

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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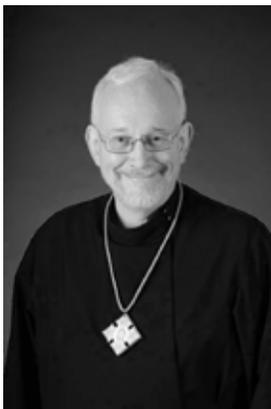
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ENTERING INTO GREAT LENT

Fr. Ted Bobosh



The spiritual life is a sojourn, that is not just a metaphor. In the Church we have opportunities to experience the spiritual life as a sojourn. A sojourn requires time and movement – we move from one place to another over time. Things around us change, and we change in this process as well. This is what makes repentance and forgiveness possible. We are journeying to the

Kingdom of God, to the eschaton, to heaven, to God's Paradise.

Great Lent is a journey to Pascha – to the celebration of the Resurrection. But it is movement not to the past, but forward to the eschaton. The past – the events of the crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ – are part of this sojourn, but only because they are eternal events. We are not trying to get back to the empty tomb of Christ, for there the women who discovered it did not know what sense to make of it, even when the angel explained it, and the disciples didn't believe the women. [We sing "Christ IS risen..." not "Christ was risen..."] Going back to that time and moment cannot help us. It is only in light of Pentecost – God's sending His Holy Spirit upon the Church and the world – that we make sense of the empty tomb and resurrection of Christ.

Tradition is not a backwards looking frame of reference – it is always geared to move ahead to the eschaton. We are not going to find Christ in the past. The entire New Testament is geared toward the Risen Lord, toward His Kingdom, His glory, His triumph.

"Blessed is the kingdom..." That is how we start the Divine Liturgy and Matins – it is declaring the blessedness of that Kingdom which is to come, which is breaking into this world, and yet not fully realized here. We start our services by declaring the blessedness of our destination.

In the Epistle, St. Paul speaking about "knowing the time". He is not talking about clock time, but rather a much broader sense of era the world is in. The fulfillment of Christ in His Kingdom is arriving. We need to use the time to prepare ourselves, to be ready for its arrival. Great Lent is that season in which we prepare for the coming of Christ in His Kingdom.

Romans 13:11-14:4

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

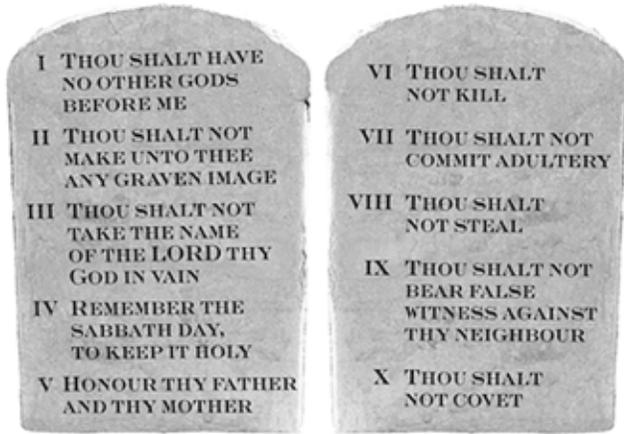
We are to use this time, this season of Great Lent to for our sojourn. Walk properly. Sojourn correctly – in an Orthodox manner! St Paul sets up some pairing that we are to reject:

revelry and drunkenness,
lewdness and lust,
strife and envy.

We put on Christ is baptism – how are we to live clothed in Christ?

Lent is to help learn the proper moderation in living. Drunkenness is not OK. Pornography is not OK. Anger and Antagonism are not OK. If these things are present in our life, we need to repent! As St. Paul exhorts: "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness,

carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). The sins for which we need to repent are not all found in the Ten Commandments.



We are to practice a sobriety in Lent – but not just for the duration of the 40 days of Lent. We are practicing in Lent in order to live this lifestyle always. It is not OK to get drunk on Pascha night!

We are not aiming to get through Lent so that we can return to drunkenness and revelry, lewdness and lust, strife and envy come Pascha.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Lenten fasting is not the time to pay attention to what others are eating or not eating. We are not to criticize anyone based upon what they eat. That is no basis for any evaluation of anybody.

Lenten foods are a return to the foods God provided in the delightful luxuries of Paradise. We claim we want to reach this Paradise. Our Lenten journey is taking us there. So, what did they eat in Paradise?

And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. (Genesis 1:29)

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden...” (Genesis 2:16)

Fruits, greens, vegetables are the foods of Paradise.

So what do we love more? – God’s Paradise and its leaves and fruits and nuts or this fallen world and its steaks, lamb, ham and salmon? Do we really long for the Kingdom of God or are we hoping Lent we pass by quickly so that we can return to things of this world which we love so much?

Are we willing to trade the things of this world which we love and lust after for the things of Paradise? If so, we need to show it in our lives and to live for paradise rather than for this world.

