



# “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**

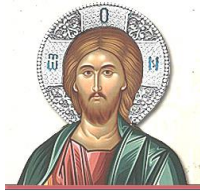
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

**Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)**

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)**



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## March 7 - April 23 – the 40-day journey of the Great Lent

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

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Lifegiver,  
For my spirit rises early to pray towards Thy holy temple.  
Bearing the temple of my body all defiled;  
But in Thy compassion, purify me by the loving kindness  
of Thy mercy.

Now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen

Lead me on the paths of salvation, O Mother of God,  
For I have profaned my soul with shameful sins,  
and have wasted my life in laziness.  
But by your intercessions, deliver me from all impurity.

Have mercy on me O God, according to Thy great mercy,  
and according to the multitude of Thy compassions,  
blot out my transgressions.

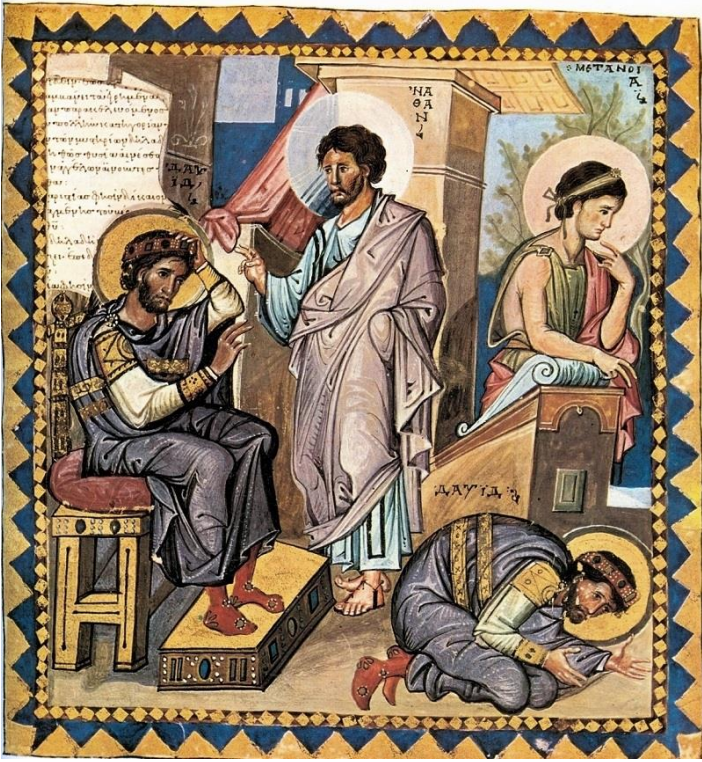
When I think of the many evil things I have done, wretch  
that I am, I tremble at the fearful day of judgement.  
But trusting in Thy living kindness, like David I cry to  
Thee:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy!



Three weeks before the beginning of the Great Lent, the preparatory period begins, which brings us to the Fast with special readings and hymns. Starting from the first preparatory Week about the publican and the Pharisee and until the Sunday of the fifth week of fasting, this penitential troparia "Open to me the doors of repentance, O Lifegiver" is sung at Matins.

# Open to me the doors of repentance!



"This church hymn will call us to repentance for a few more weeks [of the Great Lent], if we are alive.

But do we understand these words, what do they mean? "Like David, I cry out to You: Have mercy on me, God, according to Your great mercy." Why is David and his prayer remembered these days?

Maybe not everyone remembers it. David was rich and seemed to have everything. But one day he saw the beautiful wife of one of his warriors. David ordered this warrior to be sent to a dangerous place of battle and the warrior was killed, and the king then married his widow. But the Lord loved David and sent the prophet Nathan to him. When Nathan came to the king, he said: "Two people lived in one

city: one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had a lot of cattle, the poor nothing but one sheep. He bought this little lamb and nursed it, and it grew up with him along with his children; she ate from his bread and drank from his cup and slept in his arms. Once a stranger was visiting a rich man.

The rich man spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, but he took the poor man's sheep and cooked a meal for the visitor from it. "David thought that Nathan was talking to him about some of his servants. He became very angry and exclaimed: "This evil man deserves to die for taking a sheep from a poor man." - "You are this man, king," said Nathan, "you have forgotten how much mercy the Lord sent you and took away your warrior's wife. The Lord will punish you for this."

