



“ORTHODOX 9” PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:



St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU

Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE

St. John the Baptist - HOREN

Holy Ascension - CALMAR

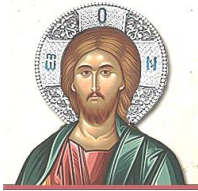
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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March 15 – the beginning of the Great Lent



Welcome to the Great Lent, dear brothers and sisters! It is Great first of all due to the Great Goal that is set to it – to be ready to meet the Lord’s Pascha – His Resurrection and the Victory over the death.

The two greatest and indispensable means for that is fasting and prayer. This fasting should be a balanced physical – the bows during the prayer, the limitations in food, drinks, and diversions; and spiritual – forgiveness, non-judgment, penitence, and certainly prayer, and Gospel and spiritual literature reading.

As for the spiritual aspect, it might be verified by the quality and the way of prayer that we hear in our

heart on these days: is it “Oh God, be merciful on me a sinner!”, “Oh Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful on me a sinner!”; or the insane enumeration of our merits and achievement during this fasting.

As for the physical, it might be just humble bearing of given to us unpleasant but curative means – our infirmities, losses, weaknesses, everyday problems, if not able to follow all the strict rules of the gastronomic aspects of the fast. As the latter has always been dissimilar for different people.

However, do we have enough evidence or experience, that having too much in this life can very often be degenerative and harmful for us and our loved ones; or when we follow some rather rigorous diets or exercises, do not we feel some relief when we get some extra and unnecessary burden from our shoulders...

I wish all of us a good, kind, peaceful and profitable fasting, and especially – the quick reunion in our holy temples in partaking the Holy Communion – the Body and Blood of the Lord! Amen

f. Yevheniy Protsenko

On the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise

The last Sunday before the Great Lent (this year – March 14th) is the commemoration of Adam's expulsion from Paradise.

This is the time, when we are given the answer to one of the most crucial questions – how the tragedy of the whole world and the people of this world took place. We are taken to the threshold of Paradise and shown what has happened there.

The original sin takes place. First people choose and prefer magic to love and become incapable to live with the Source of Life. Many preachers point out that the expulsion is also a separation from the tree of life, so that not to make this sad condition eternal...

People are given leathern clothes; this is the upper layer of our skin, which is really dead! – just to protect us, for some time of our finite life, from the death that has reigned in the world due to that corrupt choice of the first people.

But not only we are shown to the doorstep of the Paradise to be reminded of those sad events, but also to be able to hear the voice of the Lord, that Adam heard, but ran away – “Where are you?”, and with the help of all perfect means of the Great Lent – first, to see, where we really are (to see our true spiritual state or condition), and second – to respond to this loving and compassionate voice in a proper way.

For your pious attention and consideration, I would like to present one of the ways we could comprehend this Expulsion from Paradise, expressed in the sermon of one of the contemporary preachers:



There, on the threshold of paradise, the love of God and the freedom of man converged at one point. On the threshold of paradise, the love of God and our human freedom always converge. It also seems that in paradise the voice of God the Father has not ceased to be heard, Who embodies this His love in these words. Remember when Adam sinned, how the Lord cried out in Paradise: Adam, where are you? - when he hid from Him for the shame, for fear, and also did he hid from his freedom, having made his choice.

These words still sound so strong and will always continue to sound on the threshold of paradise, addressed to each of us: Adam, where are you? God did not drive

Adam away, did not drive him out, did not push him away from Himself, did not lock the doors of paradise. God was looking for Adam: "where are you?", reaching to him at this very threshold of paradise.

None of us can judge Adam, because in order to judge Adam, we must first judge ourselves. How did God call Adam: "where are you?", does He not call me with the voice of my conscience, the circumstances of my life, the events that are taking place in my life? "Where are you?" - then God said to Adam, and now to me.

It seems that everything is clear and understandable, tell Adam then: here I am, Lord, here, I have sinned against heaven and before You, and now I am no longer worthy to be called Your son, but maybe you will take me as a slave, - Adam could have said it in the words of the prodigal son.

We know what Adam answered, and we know that there, on the threshold of paradise, he used, as before, his freedom. He leaves paradise. Adam's exile is not when God persecutes, but when we do not hear Him, do not answer Him. On the threshold of paradise, Adam was driving himself.

