



*Great Lent 2019*



## 2019 LENTEN SCHEDULE

### MARCH

Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Vespers
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am	Divine Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday / Rite of Forgiveness
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony,
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Poklony
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am	Divine Liturgy, St. Theodore Saturday
	6:00 pm	Vespers
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am	Divine Liturgy, Sunday of Orthodoxy/ Icon Procession
		Lenten Breakfast in support of OCMC
	5:00 pm	Lenten Vespers St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck dinner
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9:00 am	Divine Liturgy, Memorial Saturday
		(Turn in your updated memorial books at this time)
	6:00 pm	Vespers
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am	Divine Liturgy, Sunday of St Gregory Palamas
	5:00 pm	Vespers, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, McKeesport
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup>	9:30 am	Divine Liturgy, Veneration of the Holy Cross
	5:00 pm	Vespers, St Alexander Nevsky OCA Cathedral, McCandless

### APRIL

Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Grand Compline, Annunciation
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am	Divine Liturgy, Annunciation, St John of the Ladder
	5:00 pm	Vespers, Sts Peter & Paul, Carnegie
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Canon of St Andrew of Crete
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Mother of God, Akathist Saturday/ Missions/Confessions followed by a luncheon

<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, St Mary of Egypt, Pysanky Sale</b>
	<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers, St George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Bridgeville</b>
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy, Pot Luck Dinner</b>
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Saturday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Lazarus Saturday, Children Participation</b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Children Participation/ Parish grounds clean-up</b>
		<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, Palm Sunday.</b>
<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Bridegroom Matins</b>
<b>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Bridegroom Matins</b>
<b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Wednesday, Sacrament of Healing</b>
<b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Commemoration of first Divine Liturgy</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Thursday, Passion Gospels</b>
<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Royal Hours</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holy Friday, Vespers, Procession &amp; Burial</b>
<b>Saturday 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Holy Saturday, Anticipation Liturgy, Baskets Blessed</b>
	<b>9:00 pm</b>	<b>Reading of the Acts of the Apostles</b>
	<b>9:30 pm</b>	<b>Resurrection Services:</b>
		<b>Nocturnes, Paschal Matins &amp; Divine Liturgy</b>
		<b>Paschal Blessing of Baskets &amp; Agape Feast</b>
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Agape Vespers</b>
		<b>Blessing of Baskets</b>
<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Bright Monday, Divine Liturgy</b>
<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Bright Tuesday, Divine Liturgy</b>

## MAY

<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Vespers</b>
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy, St. Thomas Sunday</b>
		<b>St. Thomas Day Dinner, Provody, Grave Blessing</b>

Great Lent is a wonderful time to get spiritually refreshed and confession is an important step on that journey. Fr. John is available for confession by appointment and prior to as well as after all services. On Sundays, Fr. John will stop hearing confessions at 9:20 so that Liturgy may begin on time. Please plan accordingly. If you'd like to confess in Ukrainian please let Fr. John know and he will arrange for a Ukrainian speaking priest to come to a Saturday Vespers.



# Lenten Readings

## March

- 11 Gen. 1:1-13, Is. 1:1-20, Prov. 1:1-20
- 12 Gen. 1:14-23, Is. 1:19-31, Prov. 1:20-33
- 13 Gen. 1:24-31, 2:1-3, Is. 2:3-17, Prov. 2:1-22
- 14 Gen. 2:4-19, Is. 2:11-21, Prov. 3:1-19
- 15 Gen. 2:20-3:20, Is. 3:1-14, Prov. 3:19-34
- 16 2 Tim. 2:1-10, Jn. 15:17-16:2
- 17 Heb.11:24-26, 32-40, Jn 1:44-52
- 18 Gen 3:21-4:7, Is 4:1-6, 5:1-7, Prov 3:34-4:21
- 19 Gen 4:8-15, Is 5:2-16, Prov 5:1-15
- 20 Gen 4:16-26, Is 5:16-25, Prov 5:15-22
- 21 Gen 5:1-24, Is 6:1-12, Prov 6:1-20
- 22 Gen 5:32-6:8, Is 7:1-14, Prov 6:20-7:1
- 23 Heb 3:12-16, Mk 1:35-44
- 24 Heb 1:10-2:3, Mk 2:1-12
- 25 Gen 6:9-22, Is 8:12-22,9:7, Prov 8:1-21
- 26 Gen 7:1-5, Is 9:9-21, Prov 20:1-16
- 27 Gen 7:6-9, Is 10:12-20, Prov 9:12-18
- 28 Gen 7:11-8:3, Is 11:10-16, 12:1-3, Prov 10:1-22
- 29 Gen 8:4-21, Is 13:2-13, Prov 10:31-11:12
- 30 Heb 10:32-38, Mk14-17
- 31 Heb 4:14-5:6, Mk 8:34-9:1, Heb 2:11-1, Lk 1:24-38

## April

- 1 Gen 8:22, 9:1-17, Is 14:24-32, Prov 11:19-12:6
- 2 Gen 9:8-17, Is 25:1-9, Prov 12:8-22
- 3 Gen 9:18-10:1, Is 26:21-27:9, Prov 12:23-13:9
- 4 Gen 10:32-11:9, Is 28:14-22, Prov 13:20-14:9
- 5 Gen 12:1-7, Is 29:13-24, Prov 14:15-26
- 6 Heb 6:9-12, Mk 7:31-37
- 7 Heb 6:13-20, Mk 9:17-31
- 8 Gen 8:21-22. 9:1-7, Is 37:33-38, 38:1-6,  
Prov 11:19-31, 12:1-6
- 9 Gen 15:1-15, Is 40:18-31, Prov 15:17-19
- 10 Gen 17:1-8, Is 41:1-14, Prov 15:20-16:9
- 11 Gen 18:20-33, Is 42:5-16Prov 16:13-17

- 12 Gen 22:1-18, Is 45:11-17, Prov 17:17-18:5
- 13 Heb 9:1-7, Lk 1:39-56
- 14 Heb 9:11-14, Mk 10:32-45
- 15 Gen 27:1-41, Is 48:17-22, 48:1-5, Prov 19:16-25
- 15 Gen 31:3-16, Is 49:5-10, Prov 21:3-21
- 17 Gen 43:26-31, Is 58:1-11, Prov 17:17-18:5
- 18 Gen 46:1-7, Is 65:8-16, Prov 23:15-24:5
- 19 Gen 49:22-50:26, Is 66:10-24, Prov 31:8-31
- 20 Heb 12:28-13:8, Jn 11:1-45
- 21 Phil 4:4-9, Jn 12:-8
- 22 Mt 21:18-43, Mt 24:3-43
- 23 Mt 22:15-23:39, Mt 24: 36 – 26:2
- 24 John 12: 17-50 Mt 26: 6 -16
- 25 Lk 22:1-45, 1Cor 11:23-32, Mt 26:2-27:2 , Jn 13:1-17
- 26 1Cor 1:18-2:2, Mt 27:1-61, Lk 23:34-43, Jn 19:31-43
- 27 1 Cor 5 : 6-8, Gal 3:13-14, Mt 27:62-66, Rom 6 : 3 – 11



THE ORTHODOX CLERGY BROTHERHOOD OF GREATER PITTSBURGH INVITES YOU TO THE

# PITTSBURGH AREA ORTHODOX CHURCHES SUNDAY LENTEN VESPERS SERIES

**17 MARCH** FIRST WEEK OF LENT

SAINT NICHOLAS SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

2110 Haymaker Rd., Monroeville, PA

Speaker: His Eminence Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern PA, OCA

Pan-Orthodox Choir of Pittsburgh Will Sing Vespers

Lenten Dinner following Vespers

**24 MARCH** SECOND WEEK OF LENT

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

1128 Summit St., White Oak, PA

Festal Great Vespers of the Annunciation

**31 MARCH** THIRD WEEK OF LENT

SAINT ALEXANDER NEVSKY ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

290 Thompson Run Rd., Pittsburgh, PA

**7 APRIL** FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

SAINTS PETER & PAUL UKRANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

220 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie, PA

**14 APRIL** FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

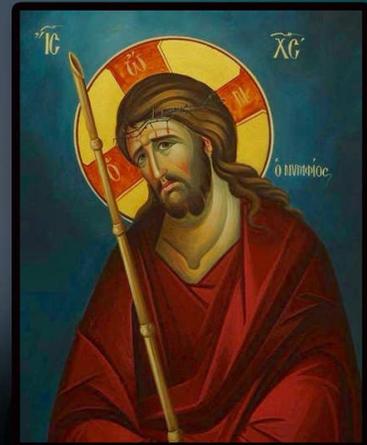
SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

3230 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA

Veneration of Relic of Saint John Maximovitch following Vespers

**EVERY SUNDAY OF LENT 5:00 PM**

# ΕΣΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΑΛ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗ ΚΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΕΩΨ ΣΕΝΤΕΝ ΕΡΙΣΤΛΕ ΕΣΕΛΕΝΣΚΟΓΟ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΑ ΚΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΙΑ ΠΟΣΤΟΚΕ ΠΟΣΛΑΝΝΑ



## + BARTHOLOMEW

*By God's mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch*

*To the Plenitude of the Church*

*May the Grace and Peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you together with our Prayer, Blessing and Forgiveness*

With the grace of God, the giver of all gifts, we have once again arrived at Holy and Great Lent, the arena of ascetical struggle, in order to purify ourselves with the Lord's assistance through prayer, fasting and humility, as well as to prepare ourselves for a spiritual experience of the venerable Passion and the celebration of the splendid Resurrection of Christ the Savior.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

In a world of manifold confusion, the ascetic experience of Orthodoxy constitutes an invaluable spiritual asset, an inexhaustible source of divine knowledge and human wisdom. The blessed phenomenon of asceticism, whose spirit pervades our entire way of life – for “asceticism is Christianity in its entirety” – is not the privilege of the few or chosen, but an “ecclesial event,” a communal good, a shared blessing and the common vocation for all faithful without exception. The ascetical struggles, of course, are not an end in themselves; the principle that “asceticism exists for the sake of asceticism” is not valid. The purpose of asceticism is the transcendence of one's own will and the “mind of the flesh,” the transferal of the center of life from individual desire and the “right,” toward love that “does not seek its own,” in accordance with the scriptural passage: “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of the other.” (1 Cor. 10.24)<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

Such is the spirit that prevails throughout the long historical journey of Orthodoxy. In the *New Miterikon*, we encounter an excellent description of this ethos to renounce “our own” in the name of love: “Some hermits from Scetis once approached Amma Sarah, who offered them a container with basic provisions. The elders set aside the good food and consumed the bad. The righteous Sarah said to them: ‘You are truly monks from Scetis’”<sup>[1]</sup> This sensitivity and sacrificial use of freedom is foreign to the spirit of our age, which identifies freedom with individual assertions and claims for rights. Contemporary “autonomous” man would never have consumed the bad food, but only the good, convinced that in this way he expresses – while authentically and responsibly employing – individual freedom.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