And David realized his terrible sin! He regretted it bitterly, wept before God and composed a wonderful penitential prayer - psalm, which is read every day in church and which begins: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy" (Psalm 50).

That's why we hear [during the Great Lent] -"Like David, I cry out to You: Have mercy on me, God, according to Your great mercy."

So we need to realize our sins, remember the Lord God and go ask for forgiveness with a desire to become better. Amen."

**Bishop Methodius (1932-1972)**

***"Words and Teachings"***

This story might also warn us from one of the greatest impediments on the path of repentance – being judgmental. For, as we have seen, when the Lord shows us the sins of, seemingly, someone else, it might be just a parable-like rebuke of our own infirmities and transgression... Let us attend!



### **Prayer to the Lord Almighty for peace and the cessation of enmity**

O Lord Almighty, the Lord of great mercies, accept our prayers of kneeling and our humble tears, offered before Your Holy Altar at this time of afflictions and tribulations of your people. Accept the heavenly intercession of all our holy ancestry, whom we now call for help and protection, so that the light of Your love, revealed on Your Cross, enlighten every person suffering in this world, who dwell in the darkness of enmity and iniquity.

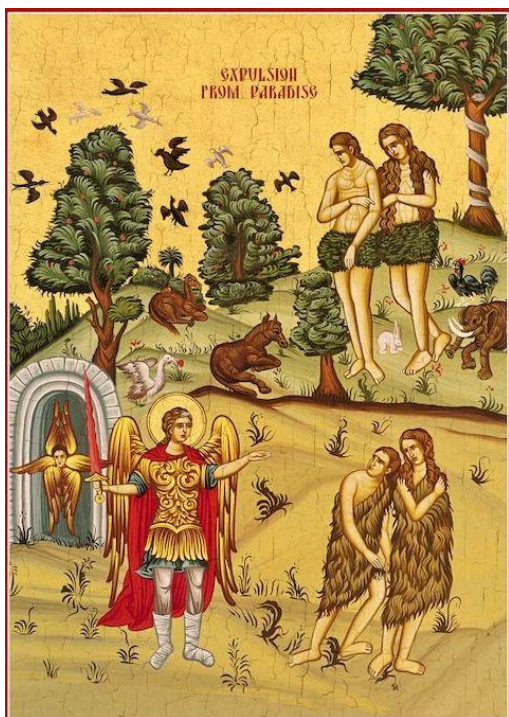
Accept the intercession of the holy and blessed Prince Vladimir, the Baptist and Enlightener of our land; accept the prayer of the passion-bearers Saints Boris and Gleb, who teach us not to raise their hands against our brother. Accept the intercession of Your saints Anthony and Theodosius and with them all the venerable righteous fathers and mothers, who have made their souls whiter than snow with the tears of repentance. Accept the deeds of new martyrs and confessors, who have preserved for us, by their sufferings, the saving faith in You; accept petitions of all the saints of Your Church, who have sanctified our land with their labors. Above all, accept the Protecting Veil of the prayers of Your Most Holy Mother, Our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, Whose ever-trustworthy intercession has delivered us so many times from all enmity, internecine and fratricidal warfare.

Hear us, O God our Saviour, and be merciful, be merciful, O Master, to all those who suffer greatly and are heavily burdened, and forgive us our sins, teaching us also to forgive the trespasses those who trespass against us, and change Your wrath to Your mercy, pacifying all sedition and disorder in our nation!

For Thou only art Good and the Lover of mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen

# A Word on Forgiveness

By Bishop THOMAS (Joseph) and Peter Schweitzer



In each of the preparatory Sundays, forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel message. In his great zeal to meet the Lord, Zacchaeus confessed his sins and repented by giving back four-fold his ill-gotten gains. The publican asks for forgiveness through his heartfelt "have mercy upon me, a sinner." The Sunday of the Last Judgment reminds us that Christ will judge us according to the extent that we were merciful and forgiving of others. Finally, Forgiveness Sunday recalls Adam's sin and more importantly, his unwillingness to ask for forgiveness. Reflecting upon this ancestral sin, Abba Dorotheos writes:

*Again, after his fall, God gave him an occasion to repent and to receive mercy, but he kept his stiff neck held high. He came to him and said 'Adam, Where are you?' instead of saying 'What glory you have left and what dishonor you have arrived at?' After that, He asked him 'Why did you sin? Why did you transgress the commandment?' By asking these questions, He wanted to give him the opportunity to say, 'Forgive me.' However, he did not ask for forgiveness. There was no humility, there was no repentance, but indeed the opposite. (Practical Teaching on the Christian Life)*

The ability to ask for forgiveness and to forgive others is at the heart of the spiritual life. There can be no spiritual growth without these two components. In Saint Matthew's Gospel, the Lord tells His disciples, "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:2).

