



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Orthodox Church

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VERY REVEREND

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An Orthodox Christian community of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA under the protection of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

WELCOME!



WEEKLY BULLETIN

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2022

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

TONE V ✕ HEBREWS 11:24-26, 32-12:2 ✕ GOSPEL: ST. JOHN 1:43-51

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY DIVINE SERVICES

SUNDAY, MARCH 13 - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

- 9:00AM Sunday Divine Liturgy with procession of icons, followed by a Panachida in Memory of +Metropolitan Nicholas (11th Anniversary).
- 5:00PM Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers - Holy Resurrection Church 285 French Hill Road, Wayne NJ. Archbishop MICHAEL (OCA-NY/NJ) - Main Celebrant.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

- 6:00PM Pre-Sanctified Liturgy - Fasting begins at 3:00PM.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19 - ALL SOULS SATURDAY

- 9:00AM All Souls Saturday Liturgy with a reading of the church diptychs.
- 3:00PM Saturday Evening Vespers.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20 - GREGORY PALAMAS

- 9:00AM Sunday Divine Liturgy
- 5:00PM **Deanery Mission:** St. John's Rahway - Akathist to the Mother of God.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY PARISH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

- 10:30AM NO Sunday Church School & Coffee Social Hour.
Parish Council Meeting — All Officers are asked to attend.

MONDAY, MARCH 14

- 5:00PM Weekly Soup Kitchen Service.
Pirohi Balling Session.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15 - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

- 9:00AM Pirohi Making Session - Come one and Come All!
- 4:00PM (Tuesday Only) Pirohi Balling Session.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

- 10:30AM Sunday Church School & Coffee Social Hour.

Ukraine Appeal

As related in the letter from Metropolitan Gregory today, we will be taking up a collection for relief to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine over this lenten period. The Donation Jar has been placed in the back of the Church and all fund will be disbursed to IOCC and earmarked for Ukraine for their direct usage in those efforts. You may make a donation via check (Payable to St. John's with Ukraine in the Memo Line) at any time in the collection basket or the business office. All Donations are due by Palm Sunday, April 17 so they can be forwarded to IOCC during Holy Week in time to arrive for Pascha.

PLEASE PRAY for the Servants of God: His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. John & Pani Eleanor Pribish, Helen Hrehowsik, Chrissy Santalla, Bill Kobasz, Helen J. Dunham, Olga Medvigy, John & Suzanne DiBiasi, Lynn Beres, Maryann Dudash, Eleanor Aleksza, Judith Raskoshin & Unborn child, Jenna Quinn & Newborn Son, Kristy Stallard & Unborn Son, Frank Ello, Lia Gogoladze, Dacia Snider, CPL Michael Delcher, Joann Kolator, Irene Tobin, Olga Mitko, Sandy DiLeo, Pani Eleanor Herbert, Michele Camisa, Abigail Billy, Joseph Santalla, Sussi Howard, Amanda Orender, Helen Deliman, Melanie McHenry, Peggy Patrick, Lillian Kalog, Maryann Della Serra, Victoria Dean, Stephen Skasko, George Kratsashvili, John Paul Hall, Veronica Houser, Joshua Skoog, CPL Logan Grguric, PO Daniel Langner, Smn. Daniel Birthisel, the unborn children of this world and for more vocations to the Holy Priesthood.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Please remember, if you are admitted to the hospital in an emergency or for any reason, or are undergoing surgery, please notify Fr. Michael so he can make arrangements to visit and pray with you ASAP. He may be reached on his cell phone, at any hour of the day by calling **(201) 486-2123**. If he cannot be reached: **Fr. Andrew Fetchina (732) 382-8844** or **Fr. Ken Ellis**.

WELCOME VISITORS

We are happy that you have joined us today. Please join us in the church hall (behind the church) for coffee and a bite to eat. You have just experienced the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom which is the ordinary service of worship celebrated on regular Sunday's in the Orthodox Church. The Liturgy—as experienced at St. John's Church—stems from the 4th century though its practices were inherited from the time of the apostles in the book of Acts. (Acts 1:14) It also represents a time when all Christians worshipped in One Undivided fully Catholic Christian Church. If you have any questions in regards to our worship or the Orthodox Church in general please see Fr. Michael and he will gladly answer any of your questions to the best of his ability. He looks forward to meeting you.

At our best we are known for our welcoming attitude, hospitality, prayerfulness, generosity and compassion. At our worst, we are sinners, but we're working out our salvation together, and could use your help. If you are looking for a church home, we hope you will consider making St. John's Church that place.

PANACHIDA REQUESTS

Please be reminded to submit requests for all Panachidas to Fr. Michael in writing so there is no confusion. Multiple requests on the same day will be combined, with the exception of 40th day and 1 year anniversaries which take precedence.



PAYPAL QR DONATION CODE

Just scan with your phone and follow the prompts. Thank you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LENTEN MISSION FOOD SIGN-UP SHEET has been placed in the vestibule. Please sign your name and what dish you would like to provide. All dishes should be meat-free in the spirit of our Lenten tradition. If you would like to donate money towards the cost of fish, please place the donation into an envelope and give it directly to Fr. Michael. Thank you all for your assistance. Join us together on April 10th in prayer & fellowship.



CONFESSIONS will be heard at anytime or by appointment. It is of great spiritual importance that we get back into a regular rhythm of confession now that Great Lent is right around the corner. Take advantage of the sacraments, today!



RESTORATION FUND COLLECTIONS will be taken the *FIRST SUNDAY of EVERY MONTH* as a second collection. There is much work to do around the church in preparation for the 125th Anniversary and beyond. We need to replenish this fund. Please give as you have been blessed. We need your support!



SPECIAL THANKS are extended to **George Gray, George Maslow, Viktor Pitrun, Stash Raskoshin, David Psenechnuk, George Hanas, Ernie Delcher, Steve Gallant and Rich Szetela** for their work this past week removing the pews in the front of the church in preparation for new carpeting and floor work.

COMPLAINING

If we are always complaining about how unfairly we are treated, we will have failed in our imitation of Christ, Who was abused by His enemies unto death. We should strive to reign with Our Lord by loving our enemies and never complain. Christ looked towards His Heavenly Father and when we are tempted to complain we should gaze upon the cross.

Complaining disturbs the heart and distracts us from the Path. Complaining weakens our resolve and interferes with the acquisition of peace and holiness. When we complain we are rejecting the role of suffering as a means towards the union with God. Complaining keeps our heart from soaring to the heavens and experiencing the joy that can be had when we surrender ourselves into the protective arms of Jesus.

Abbot Tryphon

HOLY CONFESSION

Saint John Chrysostom writes: *"Did you commit sin? Enter the Church and repent for your sin; for here is the physician, not the judge; here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins."*

The sacrament of confession introduces us to the life-long process of grasping accepting and choosing to follow the values of the Christian life. Christians, are expected to govern their lives by the power of God. They are to undertake the noblest deeds and hold fast to both faith and virtue, and grow into the blessed likeness of Christ". The Church, however, has never considered Baptism to be an automatic guarantor of continuous salvation. It is only the beginning of the life in Christ. Its full effects are derived when the baptized are disposed to persevere and preserve the treasure to the end. The process of healing and restoring our damaged, wounded and fallen nature is on-going.

God is recognized to be continuously loving, merciful and long-suffering towards his creation. He accepts all repentant sinners tenderly and rejoices greatly in their conversion. There are no limits set to the exercise of his loving-kindness and forgiveness. All sins are forgivable, save one: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Here we are confronted not with the powerlessness of God, but with an unrepentant and callous heart.

Through the mystery of repentance God embraces a repentant lapsed Christian with his love, in order to forgive him and reconcile him to the Church. But, for this to occur, the sinful Christian must first have a sense of his unfaithfulness to God, contrition of heart, and determination to amend. This must be followed by the confession of his sins before the authorized clergy of the Church.

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Sunday_{of} Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of the Great Fast is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy. On this day, in commemoration of the victory of Orthodoxy over heresies, the holy Church, as a loving Mother, invites her faithful children to venerate and honor in piety the holy icons of the Savior, the Mother of God and the Saints.

At the start of the eighth century in the Church there began a catastrophe that continued for more than a hundred years. A cruel persecution arose against the holy icons and those who venerated them. The holy vessels used in the celebration of divine services were trampled under foot, because the Saints were depicted on them. Everywhere holy icons were removed, taken from the temples and cast into rivers or burned. The defenders of the veneration of icons were subjected to all possible kinds of persecution, even capital punishment. At that time many bishops, priests and others were tortured for venerating the holy icons. They were shut up in prisons and tortured. Some had their noses or ears cut off. Others had their eyes put out or their hands severed. But the word of Christ, that the gates of Hell should not prevail against the holy Church, and that He would remain with it until the end of the age is immutable. In the year 842, after the last enemy of the veneration of icons finished his days in horrible torment, the emperor Theophilus and his wife the empress Theodora put an end to the persecution and unrest.

At her command on the forthcoming first Sunday of the Great Fast, February 19, the Patriarch Methodius in a solemn procession, accompanied by a multitude of joyful Orthodox faithful, entered the cathedral church and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the restoration of the veneration of icons. The blood shed by the holy martyrs for their faith was victorious; the torments of the Church were triumphant. Truly "this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith," in the words of the holy Apostle John.

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Both the interior repentance and the verbal acknowledgment of concrete sins are indispensable conditions for true forgiveness and reconciliation. Confession is the opening of one's conscience before God and the witness of the Church. Our Lord ordained this sacrament in the form of a law, giving power and authority to His ordained ministers to declare and pronounce absolution to the faithful who confess and repent of sins willingly committed after baptism. The faithful should consider the many sins he or she has committed and must truly and earnestly repent. One should then confess them to the priest without concealing them and, consequently, accept the canonical penalty.

Confession is essentially a healing ministry, since sin is viewed primarily as a disease that needs to be healed, rather than a crime that needs to be punished. And since everyone is susceptible to the wiles of the devil, a regular examination of the conscience deepens self-awareness and quickens the sensitivity of the heart. For this reason many persons as a matter of course have a father confessor who shares their concerns in the on-going process of spiritual development and growth.

by Tenny Thomas



*Don't forget to take advantage of the sacrament of confession/absolution this lent. There is plenty of time, we just have to **make** the time.*

The holy Church ordained that this solemnity should be observed each year always on this day in gratitude to the Lord God for His saving grace and strength in the time of crisis and for the edification of the faithful.

Yet it is sad and distressing to both hear and observe the terrible blindness regarding the holy icons on the part of sectarians who were once Orthodox. Some, on the pretext of identification with idols, denounce the holy icons; Others with boastful pride in their hearts critically condemn the obsolete custom of venerating the holy icons. Respect for the holy icons, which is their due according to the highest principle, has unfortunately been lost among contemporary modern demands. Rarely do we find holy icons in the house as a sacred ornament. Rarely do they generate those worshipful sentiments, which should arise in us on seeing them. The icon in a Christian house is often not seen, having been conspicuously replaced by sensual artwork or colorful photos. And this is all because the hOly faith 'has been weakened, and former religious convictions have been shaken.

This is really not the way it should be!

Every Christian believes and confesses that there is one God glorified in the Trinity, and that no glory or worship may be given to any other God or idol.

For this reason sectarians reproach the Orthodox unjustly for their worship of the one true God through sacred images. If a person consisted of spirit alone, if one had no body, then during worship services there would be no need for visual representations of unseen things. But since we are clothed in flesh, it is natural to require visual objects to influence our souls through our bodies and stimulate a prayerful attitude. Bowing before visual sacred images, the soul of the Orthodox Christian is elevated in spirit to its prototype. For, after all, icons are only a representation of the true God in the form in which He revealed Himself to mankind.

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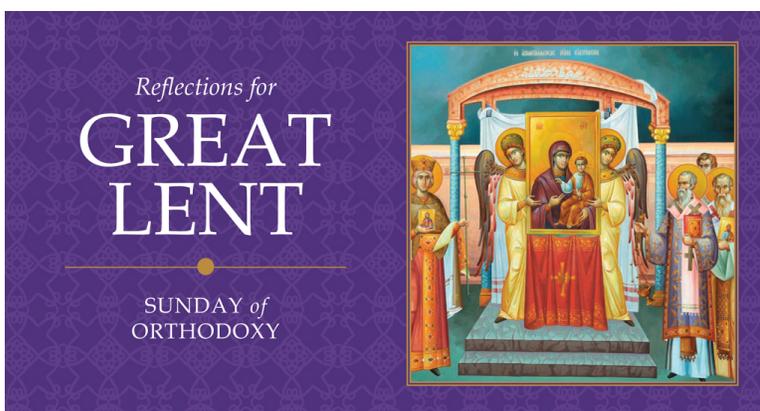
And who of the mindful children of the Church does not experience the strength of grace from the holy icons as a visual representation of the Lord, the Mother of God and His Saints? Standing before a holy icon, we are spontaneously lifted in spirit to that very personage depicted as a living person, we are inevitably reminded of his virtues and life of piety, of the grace of God which worked and works in him still. Standing before a holy icon we are transported in spirit to another, higher world, where all is pure and holy. We reject this vain and sinful world, and are elevated in mind and spirit. Our heart is filled with joyful thanksgiving to the Lord. We stand in front of the holy icon and feel that our joy is made stronger through communion with the depicted saint as a living intercessor for us before the throne of grace. If we experience sadness in our lives, we stand before the holy image and feel spontaneous relief in our hearts, because before our eyes our heavenly comforter actually stands in front of us, praying to God, always ready to help us in the fullness of love of his pure and holy spirit. And how many and varied lessons may be learned from the holy icons! What was it that converted the heart of Saint Vladimir, the equal of the Apostles, to the truth of Christ, when he was uncertain and wavered in choosing a faith? It was the depiction of the last judgment of God, unrolled before his eyes by a missionary philosopher, that convinced him to accept Christianity. This image resolved his uncertainty and indecision. It made him a follower of Christ. It made us Christians through him, and Orthodox as well.

An officer who returned not long ago from Siberia was showing a small icon of Saint Nicholas which he wore on his chest. It was a blessing from his mother, who had sent him off to war in 1914, and he had never taken it off. The little icon was slightly dented on one side, where it had been hit by a German bullet intended for his heart. The bullet did no harm to the soldier, and in his words Saint Nicholas through his little icon invisibly protected him during many dangerous battles. We can truly say, "Thy faith has saved thee!"

When we enter a church decorated with icons, we feel that we are in another world. We are spontaneously carried off in spirit to the community of the Saints whose visages are turned to us. We forget all the misfortune that assails us, and we lift up our hearts, soaring to the heavens in spirit. What can compare with this edification of the holy temple? "Standing in the temple of Thy glory, we think ourselves in heaven.

Bless yourselves with the sign of the Cross, O holy people! Kiss the icon of the Savior reverently and cry out from the depths of your heart along with your mother, the Church, "We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One, and we ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God." Amen.

-Priest Vladimir Sakovich (1919)



Icons have been in use since the earliest days of the Church. In their simplest forms, icons were found in catacombs, graves, and other places of ancient Christian worship. They included the cross, the fish, the lamb, and other symbols that represented Jesus. By the fifth century, iconography began to be widespread. Beautiful paintings, mosaics, frescoes, and other media of art were used to depict Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints. The Church felt quite comfortable in depicting our Lord and His saints, as art was just another way to praise and teach about God, just as the Church used music and poetry.

Icons also affirm for us a very foundational and fundamental truth of Christianity: that is, the Incarnation of Christ, that God became man. The invisible became visible, the intangible became tangible, the unseen is now seen in the person of Jesus Christ. *This is the truth we proclaim today: that we can see God.*

When a priest censes the church, he offers a blessing and prayer to the icons of the church, paying honor not to the painting, but to the saint. Then the priest censes the living icons throughout the church, you the faithful, because that's what you are, living icons of the beauty of God.

So on this Sunday of Orthodoxy, we celebrate the Triumph of Truth by remembering Who is Truth Incarnate—Jesus Christ. May we all make His life and His way become our life and our way. Let us allow His Truth to be the guiding factor in our lives not only throughout our Great Lenten journey, but throughout every day of our lives.

To Him be all glory, honor, and worship, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Fr Christopher Retells (Anaheim, CA)