This is where the supreme value of the Orthodox concept of human freedom lies. It is a freedom that does not demand but shares, does not insist but sacrifices. The Orthodox believer knows that autonomy and self-sufficiency do not liberate humanity from the shackles of the ego, of self-realization and self-justification. The freedom “for which Christ has set us free” (Gal. 5.1) mobilizes our creative capacity and is fulfilled as rejection of self-enclosure, as unconditional love and communion of life.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

The Orthodox ascetical ethos does not know division and dualism; it does not reject life, but rather transforms it. The dualistic vision and denial of the world is not a Christian concept. Genuine asceticism is luminous and charitable. It is a characteristic of Orthodox self-conscience that the period of fasting is permeated by the joy of the Cross and the Resurrection. Moreover, the ascetic struggle of Orthodox Christians – much like our spirituality and liturgical life in general – communicates the fragrance and radiance of the Resurrection. The Cross is found at the heart of Orthodox piety, but it is not the final point of reference in the life of the Church. Instead, the essence of Orthodox spiritual life is the ineffable joy of the Resurrection, toward which the Cross constitutes the way. Accordingly, during the period of Great Lent, the quintessence of experience for Orthodox Christians is always the yearning for the “common resurrection.”<sup>[SEP]</sup>

Pray, then, precious brothers and sisters in the Lord, that we may be deemed worthy, with the grace and support from above, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, as first among the saints, and of all the saints, that we may run the race of Holy and Great Lent in a way that is fitting and joyous before Christ, joyfully exercising, in obedience to the rule of church tradition, the “common struggle” of fasting that extinguishes the passions, constantly praying, helping the suffering and needful, forgiving one another and “giving thanks for all things” (Thess. 5.18), in order that we might venerate with a devout heart the “Holy, Saving and Awesome Passion” as well as the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory, power and thanksgiving to the endless ages. Amen.<sup>[SEP]</sup>

*Holy and Great Lent 2019<sup>[SEP]</sup>*  
**✠ Bartholomew of Constantinople<sup>[SEP]</sup>**  
*Fervent supplicant for all before God*

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## [Prayer for Repentance](#)

### [St. Seraphim of Sarov](#)

Master and Lord of Heaven and Earth and King of the ages. Deign to open the door of repentance to me, for in anguish of my heart I pray to You, our true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Look upon me in Your great loving-kindness and accept my prayer. Incline Thine ear to my prayer and forgive me all the evil that I have done by the abuse of my free will.

Behold, I seek rest, yet I do not find it, for I have not received forgiveness from my conscience. I thirst for peace, but there is no peace in me from the dark abyss of my transgressions. Hear, O Lord, a heart which cries to You. Regard not my evil deeds, but consider the agony of my soul and make haste to heal me who am badly wounded.

By the grace of Your love for men, give me time for repentance and deliver me from my shameful deeds, lest I finally perish. Hear me, O Lord, in my despair. Behold, I am bereft of my will and of every thought of amendment. Therefore, I have recourse to Your compassion. Have mercy on me, cast down and condemned on account of my sins.

O Lord, rescue me who am enslaved and held by my evil deeds, as if I were shackled with chains. You alone know how to set prisoners free; and as You alone know secret things, You heal wounds that are known by no one but seen by You. Therefore, being tortured in every way by cruel pains, I cry only to You, the Physician of all who are afflicted, the Door of those who knock without, the Way of the lost, the Light of those in darkness, the Redeemer of those in bonds, Whoever restrains Your right hand and withholds Your anger prepared for sinners, but Who gives time for repentance through Your great love for men.

O You Who are quick to show mercy and slow to punish, shine upon me, who have fallen badly, the light of Your countenance, O Lord. In Your loving-kindness stretch Your hand to me and raise me from the depth of my transgressions. For You Alone are our God, Who does not rejoice at the destruction of sinners, and Who does not turn away Your face from those who cry to You with tears.

Hear, O Lord, the voice of Your servant who cries to You, and manifest Your light to me who am deprived of light, and give me Your grace, for I have no hope whatever, that I may always trust in Your help and power. Turn my weeping into joy, rend my rags and gird me with gladness. Grant that I may rest from my dark deeds and enjoy the morning calm with Your chosen, O Lord, whence all pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away. May the door of Your Kingdom be opened to me, that I may enter with those who rejoice in the light of Your countenance, O Lord, and that even I may receive eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



THE 2019  
**GREAT LENT EPISTLE**  
OF THE PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN  
ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE

To the God-beloved Pastors, Monastics, and all Faithful Children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora and Ukraine,

Beloved in the Lord: **CHRIST IS AMONG US!**

The Holy and Sacred Season of Great Lent is upon us! Each year, the Church offers us the Lenten season as a time of repentance and renewal. As for us, Orthodox Christians, the contemplation on this beautiful season of the Church year is a cause for much of spiritual joy!

There is real confusion in today's world about the meaning of joy. Like happiness, joy is often seen as something that we can physically buy. We may be able to buy something that brings temporary pleasure: but we cannot buy joy. They must not be confused. Joy is a free gift from God.

This surreal and joyful season of Great Lent is an opportunity to be graced afresh by contemplating the presence of Christ in our lives. All our efforts to evangelize in our new millennium here in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in North America, Western Europe, Australia, South America and throughout Diaspora would be fruitless unless we ourselves have first contemplated on the presence of Christ in our relationship with the world around us. It is the presence of the One who has suffered, died and risen from the dead out of love for us. To be so loved by the God of love in the midst of all our sinfulness and human limitations, indeed, is a joyful experience. This is surely the starting point for the Lenten season and the key point in our reflection upon our path to salvation. It is all summarized in one word: conversion.

It resonates with a deep yearning and recognition within us. As we make our first prostrations, we are reminded of our own sinfulness. Throughout the next 40 days we are called to repent and believe the Good News: God loves us. He sent His Beloved Son to suffer and die for us. He has risen from the dead and shares his new life with us. This is the heart of the Gospel. Lent refocuses our attention on this message of salvation, this good news through our ability to recognize and consider our identity as children of God.

Searching for our identity is part of life. We identify our "self" as a family member, spouse, sibling, clergyman, carpenter, farmer, doctor, entertainer or clerk. We also identify ourselves as Orthodox Christians, or as members of a parish. Identity involves discovering who we are as persons and what our role is by answering these questions: who am I, and why am I here? Growth in the awareness of our Christian identity is a lifelong process that shifts as we change. It is rooted in our Baptism, where

we are transformed into our true identity as sons and daughters of the God. Holy Apostle Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians ("You should put away the old self of your former way of life . . . and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph 4:22, 24), challenges us to put away our former life and put on a new self. In other words, he tells us to turn from sinful ways and take on our new life in Christ. In so doing, we become one with Christ, where we find our true identity. We accept this challenge during the Great Lent, as we journey with Christ through life's difficulties to eternal life.

In the Church's Tradition the season of Great and Holy Lent has always been accompanied by the Lenten efforts of prayer, fasting and acts of charity. We know that parishes will be providing many extra opportunities for prayer over the days of Lenten journey. We call upon you to greater attendance at liturgical services of the season. We hope that the participation in the Holy Mystery of Repentance over this time will be a real priority in your lives and in all parishes. We hope that the prayers of the Church will offer people an invitation to be touched, healed, forgiven, comforted and strengthened by our Lord. Also, at home we recommend a closer attention to times of prayer and fasting and moments of genuine devotion in family life.

Secondly, our journey through Lent and preparation to more fitting celebration of Pascha - the Resurrection of our Lord - includes "willing service to our neighbor". All Christian true conversion starts in the heart but never stays there. True spiritual conversion always seeks out acts of charity to give practical help to our neighbor in need. This is a vital aspect of who we are as children of God.

We also encourage practical gestures of prayerful compassion to children. In this Lenten period, we must remember that our children are so often victims of human selfishness in today's world and deserve special attention. During this Lent, perhaps we could find ways in our neighborhoods to share something of the importance of Christ Jesus to those who do not believe in Him. Such efforts can start so simply: with a kind word and gentle smile in His Name.

As we embark upon this Lenten journey, it is the time to renew ourselves as Orthodox Christians. Upon baptism we assumed the obligation of sharing the Good News of Christ with others, of defending the Holy Orthodox faith from persecution and of living a Christ-centered life of love for others. This six-week journey entails striving for humility and contrition before God in our repentance, seeking mutual forgiveness from others and contemplating our renewal in our prayers. Let us open our hearts to let in that, which is eternal, that which is Truth and not be blinded by the temporal world around us. Where there is light there is hope. Through His life and suffering for our salvation, we gain renewed hope in the light of Christ's glorious victory over death and in eternal life.

May our All-Merciful and Almighty Lord assist us on our journey through this Great Fast with humility and reverence so that we may be worthy to greet the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

With Hierarchical Blessings,

† **YURIJ, Metropolitan**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*  
† **ANTONY, Metropolitan**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and in the Diaspora*  
† **JEREMIAH, Archbishop**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Brazil and South America*  
† **DANIEL, Archbishop**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Western Europe*  
† **ILARION, Bishop**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*  
† **ANDRIY, Bishop**, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*



# ВЕЛИКОПОСНЕ ПОСЛАННЯ

2019 РОКУ

ПОСТІЙНОЇ КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ ПРАВОСЛАВНИХ  
ЄПІСКОПІВ ПОЗА МЕЖАМИ УКРАЇНИ

Боголюбивим Пастирям, Чернецтву та всім Вірним Дітям Української Православної Церкви в Діаспорі та Україні,

Улюблені в Господі: **ХРИСТОС ПОСЕРЕД НАС!**

Ну ось і настав час Священного та Великого Посту для усіх нас. Кожного року Церква надає нам Великопосний період як час покаяння і відновлення. Для нас, православних християн, роздумування над цим чудовим періодом церковного року є причиною великої духовної радості!

У сучасному світі існує хибне розуміння значення радості. Як і щастя, радістю часто вважають щось таке, що ми можемо купити фізично. Ми можемо купити те, що приносить нам тимчасове задоволення: але ми не можемо купити відчуття радості. Тому не слід їх плутати. Адже радість - це безкоштовний Божий дар.

