

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Church

Sunday, March 1, 2020

Fr. John Pawelchak - (618) 975-8375

Tone 4: Expulsion from Paradise; Cheesefare; Finding the Head of John the Baptist, St. Tarasios of Constantinople, St. Porphyrios of Gaza, St. Basil the Confessor, Sts. Marina and Kyra of Syria, Fathers and Mothers of Monasticism, St. John Cassian, St. John Basanuphius, Martyrs Eudokia and Antonina, St. David of Wales.

Welcome:

Welcome to all visitors to our celebration of the Divine Liturgy today! We are glad you are here. Though Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Please also join us for coffee and fellowship downstairs afterwards!

This Morning:

9:30 AM - Church School

10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy, Vespers, and Act of Forgiveness



Troparia and Kontakia

Resurrection Troparion - Tone 4: When the women disciples of the Lord/ learned from the angel the joyous message of thy Resurrection,/ they cast away the ancestral curse/ and elatedly told the apostles:/ “Death is overthrown!/ Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

Kontakion - From the Lenten Triodion: O Master, Teacher of wisdom,/ Bestower of virtue,/ Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor,/ strengthen and enlighten my heart!/ O Word of the Father, / let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:/ “Have mercy on me, a transgressor,// O merciful Lord!”

Prokeimenon - Tone 8

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps 75/76:11)

v: In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps 75/76:1)

Epistle

Romans 13:11-14:4

11 And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

14:1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Alleluia - Tone 6

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. (Ps 91/92:1)

v. To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night. (Ps 91/92:2)

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Church * 112 N. Fairdale Street * Royalton, Illinois 62983

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Gospel
Matthew 6:14-21 (NKJV)

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 “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. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 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.

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Upcoming Services

Wednesday, March 4, 2020 - Presanctified Liturgy with Bridegroom Matins

5:15 PM Confessions, 6:00 PM Liturgy

Sunday, March 15 - St. Gregory Palamas & Holy Cross

9:30 AM Church School, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Saturday, March 21- Memorial Saturday

9:15 AM Confessions, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, April 1, 2020 - Presanctified Liturgy

5:15 PM Confessions, 6:00 PM Liturgy

Saturday, April 4, 2020 - Bishop Paul Visitation

4:00 PM Vespers

Sunday, April 5, 2020 - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

9:00 AM Meeting the Bishop, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Potluck Lenten Meal with His Grace, Bishop Paul

**Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM Sundays, as scheduled. Other Sundays will be a Reader Service.*

Forgiveness Sunday

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday.

On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (Mark 6:14-15).

Then, after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: “Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!” [and] after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the

church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people, Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says: “In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.”

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies”? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them—in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize – be it only for one minute – that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me – we begin to realize that it is Christ Who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery – and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists – we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, “opens to us the doors of Paradise.” We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting – true fasting; our effort – true effort; our reconciliation with God – true reconciliation.