This day is not only a reminder to us of that tragedy of Adam, it is a reminder to us of the tragedy of each of us. When the love of God descended, and my freedom drives me away from this love, when my freedom drives me away from the love of God, when my freedom is dearer to me because of my clinging to sin, habits, fears, when my freedom leaves no place in me for the love of God, then together with the apostle Paul I repeat: I am a poor man, as I want to do good, I do not do it, but I do evil.

Adam's exile is *my* freedom, that left the love of God. What is this Love, is it standing on the doorstep? No, it follows Adam. And very soon we will see this Love, which follows Adam and which will be raised on the key to the door of paradise, on the Cross. We will see this love, which will no longer call from the Cross: "Adam, where are you?", but will triumph by the victorious "Forgive them, God, they do not know what they are doing."

Adam's exile is the point of our return, this is the point of our going back to the door of paradise, this is not the starting point of our pain and suffering, our losses – this is the point from which we can leave all our losses and pains in the past if we return to these doors of Paradise. After all, there is always the love of God and our freedom there. When I freely take a step towards God, His love helps me to take the second. When, free from the curse of sin through repentance, through the thirst for light, I take a step to the doors of paradise, to His Divine love, God will never leave it closed to me.

Today the Church reminds us that the Lord did not close this door, that we can always return through it if we begin to change our lives. Not all at once, as it will not work. Let us start yearning for paradise, let us start craving it.

Finally, in the midst of the polyphony of our life, we will hear the most important question: "Adam, where are you?"

And we will answer it: here I am, Lord, forgive me, not because I feel bad, but because it is impossible to be without You. Forgive me, not because I did not succeed, but because without You there is no point in making something work. Forgive me, not because You were right, but because I was wrong. Forgive me, not because I fell or got lost, but because You are my father, and I am Your son, created by You. Forgive me, because without Your love my freedom destroys me, takes me away from paradise, leads me into such a jungle of life, because without Your love my freedom makes me a dead person. Forgive me, let me step on the threshold of paradise again.

The recollection of Adam's exile is our honest: "Lord, it is not You who persecute me, but I who persecute You..."

And God grants, during the Great and saving Fast, maybe we will still take the decisive steps, during the Great saving Lent, maybe, we will try to get up and go. We know to Whom. And most importantly, there is a voice that you can here and respond: "Adam, where are you?" - says the Lord even now and does not cease.

Great Lent begins - the time of our return, the time when each of us can stop being an exile. And again, on the threshold of paradise, His Divine love and our freedom will meet. Amen.

by Archbishop Theophylact (Kuryanov)



The last Sunday before the Great Lent is also called Sunday of Forgiveness.

The words of the Lords' Prayer, "and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" become reality in the Holy Temples, as people ask each other forgiveness during the service.

Taking this happy opportunity, I, and my family, ask you to forgive us what we have done wrong or improper, or did not do, voluntarily and involuntarily, and may God forgive and bless us all!

f. Yevheniy Protsenko with the family

The 120th Anniversary of consecration of the first Orthodox church in Canada and the first visit of the Orthodox Bishop, St. Tikhon

In this year of 2021, we mark the 120th anniversary of the first historic visit to Canada of Bishop Tikhon (Belavin), the future Patriarch and New Hiero-Confessor of the Russian Orthodox Church.

This is a summary of Bishop Tikhon's visit made by Bishop Job (Smakouz), bases on writings of Father Jacob Korchinsky, the first permanent priest in Canada, whose life we also depicted in the bulletins of 2020.



Bishop Tikhon (Belavin) was travelling constantly by rail and by ship, by horse and by foot. He visited the developing communities of immigrants, and he helped to organise them ecclesiastically and civilly. He blessed the foundation and organisation of parishes throughout Canada and the USA.

In May 1900, Bishop Tikhon (Belavin) boarded a ship, and he sailed to Alaska for a 78-day pastoral visit. This time, he travelled inland, and he thus became the first bishop in 55 years to penetrate some parts of Alaska's vast interior. About much of his journey of 11,748 km (7,300 mi), an Alaskan veteran wrote:

The inconveniences of travel in this region often oppress even the local people who are used to them. How much more difficult must our travels have been for the bishop, a novice. But not only did the bishop never express fatigue or inconvenience, he even inspired cheerfulness in us by his good-natured attitude toward the various inconveniences.