Lent is a testing. It is sifting us to see which of us loves God more than the things of this world. It turns out we love the things of this world – the food, the sex, the entertainment, our money, wealth, shopping, drinking, prosperity and our possessions. We want to sit with the rich man not dream about crumbs like Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), not matter what the consequences of eating from the rich man’s table might be.

Pascha night is not mostly about ham, lamb and fine cheeses.

It is about the Kingdom of God, and the fact that this world is passing away. Are we headed toward that Kingdom, or are we in pursuit of receding worldliness? Do we live for this world or for the Kingdom? Are we willing to abandon the good things of earth which is passing away for life in Paradise?

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

For 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. Moreover, 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. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The spirit of the fast is not found in what we eat or don't eat. But where our treasure is.

From: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/101472.htm>



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 Myrrbearers: The sisterhood meeting will be announced.

Men's Group: There will be no Men's Group this month.

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

February data:

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$10,544.59	\$10,630.00
Expense	\$9425.48	\$9143.53

Thank you for your generosity!

FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION



I have rejected with contempt the wealth and gifts of grace that God conferred upon me, and have come to a country cursed by famine, empty of life-giving blessings; but, Father, in Thy goodness and compassion restore to me the glory and the joy that once was mine.

Having spent our life in self-indulgence, let us make our own the resolve of the Prodigal; let us run to the merciful Father with undoubting faith and contrite hearts, that we may receive forgiveness of our sins.

Tarry not, O my soul, that dwellest an exile in a far country, but run swiftly and call upon thy God and Father; and thou shalt receive forgiveness for the sins which thou hast committed, wasting thy life as the Prodigal.

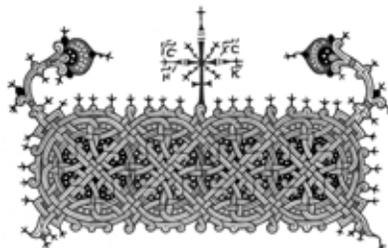
O all-holy Virgin, thou art a cloud of light, bearing the Sun of righteousness. He dispels the dark ignorance of idolatry, and shines upon us with the light of divine knowledge.

From the services of the Second Sunday of Lent.

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 8PM Lenten Potluck	2 6:30PM Compline with Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	3 10AM Prayers at our property	4 6 PM Great Vespers
5 Orthodoxy 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	6	7 7PM Choir Rehearsal	8 6:30PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 8PM Lenten Potluck	9	10 10AM Prayers at our property 6:30 PM Alaskan Orthodoxy with Fr. Michael Oleksa	11 6 PM Great Vespers
12 St. Gregory Palamas 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	13	14	15 6:30PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 8PM Lenten Potluck	16 6PM Parish Council	17 10AM Prayers at our property	18 6 PM Great Vespers
19 Veneration of the Holy Cross 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	20	21	22 6:30PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 8PM Lenten Potluck	23	24 10AM Prayers at our property 5PM Open Door 7PM Annunciation Vespers at Annunciation GOC	25 ANNUNCIATION 9AM Divine Liturgy 6 PM Great Vespers
26 St. John Climacus 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	27	28 7PM Catechism Class	29 6:30PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 8PM Lenten Potluck	30	31 10AM Prayers at our property	





THREE ALASKAN SAINTS

FROM ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN 1794, WHEN A SMALL GROUP OF MISSIONARIES LANDED ON KODIAK ISLAND, ALASKA, ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA HAS EXPANDED TO COMPRISE A CHURCH OF MANY DIVERSE FAITHFUL. COME HEAR MORE ABOUT THREE ALASKAN SAINTS AND THEIR MISSIONARY SIGNIFICANCE FOR TODAY. WE WILL HEAR OF THE JOY AND COURAGE OF SAINT HERMAN, THE COMMITMENT AND VISION OF SAINT INNOCENT AND THE LONG-SUFFERING AND PASCHAL JOY OF SAINT JACOB AS ESSENTIAL TO OUR MISSIONARY TASK IN NORTH AMERICA. WE WILL CONCLUDE WITH A SERVICE OF PRAYER ASKING THE SAINTS WHO HAVE SHOWN FORTH IN THIS LAND TO INTERCEDE FOR US.

REV. DR. MICHAEL OLEKSA

DEAN EMERITUS OF ST. HERMAN'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, KODIAK, ALASKA

**FRIDAY, MARCH 10 AT 6:30 PM AT HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH
645 GREENSBORO RD., HIGH POINT, NC**

GO TO HOLYCROSSOCA.ORG FOR DRIVING DIRECTIONS OR CALL 336-688-9920

Fr. Michael Oleksa has a Ph.D. in Church History and has lived in Alaska for the past thirty years. He speaks several native Alaskan languages, and teaches at the University of Alaska. He has produced numerous educational programs for cultural sensitivity, bridging the cultural and social divide among the many native Alaskan peoples. Fr. Oleksa has been on public television programs and is an expert in Alaskan culture.