Цей піднесений та радісний час Великого Посту є неоціненною можливістю для нас знову примиритися з Христом, роздумуючи над Його присутністю в нашому житті. У теперішній час усі наші зусилля пов'язані з євангелізацією в Українській Православній Церкві на теренах Північної Америки, Західної Європи, Австралії, Південної Америки та усієї Діаспори були б безрезультатними, якщо б ми самі спочатку не роздумували про присутність Христа у наших відносинах з навколишнім світом. Це присутність Того, Хто страждав, помер і воскрес з мертвих через Свою любов до нас. Для людини, бути на стільки огорнутою Божою любов'ю, попри всю її людську гріховність та всю людську немічність, є справді радісним досвідом. Цей радісний досвід є початком Великого Посту, але водночас є і ключовим моментом у наших роздумах про наш шлях до спасіння. Все це узагальнено одним словом: преображенням.

Це перетворення відбувається і стає можливим тільки через глибоке прагнення і визнання у середині нас. Роблячи наші перші поклони, ми пригадуємо собі про нашу власну гріховність. Протягом наступних 40 днів ми покликані до покаяння та до віри в Благую Вістку: що Бог любить нас. Він послав Свого Улюбленого Сина, щоб терпіти і померти за нас. Він воскрес із мертвих і ділиться з нами своїм новим життям. Все це є центром Євангелія. Піст знову і знову звертає нашу увагу на цю вістку про спасіння, цю добру новину через нашу здатність вбачати в собі Божих дітей.

Віднайти та зрозуміти ким ми є – це частина нашого життя. Кожен з нас ідентифікує себе як член сім'ї, як чоловік чи дружина, брат чи сестра, священнослужитель чи столяр, фермер, лікар чи артист. Ми також ідентифікуємо себе як православні християни, чи як парафіяни. Ідентичність дає зрозуміти, ким ми є, як особи, і якою є наша роль, відповідаючи на такі питання як: хто я і чому я тут? Вдосконалення розуміння нашої християнської ідентичності – це процес, що постійно змінюється разом з нашою власною зміною. Її корінь же лежить в нашому Хрещенні,

де ми зодягаємось в нашу справжню ідентичність будучи синами і доньками Божими. Святий Апостол Павло у своєму посланні до Ефесян («Відкинути колишній спосіб життя старої людини ... і одягнутися в нову людину, створену за Богом, в праведності і святості істини.» (Еф. 4:22, 24), змушує нас відкинути наше колишнє життя і зодягнутися в нового себе. Іншими словами, він наставляє нас відкинути гріховні шляхи, преобразивши своє життя в нове життя у Христі. Ми відчуваємо на собі цей виклик переміни під час Великого Посту, подорожуючи з Христом через повсякденні труднощі до життя вічного.

Згідно Церковної Традиції, час Великого і Святого Посту завжди супроводжується молитвою, постом і ділами милосердя. Ми знаємо, що в час Великого Посту в наших храмах буде багато додаткової можливості усім нам для молитви. Ми закликаємо вас до частішого відвідування літургійних богослужінь в час цього періоду. Ми сподіваємося, що участь у Святому Таїнстві Покаяння впродовж цього часу стане справжнім пріоритетом як у вашому житті, так і в житті усіх парафій. Ми маємо надію, що молитви всієї Церкви прикличуть людей до зцілення, прощення, заспокоєння і зміцнення нашим Господом. Крім того, ми радимо вам вдома приділяти більше уваги молитві, посту і також справжній відданості й присвяті в сімейному житті.

По-друге, час Великого Посту як підготовка до належнішого святкування Пасхи - Воскресіння нашого Господа - включає в собі «добровільне служіння нашому ближньому». Все правдиве Християнське навернення починається в серці, але ніколи там не залишається. Справжня духовна трансформація завжди супроводжується ділами милосердя, подаючи руку допомоги кожному, хто є в потребі. Це важливий аспект того, ким ми є, як Божі діти.

Ми також заохочуємо вас до молитовних вчинків милосердя для дітей. У цей великопосний період нам необхідно пам'ятати, що наші діти в сучасному світі часто стають жертвами людського егоїзму і заслуговують особливої уваги. Під час цього Великого Посту, знайдімо шляхи і можливості підходу до тих, хто, можливо, не вірить в Ісуса Христа. Щоб саме з ними поділитись цією Євангельською радістю. Це можна зробити дуже просто: добрим словом та лагідною посмішкою в Його Ім'я.

Розпочинаючи цю подорож Великого Посту, для нас настає час для відновлення себе як Православних Християн. Разом із Хрещенням ми взяли на себе відповідальність ділитися Доброю Вісткою Христа з іншими, захищати Святу Православну віру від переслідувань і проводити наше життя навколо Христа в любові до ближніх. Ця шеститижнева подорож вимагає від нас бажання до смирення і щирого каяття перед Богом, прагнення взаємного прощення з ближніми і розмірковування над нашим оновленням в наших молитвах. Відкриймо наші серця перед тим що є вічним, перед тим, що є істиною, не будучи засліпленими тимчасовим світом що навколо нас. Там, де є світло, там є надія. Через Його життя і страждання задля нашого спасіння ми сподобились отримати нову надію у світлі славної Христової перемоги над смертю і у вічному житті.

Нехай наш Всемилосердний і Всемогутній Господь допоможе прожити нам цей час Великого Посту зі смиренням і благоговінням, щоб достойно возвеличити славне Воскресіння Господа нашого і Спасителя Ісуса Христа!

З Архіпастирським Благословенням,

**† ЮРІЙ, Митрополит, Українська Православна Церква Канади**

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# The Sacrament of Confession

By: Fr. Lawrence Farley

The odds are that the Sacrament of Confession is everyone's least favorite sacrament. Not "the least needed," just "the least favorite." No one likes to look inside himself to survey and itemize the mess he finds there. It is like opening the fridge door and finding a large jar of green, smelly, moldy, unidentifiable food. One instinctively cringes, and would prefer to simply ignore it and close the door.

A commitment to our own spiritual health means not simply closing the door to our conscience, but making a regular spiritual house-cleaning. Indeed, going to the sacrament of Confession is a bit like spring cleaning—we clean up after ourselves all the time, but make a special effort once a year in the spring to keep our home really clean and to get the messes we may have missed. In the same way, we confess our sins every day to God, but make special efforts several times throughout the year to keep our hearts really clean and to get the messes that still require special attention.

How many times throughout the year should we go to Confession? Different churches have different guidelines, but ultimately it is up to the individual, who knows his needs better than anyone else. My own suggestion is that one should confess four times a year, during the four fasting seasons, at a minimum. Obviously, though, if you have a spiritual melt-down, you should not wait until the next fasting season, but go to Confession right away to deal with it.

Some people ask why they need to go to a priest to confess their sins. Why not just go to God? Can't God forgive sins without the aid of a priest? Of course God doesn't need a priest's help to forgive sins. But the sacrament of Confession is about more than simply being forgiven. It is also about being healed. And any 12-step programme (such as Alcoholics Anonymous) will tell you that to be truly healed, one needs to "make a fearless moral inventory" (i.e. an examination of conscience), and then share this with another person.

It is a difficult thing to do. No one enjoys letting another person know all the shameful things they have thought, said, and done. It is hard on the pride. But that is just the point—it is our pride that keeps our sins intact, that keeps the lid on the whole mess, and keeps God's grace on the outside. By confessing our sins to another person, we destroy our pride and let God in, and this is the only way to truly begin the process of dealing with our sins and overcoming them. And confessing to a priest has the added advantage that he is empowered to pray for you and effectively ask for God's forgiveness.

Where, you might ask, did the priest get this power? It is not his personal possession. The priest does not walk around with divine power to forgive in his back pocket like some kind of credit card. As he himself says in the very prayer of absolution, "I do not have power on earth to forgive sins, but God alone does." But the priest does represent God's Church, and Christ committed the stewardship of divine grace to that Church. That is, He gave His Church the authority to bind and loose, and after His Resurrection, He said to His disciples, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whosoever's sins you forgive, they have been forgiven them; whosoever's you retain, they have been retained" (John 20:22). In this act, Christ committed the keys of stewardship to His Church, and gave them authority to gain forgiveness from God for those who repent.



We Orthodox take for granted the assurance of forgiveness, but this was new in the ancient world. In that world, when one repented, one could only hope that God would forgive. There was no assurance or guarantee: maybe He would, and maybe He wouldn't. You wouldn't find out whether or not He forgave you until some disaster struck, telling you that He had in fact not forgiven you, or until you reached the final judgment and got the bad news then. Christ gives to His Church the firm assurance of forgiveness so that we can really know now for certain that God forgives us. Eternal life thus is not a distant wistful hope, but a joyful present possession. As a part of Christ's body we can know that we have been forgiven and now have eternal life.

We see this stewardship of grace in action in the ministry of the apostle Paul. One member of the Corinthian community sinned rather badly (he was living as husband and wife with his step-mother), and on Paul's insistence, the offender was expelled from the Eucharistic communion of the church (1 Cor. 5:1-5). Later, he was overwhelmed with regret and repented and amended his life. Paul, therefore, urged the Corinthian community to forgive him, and to welcome him back (2 Cor. 2:6-8). When the local church forgave him (doubtless through the prayers and welcome of its leaders), God forgave him as well. Thus the church's authority to forgive sins was revealed through the restoration of the penitent after excommunication.

In the early church, this responsibility to restore the penitent devolved on the pastoral leadership, and especially upon the congregation's main pastor, the bishop. An early ordination prayer for the bishop (in the third century document known as The Apostolic Tradition) mentions this responsibility, and asks God to give the new bishop the Holy Spirit so that he may "offer to You the gifts of Your holy Church [i.e. preside at the Eucharist], and by the Spirit of high-priesthood to have the power to forgive sins according to Your command...to loose every bond according to the power which You gave to the apostles" [i.e., restore the excommunicated to the fellowship of the church]. In this prayer we see the bishop's responsibility to decide who is in the church and who is out. If a person had been expelled from the church for grave sin, it was the bishop who allowed him back in upon repentance, and prayed for his forgiveness. Most Christians, of course, never had to be expelled for grave sin, and so never had to receive this prayer for forgiveness and re-admission. A good Christian in those early years never had to have recourse to what would later be called "the sacrament of Confession," for he would never have to be excommunicated.

Later, however, this rite of forgiveness for the excommunicated became fused with another private spiritual exercise, one which became especially popular among monks. In this practice, the young monk would confess his sins to an older monk who was his spiritual father as the young one struggled to gain the victory over his sins. The penitent had never been excommunicated; he was only confessing his sins and receiving counsel for his spiritual benefit. The older monk would listen and give counsel and pray for the younger one's forgiveness. It proved to be spiritually valuable, and not just for monks. Nowadays, everyone in the church uses the sacrament of Confession like this.