The local indigenous peoples gave him the nickname "Aliutukhta" in their language, and he treated them as though they were his own children. He ate with them; and like them, he ate from a common pot. He taught them; he offered them gifts; he administered medicine as he visited the sick; and he most memorably celebrated beautiful and impressive services for them.

By 1900, there was so much immigration to the eastern USA that Vladyka Tikhon understood that a reorganisation of the diocese was required. He therefore petitioned the Most Holy Synod in Saint Petersburg for this change. Thus, during that year, the Most Holy Synod blessed the change of name from the "Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska" to the "Diocese of the Aleutians and North America".

In the spring of 1901, the bishop travelled eastwards from San Francisco by railway. The highlight of this journey was the blessing of the cornerstone for the new Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York City. He increasingly was becoming an apologist for the Orthodox Christian Faith, as he had to counter false claims by the Uniats. He sanctified many newly-constructed and renovated Temples for those who had left the Roman Catholic (Greek Catholic) church. He spent a substantial amount of time in the Greater Pittsburgh Area, which was rapidly expanding as a centre of Orthodoxy; Galician Uniats were returning to their ancestral Orthodox Christian Faith in large numbers; Serbians and Arabic-speakers were requesting pastors.

In May, the Allegheny Arabic-speaking Syrians held a dinner in his honour. The bishop repaid their hospitality by giving each one there a flower, along with a blessing. In August, Vladyka Tikhon sanctified the Pan-Orthodox Temple of Saint Spiridon in Seattle, Washington, during which he used a mixture of English, Greek, and Church Slavonic.

After this, he made his first crossing of the border into Canada.

This was his first archpastoral visit to Canada, which was also accomplished by using the railway. First, he travelled north to Vancouver, British Columbia, and then eastwards to Calgary, Alberta, and finally northwards to Edmonton, Alberta. In doing so, he retraced the fundamental route of the first missionaries, Father Dimitry Kamnev and Deacon Vladimir Alexandrov, who had been sent in 1898 by Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) to organise the new Orthodox Christian settlements and parish communities near Edmonton, Alberta. It is entirely likely that he visited the small Greek Orthodox community in the Vancouver region, as they had done, but it is not written. From Edmonton, he visited many communities on the prairies of Canada. Sadly and painfully, during this visit, he suffered serious leg injuries which he sustained in an accident with the carriage in which he was driven.

This is how Bishop Job (Smakouz) described the first visit, based on writings of Father Jacob:

[...] On 18 August, Father Jacob, at the head of the church clergy and active parishioners, met his Bishop at the Leduc railway station, 5 miles (8 km) from which was the Orthodox community of Ruthenians (Rusyns). Since the community did not yet have its own temple, everyone went to the farm of the Galician Rusyn Pyotr Dublyanka, where a Sunday service was planned.

The baggage with bishops' and deacon's vestments was delayed along the way. In this regard, Vladyka blessed the rector of the community, Father James, to serve the All-Night Vigil. Since the farm was far from others and many farmers were at that time in the field, 30 people attended the service.

The next day, 19 August (1 September), 'the whole present Russian population, without distinction of confession', came to the bishop's service, namely the Uniates and even the Roman Catholics. Vladyka, having only a panagia and a mitre with him for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, blessed to prepare for him the one and only priestly vestment of Father Jacob Korchinsky. 'By extraordinary coincidence, just above the altar was the icon of St. Nicholas, depicted in the same vestment'.



After the Liturgy, newcomers to Canada from Western Russia thanked Vladyka 'for sending them a priest who preaches in a language that they understand'. In addition, with the help of Father Jacob, the question of the construction of the temple and its name, as well as the difficult question of choosing a place for its construction, was resolved. One of the Rusyns allocated for this purpose two acres (1 acre = 0.405 ha) of their land. Immediately on this holy work was given the Bishop's blessing with the prayerful well-wishes of God's help. Vladyka also made the first feasible donation from his personal funds. A plot allocated by the provincial government was set aside for the cemetery.

Through Edmonton, Vladyka, accompanied by Father Jacob, headed for the Ruthenian settlement with the name Vostok. Here, the Priest Jacob in traditional fashion met the bishop on the threshold of the newly-built church in honour of the Holy Trinity. On 24 August (6 September), in the morning they left for Beaver Creek, located 12 miles (19 km) to the west to consecrate the chapel.

