



# “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

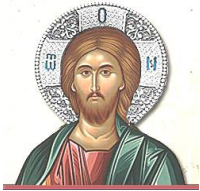
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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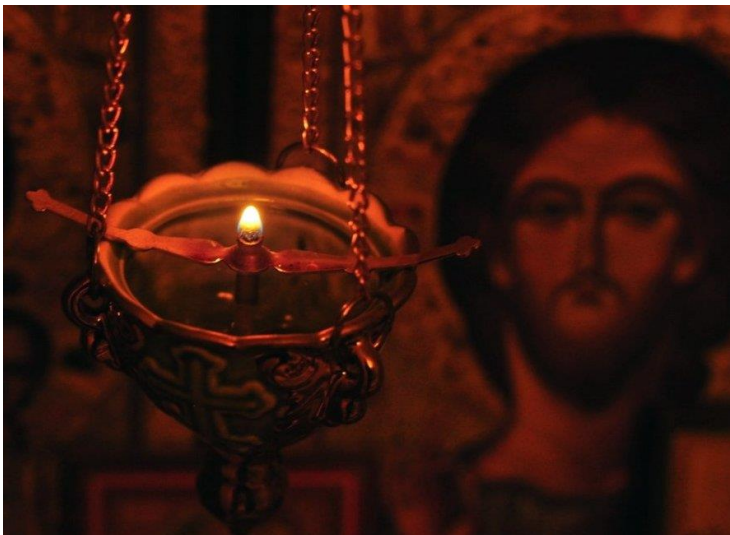
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## The Fire and the Light of the Great Lent’s Lamp

We ignite a candle for the sake of its light; but no fire – no light! This is why one of the symbols of the Great Lent is a lamp, or lampada (icon lamp), containing and giving both – the fire of the voluntary and cleansing hardships, and the light of the God’s Grace that will radiate from this Lenten fire.

What would be the aspects of the ‘fire’ of the blessed fast, to practice them during these days, on the way to the Light of the Holy Resurrection?

**Abstaining** from certain foods and eating sparingly during Lent to give less strength to the passions (as the first and necessary step), and from the addictions that would blind our heart and conscience most of the time, exhausting our forces and blunting our attention.

**Confession** with proper preparation, preferably, with less excuses than during the rest of the year. For that – more painstaking doing of the commandments of God, as there is no other way to see the sins. As well as being on guard of the door of our heart.

**Discernment**, as for what I really want, and as for the degree of fasting, and as for the priorities in the fasting, humble, self-denouncing but not self-eating; and as for the analysis of thoughts and feelings that my fasting causes in me, and if there is any despondence prevailing, or the increase of anger and/or judgmental attitude to my neighbor, etc.

**Prayer**, that is, according to Fathers, the second wing in true spirituality, more intense and lengthier, as when we take part in the Repentance Canon two times during the Lent, or the more extended Liturgies of St. Vasil the Great, and additional Presanctified Liturgies during the weekdays, reading the complete morning and evening prayer rule, and with more attention, less distraction, etc.

**Almsgiving**, that we should add to the rest of the fasting, that saves us from idolatry, and inclines God’s mercy to us, capable of making even the eye of the needle wide enough for us.

If we let this saving **fire** burn us from time to time, then, we might have, even though invisible, but mystical **light**, which let us wish to each other during this blessed time, and in which we might see and feel much better the joyous Light of the Christ’s Holy Resurrection! *Let us be radiant, O people!*

# The Fathers of today about the Great Lent



Today, when we are getting closer and entering the Great Lent, we would like to present to the pious attention of our parishioners two contemporary Christian priests and authors – Father Bill Olnhausen and Father Sergei Sveshnikov, who shared their, we believe, very deep and at the same time concise insight into the vital part of our Holy Tradition – the Great Lent.

The following will be two excerpts (one – in this March bulletin, and the other in the April one), that are mostly about what the Great Lent is or is not, but their complete articles are very much worth of reading from beginning to end, and given a good thought. Consider it, if you like, one of the ‘TODO’ for the Great Lent, which

though might be not an easy task in the context of the ‘busy life’ of today, but certainly a source of the life-giving and saving Grace of God. (With the links to go to the originals available here, after each excerpt.)

## *Great Lent: How to Keep the Fast*

### **‘How to approach the Fast’**

Great Lent is upon us. Here’s the first principle: If during Lent you find yourself getting proud of your fasting... quick, eat some meat! Pride is much worse than breaking the Fast. Fasting is not what Lent is all about. The purpose of Lent is to bring us nearer to God, nearer to our brothers and sisters. Fasting is only a tool.



An example of how not to do it: When I was in Episcopalian seminary long years ago, I made myself a strict Lenten rule and kept it to the letter. Then all during Lent I kept comparing myself to my classmates who, I thought, were not being as pious as me. Did I know that? Perhaps they were fasting and praying in the way Christ commanded: “when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place” (Matthew 6:6). By the end of Lent I was filled with pride and far worse off spiritually than I was at the beginning.

### **‘How to keep the spirit of the Great Lenten Fast’**

Fast with the Church, using the Church’s fasting rules as a guide. Keep food simple. Eat light. Avoid snacks if you can. Remember that the Church’s fasting rules may be adjusted for good cause: youth, age, health, pregnancy, travel, family situations and so on. You do not need a priest or bishop to dispense you. Use your common sense.

If fasting is new to you, start slowly this year and work up to the full Fast in due time. Make sure you get sufficient protein and calcium. If your fasting rule turns out to be too hard or too easy or impractical, it’s alright to adjust it. If anyone serves you non-fasting food, eat it gratefully without mentioning the Fast. (Definitely do not do the “Oh, I can’t eat that, I’m Orthodox” act.) Then go back to the Fast. Above all, keep the spirit of the Fast: Lobster and vodka are both technically legal but not exactly appropriate!

During Lent seek God and his will. Simplify your life. Cut back on entertainments. Don't just give up things. Take on good things. Try to concentrate on what's most important, God and your neighbor. Come to worship more often if you can. Most parishes offer the Wednesday night Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts. In the Slavic tradition, this is usually offered again on Fridays.

Set aside time for extra prayer and study, and for your family and those you love. Take what you save by eating less, and give to the needy. Many jurisdictions and parish churches have special Lenten collections of food or money for the poor.

### **From 'What will fasting do for you?'**

The purpose of fasting is to teach us to keep a discipline, so that when you need to give up something important (your neighbor's wife? robbing banks?) you'll be in practice. Fasting is like practice for athletes to prepare them for the real game.

The purpose of fasting is not to make us suffer. This is why vegan Lenten desserts are permitted. A non-Orthodox friend, on hearing of our Lenten fasting, once asked me, "What ever do you eat?" Ask a silly question, get a silly answer: I replied, "Roots and berries." But seriously, there are many delicious vegan recipes on-line and in Orthodox recipe books. If you love Indian food, as I do, go Indian. On the other hand, if you have a special passion for Indian food, you may want to give that up for Lent – just so you set a rule and try to keep the discipline. My wife has many delicious strict Lenten fasting dishes. I look forward to Lenten food. Well, until late Lent when I begin to get desperate for a cheeseburger... but it's worth waiting till Pascha.

Fasting from food without fasting from sin leaves us worse off. A Pre-Lenten Matins hymn warns that fasting without love, humility and mercy makes us just "like the demons who never eat at all". So, as you fast, work on overcoming a particular sin or failing, and if you fail (you probably will) go to Confession and try again. Remember, Christ taught that evil is driven out not by fasting alone, but by "prayer and fasting".

What will fasting do for you? Don't expect quick results, but over the years it will help get your ego out of the way. Fasting will help you gain control over the desires for self-will and immediate self-gratification. Fasting will unite you with Christ who sacrificed himself for you, with the many hungry people in the world, and with 250 million Orthodox Christians in every land with whom you are keeping the Fast. Strict fasting may produce a spiritual lightness before Lent is over – not to mention physical lightness, for fasting is good for the body, too. Goodbye, bad cholesterol! Fasting adds variety: eating the same things every day is boring. You'll learn that less is more: ordinary food tastes better after you have been fasting. And if you have kept the Lenten Fast, the Paschal Feast is just wonderful. It will give you the feel of what Christ's Eternal Banquet will be like after the "fast" of this earthly life.

Finally, as I said at the beginning, if you want to have a good Lent, above all do not run around judging other peoples' fasting or lack of fasting. That is none of your business. It is between them and God. Note the last line of the Orthodox Church's Lenten prayer, below. Pray it every day.

**Very Rev. Father Bill Olmhausen, retired Pastor  
Emeritus from Saint Nicholas Antiochian  
Orthodox Church in Cedarburg, Wisconsin  
(was an Episcopalian priest for 24 years, and  
now for 33 years have been an Orthodox priest)**

<https://frbillsorthodoxblog.com/2018/02/09/51-great-lent-keep-fast/>

Let us remember the main theme of every Sunday of the Great Lent, dedicated to a special Church event, feast, or Saint, that the Church considers of the great importance thus, commemorating them all through the special period of spiritual vigilance and effort.

In March 2024 we have two Sundays of the Great Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy, and Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, with Gospel readings from John 1, 43-51, and Mark 2, 1-12, respectively.

# THE SEVEN SUNDAYS OF THE GREAT LENT

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

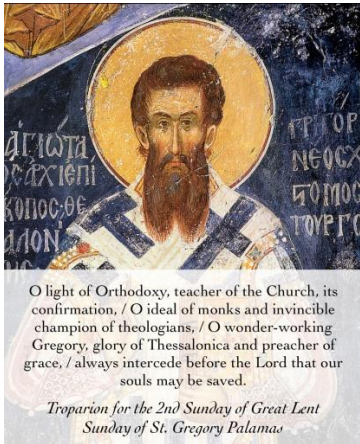


On the First Sunday of Great Lent, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, we commemorate the victory of Orthodoxy over false teaching. This commemoration has its origins in a particular aspect of that victory, the end of the iconoclast (“icon-smashing”) controversy and the restoration of the holy icons to the churches on the First Sunday of Great Lent in 843 AD.

The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church.

The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”.

## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – ST. GREGORY PALAMAS



On the Second Sunday of Great Lent we commemorate Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (+1359 AD). This commemoration is essentially a continuation of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, because Saint Gregory defended Orthodoxy against the people that put the limits to the unity of a true Christian with God.

The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory for his orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the orthodox teaching on the subject of *Hesychasm* (from the Greek, meaning quiet.) Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God.

As Gregory was himself dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent, he obtained the wisdom to discern the spirits and practices of especially monastics, while not undermining the mystic unity, that is expressed by St. Apostle Peter: “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Peter 1:4)

*In this time of fasting and prayer, brethren, let us with all our hearts forgive anything real or imaginary we have against anyone. May we all devote ourselves to love, and let us consider one another as an incentive to love and good works, speaking in defense of one another, having good thoughts and dispositions within us before God and men. In this way our fasting will be laudable and blameless, and our requests to God while we fast will be readily received. We shall rightly call upon Him as our Father by grace and we can boldly say to Him, "Father, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). (Saint Gregory Palamas, 'Homily Seven: another on fasting')*

## Uncovering of the relics (1992) of New Hiero-confessor Tikhon, Enlightener of North America, patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (†25)



*One of the many mysteries of ecclesiastical life in Soviet times was what had happened to the remains of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon, who had been buried in 1925 in the Small Cathedral of Moscow's Donskoy Monastery.*

*In his popular book, [Everyday Saints and Other Stories](#), Bishop Tikhon (Shevkunov) tells the amazing story of how the relics of Patriarch Tikhon were discovered in Donskoy Monastery, Moscow, where he was living as yet a hieromonk at the time.*

(continuation; the beginning – in February 2024 bulletin)

I donned my priestly stole, because one can only touch remains when one is clad in priestly attire, and lowered myself back down to the crypt. Removing the nails lifting up the carved lid of the coffin, I felt my heart pounding as I put my arm inside. My fingers gingerly touched first fabric, and then a shoulder. “He’s here!” I cried out as loud as I could, “Enough! Come back! Come back! And close the lid quickly!” I heard from above the voice of the Patriarch quivering with emotion.

This took place on February 19. Three days later His Holiness the Patriarch, the members of the Holy Synod, and the father confessors of the Holy Trinity Monastery, Father Kirill (Pavlov) and Father Naum (Baiborodan), came to our monastery. When the weathered lid of the coffin whose carving was collapsing was lifted up, we saw with our own eyes the preserved remains of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon covered by his velvet Patriarchal mantle.

Several days later we washed the holy relics according to an ancient rite, garbed them in new Patriarchal vestments, and placed the relics in a specially prepared shrine. The Patriarch was wearing the very same famous vestments that had been made in the factory of the Olovyanishnikov merchant brothers. After this for a long time we could not understand how it was possible that these same vestments had also been on the false Metropolitan Vvedensky.

In spite of the fact that it had been very humid in the crypt, the body of Patriarch Tikhon, which had been lying in the earth for sixty-seven years, had somehow been almost perfectly preserved. It was remarkable that by contrast one of his panagias, or pectoral icons, a symbol of hierarchical power resting on the breast of Patriarch Tikhon, though it had been made from the ivory of a mammoth tusk, had been completely dissolved into dust over the years. Only the silver frame of the panagea had survived.

We could not help remembering the verse from the Psalm: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them shall be broken.” And yet not just the bones of the Holy Patriarch but most of his body had been preserved as well. Likewise preserved were the great Patriarchal paramon, (his prayer beads, and his monastic paramon, his baptismal cross, and a golden panagia that had been presented to the Patriarch once by the Bishop of Yaroslavl and the parishioners of that diocese. We even found a piece of a palm frond (for the holy prelate Tikhon had been buried on Palm Sunday)—and found as well a little bottle of aromatic rose oil with which the body of the Patriarch had been anointed before his burial.

Sometime later our archeologist Sergei Alexeyevich Belyayev was able to get to the bottom of the mystery of why the “false Metropolitan” Alexander Vvedensky had been seen wearing the Patriarchal vestments. It turned out that in the Olovyanishnikov Factory two sets of vestments had been made. Nowadays the one that truly belonged to the Holy Patriarch Tikhon is on display in the museum of the Donskoy Monastery.

## *In Memoriam*

***The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our deepest condolences to Calmar Holy Ascension parish, and to the big Family and friends of the newly departed Cecil Chimera. May God comfort you with His compassion, and may God settle His servant, where the light of His countenance shall visit!***

**Cecil Chimera**

**30 June, 1933 – 3 February, 2024**



It is with great sadness that the family of Cecil announce his passing on February 3, 2024, at the age of 90 years.

Cecil is survived by his 3 children Barbara, Barry (Darlene), Bradley (Jody), 8 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, sister Lavinia (Bryon) as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his wife Angeline, parents John and Caroline, sister Wasylia and brother Darvyn.

A special thank you to the doctors and nurses in Leduc Community Hospital as well as Thorsby homecare and staff.

A faithful parishioner of the Holy Ascension Church the servant of God Cecil was vouchsafe a Christian Burial service at his dear and beloved church, with many people present and praying.

May God remember His servant in His Kingdom!

***Memory Eternal! The mercy of God, the Kingdom of Heaven!***

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***The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our condolences to Foam Lake SK St. Onuphrius the Great Parish and to all the Family of the newly departed Mike Holowaty! May God have mercy and settle him where the light of His countenance shall visit!***



**Mike Holowaty**

**November 3, 1934 - February 6, 2024**

We are sad to announce that on February 6, 2024, we had to say our final farewell to Mike Holowaty (Foam Lake, Saskatchewan).

One of the most devout members of Saint Onuphrius Church in the famer's fields at Foam Lake, with his family still doing most of the care for the church, when he was younger, Mike participated in all the services and events and supported the church life in many ways.

Even after he was too weak, for many years, every time a priest would come there for the service, there was an invitation to visit the servant of God Mike and to give him the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion, with him always lighting a candle and participating in the prayer. Every time he used to say how eagerly he would go to church if he could.

His life and happiness were in communication with people and God.

May God remember His servant in His Kingdom!

***Memory Eternal! The mercy of God, the Kingdom of Heaven!***



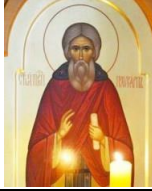





*Children's Corner: Drop in with your children and great & grand children!*

*Great Lent is the period of our spiritual and physical preparation for Pascha, the glorious Resurrection of our Lord. It is a period of deep reflection into our inner self, repentance, confession of sins and prayer, and is certainly the perfect time to do good deeds, helping others in many different ways, like this one in the picture!*



# March 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					<u>1</u> Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro (306) 	<u>2</u> 10:00 am - The <b>Annual “Orthodox IX” Parishes meeting</b> will be held at St. Mary’s Parish Hall, Nisku
<u>3</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Mary’s NISKU	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> St. George, bishop of Amastris 	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> St. Polycarp, monk of Bryansk 	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> 1:00 pm - The <b>Annual St. Mary’s Parish meeting</b> will be held at Parish Hall, Nisku
<u>10</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara.	<u>11</u> St. Procopius 	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> St. Meletius 	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> St. Arsenius 	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Mary’s at NISKU Sunday of Forgiveness	<u>18</u> Great Lent Beginning Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>19</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>20</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>21</u> Great Repentance Canon reading – St. Barbara Cathedral – 6 p.m.	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>24</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara. Sunday of Orthodoxy	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> 06:00 p.m. – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts - NISKU	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara. St. Gregory Sunday						