Thus this Sacrament has developed a great deal over the years, and is used in a number of ways by a number of people. The Church uses it to reconcile excommunicated persons when they repent (its original function). The Church uses it to reconcile Orthodox to the Church after they have lapsed and been away from the Church's communion for a long time. The Church uses it to offer forgiveness to Orthodox communicants after they commit some major sin. And the Church offers it to Orthodox communicants as part of their regular spiritual house-cleaning.

In all its many uses, the Sacrament of Confession brings the penitent back to Christ, and to His boundless mercy. The penitent may be telling his sins to the priest, but the priest is there simply as a witness. It is Christ who really receives the confession; it is Christ who brings the forgiveness and the healing. We see this in the original form of the absolution prayer: in the original version, the priest does not say to the penitent, "I forgive you," (the western formulation) but rather, "May God forgive you." And the penitent does not kneel before the priest who is seated (as in the classic western confessional booth). Rather, both priest and penitent stand together before the cross, with the priest's arm around the penitent in a gesture of solidarity and support. In that sacramental moment, both are sinners. Both are debtors to the boundless love of God.

<http://myocn.net/sacrament-confession/>

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2019

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 17th</b>	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Reading: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14	Trust in God, not yourself! Ask for His help before every task this week!
Normal Fast Week <b>FEBRUARY 24th</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32	Schedule a Confession. Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>MARCH 3rd</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgment</b> Reading: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9: 2 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 10th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Reading: Romans 13: 11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 17th</b>	 <i>GREAT FAST BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Reading: Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1: 43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 24th</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2: 1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 31st</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9: 1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 7th</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Reading: Hebrews: 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9: 17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 14th</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-14 Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 21st</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Reading: Philippians 4: 4-9 Gospel: John 12: 1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>APRIL 26th</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet, & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>APRIL 28th</b> NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1: 1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

# FASTING

The fast for the forty days of Lent is indicated below, though many are not able to hold to the strict fast. We offer the following guidelines to be considered prayerfully with the guidance of your spiritual father and in consideration of any medical condition or dietary requirements.

## STRICT FAST

No Meat, Fish, Milk, Dairy Products, Oil, or Oil Products

## PALM SUNDAY

Fish, Oil & Wine permitted

## FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Fish, Oil & Wine Permitted

Shellfish are permitted throughout Great Lent

Resource:

The Orthodox Daily Planner and Resource Guide published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries provides daily guidance in fasting, scripture, feast days and more.

## St. John Chrysostom on Fasting

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.

If you see a poor man, take pity on him.

If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.

Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes,  
but bite and devour our brothers?

May He who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.

## Jesus' Instructions on Fasting

"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."

*Gospel of Matthew Chapter 6:16-18*

## REPENTANCE & CONFESSION

Repentance has its roots in the apostles. In the Book of Acts the Apostle Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)

When we fall away from God, we have removed ourselves from His communion – with Him and with other Christians. We have excommunicated ourselves. To re-enter communion with God is the on-going activity of all Christians. We fall away daily in some way or another. No one is exempt.

Often, when children play in competitive games, one will call out "that's a do over!" Haven't we all wished for that chance to undo the past and start over? Repentance offers us this new beginning.

We are telling God that we have changed our mind about our past direction and want to be back in communion with him. The Greek work for repentance, metanoia, implies a very deep change in the way we see ourselves, our world, and our relationship to God. To change our mind in repentance is the starting point in our Lenten journey. We leave behind regret as we move toward hope. Repentance is not a single action but an attitude, a frame of mind.

Think back over your life of things which you regret having said or done – hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, deceitful. Think also of those things which you have done which may not have directly affected others, but which you know to be wrong according to the teachings of the Church. Bring them to mind as if they were occurring right now. Think of how it would have been if you had acted differently. Take this regret and turn it into repentance. Acknowledge that you have offended another person or the Church, and in doing so you have offended God.

If we are to be forgiven by God, He requires of us that we also forgive one another. For many of us, this is the most difficult aspect of repentance and confession. Yet we say it each time we pray the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Just as God’s love for us is personal, so must ours be for Him. As the Christian grows from child to adult, his or her personal response to God becomes crucial. This personal response is the act of confession.

## PRAYER

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.

*-St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians*

One key to a more fulfilling life is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, the aim of prayer is to enter into conversation with God. Prayer is sometimes referred to as dialogue with God. Often it is a waiting on God in silence. In the church it is defined as the lifting of the mind and heart to God, and also as walking in the presence of God. We turn our mind and thoughts toward Him. We mentally gaze at Him and speak with Him in reverence, fear, and hope. At times we speak to Him with words and at other times we stand in reverent silence, saying nothing, but being aware of His presence. In this dialogue with God we praise Him and thank Him. We ask Him for what we need. Our mind and our heart are opened to Him. Prayer is not only repeating words, it is trust in God that he hears and directs us in His Way involving spiritual growth and development.

### The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

Read each week-day during Great Lent

O Lord and Master of my life,  
take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.  
But give rather the spirit of  
chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.  
Yea, O Lord and King,  
grant me to see my own transgressions,  
and not to judge my brother,  
for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages.  
Amen.

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,  
present in all places and filling all things,  
the treasury of blessings and Giver of life:  
come and abide in us.  
Cleanse us from all impurity, and save our souls,  
O Gracious Lord.

# Praying Our Way Together

## Through Great Lent 2019

Eph.6:17-18 “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to the end with all perseverance...”



Come join your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ on a Lenten journey as we pray and read the Psalter each day for 20 days!

**What:** Reading the Psalter

**When:** March 18, 2019 – April 12, 2019, five days a week, Monday - Friday, at any convenient time

**Where:** In the comfort of your home or wherever you may be with your device.

**Why:** To heighten your Lenten journey by reading the Prayer Book of the Church!

If you would like to journey with us, please email your name, address, phone number, parish name, and parish address to Janice Meschisen at [Bridesong150@gmail.com](mailto:Bridesong150@gmail.com) and more information will be sent to you.

**Please respond by March 13, 2019**

Sponsored by the UOL



# Raising Saints

## Group Work for Great Lent

February 23, 2019 · [Elissa Bjeletich](#)

*Let us fast in a way that is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. True fasting is flight from evils, temperance of the tongue, refrain from anger, separation from lustful desires, and from lies, from falsehood and from perjury. The absence of all these makes our fasting true and acceptable. (From Vespers Service on Clean Monday)*

Let us fast. When we sing about fasting on Clean Monday, we'll sing together, a community that fasts together (and feasts together in the Eucharistic cup!) As much as fasting is an individual activity, as we prayerfully practice self-control and bring our own will into line, it's also a communal fast. We don't choose the days on which we fast; the whole Church fasts together on Wednesdays and Fridays and through pre-determined Lenten seasons. Indeed, the rules of the fast are shared; we don't choose what we'll give up in the Orthodox Church, but instead we are all called to keep the same fast, though we may have to adjust it for individual medical reasons. We are called to fast *together*.

I'm reminded of the Ninevites. The Holy Prophet Jonah came to them as reluctantly as a prophet can come, with the bad news that God would destroy them. Jonah didn't tell them to fast, but they knew instinctively that they must:

And Jonah began to enter into the city, going a day's journey, where he proclaimed and said, "Yet three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." And the men of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least.

Then the word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and put on sackcloth, and sat upon ashes.

And it was proclaimed and spoken in Nineveh by the king and by his great men, saying, "Let not the men, cattle, oxen, or sheep taste anything, eat, or drink water." So the men and the cattle were clothed with sackcloth, and they cried out fervently to God; and they each turned back from their evil ways and from the wrongdoings of their hands, saying, "Who knows if God shall have a change of heart and turn from His fierce anger, that we should not perish?" And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways. And God had a change of heart about the evil which He said He would do to them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3: 4-10)

The people of Nineveh — not the king, but the grass roots citizenry — proclaimed a fast. As a community, they understood what had to be done. "From the greatest of them to the least" every single person, right up to the king, was clothed in sackcloth and cried out fervently to God. The whole community, not just its leaders and not just a few farmers, but truly the whole community came together in one ascetic offering, and God heard them and did not destroy them (or their cattle).

This is the kind of fasting we undertake at Great Lent: it's not just one of us headed into the desert like St. Mary of Egypt (though such a fast is a beautiful thing), but this is all of us, crying out fervently to God together.

When we take seriously the communal aspects of Great Lent, it makes sense to gather in groups for some of our activities. We'll gather at church to worship together, and parishes will host Lenten retreats. We could consider

joining prayer groups or book groups too, so that we can support one another in our Lenten efforts, and experience the important role of community in this holy season.

Ideas for groups:

- Take the *Tending the Garden of Our Hearts* Parish-Wide Lenten Challenge! Families can read the daily meditations at home (or listen together to the Audible audiobook), and then gather occasionally to discuss what they're learning. Households with younger children should look for the podcast version that is adjusted for our youngest listeners and other Lenten resources, like countdown ideas (think Lenten advent calendar!) This also works well for moms' groups and playgroups.
- You might want to join a Psalter Group! These groups agree to divide up the Psalter and pray it all the way through every day. Usually, twenty people will each take one of the twenty Kathismata and each will pray just one Kathisma per day (so that all twenty are read by the group each day.) At the end of the prayers, they'll pray a "Lord, have mercy" for each member of the group by name. This is a beautiful way to attach group accountability to our Lenten prayer rule — and frankly, the prayers of those nineteen people can sustain us through a long Lent! If you don't have twenty people or a Psalter Group in your area, join mine! We'd love to have you.
- Consider getting a group together to read Nicole Roccas' *Time & Despondency: Regaining the Present in Faith and Life*. Nicole has created a free downloadable Lenten Study Guide to help you lead a group, and she's even moderating a Facebook Reading Group where you can gather together with questions and ideas.
- Start a Bible Study group! The Sunday Gospels throughout the Triodion period are all very thought-provoking and beautiful. This is a great time of year to get started with a group that reads the Scriptures together. Y2AM (The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry) has released a free Bible Study guide that will carry you from now through Great Lent.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/raisingsaints/group-work-for-great-lent/>

