

The Good News

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

MARCH 2020

PASTORAL MESSAGE

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

March is upon us and with it Holy and Great Lent. When we think of this period of the Church year, how do we feel? Is it a knee jerk reaction of the “somber, disfigured face” that Jesus warns us about. Are we embracing it as we should as a church? What is fasting anyway and why do we have to do it? I hope to clarify a few of these questions in a way that will not only encourage us to participate in the fast, but also help understand why fasting is so important in the life of the church.

Fasting has been around since Moses. In Exodus 34:28 we are reminded of his abstinence from food and drink before receiving the commandments of God. Throughout the old testament we see this formula for the fast repeated: for spiritual reasons a fast was self-imposed for those asking for God’s assistance. It was this same formula through which the Theotokos was born, a time of self-imposed prayer and a fasting by her parents Joachim and Anna. Today we fast for a similar reason, we are seeking God, except we know for certain we will find him, laying in a manger on Christmas morning, and Resurrected from the dead on Pascha. The church prescribes for us, during these times, a fast in preparation for these encounters.

Fasting is for the body what prayer is for the soul. Something we don’t often consider is that our soul and body are inseparably fused during our time here in God creation. We have different ways to feed our souls; prayer, almsgiving and good deeds. These spiritual virtues feed only half of our existence. Our soul is feed but our body is neglected and allowed to lapse into an unhealthy state. Fasting is the spiritual exercise for our bodies. It allows us a way to learn self-control in hope that by controlling our bodies in the simple way of eating we learn to control ourselves in all the passions of the flesh. It is also important to note that prayer and fasting should be as inseparable as the soul and body are. The church teaches that fasting without prayer has no value and can even be harmful.

The goal of fasting if to remind us of our dependence of God. By fasting we are allowing ourselves to become hungry knowing that God will fill us. So often we are looking for God in our lives and when we do not find Him we get discouraged. This is not because He is not there and not because we are not listening for Him, but I believe we are not leaving space for Him. Only if we invite Him into our lives and leave space from Him to work can we then see Him.

In understanding the fast, it also important to know what the fast is not. The fast is not only intended for monks and nun, it is a benefit to all Christians. Also, we must not pretend that we are saving ourselves through our effort of fasting, God only can save us, our fast is not unto salvation but continual obedience. On that note, the way we fast should not be made up on our own or self-guided. The church offers the prescription and only through consultation with your spiritual father should it ever be adjusted. Also, the fast is not a sad or sorrowful time, it is a time of Joy. St. John Climacus calls it a “joy-creating sorrow” It is a struggle, but one that is maintained joyfully, it is not a punishment. Lastly, we do not fast as a rejection or punishment of the flesh. Because our world is fallen we have the need to be purified through the self-discipline that fasting offers us, we were in fact created “very good”.

With that brothers and sisters I urged all of you to take to time to be intentional about your fast this lent. Christ warns us in our Holy Week passages not be white washed tombs, where the outside is cleaned but the inside is full of death and decay as the Pharisees were with their external sign of piety. We must take the time now to prepare the inside of the tomb with the virtues of prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Blessed Lent and Kali Sarakosti!



+Fr. Thomas Alatzakis

March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Forgiveness Sunday Fasting from meat only Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion	2 Clean Monday Great Lent Begins Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption and Saint George)	3 Fast Day 1:00 p.m. Care Link Meeting (Saint George) 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption)	4 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George) 5:00 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy at Assumption	5 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)	6 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. 1st Salutations (Assumption and Saint George)	7 3rd Saturday of Souls Oil and Wine Allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George)
8 1st Sunday of Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Oil and Wine Allowed Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion 5:00 p.m. Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at Assumption Church followed by a meal	9 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption) 6:30 p.m. Orthodoxy 101 (Saint George)	10 Fast Day 9:30 a.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy at Assumption Church	11 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George) 5:00 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy at Saint George	12 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)	13 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. 2nd Salutations (Assumption and Saint George)	14 Oil and Wine Allowed 6:00 pm Great Vespers (Assumption)
15 2nd Sunday of Lent Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas Oil and Wine Allowed Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion	16 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption) 7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting (Assumption)	17 Fast Day 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting (Saint George)	18 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George) 5:00 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy at Assumption	19 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)	20 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. 3rd Salutations (Assumption and Saint George)	21 Oil and Wine Allowed 6:00 pm Great Vespers (Assumption)
22 3rd Sunday of Lent Sunday of the Holy Cross Oil and Wine Allowed Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion	23 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption)	24 Fast Day	25 The Annunciation of the Theotokos Fish, Oil and Wine allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy (Assumption)	26 10:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)	27 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. 4th Salutations (Assumption and Saint George)	28 Oil and Wine Allowed 11:00 a.m. Quad Cities Orthodox Christian Youth Group Proshphora Making at Saint George 6:00 pm Great Vespers (Assumption)
29 4th Sunday of Lent Sunday of Saint John Climacus Oil and Wine Allowed Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion	30 Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline (Assumption)	31 Fast Day				Note: Sunday Liturgy 8:30 a.m. Orthros 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy (Saint George) 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy (Assumption)

