other Christians.

Christ has only one Body, by partaking of It, each and everyone of us also becomes united into one body – the Body of Christ. Christ's love for us is made perfect in unity, since not only is it reciprocated between ourselves and Christ, but amongst ourselves as well. This is what Christ meant when He established the Church.

The Church is not a building where people pray, it is the Body of Christ – a living organism, in which we all unite in love with Him and amongst ourselves, when we partake of Holy Communion (1 Cor 10:17). Christ is the head of His Body, the Church (Col 1:18), and not some bishop, patriarch, theologian or other mortal man. The Orthodox Church is thus infallible, since Christ being God, is infallible; we can then be sure that our Divine nourishment can never be false or corrupted, even if those who perform this Sacrament are themselves imperfect or unworthy.