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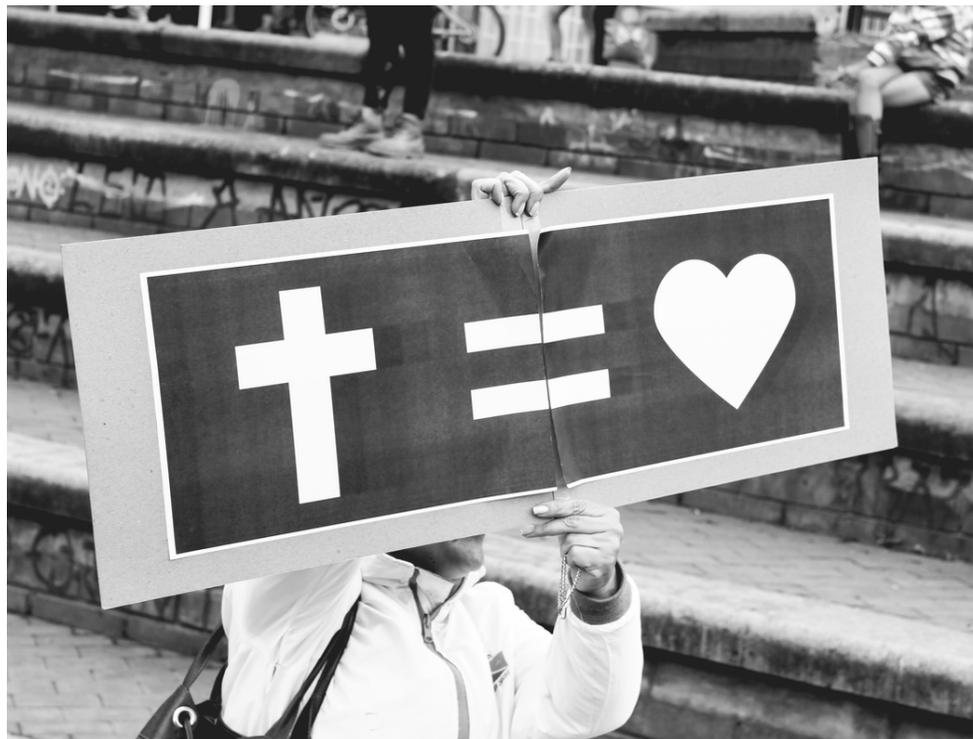
## He Cannot Sin

[Fr. Barnabas Powell](#)

"You sinner!" The preacher thundered from the pulpit in our small Pentecostal church, and, as a 10-year-old boy, he had me convinced. Yep, I was a sinner and I needed to be saved. So, that's what I did. In fact, every time there was a chance to be "saved" I took it! (I still do!)

Wouldn't it be wonderful to never sin again? But what if our idea of what sin really is is wrong? What if we have the wrong notion of what sin is in the first place? How can I stop doing what I don't understand?

Look at our Lesson in 1 John 3:9-22:



BRETHREN, no one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, and not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask.

St. John's provocative statement declaring that "no one" who is born of God commits sin" is shocking, especially since we know we do sin. So, does that mean we aren't born of God? But he doesn't stop there with the challenging comments. He then goes further and says that someone born of God "cannot" sin! Whoa!

Before you push the panic button, let's look at the rest of the passage to see what John is trying to communicate to us. John gives us three insights into the nature of sin and what overcomes this sad state in the human heart.

First, The Message of Love is "from the beginning." John immediately follows up his challenging comments with a reference to love being the timeless message of God to His creation. He uses the ancient story of Cain and Able to illustrate this message. Cain killed his brother, Abel, because Cain's deeds were evil. And his deeds revealed his heart. He didn't love his brother!

Next, The Message of Love is a matter of life and death. The key word here is "abide." In fact, this unlocks the whole passage. A lifestyle of love reveals a person is truly living in the divine nature. A lifestyle of a lack of love reveals just the opposite. Just as Christ laid down His life for us, so we, too, if we are His disciple, we lay down our lives for others.

Finally, The Message of Love is public. All know Who's side we are on as we allow love for others to be the paramount characteristic of our life. When everyone witnesses your love for others, this one consistent practice proves your freedom from condemnation. When your heart doesn't condemn you, no one else will either. And you can have confidence in your relationship with God.

So, a lifestyle of sin (not breaking a rule, but a lack of love) reveals you are still gripped by spiritual death and you are not participating in God's divine nature. But a lifestyle of love for others is the Family resemblance of a person who is becoming "like Christ!"

Today, what does your lifestyle say about who you belong to in the first place? Your deeds reveal your heart. So, what do your deeds say to everyone around you? It is by an active, daily, and consistent willingness to keep getting up every time you stumble that will gradually transform your life to one that is loving and like Christ. It's the whole reason we are called to be Orthodox on Purpose!

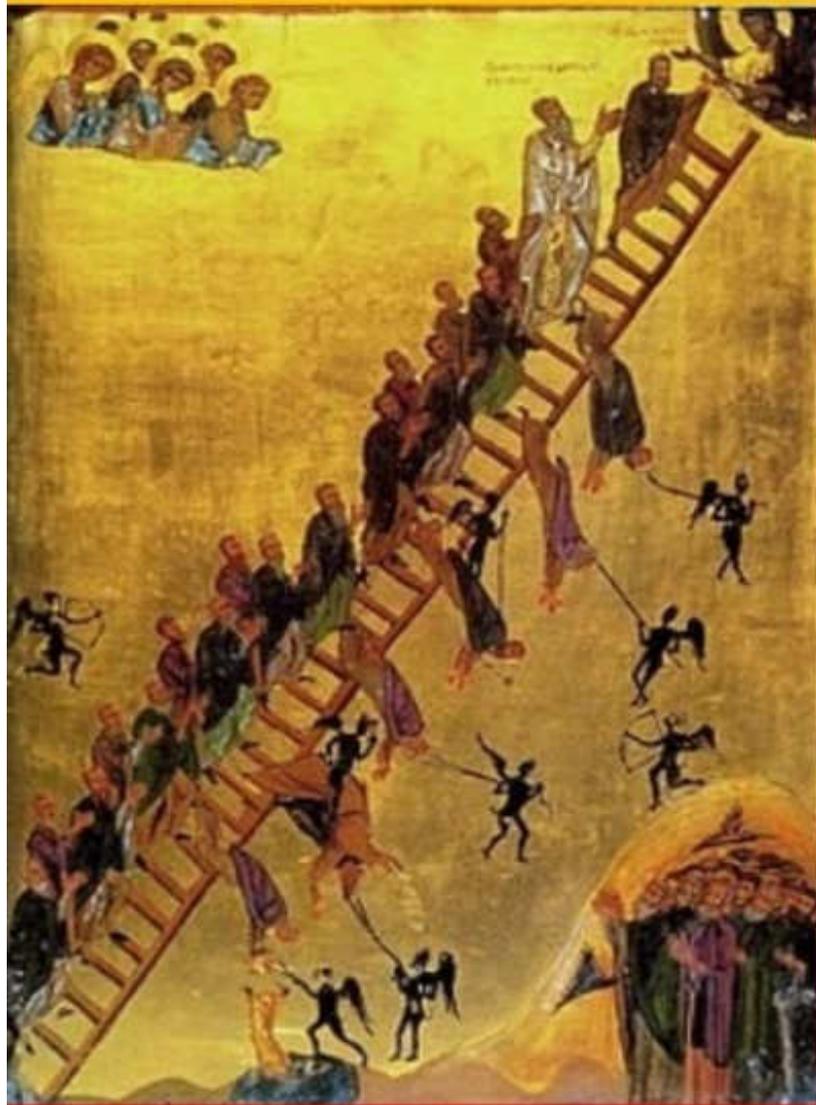
<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2019/02/he-cannot-sin-2/>



# *Lenten Retreat*

*Focusing on the Ladder of Divine Ascent and our  
spiritual journey one step at a time*

*April 13, 2019*



## **Speakers:**

**His Eminence**

**Metropolitan Gregory**

**Fr. Anthony Perkins**

*Retreat registration:*

*Adults \$45 (late fee \$10)*

*Adolescents \$20 (late fee \$10)*

*Children (under 12) \$7*

*Registration includes all meals, breakfast,  
lunch and dinner.*

*For more information contact:*

*Oleh or Natalie Bilynsky at*

*nsusler@aol.com call – 610-892-7315*

*St. Francis Center for Renewal*

*395 Bridle Path Road*

*Bethlehem, PA*



# 2019 UOL Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat

Senior/Junior Retreat Program and Activities

(Ohio/Western, Pennsylvania)

8:15 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday, March 30, 2019

*Don't just go to Church,*

# Be the Church

*Why Here, Why Now, Why Me*

*Looking from the Inside Out, Looking from the Outside In*

*It's only a matter of time, Living a Life that Matters*

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## Registration Fees:

Adults \$35.00 ■ Adults (Ages 19 to 25) \$20.00

Youth (Ages 10 to 18) Free

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8:15 AM – 5:00 PM: Registration, Continental Breakfast, Morning Prayers, Lecture/Discussion, Lunch, Vespers, Pizza and Refreshments, Departure

Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center

2067 Evergreen Road • P.O. Box 424 • Villa Maria, PA 16155 • Phone: 724-964-8886

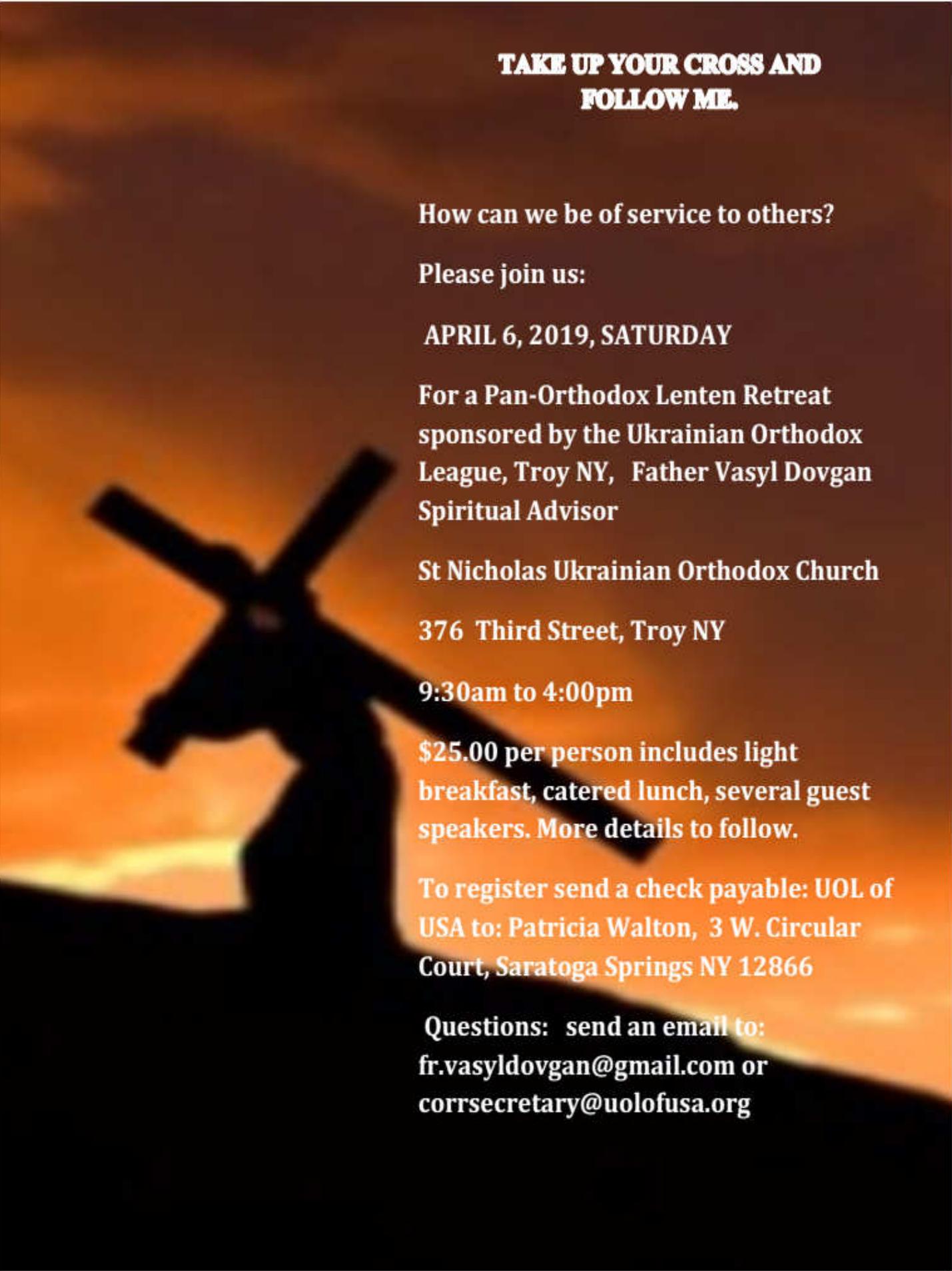
*Overnight accommodations available at Villa Maria (Single Room w/ Bath \$55.00; Double Room w/ Communal Bathroom \$25.00 per/person Double Occupancy) for long-distance travelers and others. Rates are subject to change.*