Great Lent is a period of grace given to us to demonstrate in concrete actions and words our forgiveness of others who have wronged us. Our father among the saints, the righteous John of Kronstadt, is quoted as saying:

*Imagine, picture the multitude of your sins and imagine how tolerant of them is the Master of your life, while you are unwilling to forgive your neighbor even the smallest offense. Moan and bewail your foolishness, and that obstruction within you will vanish like smoke, you will think more clearly, your heart will grow calm, and through this you will learn goodness, as if not you yourself had heard the reproaches and indignities, but some other person entirely, or a shadow of yourself. (Lessons on a Life of Grace)*

Pride is at the root of our unwillingness to forgive. We may protest by saying that our unwillingness to forgive is justified in some way but the appeal to justice is a two-edged sword. As Saint Paul writes to the Romans, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It is much more profitable spiritually for us to appeal to mercy. If we are able to overlook the sins of others and show mercy, mercy will be shown to us as well.

Just as pride is the root of hard-heartedness, humility is the key to forgiveness. Abba Anthony said, "I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world, and I said groaning, 'What can get through from such snares?' Then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Humility.'"

Our first task during Great Lent and every day of our lives is found in the Gospel: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

If we seek the Lord's forgiveness, we must forgive our brothers and sisters from our heart. This is the task and the opportunity of Great Lent. A blessed fast to you all.

**In 2022 St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church of Horen (near Tomahawk) is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1952-2022).**

Every church is, first of all, people, there lives, there labour, spiritual and physical, there history that has been interwoven into the Holy History and became a part of the Body of Christ.

Today we begin our publications dedicated to the people St. John's the Baptist, the accounts of there life, their memories about the events surrounding the holy temple and the community.

## **The account of the life of Archpriest Vasily Hochachka – the founding priest of the Temple of Saint John the Baptist at Horen**

Archpriest Vasily and Matushka Paraskevia Hochachka



### **Early life of Vasily Feodorovich Hochacha**

On 9 May, 1901, Vasily Feodorovich Hochacha was born to Theodore and Martha Hochachka in the village of Sinovo in the Volyn Gubernia of the Russian Empire. This region was from time to time in history a part of Poland. It is now in western Ukraine. There, he was raised in the bosom of the Russian Orthodox Church.



*Teodor (Fred) and Marta Hochachka*

Vasily was the 3rd of 5 sons born into the family of a blacksmith. His father was, as expected, strong and of robust physically. His mother was very diminutive and very intelligent. Although Vasily grew to be diminutive also, he had very great physical strength and mental and spiritual determination.

The society in which Vasily and his brothers grew up was typical of old Russia. There was a balance of hard work, song and dance, together with regular worship in the Temple of the village. As was customary, Vasily and his brothers were taken to worship services from a very young age, so they

were accustomed to the nature of Orthodox worship from the beginning. Once Vasily had learnt to sing, he was included in the boys' section of the parish choir.

His religious education was an integral part of his school education (before the Bolshevik Revolution), and he naturally also learned to sing the folk-songs which accompanied all the aspects of daily life. Such songs are used not only on various Church festivals, but they also accompany various everyday practical manual tasks such as washing, cleaning, baking, planting, harvesting and more (including blacksmithing).

### **World War I, Bolshevik Revolution, 1914-1918**

His studies were interrupted by World War I. Austrian forces occupied his village, and both he and his older brother Alex were imprisoned in Kovel. Nevertheless, the boys managed to escape after a time, and they lived in hiding until they were recaptured. Because of a sporting display of bravado, the 2 were released, but they were permitted to stay in their home as "servants" of the officer.