On the way, a miracle happened to save the travellers from possible injuries and even death in an unfortunate incident. When Vladyka, along with the Priest Jacob Korchinsky were seated on a simple peasant cart, they were already a mile from Beaver Creek, when suddenly something broke off in the harness and the horses rushed in a furious leap along bumps, potholes, and ditches. Vladyka was thrown to the ground. In this case, one leg fell under the wheel of the wagon. With a sharp movement, he managed to pull it from the boot just at the moment when the wheel ran over the boot. But the other leg, on which the saint fell, suffered greatly. Stretched ligaments inflicted a lot of suffering on Vladyka during walking and standing. Even in this state, barely stepping on the sore foot, the saint continued his path and archpastoral labours.

[https://orthodoxcanada.ca/Saint_Tikhon_\(Belavin\)](https://orthodoxcanada.ca/Saint_Tikhon_(Belavin))

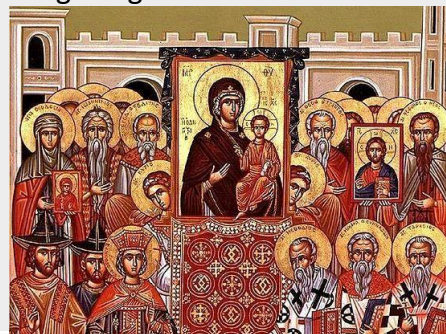
(to be continued in April bulletin)

What is the Sunday of Orthodoxy? (March, the 21st)

The Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. It is the celebration of the victory over the iconoclasts by the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Therefore, the service is to commemorate the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Christians. Services often include the clergy or the faithful triumphantly processing around the church, holding icons of their patron or parish saints. In areas where multiple jurisdictions exist, Pan-Orthodox Vespers are also usually celebrated in the evening. The theme of the day is victory of the True Faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4). Also, 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.

Troparion (Tone 2)

*We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh
and deliver Your creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to You:
"You have filled all with joy, O our Savior,
by coming to save the world."*



In Memoriam

The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our deepest condolences to Vegreville St. John the Baptist parish, and to the relatives of the newly departed Elizabeth Lastiwka.

May God comfort you with His compassion, and may God settle her, where the light of His countenance shall visit.



The mercy of God, the Kingdom of Heaven!

LASTIWKA, Elizabeth July 25, 1929 - February 5, 2021



On Friday, February 5, 2021, Elizabeth Lastiwka of Vegreville, formerly of Willingdon passed away.

Elizabeth is survived by her loving family, children Leonard (Vivian), Raymond (Lydia) and Bev (Alex) Mihalcheon; grandchildren Janet, Charlene, Carmen, Jennifer, Cliff, Wayne, Arnanda, Lori, Jolene, Rochelle and Steven; great-grandchildren Jody, Jessica, Kingsley, Austin, Brandon, Cody, Eli, Kathleen, Jonathan, Tesa and Ralynn; along with numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Elizabeth was predeceased by her husband Eli; daughter Gladys Didechko and son-in-law Victor Didechko; daughter-in-law Maryann Lastiwka; parents Conrad and Rafia Skirka; brothers Mike, Nick, Steve and Floyd; sisters Mary and Dora.

A Private Funeral Service was held at Autumn Rose Funeral Home in Vegreville, with Very Reverend Igor Kisil officiating. Interment to follow in Riverside Cemetery.

Elizabeth and her children and grand children have always been one of the most caring and devout for the Vegreville church family and did so much for the parish and the temple. May God remember her love in His Kingdom!

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Add Colours To This Good Works Picture And Try To Do Likewise!



March 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro (306) 	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> St. Leo, bishop of Catania (780) 	<u>6</u>
<u>7</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy	<u>8</u> Hieromartyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (167) 	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> St. Tarasius, patriarch of Constantinople (806) 	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> St. Procopius the Confessor, of Decapolis (ca. 750) 	<u>13</u>
<u>14</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare)	<u>15</u> Great Lent Begins Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>16</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>17</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>18</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>21</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. Triumph of Orthodoxy	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara's Cathedral	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara's Cathedral	<u>27</u>
<u>28</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. St. Gregory Palamas.	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara's Cathedral			