For more information or to request a registration form, call or text 412-565-9441 or send an email to: [ohiowpalentenretreat@gmail.com](mailto:ohiowpalentenretreat@gmail.com)

The Ukrainian Orthodox League of the USA

*Dedicated to our Church – Devoted to its Youth*

<http://www.uoorthodoxus.com>



**TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND  
FOLLOW ME.**

How can we be of service to others?

Please join us:

**APRIL 6, 2019, SATURDAY**

For a Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat  
sponsored by the Ukrainian Orthodox  
League, Troy NY, Father Vasyl Dovgan  
Spiritual Advisor

**St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church**

**376 Third Street, Troy NY**

**9:30am to 4:00pm**

**\$25.00 per person includes light  
breakfast, catered lunch, several guest  
speakers. More details to follow.**

**To register send a check payable: UOL of  
USA to: Patricia Walton, 3 W. Circular  
Court, Saratoga Springs NY 12866**

**Questions: send an email to:  
fr.vasyldovgan@gmail.com or  
corrsecretary@uolofusa.org**

## Looking at the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

March 6, 2018 · [Fr. Lawrence Farley](#)

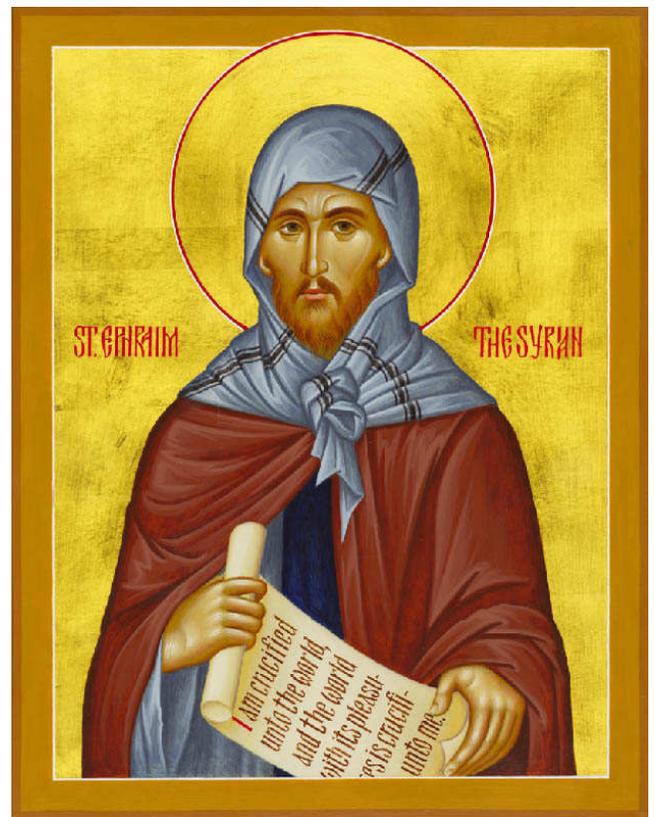
I cannot be the only Orthodox pastor to have been asked occasionally by my people about the meaning of the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian. In its (OCA) translation, it reads, “O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages.”

Most of it is fairly straightforward and easy to understand—although not at all so easy to accomplish. The spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love present no problem to the mind, only to the will, as does the petition to see one’s own sins and to refrain from judging others. The questions usually arise regarding the first petition, and what is meant by “sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk”. Avoiding these sins is difficult enough, but first we have to understand what sins we are striving against. “Sloth” (or “laziness” to give its more usual name) is fairly easy to understand, as are the sins of lust for power and idle talk. We all have temptations to sit around and watch television when we should be praying or working, and temptations to grab for control of things that don’t really belong to us. And of course everyone is all too familiar with the temptation for idle talk, whether the talk be gossip, whining, or complaining. But what, I am often asked about, is meant by “despair”? It conjures up ideas of suicidal depression—a problem certainly, but why is it grouped with such other daily sins as laziness, the itch to control, and to run off at the mouth? Surely such despair is (mercifully) rather rarer than these common sins?

The Greek translated by the OCA translation as “despair” is *περιεργία*/ *periergia*. Orthodox Wiki (that invaluable source for unilingual people like myself who speak no Russian or Slavonic) tells me that the Slavonic renders it *небрежѣніа*/ *nebrezheniya*, which it renders as “faintheartedness or despondency”—thus, I suppose, the OCA rendering of it as “despair”. But the Greek is very different. (Orthodox Wiki wonders aloud if the difference might be attributable to a different original.) The word *periergia* comes from the words *peri* (meaning around or beyond) and *ergia* (meaning deed or to do). The Liddell-Scott Greek lexicon defines it as “over-exactness in doing anything” and as “intermeddling, officiousness”. Google’s version of the Oxford English Dictionary offers “Chiefly Rhetoric: The use of an excessively elaborate or elevated style to discuss a trivial matter; bombastic or laboured language”. It traces it to the “classical Latin *periergia* excessively elaborate rhetorical style (Quintilian)” and from the “Hellenistic Greek *περιεργία* already in ancient Greek denoting futility, needless questioning, curiosity, superfluous, excessively elaborate, especially of rhetorical style and in sense ‘taking needless trouble’”.

Putting all of this together we get the idea of a desire to show off, to sound off and impress people by putting our verbal oar in when discussing things that are none of our business. This fits better with the other sins on the list, and is much more common than the sin of despair. We often are tempted by laziness, by the itch to control, and by the desire to talk when we should listen. The temptation to show off how clever we are and win arguments often go along with such sins.

What all these sins have in common is the failure to restrain ourselves, the temptation to let ourselves go. I let myself go by sitting around when I should be working or by surfing the net when I should be praying (i.e. the sin of sloth). I fail to restrain myself when I leap in to try to make things go my way when I should mind my own business and take things as they come (i.e. the sin of lust of power). I fail to restrain myself when I whine, complain, denounce, or otherwise opine about things which don’t concern me (i.e. the sin of idle talk). And I



fail to restrain myself when I give in to the temptation to dominate conversation, win every argument, and generally show the world how spectacularly clever I am (i.e. the sin of *periergia*—possibly translated “boastfulness”). Over against such sins, St. Ephraim’s prayer counsels restraint—the alternative way of keeping quiet and patient, of reining in the desire to obtain, defeat, dominate and impress. Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing.

In the Orthodox liturgical tradition the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian is said many times, usually with prostrations and bows, so that the body prays as well as the mind. The repetition is helpful, for in our secular western culture the successful person is the one who impresses, the mover and shaker, the one who confidently puts himself (or herself) forward and is not shy of expressing an opinion, the one who wins, who dominates, who owns the room. That person is the one who we say “is going places”, and who will certainly end up as CEO or VIP. It is all about self-promotion and self-assertion. Against such a relentless onslaught we need all the help we can get. We can’t say the Lenten prayer too many times.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/nooterfoundation/looking-lenten-prayer-st-ephraim-syrian/>

## Therapeutic Medicine

Abbot Tryphon

As we begin the Lenten Journey, it would be good for us to consider the use of a “prayer rule.” This “rule” is of critical importance, for it will help us develop the discipline we need to progress spiritually. It is one of the great tools the Orthodox Church has to offer, since it has been handed down from the Fathers of the Church. This “art of prayer,” comes directly to us from the experience of the Early Church.



Along with keeping the fasting rules of the Church, including the Wednesday and Friday fasts, the prayer rule, received in consultation with your priest, your confessor, or your spiritual father or mother, is the medicine that will help you progress spiritually on your journey into the Heart of God.

An integral part of anyone’s prayer rule should be the recitation of the Morning and Evening Prayers, as found in the numerous translations available of the Orthodox Prayer Book. These prayers, together with the Precommunion Prayers, and the prayers to the Holy Virgin, train our hearts in the discipline that help us sustain the grace that we receive when we commune of the Life Giving Mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood, and help us go deeper into our faith.

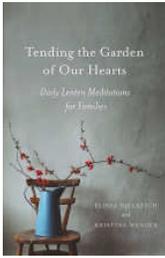
The use of the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner,” throughout the day, further aids us as we attempt to live out our day, focused on Christ. There is power in the Holy Name of Jesus, and this prayer fulfills Saint Paul’s injunction that we “should pray always.” The Jesus Prayer, also known as the Prayer of the Heart, gives us the strength to walk with Jesus throughout the day, even when driving through heavy traffic, weeding in the garden, waiting for the bus, or sitting in a long board meeting.

Finally, it is important to remember that the Church, as defined by the Church Fathers, is not a religious institution, but is a living organism that is the Hospital for the Soul. Therefore, the frequent use of the “tools” given to the Church, are of the utmost importance for our spiritual progress. Weekly confession, as well as the weekly reception of Holy Communion, fortify us spiritually, enabling us to live “in the world” without being “of the world”.

