



HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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PREPARING FOR OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

by Fr. John Matusiak



On Sunday, February 13, 2011, Orthodox Christians observe the beginning of the pre-lenten season of the Church year and start to make use of a liturgical book known as the Triodion.

THE PRE-LENTEN SUNDAYS

Preparing for Our Lenten Journey Use of the Triodion begins with the Sunday of

the Publican and Pharisee -- the 10th Sunday before Holy Pascha and the 22nd day before the beginning of Great Lent, which in 2011 starts on Monday, March 7, and ends on Great and Holy Saturday, April 23. It is in the Triodion that the texts for the services of the pre-lenten season, the days of Great Lent proper, Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, and Great and Holy Week are found.

THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

The Gospel reading for the first pre-lenten Sunday – Luke 18:10-14 – offers a striking contrast between the pharisee, a genuinely religious man, and the publican, an equally genuine sinner, a tax collector known for cheating others. In his prayers, the pharisee boasted before the Lord: “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all



that I possess.” The publican, meanwhile, “standing afar off,” begged for mercy: “[He] would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’” The pharisee’s religious yet boastful piety did not justify him, while the publican’s humble repentance – that repentance to which we especially aspire during the season of Great Lent – is revealed as the first step in our salvation. The pharisee sought adulation; the publican sought – and received – great mercy.

THE PRODIGAL SON

On the second pre-lenten Sunday, the Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32 – is read. In it, Our Lord reveals that our heavenly Father offers to us unconditional forgiveness and mercy if, like the prodigal son, we “come to our senses,” see ourselves for who we really are, and turn away from the “hunger” of “riotous living” in a “far country.” The prodigal son discerned his need to return to his true home, his father’s house, and acted decisively: “When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him,” exclaiming “for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” In the same way, our heavenly Father unconditionally forgives and receives us, His prodigal children – but it is we who, laying aside our pride, must “come to our senses,” acknowledge that we “have sinned,” and return to our “true home.”



THE LAST JUDGMENT

The Parable of the Last Judgment – Matthew 25:31-46 – is read on the



third pre-lenten Sunday, commonly referred to as Meatfare Sunday, since it is the last day on which we partake of meat before Holy Pascha. In this parable, Our Lord reveals that, while it is important for us to desire Him, to repent and seek His mercy, to see ourselves for who we truly are, and to return to Him, we also must discern His very presence in everyone around us, in the “least of the brethren,” and minister to them as if we were ministering to Christ Himself – and for the sake of Christ Himself. Our Lord reveals that our salvation and judgment depend on how we put our desire, repentance, and the mercy we receive into action, in the midst of others, for their sake as well as for the sake of the One Who feeds us, clothes us, ministers to us, and ultimately calls us to the life of His Kingdom. “Good intentions,” as Our Lord reveals, are insufficient; crucial as prayer, fasting and almsgiving indeed are, they certainly are not mere “religious exercises” performed for their own sake, and surely not for the sake of acquiring a sense of “pride in accomplishment.” Discerning Christ’s presence in everyone – and especially in those who so often are ignored, forgotten, abandoned, or despised – while offering them the same loving kindness that He first offered to us is the ultimate “fruit” of genuine repentance.

THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness Sunday – commonly known as Cheesefare Sunday, since it is the last day on which we partake of dairy products before Holy Pascha – falls on the eve of the first day of Great Lent. In the day’s reading from the Gospels – Matthew 6:14-21 – we hear Our Lord’s teaching about forgiveness: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” We also hear His teaching about fasting: “When you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father Who is in the secret place; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Like Adam, exiled from Paradise, we lament our sins. Forgiveness and



mercy are ours, but if only we fast from those things, those passions that, with Our Lord’s help, we can bring under control, even if we all too often allow them to control us.

The pre-lenten Sundays prepare us for our “lenten journey.” They arm us with that which we need to “enter the Fast with joy,” to make the most of the “time for action,” for as we sing on the first day of Great Lent, “salvation is at the door.”