With the end of the war, and the consequences of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the region around their home became chaotic. First, the Soviets arrived and overran the village. They were then repelled by the Polish forces. The Polish people were then able to establish their own state, and they ruled this region until World War II.

### **Marriage, 1919**

After the end of World War I, Vasily met Paraskevia Karynik. She had lived in another district of the Sinovo village.

On 19 May, 1919, she and Vasily were married.

After this, Vasily began to try to make a living as a farmer; however, this project was interrupted when he was conscripted into the Polish army. His experience in the army was distasteful to him, so he eventually deserted. He went into hiding, along with his wife and a child [his son Julian, who was born on September 26, 1921 in Synowa]. However, he later turned himself in. He was sentenced to prison for desertion, but he was soon released in the context of a general amnesty for prisoners of his type.

[Two more children were born in Synowa to their family: Ivan "John" born on September 14, 1924; and Mary born on August 23, 1927.]

### **Emigration to Canada, 1928**

In 1928, Vasily, his wife, [children,] his parents, his 3 brothers, and their families emigrated to Canada.

They first settled in the Lake Eliza district south of Saint Paul, Alberta.

[In 1932 they gave birth to their daughter Stephanie.]

In 1931, they moved to the Therien-Glendon district, where he farmed for 16 years. By this time, his contacts and his life in the Church had opened some new possibilities. His parents had contributed to the construction of the Temple of Saint John the Baptist at Therien, and he attended services in this place.

*On September 2 and 13, 2017, the [now former] Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in Canada, Bishop Job, visited some remote churches in the north-east of the province of Alberta, in which divine services have not been performed for many years: St. John the Baptist in a farming area near the hamlet Therien, 4 miles from the village of Glendon and 25 miles north of the town of St. Paul, Petropavlovsk in Bonnyville (Bonnyville) and near Redwater (Redwater).*

*The Russian Orthodox Church of St. John The Baptist Russo Orthodox Church, Therien, Alberta was built in 1932 on 4 acres of land donated by Stephen Zubko. The builders and the first parishioners of a small church without a dome with a wooden cross on the roof were Vasily Chipyuk, Daniel and Peter Fika, Theodore and Martha Hochachka (the parents of the priest Vasily Hochachka, who was ordained by Archbishop Joasaph (Skorodumov, †1955) in the ROCOR, then for several years (1949-1955) he served in the St. Barbara's Patriarchal Church [today - cathedral] and moved to the American Metropolia, now the OCA, founding the Bukovina Church of All Saints in Edmonton.)*

*[Bishop Job was accompanied with father Alexios Suraev and the grandson of Reverend Vasily Hochachka (and the son of St. Barbara's choir director of many years – Fred Hochachka) – Gene Hochachka. Gene is the President of St Mary's Holy Dormition Russo-Greek Orthodox Cathoic Church of Shishkovtzy, Chipman, Alberta.*

*As the article, that we are referring goes, the family St. John's church was dilapidated and there was a decision to dismantle it, burn and bury the ashes at its foundation, but, thanks God, that was never done, as our people decided to preserve even the smallest remnants of the Lord's glory.*

*We will tell you, our god loving reader of another, and still more glorious outcome for another church of our Orthodox IX parishes, that was not far from the same fate, and was literally restored from the ashes that were deemed for it, and into the best of its condition, as this temple is also celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of 2022, in one of the bulletins to follow.*

*But let us go back to the story of the life of father Vasily.]*

[During the years of 1937 and 1947 the family was blessed with three more children: Peter, Vladimir, and Nadia.]

In 1947, Vasily and his family moved to Edmonton, Alberta (the provincial capital).

There, he worked at odd jobs while he was studying towards the possibility of ordination.

At the same time, he was attending Saint Barbara's Orthodox Church there.

### **Ordinations, 1949**

In 1949, Vasily was ordained to the Holy Diaconate, and then to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Joasaph (Skorodumov) in Saint Vladimir's Church, in North Edmonton. Vladyka Joasaph was a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR).