Because the Orthodox Church is “wholistic” our living out this Faith should not be confined to Sunday morning. If we were a pianist who made our living accompanying an orchestra, we wouldn’t think of going through a week without daily practice. The conductor of the orchestra wouldn’t put up with an unrehearsed pianist. As well, a marriage that is not worked at on a daily basis is doomed to ultimate failure since a relationship between two people requires effort. If we expect to have a relationship with God we have to prioritize our spiritual life. An occasional Liturgy does not suffice if we expect to grow in Faith and Wisdom.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/2016/03/therapeutic-medicine/>

# Lenten Reading from our Parish Bookstore



## **Tending the Garden of Our Hearts: Daily Lenten Meditations for Families. \$17.95**

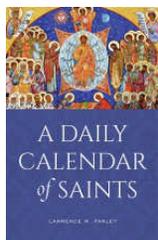
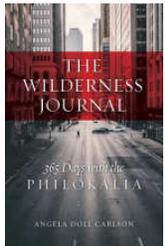
by *Elissa Bjeletich and Kristina Wenger*

Are you looking for a way to keep your family engaged in the true spiritual nourishment Lent has to offer? *Tending the Garden of Our Hearts* offers family devotions based on the scriptures for each day of Great Lent, including questions to discuss and ponder and an appendix full of hands-on activities to bring the lessons of the season to life. Whether you use it every day or dip into it occasionally as time permits, this book will help the whole family get more out of this crucial season of the Orthodox year.

## **The Wilderness Journal: 365 Days with the Philokalia , \$18.95**

by *Angela Doll Carlson*

*The Philokalia* - a collection of the best writings from Orthodox spiritual masters across many centuries - is a treasure trove of direction for the spiritual life. But it can be overwhelming at first glance. Popular author and podcaster Angela Doll Carlson set herself the mission of reading through *The Philokalia* in a year and journaling about the thoughts it called up in her. The result is a thoughtful, inspiring daily devotional that introduces new readers to this great spiritual classic and helps us apply the wisdom of the ages to a layperson's life in the modern world.



## **A Daily Calendar of Saints: A Synaxarion for Today's North American Church, \$17.95**

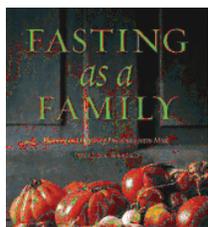
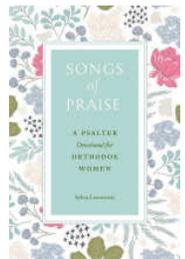
by *Lawrence R. Farley*

Popular biblical commentator and church historian Fr. Lawrence Farley turns his hand to hagiography in this collection of lives of saints, one or more for each day of the calendar year. His accessible prose and contemporary approach make these ancient lives easy for modern Christians to relate to and understand.

## **Songs of Praise: A Psalter Devotional for Orthodox Women, \$29.95**

by *Sylvia Leontaritis*

If you want to make the Psalter a more integral part of your life - either on your own or as part of a Psalter group - *Songs of Praise* is the perfect aid. It includes the full text of the *Ancient Faith Psalter* (with wide margins for note-taking). Each kathisma is followed by a reflection from popular Orthodox Mom blogger Sylvia Leontaritis plus several blank pages for journaling. Read, reflect, and journal your way through the Psalter and let its holy words sink into your soul.



## **Fasting as a Family: Planning and Preparing Delicious Lenten Meals, \$21.95**

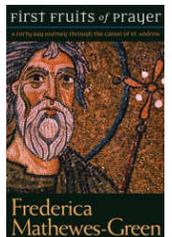
by *Melissa Naasko*

Does every fasting day or season find you scanning your pantry shelves in a panic, wondering what in the world to cook for dinner? Help is on the way! Melissa Naasko, food blogger and mother of 11, will walk you through the process of stocking your Lenten pantry, planning meals, providing for tight budgets and dietary restrictions, and cooking easy, delicious, and varied fast-appropriate meals that both kids and adults will love. With worry about food a thing of the past, you'll be able to focus on the spiritual aspect of the fasts as never before. (Includes an extensive recipe section.)

## **First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty-Day Journey Through the Canon of St. Andrew, \$15.95**

by *Frederica Mathewes-Green*

A guided retreat—ideal for the Lenten Season—through the classic Great Canon of St. Andrew, still chanted by Eastern Christians every Lent. This insightful book offers readers a series of forty prayerful readings with accompanying commentary and questions for further reflection



## **Meditations for Great Lent: Reflections on the Triodion, \$9.95**

by *Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou*

The Lenten Triodion exhorts us, "Let us observe a fast acceptable and pleasing to the Lord." Using hymns from the Triodion and the Scripture readings appointed for the season, *Meditations for Great Lent* shows us how to make our fast acceptable: to fast not only from food but from sin; to fast with love and humility, as a means to an end and not an end in itself. Keethis gem of a book with you to inspire you for the Fast and to dip into for encouragement as you pursue your Lenten journey.





**The Lenten Spring, \$18.00**

by: Fr. Thomas Hopko

The Church welcomes the Lenten spring with a spirit of exultation...with the enthusiasm of a child... The tone of the church services is one of brightness and light. Thus the author begins the first of forty meditation on Great Lent, casting out the gloom and darkness with which many Christians approach this holy season and revealing, in a simple, clear and beautiful manner, its true meaning.

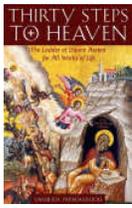
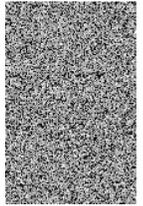
In his meditations, Fr Hopko draws on his long experience as a pastor and teacher, working with young and old throughout the country, to present to the modern reader the relevance of the Church's two-thousand-year-old tradition of preparing to greet our Lord's Resurrection. But in so doing he also makes extensive use of all facets of church tradition from all times, inspiring scriptural and liturgical passages from the Lenten services, the spiritual wisdom of the ancient saints and fathers, as well as the teachings of modern guides to the Christian life.

All Christians who undertake the yearly journey to the blessed Pascha of our Lord will find inspiration and guidance in these meditations. All can enjoy reading and rereading them and share in the profound thoughts of the author as they make their own spiritual way through this holy season.

**Meditations for Holy Week: Dying and Rising With Christ, \$12.95**

by Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou

Archimandrite Vassilios brings his liturgical and devotional insights and warm, accessible style to bear on the services of Holy Week, helping the reader enter fully into this most rich and intense period of the Christian year.



**Thirty Steps to Heaven: The Ladder of Divine Ascent for All Walks of Life \$18.95**

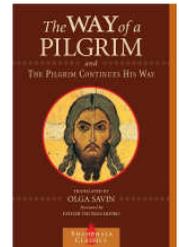
by Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou

Many laypeople have attempted to read the great spiritual classic, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, but have been frustrated in attempting to apply the lessons of this monastic text to their everyday lives in the world. In *Thirty Steps*, Archimandrite Vassilios interprets the *Ladder* for the ordinary Christian without sacrificing any of its beauty and power. Now you too can accept the challenge offered by St. John Climacus to ascend closer to God with each passing day.

**The Way of a Pilgrim & The Pilgrim Continues His Way, \$21.95**

This edition was translated by Olga Savin, and includes a foreword by Fr. Thomas Hopko

This spiritual classic is the firsthand account of a pilgrim's journey as he endeavors to live out Saint Paul's instruction to "pray without ceasing." An un-named nineteenth-century peasant sets out on his pilgrimage with nothing but a Bible, a prayer rope, and some dried bread, and as he walks, he recites the Jesus prayer. With this prayer constantly on his lips, he undergoes a profound spiritual education. This edition contains the sequel, entitled *The Pilgrim Continues His Way* (which includes a review of the teachings of the fathers on the Jesus Prayer).



**Lenten Cookbook for Orthodox Christians, \$12.00**

A cookbook especially made for Great Lent and other Orthodox times of fasting, which includes chapters on bread, fish, main dishes, shellfish, salads, and desserts etc.

Now a classic, with over 23,000 copies in print. Note: If you are looking for a fancy illustrated cookbook, then this is not for you. It has no pictures or glossy pages, just a basic typewriter-font layout, but the instructions are clear and the recipes have been well-tested and are reliable.

Contains the life of St. Euphrosynos the Cook, the basic fasting information and rules, as well as scores of Lenten recipes.



**Garden in the East: The Spiritual Life of the Body, \$17.95**

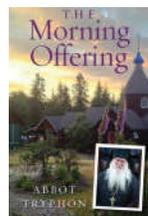
By: Angela Doll Carson

How we care for and nurture our bodies has implications for all areas of our development—physical, emotional, and even spiritual. The body is a living and organic revelation of the unseen spirit inside—a kind of garden. Garden in the East is a poetic exploration of how the care of the body can lead us to wholeness and wellness in every area of our lives.



**The Sweetness of Grace: Stories of Christian Trial and Victory, \$20.95**  
by *Constantina R. Palmer*

From the author of *The Scent of Holiness*, *The Sweetness of Grace* is a collection of stories derived from conversations with Orthodox nuns, monks, and laypeople, along with experiences of Orthodox life in South Korea, Greece, and North America. Those who enjoyed *Everyday Saints* will enjoy these similar stories from other parts of the Orthodox world.

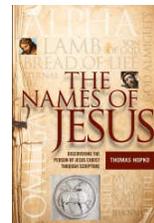


**The Morning Offering, \$19.95**  
by: *Abbot Tryphon*

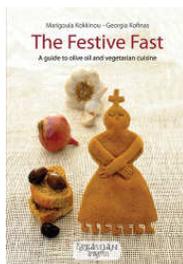
Thousands of readers and listeners have benefited from the fatherly wisdom and insight of *The Morning Offering*, the blog and podcast of Abbot Tryphon of All-Merciful Saviour Monastery, Vashon Island, Washington. Now Abbot Tryphon's reflections on faith and contemporary life have been collected in book form, with one entry for each day of the year. Start your day with *The Morning Offering* and keep yourself oriented toward Christ all through the day.

**The Names of Jesus: Discovering the Person of Jesus Christ through Scripture, \$22.95**  
by *Fr. Thomas Hopko*

In this book based on his popular podcast series of the same name, the late Fr. Thomas Hopko shares meditations on over 50 different names and titles used for Jesus in the Bible. Learn what each name uniquely has to tell us about the character of the Son of God, His role in our salvation, and the relationship we can choose to cultivate with Him.