Sunday of Orthodoxy Celebration

Join us at

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

4900 Kennedy Drive - East Moline, IL



On Sunday, March 8th

at 5pm for Vespers

followed by a Lenten Meal

Bring an icon to participate in the procession

**Sunday of Orthodoxy is a day to remember our common
Orthodox faith. All, including guests, are welcome!**

Epistle Readers

Sunday, March 1, 2020
Forgiveness Sunday
 Alexa Florence

Sunday, March 8, 2020
Sunday of Orthodoxy
 Georgjean Pitsoulakis

Sunday, March 15, 2020
2nd Sunday of Lent
 Loukia Constantinides

Sunday, March 22, 2020
3rd Sunday of Lent
 Scot Johnson

Sunday, March 29, 2020
4th Sunday of Lent
 Isabella Elias

Coffee Hour Hosts for March 2020

Sunday, March 1, 2020
 hosted by: Quad Cit-
 ies Orthodox Chris-
 tian Youth Group
Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, March 8, 2020
 hosted by: Open
Sunday March 15,
2020 hosted by:
 Tsagaris/Milani

Sunday, March 22,
2020 hosted by: Open
Sunday March 29,
2020 hosted by:
 The Pitsoulakis Family

Parish Council Sunday Duty

Sunday, March 1,
2020

Nick Coin
 John Mekus
 Dennis Spurgetis
 Diana Spurgetis

Sunday, March 8,
2020

Joe Burmeister,
 Mary Kay Eckert,
 Gus Pappas
 Mary Rankin

Sunday, March 15,
2020

Mariellen Crosson
 Doug Kenyon
 Ted Pitsoulakis
 Angela Spurgetis

Sunday, March 22,
2020

Nick Coin
 John Mekus
 Dennis Spurgetis
 Diana Spurgetis

Sunday, March 29,
2020

Joe Burmeister,
 Mary Kay Eckert,
 Gus Pappas
 Mary Rankin

Parish Registry

40 Day Blessing

Liam the son of Jerry and Christina Cunningham
 was churched on February 2, 2020

Funeral

The servant of God, Evangeline (Von) Lillios, fell
 asleep in the Lord and was buried on February 8,
 2020

EVENING MEAL
 VOLUNTEERS

March 25, 2020:
 Patty Kenyon and
 Presbyteria Maria.

April 22, 2020:
 Jim and Elizabeth
 Teros.

May 27, 2020
 Nancy Coin and
 Pat Andrews

Anyone interested
 in participating in
 this worthwhile
 ministry should
 contact Dena
 Manta at 332-1684.

Memorials for March

March 1,
2020: Von
Lillios
(40 Days)

March 15,
2020:

Helen Smith
(1 Year)
Cleo Anton:
(1 Year)

Prosphora Baking Schedule

Sunday, March 1, 2020: Mariellen Crosson
Sunday, March 8, 2020: Diane Breckon
Sunday March 15, 2020: Adrienne Johnson
Sunday, March 22, 2020: Presbyteria Maria
Sunday, March 29, 2020: Quad Cities Or-
thodox Christian Youth Group

Assumption Corner — March 2020

Forgiveness Vespers - Sunday, March 1st

The Sunday before lent begins is Forgiveness Sunday. This year we will be having our forgiveness vespers at 6pm on Sunday, March 1st. At the conclusion of this service, we will all have the opportunity to ask one another for forgiveness. This service helps us properly enter into Lent having asked and offered forgiveness.

Lenten Service Schedule

During Lent our Weekly service schedule will be as follows:

Monday Evenings: Great Compline at 6pm

Wednesday Evenings: Presanctified Liturgy at 5pm (Locations alternate)

Friday evenings: Small Compline (Salutation canon) at 6pm

As well as our normal services on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Lenten Fundraiser - Building Fund Coin Collection Wheelbarrow

During Lent we will be collecting loose change to help rebuild our building fund. There is a wheelbarrow in the church hall for donations where change is being collected. Cash, check, and electronic donations are also welcome!

Holy Week Flower Collection

We will be collecting donations towards our Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Epitaphio, and Paschal Flowers. Donations can be made through Sunday, April 5th.

There will be a donation box marked in the narthex for your donations.

Sunday of Orthodoxy - Sunday, March 8th

Sunday of Orthodoxy, or the Triumph of Orthodoxy is Sunday March 8th. We will be hosting Vespers that evening at 5pm at Assumption for all the Orthodox of the Quad-Cities to come together and celebrate our common faith! Following service there will be a meal of fellowship offered in the hall. (Flier Attached)

March Youth Event: Prosforo Baking - March 21st

On Saturday March 21st we will be meeting at St. George as a youth group to learn about and bake the liturgical offering bread, or Prosforo. All families are welcome to join us as we spend time in fellowship and learning!

Spring Food Festival - Saturday, May 2nd

Save the Date: Our spring festival is just around the corner on May 2nd!

Annual Proshphoro Making

DATE: SATURDAY

MARCH 28, 202

TIME: 11:00 AM



*St. George Church
Rock Island, IL*

RSVP TO:

PRESBYTERA MARIA:

PRESMARIAZOE@AOL.COM

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Sunday of Forgiveness (March 1)

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-

fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety

and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

1st Saturday of Great Lent: The Miracle of the Boiled Wheat (March 7)

Today we remember the miracle of Saint Theodore and the boiled wheat. Fifty years after the death of Saint Theodore, the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363), wanting to commit an outrage upon the Christians during the first week of Great Lent, commanded the city-commander of Constantinople to sprinkle all the food provisions in the marketplaces with the blood offered to idols. Saint Theodore appeared in a dream to Archbishop Eudoxius, ordering him to inform all the Christians that no one should buy anything at the marketplaces, but rather to eat

cooked wheat with honey (kolyva).

In memory of this occurrence, the Orthodox Church annually celebrates the holy Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit on the first Saturday of Great Lent. On Friday evening, at the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts following the prayer at the ambo, the Canon to the holy Great Martyr Theodore, composed by Saint John of Damascus, is sung. After this, kolyva is blessed and distributed to the faithful. The celebration of the Great Martyr Theodore on the first Saturday of Great Lent was set by the Patriarch Nectarios of Constantinople

(381-397).

The Troparion to Saint Theodore is quite similar to the Troparion for the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths (December 17, Sunday Before Nativity). The Kontakion to Saint Theodore, who suffered martyrdom by fire, reminds us that he also had faith as his breastplate (see I Thessalonians 5:8).

Saint Theodore the Recruit is also commemorated on February 17.

Sunday of Orthodoxy (March 8)

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God

in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: "If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema." Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After

this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. This is the holy deed that all we the Orthodox commemorate today, and we call this radiant and venerable day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, that is, the triumph of true doctrine over heresy.

Patrick the Enlightener of Ireland (March 17)

Saint Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, was seized from his native Britain by Irish marauders when he was sixteen years old. Though the son of a deacon and a grandson of a priest, it was not until his captivity that he sought out the Lord with his whole heart. In his Confession, the testament he wrote towards the end of his life, he says, "After I came to Ireland every day I had to tend sheep, and many times a day I prayed - the love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. And my spirit was so moved that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many at

night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain; and I would rise for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm." After six years of slavery in Ireland, he was guided by God to make his escape, and afterwards struggled in the monastic life at Auxerre in Gaul, under the guidance of the holy Bishop Germanus. Many years later he was ordained bishop and sent to Ireland once again, about the year 432, to convert the Irish to Christ. His arduous labours bore so much fruit that within seven years, three bishops were sent from Gaul to help him

shepherd his flock, "my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord - so many thousands of people," he says in his Confession. His apostolic work was not accomplished without much "weariness and painfulness," long journeys through difficult country, and many perils; he says his very life was in danger twelve times. When he came to Ireland as its enlightener, it was a pagan country; when he ended his earthly life some thirty years later, about 461, the Faith of Christ was established in every corner.

Sunday of the Holy Cross (March 22)

With the help of God, we have almost reached the middle of the course of the Fast, where our strength has been worn down through abstinence, and the full difficulty of the labour

set before us becomes apparent. Therefore our holy Mother, the Church of Christ, now brings to our help the all-holy Cross, the joy of the world, the strength of the faithful, the staff of the just,

and the hope of sinners, so that by venerating it reverently, we might receive strength and grace to complete the divine struggle of the Fast.