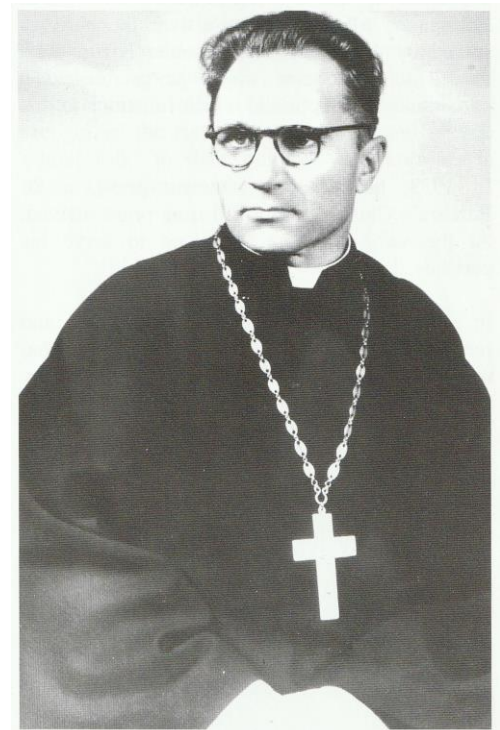
### **Pastoral service**

The Priest Vasily Hochachka was then assigned to Saint Barbara's Church in Edmonton, to be the rector of the parish. He remained as the rector for 6 years.

In 1952, Father Vasily Hochachka was the founding pastor of the Temple of Saint John the Baptist at Horen, Alberta. This community is situated about 97 km (60 mi) west of Edmonton, and south of Lake Wabamun and Seba Beach. It was established mostly by people who had immigrated from Volyn in Ukraine, and the place-name was given in memory of the River Horyn in Volyn. He served in this community from 1949 to 1955.

Father Vasily served in the parish of the Nativity of the Theotokos at Nisku, Alberta (southwest of Edmonton). He served regularly in this parish from 1954 to 1962, in addition to his main responsibility at the cathedral in Edmonton. The close relationship between this parish and the cathedral parish has continued until the present, since clergy have continued to be assigned from the cathedral to serve this parish regularly. In particular, the cemetery of this parish steadily became the preferred cemetery of the parishioners of the cathedral, and a section of this cemetery at Nisku eventually was set aside for the cathedral parishioners.

In addition, Father Vasilii served on particular occasions in the parish of Saint John the Baptist in Therien, Alberta ; in Saint John the Baptist Russo Orthodox Church in Vegreville, Alberta ; in Saint John the Baptist Russo Orthodox Church in Chipman, Alberta ; in Archangel Michael Russo Orthodox Church at Sachava (Andrew), Alberta ; and in Dormition of the Theotokos Russo Orthodox Church at Shishkovtsy-Shandro Alberta.



*(to be continued in April bulletin)*




*Trust in the Lord, and do good! (Psalm of David 37:3)*

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



# March 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		<u>1</u> St Maruthas Bishop of Tagrith 	<u>2</u> Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro 	<u>3</u> Leo the Great, pope of Rome (461) 	<u>4</u> Theodore, abbot of Sanaxar (1791) 	<u>5</u> 10:00 am - <u>The Annual</u> <u>“Orthodox</u> <u>IX” Parishes</u> <u>meeting will</u> <u>be held at St.</u> <u>Mary’s Parish</u> <u>Hall, Nisku</u>
<u>6</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Mary’s NISKU <b>Sunday of</b> <b>Forgiveness</b> <i>(Cheesefare)</i>	<u>7</u> <b>Great Lent</b> <b>Begins</b> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – <b>6 p.m.</b>	<u>8</u> <b>Great</b> <b>Repentance</b> Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – <b>6 p.m.</b>	<u>9</u> <b>Great</b> <b>Repentance</b> Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – <b>6 p.m.</b>	<u>10</u> <b>Great</b> <b>Repentance</b> Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – <b>6 p.m.</b>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> 1:00 pm - The <u>Annual St.</u> <u>Mary’s Parish</u> <u>meeting will</u> <u>be held at</u> <u>Parish Hall,</u> <u>Nisku</u>
<u>13</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Mary’s NISKU <b>Triumph of</b> <b>Orthodoxy</b>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara’s Cathedral	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara’s Cathedral	<u>19</u>
<u>20</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara. <b>St. Gregory</b> <b>Palamas</b>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, St. Barbara’s Cathedral	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy (Confession) <b>Cross</b> <b>Veneration</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>		