

****IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION****

Until further notice, we will continue celebrating the Divine Services up to no more 33 parishioners in attendance. With this in mind, if single parish members or parish member households - UP TO 33 PEOPLE IN CHURCH AT EACH DIVINE LITURGY - would like to attend the Divine Liturgy on a Sunday please refer to the following signup link <https://signup.com/go/AqSQSmX> ** (Slots 1-33 in the Church and 34-55 in the Parish Fellowship Hall)! **PLEASE SIGN-UP BY 6:00 PM ON SATURDAY NIGHT AS WELL AS ANSWER THE COVID QUESTIONNAIRE!!

Regarding Holy Communion:

- If anyone would like to come and receive Holy Communion or if you would like Fr. Jason to come and bring Holy Communion to your home, please contact him to make arrangements:
jvansuch@hotmail.com/609.851.3811/716.875.4222

Regarding Holy Confession:

Taking into consideration the spiritual and mental healing that comes through the Sacrament of Confession, His Eminence blesses, for all priests and communities in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, that for this period:

- Confession may continue to be held over the telephone or by live video communication; it may also be done in person with social distancing kept between the priest and the penitent (6 feet), and with face masks worn by both. The Prayer of Absolution can be given by video or phone and especially in person.
- When Confession is heard over the telephone or by live video, the priest must read the Prayer of Absolution before ending the phone call or video communication, in the hearing of the penitent.
 - If anyone would like to have Confession, please contact Fr. Jason to make arrangements:
jvansuch@hotmail.com/609.851.3811/716.875.4222

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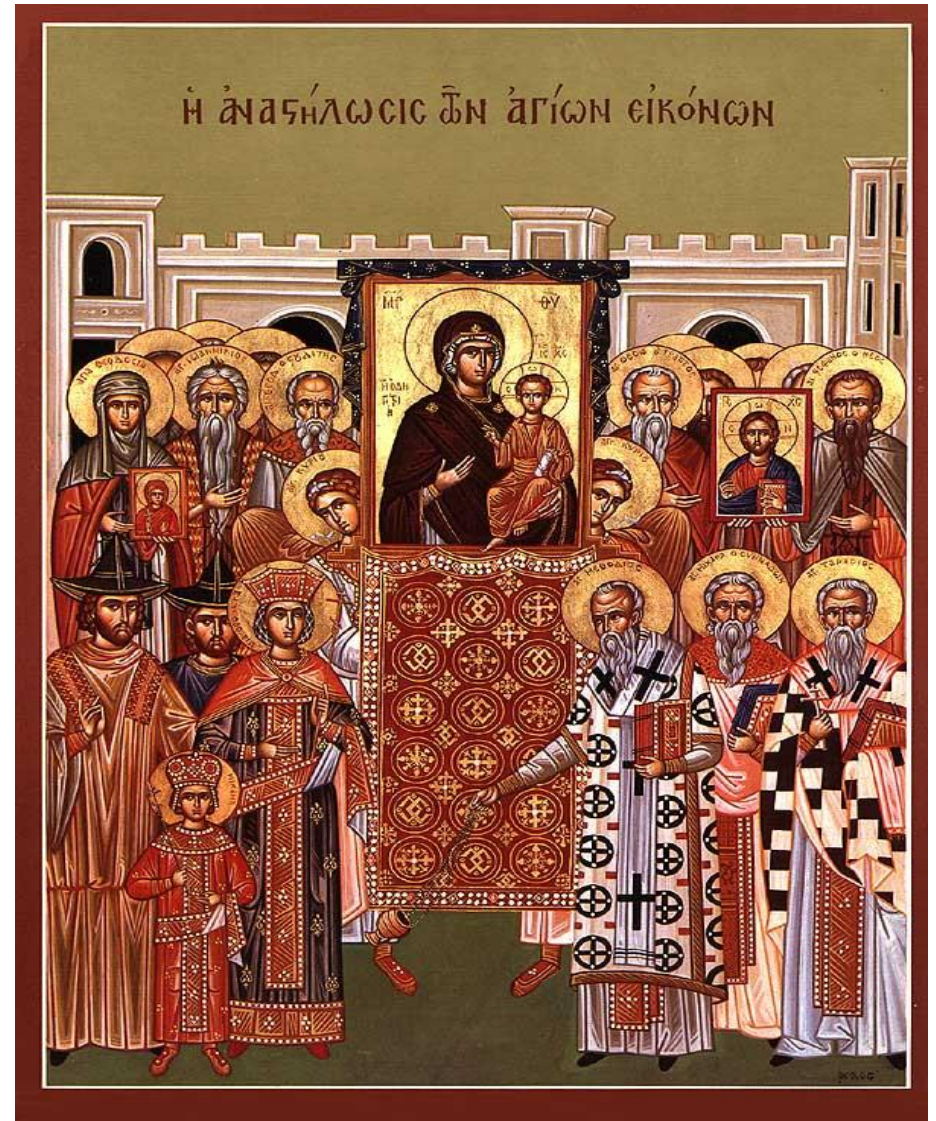
Please look up the below weblink for the Digital Edition of The Jacobs Well:
<https://issuu.com/jacobswell/docs/jacobs-well-fall-2019-nk>

Please look up the below weblink for the website of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey:

<https://www.nynjoca.org>

Please look up the below weblink for the newly-updated Diocesan Directives of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey for the Gradual Approach of Re-Opening of our Parishes:

<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/covid-19/Diocesan-Directives-on-the-Gradual-Re-Opening-of-Diocesan-Churches-2020-05-08-For-Distribution.pdf>



St. George Orthodox Church
2 Nottingham Terrace - Buffalo, NY 14216
(716) 875-4222
www.stgeorgebuffalo.com

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Published weekly in the interest of the parishioners and friends of Saint George Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The Orthodox Church in America

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

2 Nottingham Terrace Buffalo, NY 14216

V. Rev. Jason Vansuch, Parish Priest

2 Nottingham Terrace 716-875-4222 Buffalo, NY 14216

Cell Phone: 609-851-3811 Email: jvansuch@hotmail.com

Presbyter Andreja Damjanovski, Attached Rev. Peter Irfan, Attached
Reader John Kirwan, Choir Director
Mr. Paul Shosho, Parish Council President
Home: 716-544-7358 Email: pshosho@me.com

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 8. Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. James (Jacob, Iago) the Confessor, Bishop of Catania (8th-9th c.). St. Cyril, Bishop of Catania (1st-2nd c.). St. Thomas, Patriarch of Constantinople (1610).

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

John 1:43-51

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

GLORY FOREVER!

****FLOWERS FOR THIS WEEK****

In front of the Icon of Our Lord, In front of the Icon of The Theotokos, and on the Center Icon Table are donated by St. George Orthodox Church

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Altar Vigil Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory of Thy Servants of God – Marion Rose, William, and George. May their memory be eternal.

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TODAY'S WEEKLY MESSENGER IS SPONSORED BY:

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We welcome all of you to the Divine Liturgy this morning, especially those who are visiting with us here at St. George Orthodox Church. Everyone is invited to the Parish Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy for Christian Fellowship. It is our prayer that your experience this morning was spiritually uplifting and you will return very soon to pray with our parish family. In the Orthodox Church, we do not practice open Communion. However we do invite everyone to come and participate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through prayer and fasting may receive Holy Communion. May the Lord bless you with many years of good health and happiness.