**The Festive Fast: A Guide to Olive Oil and Vegetarian Cuisine, \$25.00**  
by *Marigoula Kokkinou and Georgia Kofinas*

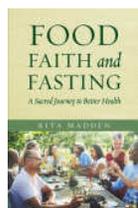
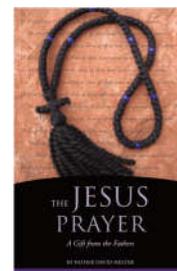


More than just a cookbook, *The Festive Fast* serves as a guide to olive oil and vegetarian cuisine based on the dietary guidelines of the Eastern Orthodox liturgical fasts. The 389 recipes focus on both traditional and creative Mediterranean cuisine, offering healthy food choices without meat and dairy products. Together with quotes from the Church Fathers, this book offers a means to maintain a balance between body and soul. The recipes in this book can be used for sit-down meals, buffets, cocktails, dinners, tea parties, or coffee hours. There are certain ingredients which should be kept on hand which are basic to lenten and vegetarian cuisines. *The Festive Fast* is a precious guide to balanced nourishment,

facilitating the ascetical effort of fasting and the adoption of a proper lifestyle. Its authors have treasured the experience of people and offered rich proposals for inspiration and culinary creativity.

**The Jesus Prayer: A Gift from the Fathers, \$3.95**

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." This prayer has been on the lips of Christians since the time of the Desert Fathers. What is its history? How do we make it our own? This booklet traces the development of the Jesus Prayer through the early centuries of the Church, follows its progression through Mount Athos, the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas, and others, and discusses its modern revival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Concludes with a brief discussion of how this prayer can be appropriated by the individual believer today.

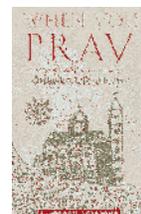


**Food, Faith, and Fasting: A Sacred Journey to Better Health, \$17.95**  
by *Rita Madden*

Orthodox Christians fast approximately half the days of the year. But in our food-obsessed society, how do we determine our approach to eating in general? Nutritional expert Rita Madden expands on her popular podcast to help us eat in a way that is healthful for both our bodies and our souls—in times of fasting, feasting, and the ordinary days in between. Includes recipes.

**When You Pray: A Practical Guide to an Orthodox Life of Prayer, \$9.95**  
by *L. Joseph Letendre*

Anyone who prays, or has tried to pray and given up in discouragement, knows praying—really praying—is not easy. Praying consistently seems almost impossible. Too often and too easily, prayer becomes a burden: one more item on an already overcrowded to-do list. Failing to pray becomes a source of guilt and stress as we must once again admit our inconstancy and procrastination to our father confessor. Yet, our Lord said, "Come to me, all of you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. My burden is easy and my yoke is light" (Matt. 11:30). The purpose of this book, then, is not to add to the burden, but to ease it by distilling the advice and experience of those who pray.



# A MEDITATION ON ALMSGIVING

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

Christ commanded his disciples to give alms. To “give alms” means literally “to do” or “to make merciful deeds” or “acts of mercy.” According to the Scriptures, the Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering, full of mercy, faithful and true. He is the one who does merciful deeds (see Psalm 103). Acts of mercy are an “imitation of God” who ceaselessly executes mercy for all, without exception, condition or qualification. He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Mercy is a sign of love. God is Love. A deed of merciful love is the most Godlike act a human being can do. “Being perfect” in Matthew’s Gospel corresponds to “being merciful” in Luke’s Gospel. “Perfection” and “being merciful” are the same thing.

To love as Christ loves, with the love of God who is Love, is the chief commandment for human beings according to Christianity. It can only be accomplished by God’s grace, by faith. It is not humanly possible. It is done by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Acts of mercy must be concrete, physical actions. They cannot be “in word and speech, but in deed and truth” (First letter of John and letter of James). Acts of mercy are acts done to Christ himself who was hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, in prison and sick in the form of being wounded for our transgressions on the cross, taking up our wounds, and dying our death.

Christian acts of mercy must be sacrificial. By this, we understand that we must not simply give to others what is left over. We have to be sharing our possessions with others in ways that limit our-selves in some way (The Widow’s Mite). And, acts of mercy should be done without qualification or condition to everyone, no matter who, what or how they are (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

## Alms Giving Opportunities

### **IOCC- International Orthodox Christian Charities**

**Mission- IOCC. In the spirit of Christ’s love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond. IOCC will respond without discrimination, to those who are suffering and in need, to enable them to continue to improve their own lives and communities and to have means to live with dignity, respect and hope.**

**Donate at: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org) or send donation to IOCC, PO Box 110 West Road, Suite 360 Baltimore, MD 21204 or by phone 877-803-4622**



### **OCMC- Orthodox Christian Mission Center**

**Mission- To help fulfill the Great Commission of Christ(Matthew 28:16); the Orthodox Christian Mission Center(OCMC) strives to establish vibrant Eucharistic communities throughout the world, to develop and support indigenous church leaders, and to strengthen the infrastructure of their churches. OCMC carries out this work primarily, though not solely, in countries where Christianity is in the minority and where the Gospel message has not been proclaimed. OCMC will recruit, train, send, and support Orthodox missionaries to preach, teach, baptize, construct, and minister to the spiritual and physical needs of those being served and saved.**



**Donate at: [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org) or send donation to: OCMC, 220 Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086**

## FOCUS + Pittsburgh

### Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve



#### *Who We Are*

FOCUS North America is a national movement of Orthodox Christians, united in faith and joined by a desire to provide action-oriented and sustainable solutions to poverty in communities across America—offering job training and placement, housing, and feeding programs, as well as other human services to the homeless and working poor.

Pittsburgh is one of the more than 50 cities across the United States that have joined this movement. Regionally, FOCUS Pittsburgh operates in a similar capacity providing healthy food for children, household and personal items for families, counseling for ex-offenders, bus passes, job training, and healthcare.

Yet, in 2016 FOCUS Pittsburgh bore life to a new strategic plan, Trauma-Informed Community Development (TICD), that would significantly expand its mission.

Upon returning from his tour in Iraq, U.S. Army Veteran Paul Abernathy and director of FOCUS Pittsburgh says, he noticed starking similarities between his own community and that of the war zone. "When I came home, I could see my own community [the Hill District] was traumatized," he said. "You can spend one year in the Army at war, but some kids in our communities spend their whole lives," with the trauma and fear of violence every day.

Trauma-Informed Community Development (TICD) grew out of research that found underlying causes of violence, homelessness, joblessness, poverty, addiction, and abuse in exposure to chronic emotional stress and trauma. Since its inception in the Pittsburgh community, the program has worked to establish and promote healthy, healing micro-communities through community support, health and well-being initiatives, and leadership development.

Donate at: <https://www.focuspgh.org/>

## ZOE for Life

any women are fortunate to have the love and support structure to lead them to marriage, children, and a meaningful life. Others, however, are not as fortunate. They find themselves in a crisis pregnancy. They have made the wrong choices and are in turmoil. They're not thinking, they're panicking.

ZOE serves as a conduit, guiding women to a wider range of support organizations, providing them with a more attractive set of options and hopefully a more promising outlook on their situation. For example, there is counseling, housing assistance, medical assistance, prenatal care, adoption and other services available that are usually unknown to most women in crisis pregnancies. It is ZOE's goal to offer more options to women in distress to empower them to make life saving decisions for their babies as well as themselves.



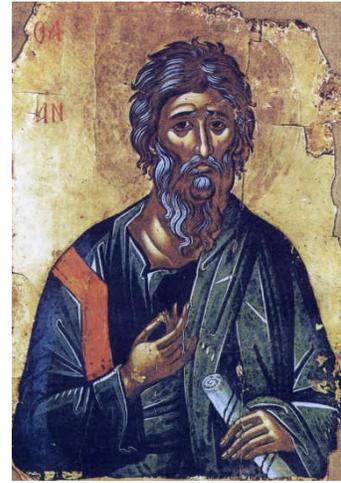
ZOE for Life!<sup>TM</sup> is a pan-Orthodox outreach of Orthodox Christians. It is funded privately, and has received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. All gifts are tax-deductible as specified by law.

Donate at <http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org/index.htm> or  
3352 Mayfield Road , Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

## St Andrew's Society

**Saint Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Society** was founded in 1990 by the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA as a religious and charitable organization.

As an integral ministry of the Church, the Society's philanthropic mission focuses on providing humanitarian assistance to the needy and supporting church-related projects in Ukraine. Since its founding, the Society has raised over 1.3 million dollars towards the support of religious, educational and humanitarian projects.



### Saint Andrew's Society Mission supports:

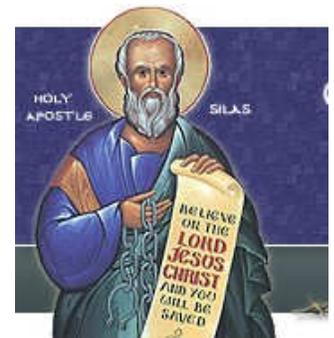
- the Christian spiritual rebirth of the Ukrainian people and reverse the consequences of Soviet militant atheism;
- the efforts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in re-establishing the universal principle of humanity, justice, charity and tolerance;
- the rebirth of the persecuted and devastated Church in the former Soviet Union.
  
- humanitarian aid to the needy, the orphans, the elderly, and the refugees in Ukraine;
- financial and logistical assistance to seminaries in Ukraine and scholarships for theological students to study abroad;
- publications of religious literature, assistance towards medical projects and church restorations.

### Donations may be forwarded to:

*St. Andrew's Society*  
*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA*  
*PO Box 495*  
*So. Bound Brook, NJ 08880*

## OCPM – Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry

**Mission -** The goal of OCPM is to bring the love of Christ to those who are in prison by providing encouragement, material support, transition and reintegration services, Christian education, spiritual guidance and the sacramental life of the Church.



Donate at: <https://theocpm.org/> or send donation to :

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM)  
P.O. Box 1597  
New York, NY 10025

**There are many other worthwhile charities, causes and monasteries one can donate to during this Lenten season. Here are several links where additional information can be found.**

[www.uocofusa.org](http://www.uocofusa.org)

[www.assemblyofbishops.org](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org)

# *Internet Lenten Resources*

ANCIENT FAITH MINISTRIES

<http://www.ancientfaith.com/>

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE

<http://www.antiochian.org/lent>

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE

<http://lent.goarch.org/>

MYSTAGOGY: GREAT LENT RESOURCE PAGE

<http://www.johsanidopoulos.com/2011/03/great-lent-resource-page.html>

My Beautiful Lent

<https://mybeautiful Lent.com/>

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN NETWORK

<http://myocn.net/>

SS. Peter & Paul

Ukrainian Orthodox Church

PO Box 835

Carnegie, PA 15106

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED