



“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

Holy Ascension - CALMAR

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

St. John the Baptist - HOREN

St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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Volume 60, Issue 4

April 2024



Another month of the Great Lent

During the last preparatory Sunday to the Great Lent we heard the Gospel, one of the main ideas of which was that man is the judge for himself; the Lord comes to confirm it when a person has condemned himself in his sins. And the righteous and sinful are both surprised. But the surprise of the first is just to show that they did good to their neighbour from the pure heart: “But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does:” But the condemned had a different kind of ignorance, the one that comes from the cold heart...

During the Great Lent we serve the evening Lurgies, of the Presanctified Gifts, and one of its traits is the persistence in asking the catechumens (the ones who hasn’t been taught and enlightened) to leave the church.

And the Great Repentance Canon we read is also not quite understandable from the point of view of the pure and scientific interpretation of the Holy Scripture, but seems to leave behind all kind of logics in favour of the penitent mood.

All this might give us a hint that there is in the Great Lent a very important gift – the gift of the self-knowledge, which has been often accentuated by many Fathers and preachers. The time of abstinence is the time to get to know a lot of things about our selves, and good before the time of judgement! How dependant we are on the things earthly, what are the intentions and, overall, the state of our heart... What is subject to us, and what controls us... So, if you want to get rid of the unrighteous ignorance – start to fast, physically and emotionally.

And since we are approaching the Great Week, let us remember that the fast brings us to the understanding of another “secret” (especially for this world) knowledge: there is something in us so corrupted that there had to be this utmost horror of the Great Wednesday and Friday, so that to somehow save us!

It is still the Great Lent, so let us remember that “God saves us not without us”. And by this and right now we do not mean our ‘righteous deeds’, but, ultimately, we mean the true repentance through the eye-opening time of fasting. Amen.

The Fathers of today about the Great Lent



In the previous bulletin we presented “Great Lent: How to Keep the Fast” by Father Bill Olnhausen, the contemporary and experienced pastor, that seemed very much worthy to be shared to our readers.

This time, to the pious attention of our parishioners we present the second insight into the vital part of the Holy Tradition – the Great Lent, an excerpt from the essay on this topic by Father Sergei Sveshnikov, about some of the aspects of the pre-Eastern fasting period, again, based on the Church’s experience in the light of the authors personal spiritual life.

We would like to mention again that the complete articles (where you can find much more than is quoted here, within the narrow confines of the newsletter) 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 after each excerpt, in March and April bulletins.)

Fasting for Non-Monastics

From the ‘Introduction’



A curious phenomenon can be observed in the interactions between pastors and their parishioners at the beginning of each major fast of the Church. Pastors attempt to call their parishioners’ pious attention to the spiritual heights of fasting: the fighting against sin, the conquering of passions, the taming of the tongue, the cultivation of virtues.

In turn, parishioners pester their pastors with purely dietary questions: when fish is allowed, whether soy milk or soy hotdogs are Lenten foods, whether adding milk to coffee is breaking the fast, or whether there is some dispensation that can be given to the young, the elderly, those who study, those who work, women, men, travelers, the sick, or those who simply do not feel well.

In response to the overwhelming preoccupation with dietary rules to the detriment of the spiritual significance of fasting, some pastors, seemingly out of frustration, began to propose in sermons and internet articles that dietary rules are not important at all: if you want yogurt during Lent, just have some as long as you do not gossip; if you want a hamburger, then eat one, as long as you do not devour a fellow human being by judging and backstabbing.

Unfortunately, such advice rarely helps eradicate gossip, judging or backstabbing. Rather, it seems to confuse people into thinking that since they have not yet conquered these and many other vices in their hearts, they do not have to fast from hamburger either.

‘Is It a Sin to Break the Fast?’

So, is it a sin to break the fast? The answer to this question depends on what is meant by breaking the fast. As we have discussed, it turns out that most people—monastic and lay alike—deviate from the rule in some way. If this deviation is meaningful and its purpose is to accommodate a real physiological need, then, it seems to me to be well within the spirit of fasting, even if it is not exactly according to monastic rules. If, however, the deviation is due to our gluttony, laziness, lack of discipline, or some other weakness, then we have something that should be corrected.

Perhaps, the best way to think about sin in relation to fasting is not in legal terms—law, crime, and punishment, but in terms of preparation or exercise. Fasting is an ascetic discipline. The word “ascetic” comes from the Greek *ἀσκησις* which means “exercise” or “training.” In other words, imagine that you are a soldier preparing for a difficult and dangerous mission. It is not so much a crime to be lazy in your training or to cut corners as much as it means that you may not be well-prepared for your task and thus will not be able to complete it or even perish in the process. So, if people choose not to exercise the discipline of fasting, they are cheating themselves out of the training necessary to fight against the enemy—sins and passions—and will be unprepared to face the snares of the devil.

From the ‘Conclusion’

Our loving mother Church gives us rules to follow. If we do not follow these rules, the result will be foul smell and decay in our soul. And thus, the task should not be to find as many excuses as possible for breaking the fast. Whether we are young or getting older, whether we work or study, whether we exercise or travel—Christians at all times in the history of the Church were both young and old, worked and studied, exercised and travelled, and kept the fast. The task should be to keep our faith, to discipline our body, and to grow in the Spirit in every situation and under all circumstances.

Fasting is only one aspect of our spiritual practice, but it is an important one. It is one of the two wings which help us rise to heaven. A bird with only one wing cannot fly; and a Christian who cannot control his belly does not have spiritual freedom.

Undoubtedly, you have heard these theoretical musings before. But I hoped to show that as a practical matter, fasting is very much possible in most, if not all situations. We must lead by example and decide that we will stop looking for reasons to break the fast and instead start looking for ways to keep it; learn a new recipe or two, and resolve to exercise our will-power and self-discipline. We reap what we sow.

Sow the good seeds of asceticism in your life, and you will reap freedom from slavery to your belly, freedom from the passions of the flesh, and a blessing of following in the footsteps of the greatest saints and our Lord Himself.

<https://orthochristian.com/69880.html>

Fr. Sergei Sveshnikov

Supervisory Chaplain at
U.S. Department of Justice
Assistant Rector, Saint John the
Wonderworker Mission, Portage, WI

Let us again 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 April 2024 we have four Sundays of the Great Lent: Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross, which this year coincides with the Greatest Feast of the Annunciation of the Mother of God; Sunday of St. John of the Ladder; Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt; and the Palm Sunday.

THE SEVEN SUNDAYS OF THE GREAT LENT

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – ADORATION OF THE CROSS (Mark 8:34-38; 9:1)



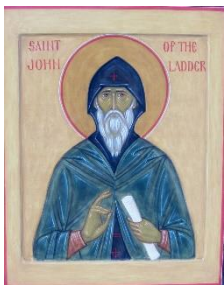
This Sunday commemorates the venerable Cross and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Cross as such takes on meaning and adoration because of the Crucifixion of Christ upon it. Therefore, whether it be in hymns or prayers, it is understood that the Cross without Christ has no meaning or place in Christianity. The adoration of the Cross in the middle of Great Lent is to remind the faithful in advance of the Crucifixion of Christ. Therefore, the Passages from the Bible and the hymnology refer to the Passions, the sufferings, of Jesus Christ: The passages read this day repeat the calling of the Christian by Christ to

dedicate his life, for “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Christ)” (v. 34-35). This verse clearly indicates the kind of dedication which is needed by the Christian in three steps:

1. To renounce his arrogance and disobedience to God’s Plan,
2. To lift up his personal cross (the difficulties of life) with patience, faith and the full acceptance of the Will of God without complaint that the burden is too heavy; having denied himself and lifted up his cross leads him to the,
3. Decision to follow Christ.

The Adoration of the Cross is expressed by the faithful through prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the forgiveness of the trespasses of others.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER (Mark 9:17-31)



This Sunday commemorates St. John of the Climax (6th century) who is the writer of the book called The Ladder (*climax*) of Paradise. This book contains 30 chapters, with each chapter as a step leading up to a faithful and pious life as the climax of a Christian life. The spirit of repentance and devotion to Christ dominates the essence of this book, along with the monastic virtues and vices. He was an ascetic and writer on the spiritual life as a monk-abbot of Sinai Monastery. These steps of the ladder as set forth by St. John are to be practiced by the Christian especially during this period of the Great Lent. Each step leading to the top step of

the ladder, is the climactic (ladder-like) essence of the true Christian life.

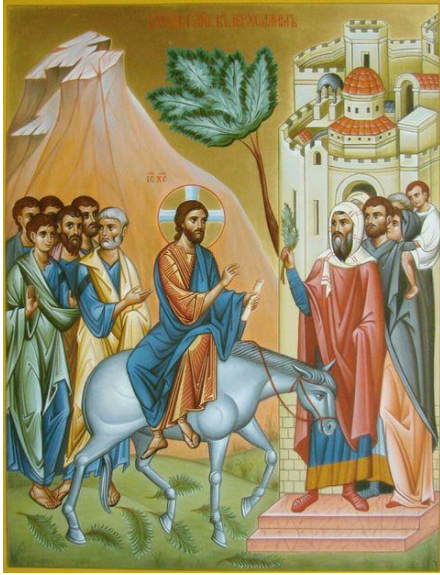
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – ST. MARY OF EGYPT (Mark 10:32-45)



This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who is a shining example of repentance from sin through prayer and fasting. She lived a sinful life for many years, but was converted to a Christian life. She went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life for many years, praying and fasting in repentance of her previous sinful life. St. Mary’s life exemplifies her conviction about Christ, which motivated the changing of her life from sin to holiness through repentance. Her understanding of repentance involved not a mere change from small things in her life, but an extreme change of her entire attitude and thoughts. The Church

commemorates St. Mary for her recognition of her own sins as an example of how one can free oneself from the slavery and burden of wrongdoings. This recognition of sin is imperative during Lent for the faithful as a means of self-examination and preparation for a more virtuous life in anticipation of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ.

PALM SUNDAY (John 12:12-18)



This Sunday commemorates the triumphant entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem received Christ as a king, and, therefore, took branches of palms and went out to meet Him, laying down the palms in His path. The people cried out the prophecy of Zechariah: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (v. 13; of Zechariah 9:9). The celebration of the Jewish Passover brought crowds of Jews and converted Jews to Jerusalem. They had heard of the works and words of Christ, especially about the resurrection of Lazarus. All the events related to Christ had a Messianic meaning for the Jews at the time. This vexed the high priests and pharisees. As usual, Christ went to the Temple to pray and teach. That evening Christ departed for Bethany. The tradition of the Church of distributing palms on this Sunday comes from the act of the people in placing the branches of palms in front of Christ, and henceforth symbolizes for the Christian the victory of Christ over evil forces and death.

In Memoriam

The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our deepest condolences the Family and friends of the newly departed Emil Kotyk. May God comfort you with His compassion, and may God settle His servant, where the light of His countenance shall visit, with his righteous forefathers and mothers!

Emil Kotyk

25 July 1940 – 9 January 2024



It is with great sadness the family of Emil Kotyk announces his passing on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. He was 83 years old on July 25, 2023, born in Horen, Alberta.

Emil will be forever remembered and missed by his loving family, daughter Yvonne Pawliw (Wayne) her children Aryn, Devin (Candace) and Levi (Victoria), great-grandchildren Parkyr, Allisyn, Hailey and Madison; daughter Angie Szabo (Alex) and his very special granddaughters Kaitlyn and Samantha Szabo; his sister Violet Lojczyc, his brothers-in-law Leslie (Connie) Wasieczko, John (Arlene) Wasieczko (BC), and sister-in-law Natalie Unger (Mexico), plus many cousins, nephews and nieces. As well as special neighbors Tom and Beth McMorran for over 56 years and long-time friend Lynn Hanna.

Predeceased by his wife Marie Kotyk of 52 years, parents Arsen and Alexandra Kotyk, brother Paul Kotyk, sisters Pauline Lemishka and Lydia Chalupa.

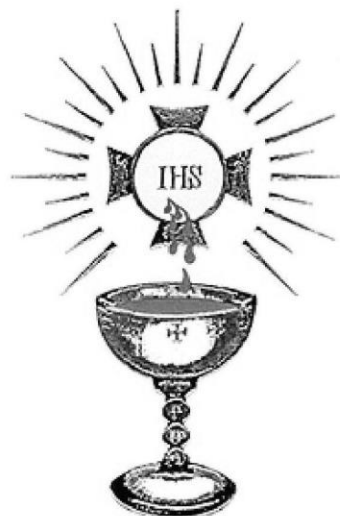
Emil had a wonderful career with Bird Construction for 36 years in which he loved and had many fond memories of his work family.

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

MY LENTEN PLAN

It can be just an episode of fasting for a child, something trifle, on which life and health does not depend, just not to play with something now but wait ("fast") for about 10-15 minutes and say a prayer in the meantime.

I will fast from...



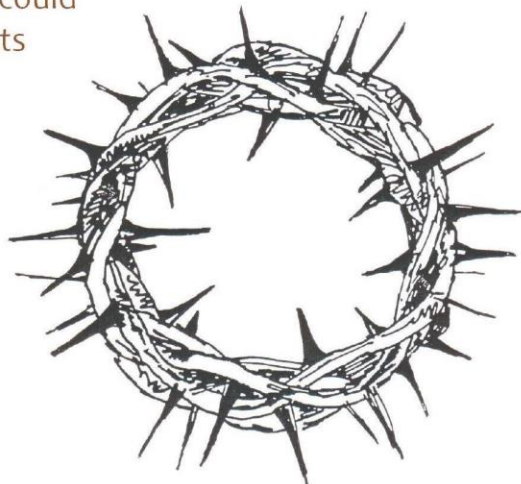
We could ask a child to say what he/she would pray for, but with one condition - to pray for someone else, not asking anything for himself now.

I will pray for...



We could tell a little one that his/her alms could be something he/she could help their parents or grandparents with, or a sibling, or a friend.

I will give alms by...



In addition you could discuss what is depicted in these pictures.

"Don't forget to do good" (Hebrews 13:16)

Add Colours to This Good Works Picture and Try to Do Likewise!



April 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><u>7</u> Annunciation of the Mother of God 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy (Confession) at Nisku</p> 	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
<p><u>14</u> Commemoration of St. John of the Ladder 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy (Confession) - Thorsby</p>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
<p><u>21</u> Commemoration of St. Mary of Egypt 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy (Confession) - Calmar</p>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<p><u>27</u> Lazarus Saturday 10:00 am - Liturgy at St. Barbara</p> 
<p><u>28</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at Nisku. Palm Sunday <i>Blessing of Willow Branches</i></p> 	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>				