THE SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

Sunday March 21 FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
9:10 A.M. The Hours
9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Annual Procession of Icons with Church School Children/Parishioners around the Church)
Memorial Litia in Loving Memory of Archpriest Eugene Vansuch
Social Distant Coffee Hour Luncheon following Divine Liturgy in Parish Fellowship Hall

Church School Class via Google Classroom (12:30-1:15 PM)

5:00 P.M. Lenten Vespers Service

Second Week of Great Lent {March 22 - March 28}

Eve of the Great Feast of the Annunciation of The Most-Holy Theotokos

Wednesday March 24 **9:30 A.M.** Presanctified Liturgy
6:00 P.M. Great Compline with Litiya

The Great Feast of the Annunciation of The Most-Holy Theotokos

Thursday March 25 **9:30 A.M.** Vespers with Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
6:30 P.M. St. George Adult Education Class via Zoom

Friday March 26 **9:00 A.M.** Confessions
9:30 A.M. Presanctified Liturgy
5:00 P.M. Confession
6:00 P.M. Memorial Matins

Saturday March 27 **SECOND SATURDAY OF GREAT LENT – MEMORIAL SATURDAY**
9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy with Memorial Litia Prayer Service
4:00 P.M. Great Vespers

Sunday March 28 **SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – ST. GREGORY PALAMAS**
9:10 A.M. The Hours
9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Social Distant Coffee Hour following Divine Liturgy in Parish Fellowship Hall
Church School Class via Google Classroom (12:30-1:15 PM)

5:00 P.M. Lenten Vespers Service

*** * * * * PRAYERFUL REMEMBRANCE * * * * ***

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP IN OUR DAILY PRAYERS
FOR THE HEALTH OF THY SERVANTS:**

HIERARCHS

Metropolitan HERMAN Bishop DANIEL Archbishop ALEJO

CLERGY

Archpriest Herman, Matushka Cynthia and George *(Schick)* Archpriest James and Mat. Patricia *(Mason)*
 Archpriest Alexey and his family *(Karlcut)* Archpriest Vladimir and Matushka Jeanne
 Archpriest Timothy/Mat. Michelle Archpriest Michael and Mat. Valerie *(Hatrak)*
 Archpriest Ken and Matushka Natalie *(Starevsky)* Dn. Sean and Mat. Heather *(McNulty)*
 Archpriest Gregory and Mat. Diane *(Winsky)* Priest Peter and Mat. Mary *(Irfan)*
 Archpriest Leonid Archpriest David *(Mezinski)* Presbyter John and Presbytera Nancy
MATUSHKI Presbyter Andreja, Popadija Anica and Family
 Mat. Katia Mat. Paraskeva Mat. Joanna Popadija Vicki Mat. Christine Mat. Patricia *(Severeno)*
 Mat. Gloria *(Martin)*

Stanley Mandy Annette Anna *(Massey)*

Family/Friends/Parishioners of St. George Orthodox Church

William Natalie Natasha Richie

Catherine Ivan/Marina/Inna Bonnie *(Dan)* Coard Karen Aliscia *(Nick Rostko)* Walter, Paul
 Edwina Irene Luba Silvu Dan, Jr. Jim, Darren, Marsha *(Relatives of Elaine M.)*
 Serena Lillian Reader Victor Nicholas, Andrew *(Wityk)* Frank *(Barb. K brother-in-law)*
 Sarah Oscar Albert *(Fadell)* Frank Boris *(Kuvshinoff)* Marilyn *(Linda cousin)*
 Xenia, Justin, Danielle *(Friends of Fr. Jason)* Larry Joseph *(Rocco Father in Law)* Ronald, Candice *(Masset)*
 Victor *(Tita Nephew)* Catherine *(Tony)* Susan *(Kirwan)* June *(Pavlov)*
 Evelyn *(Friend of Julie)* Billy *(William – Mat. Christine’s cousin)* Clyde Allison *(school)*
 Robert *(Phillips)* Rebecca *(Relative of Mat. Christine)* Svetlana *(Family friend of Fr. Jason/Mat. Katia)*
 Jeanne *(Mat. Christine’s Friend)* Angela, Jason, Michelle *(Relatives of Dn. Mark)* Linda Justin *(Slaiman)*
 Carol *(Mailman’s sister-in-law)* Joseph, John, Margaret, Thomas, Victoria *(Ewing)* Ashley *(Friend from Roswell)*
 Melody Lee *(Beth’s brother)* Lee, Bridget *(John Kirwan friend)* Paul *(Shosho)* Brain *(Brother of Matthew Just)*
 Kelly, Robert, Boris, Zaeb, Tirza, Sabas Sada Thlisinitsa, Gemmal, Geesa, and Patric *(Fr. Peter)* Child Senit
 Anne *(Mariami Grandmother)* Jeremy Stewart *(nephew of Bill George)* Susan *(Zumba)* Juliana *(Matusiak)*
 Susan *(Deeb)* Justin *(Cmunt)* Louis *(cousin of Barbara)* Yuri/Elena Alex *(Valieff)* John, Kevin Irene Sean
 Jaime *(Zumba)* Rosemary Harry *(neighbor of Tom and MaryAnne Slaiman)* Anthony *(DelNuova)*
 Aspasia *(Dean’s Mother)* Charles Seraphim Emma/Alexander *(relatives of Natalie Huett)*
 Olga *(Friend of Fr. Jason/Mat. Katia)* Vadym Iryna Yuriy Anastasia Noah *(McEntee)* Elias, John, Joseph
 Mary, Hal, Autumn, Ariana, and Amber Judithann *(Friend of Barbara)* Steven *(Uncle of Dean)*
 Barbara *(Rdr. John’s Sister in Law)* William *(Friend of Judge Family)* John, Helen *(Parents of Tanya Cmunt)*
 Brian John, Roberta, Barbara *(Family of Dana and Annette)* John, Michael John Matthew *(Bashira)*
 Rdr Nicholas, Judithann, Michael, Mary, Cate, Michael, Gary, Damian, Olga, Clara *(Bethlehem)*
 Jeffry, Dominic, Rachel *(Family of Andrea)* Lee, Benjamin, Harry Patrick *(Relatives of Beth Mellas)*

Diocese of NY&NJ Prayer List

Protopresbyter Leonid *(Kishkovsky)* Archpriest Samuel *(Kedela)* Mitred Archpriest Joseph Lickwar
 Archpriest George *(Hasenech)* Archpriest Paul *(Shafra)* Mitred Archpriest Daniel and Mat. Myra *(Kovalek)*
 Archpriest Jonathan *(Ivanoff)* Archpriest Paul *(Kucynda)* Archpriest Sergei and Mat. Gerry *(Glagolev)*
 Archpriest Terenti *(Wasielewski)*

Expectant Mothers Randy Iris, Pete, Sara Douglas, Chris Costa *(Father of Pete Thanos)*

Rachel and the child to be born of her Jonathan Kevin, Lary, Carly, Sherry, Mary Jo , Dragiza, Karl

Those Serving in The Armed Forces

Catechumens

Kenneth, Nadine, Jason, Robert, Andrew, Justin, Shawn, Austin, Juanita Martha

Chris, John, Daniel, Gjorgie

FOR THY DEPARTED SERVANTS OF GOD:

All of the clergy and parishioners of This Holy House who have departed this life, who now lie asleep in the Lord.

Ever-Memorable Archpriest Eugene Vansuch Ever-Memorable Archpriest George Timko
 Ever-Memorable Priest John Bohush Ever-Memorable Archpriest George Aswad
 Ever-Memorable Archpriest Rastko Matushka Dorothy *(Timko)* Met. THEODOSIUS
 Ever-Memorable Dn. Mark Ever-Memorable Sbdn. Gregory
 Ever-Memorable Pdn. Gregory Martha, Akhtar Remyat, and Barkat *(Family of Fr. Peter)*

Newly-Departed Servants of God Audrey *(Grandmother of Mariami)* Proto. Daniel *(Hubiak)*

Archpriest John *(Chupeck)* *If anyone would like to have their loved ones added to the prayer list for remembrance during the Divine Liturgy, please see or contact Fr. Jason.

HYMNS FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY
Tropars/Kontakions for Divine Liturgy

TROPAR FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!// O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Troparion for Sunday of Orthodoxy — Tone 2

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One; and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy. Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee: “Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior, // by coming to save the world.”

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion for The Lenten Triodion – Tone 8

No one could describe the Word of the Father; but when He took flesh from thee, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty.// We confess and proclaim our salvation in words and images.

PROKEMEINON Tone 4

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

v: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

ALLELUIA VERSES

Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name.

They called to the Lord and He answered them.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following)

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace: the assembly of Angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a Child – our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace. Glory to you!

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

EPISTLE LESSON FOR TODAY

HEBREWS 11:24-26, 32-12:2

BRETHREN:

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, and were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves of the earth*. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY

JOHN 1:43-51

Let us Attend!

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

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=== Scriptural Readings for The Second Week of Great Lent ===

Monday	Genesis 3:21-4:7	Proverbs 3:34-4:22
Tuesday	Genesis 4:8-15	Proverbs 5:1-15
Wednesday	Genesis 4:16-26	Proverbs 5:15-6:4
Thursday	Genesis 5:1-24	Proverbs 6:3-20
Friday	Genesis 5:32-6:8	Proverbs 6:20-7:1
Saturday	1 Thess. 4:13-17 and Heb. 3:12-16	John 5:24-30 and Mark 1:35-44
Sunday	Hebrews 1:10-2:3 and Heb. 7:26-8:2	Mark 2: 1-12 and John 10:9-16

FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

THE FEAST OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Next Sunday (March 21) is The First Sunday of Great Lent in which we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy and the restoration of the Veneration of Holy Icons which was established at the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 and then re-established in 843.

With this in mind, following the Liturgy, we will have The Annual Procession of Icons with Everyone (the Church School Children and All Parishioners) as we carry their Icons in procession proclaiming their faith and belief as Orthodox Christians. Please make every effort to be here next Sunday that we, as a parish family, may proclaim our faith, our belief, our life - TOGETHER!!

CHILDREN and ADULTS:

***DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR FAVORITE ICON
WITH YOU TO CHURCH!!***

May GOD continue to bless and guide
all of you and your families!

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**** NEW PROTOCOLS WHEN ATTENDING THE DIVINE LITURGY ON SUNDAYS****

☒ **A Parish Council Member will greet everyone at the Front Entrance Doors to the Church. We will have the Sign-Up Sheet there to mark off your name if you signed-up to attend. If we did not sign-up, then we will write your name down and kindly remind you to sign-up before next Sunday. We will also take your temperature as well. If someone has a fever or is experiencing symptoms or answers YES to any of the COVID Questions, they will not be permitted to come into the church.**

☒ **EVERYONE attending the Divine Liturgy (those in the Nave and those in The Parish Fellowship Hall – parishioners, choir members, parish council members) NEED to sign-up. Only Those in the Altar do not need to sign-up as they are not taking space in The Nave. Once we reach our capacity of 33 people in The Church, everyone else will be seated in The Parish Fellowship Hall. We must also remember to wear a mask in Church and in the Parish Fellowship Hall as well as on Church Property at all times and maintain social distancing. If we forget one, we will have them available at the Candle Desk as well as in the Parish Fellowship Hall. Also, when we enter the Church and say our prayers, we must use the hand sanitizer that is located at the Candle Desk as well as review the posted Diocesan Guidelines. These (masks, prayers, hand sanitizer) are also located in the Parish Fellowship Hall These precautions are for the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes and enters our Church to pray and worship God.**

☒ **When receiving Holy Communion, a Parish Council Member will call everyone up – pew by pew – to allow for social distancing (the children and Altar Servers will come first, then the first pews up front all the way to the back of the Church with the Choir being the last ones to receive Holy Communion). If any faithful are in The Parish Fellowship Hall, Fr Jason, Fr. Andreja, or Fr. Peter will bring Holy Communion to those in the Hall.**

****If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to see or contact Fr. Jason. May God continue to bless and guide all of you!****

LIVE-STREAMING OF DIVINE SERVICES

As a friendly reminder, ALL DIVINE SERVICES, WILL ALSO BE LIVE-STREAMED from Fr. Jason's Facebook page and our Parish Youtube Page so that we can still be together and pray together. So please continue to join us in prayer!! There are three ways you can join us in prayer via Live-Stream even if we do not have a FaceBook account:

- 1) Go directly to our Parish Website (www.stgeorgebuffalo.com) and on our homepage you will see a box that says 'Restream: Stream currently offline". When 'live-stream' is active, the live video will automatically appear.
- 2) Go directly to Fr. Jason's Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/jason.vansuch> and there you will see the Live-stream video.
- 3) Go directly to our Parish Youtube Page <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCft4AWAX2COorLZExfMJc5KQ> and there you will see the Live-stream video.

Also in the Parish Fellowship Hall, we have the Giving Tree! If anyone would like to sign up for Coffee Hour Readers Bulletin Collection, Communion Cloth, Home Blessing, please see or contact Fr. Jason!



A SINCERE AND HEARTFELT THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS TO THE PARISH FROM OUR PARISH GIVING TREE

- Fr. Jason and Mat. Katia for donating the flowers the Feast of The Annunciation of The Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
- John and Gretchen Judge and Rebecca Torres for donating the Incense
- John and Gretchen Judge for donating the Vigil Candles near The Gospel Book/Confession, The Icons of The Holy Sepulchre, The Icons of All Saints of North America, and The Icons of St. Nektarios and The Holy Relics, The Icons of Our Lord, and The Icons of The Mother of God for the continued good health of their Family.

Please be sure to check out "The Giving Tree" in the Parish Fellowship Hall as well as on our parish website (www.stgeorgebuffalo.com) to see how we may be able to donate towards the needs of our parish through our continued support and stewardship for our beloved parish.

If anyone has any questions, please see or contact Fr. Jason or Barbara.

Thank you for your continued prayerful support and stewardship. May God continue to bless and guide all of you, your families and our entire Parish family and keep all of us in His Loving Care!

WELCOME TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH!

Do we have questions about our life, its meaning, purpose, destiny?
Are we desiring to know Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God?
Are we seeking forgiveness, healing, and wholeness?
Do we wonder where to go to find answers?

We can find the answers to these questions and so many other questions
in The Holy Orthodox Church through Her Sacred Tradition,
Holy Scriptures, Her Teachings and Dogmas.

The Orthodox Church is the original Christian Church, the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and described in the pages of the New Testament. Her history can be traced in unbroken continuity all the way back to Christ and His Twelve Apostles, empowered and sent forth on the day of Holy Pentecost. Incredible as it seems, for over twenty centuries she has continued in her undiminished and unaltered faith and practice. Today her apostolic doctrine, worship, and structure remain intact. The Orthodox Church maintains that the Church is the living Body of Jesus Christ. Many of us are surprised to learn that for the first 1000 years of Christian history there was just one Church.

Where is "**The Church**" to be found and experienced today? Come Taste and See How Good The Lord is every Sunday by joining us for The Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

What is Orthodox Christianity all about? How does it differ from other Christian confessions? This section will attempt to answer these questions and many more. For a visual introduction to the Orthodox Church, please view the video link below: http://www.youtube.com/v/Gj4pUphDitA&color1=0xb1b1b1&color2=0xcfcfcf&feature=player_embedded&fs=1 For a brief introduction and in depth study to The Orthodox Faith and to find answers to: 'What we Believe?', 'Who we Are?', and 'How we Live?', please view the PDF link below:

<http://orthodoxdelmarva.org/files/studies/InquirersClassV1final.pdf>

or you may visit the OCA website by clicking the link below:

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith>

or you can begin a Journey Through Orthodoxy by clicking the link below:

<http://journeytoorthodoxy.com>

To learn more ways that we can teach our children about the Orthodox Faith, The OCA has provided a wonderful website for us to use that provides great resources such as (handouts, texts, articles, stories, and much more)! To see this great website, please view the PDF link below:

<http://dce.oca.org/page/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about The Orthodox Faith, please contact our parish priest: V Rev. Jason Vansuch (jvansuch@hotmail.com) or 716.875.4222 and he will be able guide you.

IMPORTANT DATES WITHIN THE LIFE OF OUR PARISH

Parish Announcements:

- We will continue with our on-going collections for The Buffalo City Mission, Hearts for Homeless, Mats for Mission, HomeSpace as well as Kevin Guest House and our other outreach ministry projects.
- **WE CONTINUE TO CONTACT ALL OF OUR PARISHIONERS ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IS OKAY, SAFE AND HEALTHY.**

****Please be on the lookout for emails this week with the following items:**

- 1) **Reader Vespers for Saturday Evening (March 27)**
- 2) **Reader Typika Service for Sunday Morning (March 28)**
- 3) **Information for St. George Book Class – Monday (March 29)**
- 4) **Information for Special Inquirer Class – Thursday (March 25)**
- 5) **Reader Vespers and Typika Service for Wednesday and Friday (March 24/26)**
- 6) **Reader Vespers Service for Sunday Morning (March 28)**

**EACH WEEK WE WILL BE RECORDING
THE WEEKLY INCOME FOR EACH SUNDAY AS WELL AS OFFERING THE
MONTHLY INCOME and EXPENSE FOR OUR PARISH!**

**INCOME FOR SUNDAY March 14, 2020 – \$ 2,920.00
& \$500 for Capital Improvement Fund
DONATIONS FOR THE NEW BOILER (Capital Improvement Fund) –
Total Donations so far for the New Boiler: \$19,130.00**

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND GUIDE YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PRAYERS!

Please refer to the Weekly Bulletin and Church Website for any changes to the calendar!

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER RULE WE CAN PRAY TOGETHER AT HOME WITH OUR FAMILIES

A Prayer Rule must be done in front of the icons and the Gospel in our Icon Corners with a lit candle.. It is important to remember that we must make time for God, for the "Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"(Matt. 11:12).The best time to pray is in the morning or in the evening when we as a family can come together in prayer. Also, when using a Rule of Prayer, we must be flexible and do what we can and do it attentively and consistently. Our goal is to maintain the connection with God and cultivate a real relationship with Him.

With that in mind, please find below The Rule of Prayer offered by our Diocese for us to use at home especially during this most difficult time when we are not able to be in church together as a parish family.

<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/praying-at-home/A-FAMILY-PRAYER-RULE.pdf>

May God bless you and keep you always in His Loving Care!

ST. ANDREW'S CAMP

** Saint Andrew's Camp has released a new promotional video for prospective campers!

The video can be found here on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewsorthodoxcamp/videos/357928144820497/>

**Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)

For more than sixty years, St. Andrew's Camp has offered the young people of our parishes an incredible summer camping experience. Children and teens have been instructed in prayer and the divine services, the reading of Scripture and the teachings of our Orthodox Church. They have been nourished with the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. They have had fun swimming, horseback riding, playing sports, singing and learning musical instruments, creating in the visual arts, learning to safeguard the planet, and exploring the stars. And they have established friendships that last a lifetime, met their future spouses, and nurtured their vocations to serve the Lord in ministry.

As a token of gratitude for the labors of love extended by the administration and staff, both clergy and laypersons, of St. Andrew's over the past six decades, it is now time for us to help the Camp in an especially needed way.

Please join us in raising funds for the new multi purpose building which will include new kitchen, dining hall and activities center. The cost of this new building is \$300,000. To become a reality, the completion and furnishing of this much-needed center will require great generosity of individuals, organizations and parishes.

You can click on the link below which will take you to the gofundme.com page.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/st-andrew039s-camp-fundraiser-by-ss-peter-and-paul>

As we continue to fulfill the work of Our Lord by living and fulfilling His Gospel Message, let us open our hearts and minds by providing support and assistance to our Diocese, to our children, by taking a moment to reflect upon what God has given us, and to discern how we might be able to return to God a portion of the blessings we have received.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you and your families for your continued prayers, support and generosity.

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**Also, make sure we check out the promotional video for prospective campers!

The video can be found here on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewsorthodoxcamp/videos/357928144820497/>

**Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)

Remember our Loved Ones during Our Daily Prayers

'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

{Matt. 25:40}

As we say our daily prayers, let us also take time out to remember our loved ones who are homebound, who are in hospitals and who are in nursing homes. Let us remember them that GOD will continue to watch over them and protect them. Also, during the Year, let us take to either send them a card, give them a call, or visit them to let them know how much we love them, how much we remember them, and how much we pray for them.

Please refer to the of our Parish Shut-Ins below.

If anyone has any questions or would like to add someone to our List of Parish Shut-Ins, please see or contact Fr. Jason. May God continue to bless you and guide you!

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH PARISH SHUT-INS (2020)

Mrs. Diane Salvamoser 147 West Hazeltine Avenue Kenmore, NY 14217 716.875.9503	Reader Victor Shanchuk 495 Lafayette Avenue Buffalo, NY 14222 716.881.3096	Mrs. Luba Japadjief Elderwood Nursing Home (Memory Care Unit) 245 Bassett Road Williamsville, NY 14221 (Room 30)
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Mrs. Catherine Tony 274 Wadsworth Ave. Tonawanda, NY 14150 716.695.3068	Mr. Albert Fadell 317.376.2562
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Andrew Wityk
Ellicott Center
200 Seventh Street
Buffalo, NY 14201

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WEEKLY VIDEO SERMONS GIVEN BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL

These sermons offered to us by The Diocese via video can be found on the Diocesan Website: <http://www.nynjoca.org>! There are videos for each week beginning with The Feast of Feasts – Holy Pascha! Be sure to check them out!

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An Invitation to Support the Stewards of the OCA!

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) set the direction for expanding our apostolic work in North America at the 18th All-American Council. The foundation for this work is Jesus Christ, Whom we encounter in our spiritual lives, stewardship, evangelism and outreach, and relations with others as we engage the world. Being a steward of the OCA goes beyond the financial gifts which support the work of our church. Being a steward is about caring for and knowing the history of the mission of the Orthodox Church here in North America and finding your place in that history. Having received this great gift of our Orthodox Faith, we bear the responsibility to continue the legacy of Saint Herman and Saint Tikhon; Saint Innocent and Saint Alexis and all the other saints known and unknown who have worked to build up and expand Christ's Church here in North America. Please consider being a part of that mission today by giving to the Stewards of the OCA. For more information, please visit The OCA Website: <https://oca.org/become-a-steward>

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An Invitation to Support the Ministry of the DDB!

In order to fund necessary ministries and fulfill the work of the Church in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors** generously contribute financial support. To learn more about the DDB, please go to the following link: <http://vimeo.com/71021182> and watch a 60 second video inviting you to join the ever-growing list of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey who joyfully support the on-going work of our diocese. Their support allows us to provide assistance to new mission parishes, scholarships to seminarians, support the departments of The Diocese, and much-needed encouragement to older struggling parishes. How about you? Our parish is a member of the DDB. If anyone would like to join, please see Fr. Jason as well as take a pamphlet from the table in the back of the church. May God continue to bless and guide you for your continued support. The Diocese of New York and New Jersey has two monthly newsletters: "**First Fruits**" and "**Beyond the Plateau**." The goal, as expressed by Archbishop Michael, is to increase communication and grow the communal spirit of diocesan fellowship in the building-up and strengthening of our parish communities. To learn more about these monthly diocesan publications, please refer to the diocesan website: <http://www.nynjoca.org/newsletters.html>.

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"Lessons in Our Faith" Video presented by His Eminence Archbishop MICHAEL

His Eminence Archbishop Michael presents a series of talks on matters of faith, belief, and the teachings of the Church. These instructional videos are concise and "to the point," offering Orthodox Christians much-needed information, helpful advice for their spiritual journey, and assistance in answering questions that may come from non-Orthodox friends or acquaintances. The goal is that we might better know and better live our faith. These instructional videos can be found at the Diocesan Website: <http://www.nynjoca.org>! For those who do not have internet, please see the handouts from each lesson which are located on the table in the back of the church. **There are 14 videos! Be sure to check them out!**

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH BOOKSTORE

As you are in the Parish Fellowship Hall for coffee hour, don't forget to check out our newly-formed Bookstore. We have some new items that just arrived. These items include: Icon ornaments, jewelry, Icons, prayer books, prayers ropes, and much more. If you need a Gift, come check out the Bookstore...you may find something you like!! We are now also offering Gift Certificates for our Bookstore. Please speak with Dave or Andrea for more details/information!! We thank David and Andrea Chmiel who are managing of our Bookstore for us. If you have any questions or if you would like to order something that you do not see, please see or contact David or Andrea Chmiel and they will be able to assist you. You may also email them at: bookstore@stgeorgebuffalo.com. May GOD continue to bless and guide all of you.

Self Preservation

Many things have been done - or words were said
That pierced the heart - like a bullet of lead
And though the event came - and soon was gone
The sting of it all - lingered on and on.

Dwelling on the past - though time has marched on
Will make us miserable - no mood for a song,
Because peace and joy - Satan is stealing
Thus, he alone prospers - if we hold an ill-feeling.

We must forgive others - in a way that is right:
Leaving their flaws - for only God's sight.
Sometimes it's impossible - to humanly do
So we call on the Holy Spirit - to see us through.

When the Lord forgives us - our slate is wiped clean.
God doesn't hold grudges - or see us as mean.
Yes, He gives us a chance - for a whole new start.
He holds no memory - of our mistakes in his heart.

If we can't forgive - like the Lord intended
We have a miserable life - which can't be mended.
Because an unforgiving heart - is real devastation
And forgiving completely - is self-preservation.

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****A REMINDER FOR HOSTING COFFEE HOUR DURING GREAT LENT****

When hosting coffee hour during Great Lent, we must refrain from using meat and dairy products in our foods and beverages.

If anyone has any questions about fasting or restrictions when hosting coffee hour, please see Fr. Jason and he will help you and guide you!

May all of us have a Blessed, Peaceful, Holy and Prayerful Great Lenten Journey!

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****NEW SECTION IN THE WEEKLY BULLETIN: LENTEN RECIPES****

As we are in the midst of Great Lent, we would like to share with one another those delicious Lenten Recipes that we have from our home kitchens. If anyone would like to share a Lenten Recipe with our parish family, please email it to Fr. Jason (jvansuch@hotmail.com) so that we can include it in the weekly bulletin. This will be another way for us to stay connected with one another as well as an opportunity to build up and expand our recipe books at home ☺

TODAY'S RECIPE..... Lenten White Bean Soup

Ingredients

- 1 pound dried white beans (such as Great Northern or Navy beans)
- 10 cups water
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion (diced)

- 2 medium carrots (diced)
- 2 ribs celery (diced)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced plum tomatoes (un-drained)
- 2 tablespoons [tomato paste](#)
- Dash salt (or to taste)
- Dash freshly ground black pepper (or to taste)
- *Garnish:* 1/4 cup fresh [parsley](#) (chopped)

Steps to Make It

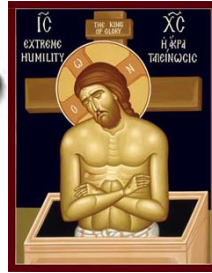
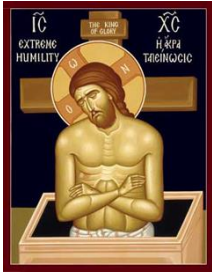
Soaking dried beans rehydrates them and results in more tender beans and shorter cooking time. If you don't have an extra day to [soak the beans overnight](#), you can try the quick soak method below.

Quick Soaking Method

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Add beans plus enough water to cover beans by 2 inches to a pot.
3. Add 2 tablespoons salt and stir.
4. Bring beans to a rolling boil.
5. Turn off heat, cover, and soak for an hour.
6. Drain and rinse beans under cold water before using.

For the Soup:

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Add the beans, water, and olive oil to a large, [non-reactive soup pot](#) and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer covered until beans are tender but not mushy - about 1 hour.
4. Add vegetables, tomatoes, tomato paste, and bay leaf to the pot and simmer uncovered another 30 to 45 minutes for flavors to meld and soup to thicken a bit.
5. Season the soup with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
6. Remove the bay leaf and sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley before serving.
7. Enjoy!



ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH EDUCATION CORNER

2021 - THE SCHEDULE OF SUNDAY GREAT LENTEN VESPERS - 2021

“Fulfilling the Gospel through Our Life in Christ”

****ALL SUNDAY EVENING VESPERS
WILL BE SERVED AT ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH (BUFFALO, NY)****

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Discussion: “Being called to be Living Icons of The Gospel in our everyday life”

Sunday March 21, 2021
5:00 PM

St. Gregory Palamas

Discussion: “Prayer as a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

Sunday March 28, 2021
5:00 PM

Veneration of the Cross

Discussion: “The Cross a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

Sunday April 4, 2021
5:00 PM

St. John Climacus

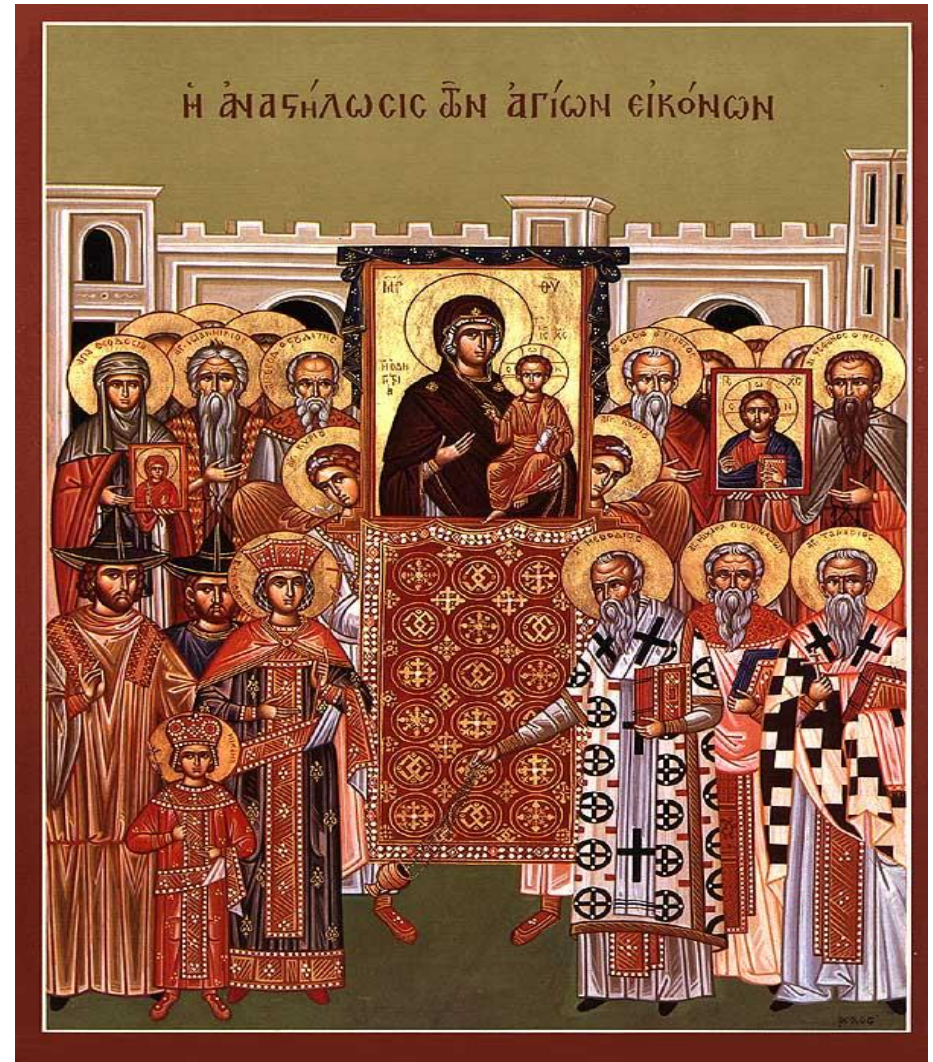
Discussion: “The Ladder of Divine Ascent a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

Sunday April 11, 2021
5:00 PM

St. Mary of Egypt

Discussion: “Repentance a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

Sunday April 18, 2021
5:00 PM



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT: THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

THE RESTORATION OF HOLY ICONS

The Seventh Ecumenical Council.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council was convened in 787 A.D., in the city of Nicea, under the Empress Irene, widow of the Emperor Leo IV, and was composed of 367 fathers.

The Council was convened against the iconoclastic heresy, which had been raging for sixty years before the Council, under the Greek Emperor Leo III, who, wishing to convert the Mohammedans to Christianity, considered it necessary to do away with the veneration of icons. This heresy continued under his son, Constantine V Copronymus, and his grandson, Leo IV. The Council condemned and repudiated the iconoclastic heresy and determined to provide and to put in the holy churches, together with the likeness of the honored and Life-giving Cross of the Lord, holy icons, to honor and render homage to them, elevating the soul and heart to the Lord God, the Mother of God and the Saints, who are represented in these icons. After the Seventh Ecumenical Council, persecution of the holy icons arose anew under the Emperors Leo V, of Armenian origin, Michael II, and Theophilus, and for twenty-five years disturbed the Church. Veneration of the holy icons was finally restored and affirmed by the local synod of Constantinople in 843 A.D., under the Empress Theodora.

At this council, in thanksgiving to the Lord God for having given the Church victory over the iconoclasts and all heretics, the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was established on the first Sunday of Great Lent, which is celebrated by the Orthodox Church throughout the world.

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The Synodikon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

{Proclaimed on Sunday of Orthodoxy}

As the Prophets beheld, As the Apostles taught, As the Church received,
As the Teachers dogmatized, As the Universe agreed, As Grace illumined,
As the Truth revealed, As falsehood passed away, As Wisdom presented, As
Christ awarded,

Thus we declare, Thus we assert, Thus we proclaim Christ our true God and
honor His saints,

In words, In writings, In thoughts, In sacrifices, In churches, In holy icons.

On the one hand, worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord.

And on the other hand, honoring and venerating His Saints as true servants of
the same Lord.

This is the Faith of the Apostles. This is the Faith of the Fathers.

This is the Faith of the Orthodox. This is the Faith which has established the
Universe.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

THE FEAST OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. The first Sunday is called the **Feast of the Triumph** of Orthodoxy. It is a historical feast commemorating the return of the icons to the churches in the year 843 after the heresy of iconoclasm was overcome. The spiritual theme of the day is first of all the victory of the True Faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn 5:4). Secondly, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, "created in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26), becomes holy and godlike through

the purification of himself as God's living image. The First Sunday of Great Lent in which we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy and the restoration of the Veneration of Holy Icons which was established at the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 and then re-established in 843.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council dealt predominantly with the controversy regarding icons and their place in Orthodox worship. It was convened in Nicaea in 787 by Empress Irene at the request of Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Council was attended by 367 bishops. Almost a century before this, the iconoclastic controversy had once more shaken the foundations of both Church and State in the Byzantine empire. Excessive religious respect and the ascribed miracles to icons by some members of society, approached the point of worship (due only to God) and idolatry. This instigated excesses at the other extreme by which icons were completely taken out of the liturgical life of the Church by the Iconoclasts. The Iconophiles, on the other-hand, believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal teachings of the Church; they considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty. The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped. In answering the Empress' invitation to the Council, Pope Hadrian replied with a letter in which he also held the position of extending veneration to icons but not worship, the last befitting only God. The decree of the Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and venerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day: "We define that the holy icons, whether in colour, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the

holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honour (timitiki proskynisis), but not of real worship (latreia), which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. The veneration accorded to an icon is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands". An Endemousa (Regional) Synod was called in Constantinople in 843. Under Empress Theodora. The veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at the Hagia Sophia Cathedral. The Empress, her son Michael III, Patriarch Methodios, and monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly with a special service on the first Sunday of Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy".

Infinite, Lord, as divine, in the last times you willed to become incarnate and so finite; for when you took on flesh you made all its properties your own. So we depict the form of your outward appearance and pay it relative respect, and so are moved to love you; and through it we receive the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the apostles." "The grace of truth has shone out, the things once foreshadowed now are revealed in perfection. See, the Church is decked with the embodied image of Christ, as with beauty not of this world, fulfilling the tent of witness,

holding fast the Orthodox faith. For if we cling to the icon of him whom we worship, we shall not go astray. May those who do not so believe be covered with shame. For the image of him who became human is our glory: we venerate it, but do not worship it as God. Kissing it, we who believe cry out: O God, save your people, and bless your heritage."

"We have moved forward from unbelief to true faith, and have been enlightened by the light of knowledge. Let us then clap our hands like the psalmist, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God. And let us honor and venerate the holy icons of Christ, of his most pure Mother, and of all the saints, depicted on walls, panels and sacred vessels, setting aside the unbelievers' ungodly teaching. For the veneration given to the icon passes over, as Basil says, to its prototype. At the intercession of your spotless Mother, O Christ, and of all the saints, we pray you to grant us your great mercy. We venerate your icon, good Lord, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. For you freely willed in the flesh to ascend the cross, to rescue from slavery to the enemy those whom you had formed. So we cry to you with thanksgiving: You have filled all things with joy, our Savior, by coming to save the world."

The name of this Sunday reflects the great significance which icons possess for the Orthodox Church. They are not optional devotional extras, but an integral part of Orthodox faith and devotion. They are held to be a necessary consequence of Christian faith in the incarnation of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in Jesus Christ. They have a sacramental character, making present to the believer the person or event depicted on them. So the interior of Orthodox churches is often covered with icons painted on walls and domed roofs, and there is always an icon screen, or iconostasis, separating the sanctuary from the nave, often with several rows of icons. No Orthodox home is

complete without an icon corner (iconostasion), where the family prays. Icons are venerated by burning lamps and candles in front of them, by the use of incense and by kissing. But there is a clear doctrinal distinction between the veneration paid to icons and the worship due to God. The former is not only relative, it is in fact paid to the person represented by the icon. This distinction safeguards the veneration of icons from any charge of idolatry. The theme of the victory of the icons, by its emphasis on the incarnation, points us to the basic Christian truth that the one whose death and resurrection we celebrate at Easter was none other than the Word of God who became human in Jesus Christ. Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of the Epistle reading at the Liturgy and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name." Orthodox teaching about icons, as defined at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, is embodied in the texts sung on this Sunday.

From Vespers: *"Inspired by your Spirit, Lord, the prophets foretold your birth as a child incarnate of the Virgin. Nothing can contain or hold you; before the morning star you shone forth eternally from the spiritual womb of the Father. Yet you were to become like us and be seen by those on earth. At the prayers of those your prophets in your mercy reckon us fit to see your light, "for we praise your resurrection, holy and beyond speech.*

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UNDERSTANDING ICONOGRAPHY IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH



Since the beginning, Orthodox Christians have used icons in worship. What is an icon? An icon is a holy image. How do we use an icon? During prayer, as a reminder of the All-Holy Trinity (God), our Panagia, (the Virgin Mary, Theotokos), of holy people (Saints) or holy events, such as the twelve holy feast days of the Church. Do we worship icons? No, we don't. We venerate icons, which means we honor them. Back in the year 726 AD, a heresy arose in the Church. Do you know what a heresy is? A heresy is a wrong teaching. One wrong teaching that arose in the year 726 was known as "iconoclasm." That meant the destruction of icons. Why did iconoclasm happen? Sadly, because some people thought the Christians were worshipping icons. Even some people who called themselves Christians thought it was wrong to venerate icons. However, to venerate means to respect or honor. It does not mean to worship.

The problem of iconoclasm lasted more than 100 years! Many people who were holy and correct in their thinking about icons were tortured and many died for the sake of venerating icons. In the year 787, Empress Irene called a council to decide the Church's teaching about icons. It was decided that the icons should be venerated by all Christians. This decision was made at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Some years after this decision,

other emperors/empresses came to power and said icons were not to be venerated. The church leaders and the people rebelled and again, many holy people were tortured and killed for believing the right thing about venerating icons. In the year 829, Emperor Theophilus came to power. He was married to Empress Theodora who was a true Christian woman. She secretly venerated icons. But her husband, Emperor Theophilus persecuted those who honored the icons, putting many into prison and killing others. Near the end of his reign as emperor (about 13 years later), he became very ill and was close to dying.

As her husband lay dying, Empress Theodora fell asleep and had a dream. In her dream she saw the Theotokos holding Christ as a babe in her arms and saw rows of angels whipping and cursing the Emperor. She woke up and heard the emperor crying out, "Woe is me, the wretched one! I am being whipped because of the holy images!" At once, the Empress took an icon of the Theotokos and placed it upon the emperor and began praying to the Theotokos with tears. Even though the emperor was very ill, he saw someone near him wearing a medallion with an icon on it and he took hold of it and kissed it. At that very moment, he received relief from his suffering and fell into sleep, though before he did, he confessed it was good to honor and venerate the holy icons. Then the Empress removed all her holy icons from

her storage chests in order to kiss and honor them with all her heart and prepared the emperor for his death. Shortly after the emperor died, Empress Theodora released those who'd been imprisoned or recalled those sent out of the country for the sake of the holy icons and ordered that they be allowed to live in safety. She also appointed a God loving leader known as a patriarch in the Church, one who honored the holy icons, to replace the patriarch her husband had appointed. Meanwhile, the Empress Theodora and Patriarch Methodios received a visit from a very holy man named Isaiah. He told them that the Lord had a message for them, that those who dishonor the holy icons were to be stopped and that it is proper to honor the holy icons and the Cross. Immediately, the Empress held up the icon of the Mother of God that was hanging about her neck and kissed it saying, "If for love's sake, anyone does not kiss and venerate these images in a correct manner, not worshipping them as gods, but as images of what they represent, let him be accursed!" And all the God loving Christians, rejoiced!

All the people were happy, but something troubled the Empress. She asked the holy priests to pray for the soul of her husband, Emperor Theophilus. She was worried because of all the terrible things he'd done to destroy the holy icons and to destroy the people who venerated them. So, all throughout the first week of Great Lent, the bishops, priests and people prayed all night for

the soul of Emperor Theophilus. At dawn on the first Friday of Great Lent, Empress Theodora fell asleep and had a dream. She saw men passing in her dream carrying instruments of torture. In the middle of the men, with his hands tied behind his back was Emperor Theophilus. Then she saw a man with a heavenly looking face sitting in front of the icon of Christ and Theophilus stood in front of Him. The Empress touched the man's feet, pleading with him for the soul of her husband. Then she heard him say, "Great is your faith, woman! Know then, that for the sake of your tears and your faith and for the sake of the intercessions and prayers of my servants and my priests, I grant forgiveness to Theophilus your husband." Then he said, "Untie him and give him back to his wife." And she received her husband back in her dream with great happiness and then woke up.

In the meantime, Patriarch Methodius, after all the prayers and intercessions for the Emperor were finished, took a plain piece of paper and wrote the names of all the heretical emperors on it, including Emperor Theophilus. He placed the paper underneath the holy altar in the church. He, too, had a vision on Friday and in it he saw an awesome angel coming toward him at the Royal Doors of the church. The angel said, "Your prayers have been heard, and the Emperor Theophilus has been granted

forgiveness. You needn't trouble God about him any longer." The Patriarch was amazed at this message and in order to test whether the vision had been true or not, he took the paper from under the altar table and unrolled it. And what do you think he found? The name of Emperor Theophilus was no longer there! God had removed his name from the list!

When Empress Theodora learned of this, she was exceedingly glad. Therefore, on the first Sunday of Great Lent, March 11, 843, she ordered the Patriarch to assemble in the Church all the people with candles, the holy images and precious crosses so that all the holy icons might be restored and that the miracle be made known unto all. So, they made a solemn procession with the holy images and the True Cross and the holy and divine Gospel Book. And every year since then, Orthodox Christians celebrate this holy festival with a procession of icons so that we never again fall into the same error and great sin of dishonoring the holy icons. And this is the reason why we celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Remember to bring your portable icon to the church that day. And remember, too, to always hold your icon carefully and with much respect.

Iconography plays a central role in the Orthodox tradition. The interior of every church is filled with icons, both on the walls and on special stands and panels, including the iconostasis – the

panel separating the nave from the sanctuary. The faithful physically interact with icons, venerating them, doing prostrations, lighting incense, candles and vigil lamps in front of them. Orthodox religious painting has evolved over the centuries into a unique art – inspired by the Holy Spirit, according to Orthodoxy – which is based on a solid theological foundation, and transforms natural reality into a higher conception of form. There is even a special feast dedicated to holy icons, **Sunday of Orthodoxy** – the first Sunday of Great Lent.

Main points

A lesson on holy icons can help teach young children the following important concepts of Orthodox iconography:

- Icons are different from any other picture. They are painted in a special way, and show our Lord Jesus Christ, His mother the Theotokos, the angels, and Christ's friends, the Saints.
- Icons help us learn and understand everything about our faith.
- We venerate icons to show how much we love the persons depicted on them. We do not venerate the icon itself, but the holy person – the prototype – to whom the icon refers.
- We venerate an icon by kissing it and making the sign of the cross. We can also do prostrations in front of it. Additionally, we light candles or a vigil lamp.
- In the home we have icons and pray in front of them.
- Through the Grace of God, some icons perform miracles.

- Orthodox icons are purposely not realistic. They do not represent the world as we experience it with our senses, but as it is in the **celestial kingdom**, transformed by the Grace of God.
- Every object on an Orthodox icon has **theological symbolism and significance**. Nothing is painted by chance or merely for decoration.
- **Colors** in icons have special meaning.
- The **gold color** is used abundantly in Orthodox iconography. It is not merely used for aesthetic reasons, but has a theological foundation, symbolizing **God himself**, and signifying **His radiant light** in the celestial kingdom where there is never darkness.

Sunday of Orthodoxy Can There Any Good Thing Come Out of Nazareth? John 1: 43-51

From The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Matthew
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

43-45. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Andrew, by listening to the Forerunner, and Peter, by listening to Andrew, both followed Christ. But it appears that Philip, without the prompting of another, obeyed Jesus at once when He said to him, *Follow me*. How was he convinced so instantaneously? It appears, first of all, that the voice of the Lord stung his soul with

love. The sound of the Lord's voice was not like that of any other; for those who were worthy, it immediately kindled within them a burning love for Him. As Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus said, *Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?* [Lk. 24:32] Furthermore, Philip had pondered earnestly within his heart, and continuously studied the books of Moses, and was always waiting for the coming of the Christ; therefore, as soon as he saw Him, he was convinced. This is why he said, *We have found ... Jesus*, which shows that he had always been seeking Him. Perhaps he had learned something about Christ from Andrew and Peter. Because they were of the same city, it is likely that they had talked together and discussed the Lord. The Evangelist seems to imply this when He says, *Now Philip was of ... the city of Andrew and John*. This was a very small city, more like a village. Therefore, we should marvel at Christ's power, that from such insignificant places He chose His pre-eminent disciples. Philip does not keep this good thing to himself, but shares it with Nathanael. Because Nathanael was a diligent student of the law and knew it thoroughly, Philip refers him to the law and the prophets. Philip calls the Lord *the son of Joseph*, because they thought He was his child. And he names Him *of Nazareth*, although He was, properly speaking, of Bethlehem. He was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. Because the manner of His birth was hidden from most, while His upbringing was apparent, they called Him *Jesus of Nazareth*.

46-48. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Philip had said that Christ was from Nazareth. But Nathanael, astute in the law, knew from the Scriptures that the Messiah

should come from Bethlehem. This is why he said, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Philip answered, *Come and see*, knowing that once he tasted Christ's words, he would never leave Him. Christ commends Nathanael for being a true Israelite, who said nothing either to curry favor or to cause enmity. Nathanael's words stemmed not from disbelief, but from a discerning mind well-versed in the law, which knew that the Christ would come from Bethlehem and not from Nazareth. How then does Nathanael respond to the Lord? Does he become conceited from these words of praise? Not in the least. Persisting in his desire to establish clearly and certainly the identity of this Man, he asks, *Whence knowest Thou me?* Then the Lord reveals His very divinity by speaking of things which no one could have known except Nathanael and Philip, because they had spoken and acted alone. Although He was not present, Christ knew all that had taken place when Philip spoke with Nathanael. This is why He says, *when thou wast under the fig tree*. Before Philip drew near, the Lord spoke these words concerning Nathanael, lest anyone should suspect that Philip had told Him of the fig tree and his conversation with Nathanael. At once Nathanael understood Who the Lord was, and confessed Him to be *the Son of God*. Hear what he says:

49-51. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Prophecy has great power, even greater than miracles, to move a man to believe. The demons are able to simulate miracles and appear to do them. But no one can have clear foreknowledge of future events, and predict them accurately, not even an angel, and even less so, the demons. Therefore the Lord drew Nathanael













to Himself by telling him the place where he had been standing, and that Philip had called to him, and that he was a true Israelite. When he heard these things Nathanael sensed the greatness of the Lord, as much as he was able to at that time, and confessed Him to be the Son of God. Yet his confession was not the same as Peter's. [See Mt. 16:16-18.] Peter confessed Him to be the Son of God, that is, true God. Therefore the Lord blessed Peter, and entrusted the Church to him. But Nathanael confesses Him to be merely a man Who by grace and His own virtue has been adopted as a son of God. This is made clear by what he says next, *Thou art the King of Israel*. Do you see? Nathanael has not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of the true divinity of the Only-begotten. He believes in Him as a man beloved by God, and as the King of Israel. If he had confessed Him to be truly God, he would not have called Him the King of Israel, but the King of all. Therefore the Lord does not bless him, as He did Peter, but corrects him, and leads his thoughts upwards to comprehend something of His divinity. *Ye shall see*, He says, *the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*. He is saying, "Do not understand Me to be merely a man, but rather the Master of the angels." He Whom the angels serve cannot be merely a man, but only true God. All these things did, in fact, take place at His Crucifixion and Ascension. As the time of His Passion approached, an angel from heaven strengthened Him; at His Tomb there was an angel, and again at His Ascension, as Luke relates. [See Acts 1:10-11.] Some have understood the fig tree to represent the law. Like the fig, the law contains sweetness, but it is hard to get at, covered over, as with leaves, by the harshness of the legal observations and the difficulty of the commandments. They say, then, that the Lord *saw* Nathanael, that is, looked down graciously upon him, and knew his thoughts, while he was still under the law. Consider this interpretation as well, O reader, if you find it pleasing: the Lord saw Nathanael *under the fig tree*, that is, under the law, or, within the law, searching out its depths. If he had not been searching out the depth of the law, the Lord would not have seen him. Know this as well, that *Galilee* means

"rolling down." The Lord, then, went forth to that place in this world which is sunk low, that is to say, to our human nature. And while we were still under the fig tree, under the sway of sweet sin, which is mixed with much bitterness on account of the regret and the punishments which follow, the Lover of man saw us, and chose those who confess Him to be the Son of God and the King of each one who sees God (for *Israel* means "seeing God"). Indeed, if we persevere with zeal, He will count us worthy to see greater things than these. We shall behold angels ascending to the height of divine knowledge of Him, and descending again, because they cannot know His unknowable essence. In another sense, a man ascends when he immerses himself in the study of the divinity of the Only-begotten, and he descends when he delights in the contemplation of His Incarnation and descent into hades.

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God by teaching and giving examples of a virtuous life to all (St. John Cassian). A primary goal of Stewardship is to strengthen our understanding of the teachings and dogmas of The Orthodox Faith through supporting the work of The Church. This can be found in The Divine Services as reiterated by St. John of San Francisco: "The Divine Services in their composition contain all the fullness of the dogmatic teaching of the Church and set forth the path of salvation." Fulfilling our responsibility of continual learning begins when we believe in God, to give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. Through being Stewards of the Gospel and of The Orthodox Church, Education calls on the faithful to cheerfully receive instruction given to the Church by Our Lord, Holy Scripture, The Divine Services, and The Holy Fathers of

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2021

Created by Fr. Jonathan W. Moore, A.C.F.S.

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 21st	 Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 28th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession! Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meat this week.
Meatfare MARCH 7th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 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 MARCH 14th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: 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 MARCH 21st	 SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 28th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: 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 APRIL 4th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Epistle: 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 APRIL 11th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: 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 APRIL 18th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to carry out and the world pure thoughts and ideas in respect.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 25th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: 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 APRIL 30th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 2nd NO FASTING!	 HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

the Church. Through Orthodox Christian Stewardship, The Church promotes spiritual growth and strengthened faith and calls on all of us to bring the faith and love of Our Lord to every aspect of our lives as gifts from Him through our time, talents, and treasures. During this year, let us come together as a Diocesan Family and recommit ourselves to both spiritual growth of our Life in Christ as well as through Orthodox Christian Stewardship by attending the Divine Services, attending the many opportunities of Education for both Adults and Children through Parish Education, gatherings, and fellowship and by supporting our Parishes and Diocese in the many endeavors through which, by the Grace of God, we will bring the light and love of Our Lord to all!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8