From <http://www.antiochian.org/node/25303>



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Blueprints for the Little Church Adult Sunday School Class

When: Sunday March 5th-April 9th, May 7th and 14th

Time: 1-1:45pm

What: An adult study of the Orthodox home life, family, and parenting. Designed to be an encouraging and safe place to discuss, to learn, and to discover ways of connecting our parish with our homes in meaningful ways. Using *Blueprints for the Little Church: Creating an Orthodox Home*, by Elissa Bjeletich and Caleb Shoemaker as our outline, we will discuss topics ranging from family prayer and fasting to creative almsgiving and activities to commemorate the Church Year in our homes. Coffee and food welcome. Hand-outs will be provided.

Contact: Caleb Shoemaker (518-590-8546, caleb.shoemaker@gmail.com) if you plan to attend

Moleben on our property: We will continue serving a weekly short prayer service on our property in Kernersville. This is a service of supplication (Molieben) that Archbishop Dimitri of blessed memory blessed for the use of parishes in the diocese. Fr. Christopher will be serving it on Friday mornings at 10 AM except where noted in the calendar. Our property is located at 1320 Masten Drive in Kernersville.

Sisterhood of the Holy Myrrhbearers: The sisterhood will meet at 10AM on Saturday, February 18th.

Order Gift Cards Through Holy Cross! Scrip cards are available from hundreds of retailers and don't cost any more than the face value of the gift card. It's a "free" fundraiser to benefit the Holy Cross building fund! Contact Karen Brudnak-Slate.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Comparing Actual with budget numbers, we are very close to where we should be at this time of the year.

	Budget	YTD
Income	\$101,020.50	\$101,569.85
Expense	\$101,573.55	\$101,063.84

Thanks for your continued giving!



FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

The gateway to divine repentance has been opened: let us enter eagerly, purified in our bodies and observing abstinence from food and passions, as obedient servants of Christ who has called the world into the heavenly Kingdom. Let us offer to the King of all a tenth part of the whole year, that we may look with love upon His Resurrection.

Now is the season of repentance; let us begin it joyfully, O brethren, as we cry: O ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

O ye faithful, with peaceful hearts and in sincerity let us greet the holy season of the Fast: let us each ask for the remission of his sins, that we may be sharers in the joy that comes through forgiveness.

Behold, now is the season of repentance, the forefast that prepares us for the Fast. Awake, my soul: with all thy heart be reconciled to thy God and Benefactor, and so escape His just and fearful judgement.

O Word supreme in love, who with the Father and the Spirit hast created all things visible and invisible in Thy wisdom past speech, grant in Thy compassion that we may spend the season of the joyful Fast in profound peace. Destroy the beguilement of bitter sin, granting us contrition, tears of healing, and forgiveness of our trespasses, that, fasting with a fervent spirit and undoubting soul, we may join the angels to sing the praises of Thy power.

From the services in Cheesefare Week.



HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30PM Great Vespers	2 MEETING of Christ in the Temple 8AM Divine Liturgy 12PM House Blessings	3 10AM Prayers at our property	4 6 PM Great Vespers
5 Publican & Pharisee 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 12PM Annual Parish Meeting 3PM House Blessings	6	7 7PM Choir Rehearsal	8 6:30PM Inquirer's Class	9 9:30AM House Blessings 6PM Parish Council	10 10AM Prayers at our property 7 PM OCAT House Meeting	11 6 PM Great Vespers
12 Prodigal Son 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 2PM House Blessings	13	14	15	16 7PM Men's Group	17 10AM Prayers at our property	18 10AM Sisterhood 6 PM Great Vespers
19 Last Judgment 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 2PM House Blessings	20 Cheesefare	21 Cheesefare	22 Cheesefare 6:30PM Inquirer's Class	23 Cheesefare 10AM House Blessings 7PM Catechism Class	24 Cheesefare 10AM Prayers at our property 5PM Open Door	25 Cheesefare 6 PM Great Vespers
26 Forgiveness Cheesefare 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 1PM Forgiveness Vespers	27 Great Lent 6:30PM Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	28 Great Lent 6:30PM Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	1 March Great Lent 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	2 Great Lent 6:30PM Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	3 Great Lent 10AM Prayers at our property	4 Great Lent 6 PM Great Vespers