

THE TROPHYBEARER

Pastoral Thoughts

Freedom is an idea that has existed in the minds of human beings since the beginning of time. While it is true that it has developed over time, its seeds have indeed been there from the beginning. Think about what kind of world we would have without the ability to choose. The choice is so vital that the world that we live in makes our power of choice intense. One small wrong decision can and often does have enormous consequences. Despite the risk of freedom, we Americans correctly expect all to use it. As Orthodox Christians, we, too, believe that freedom is an essential aspect of our humanity. The Fathers of the Church emphasize that freedom is part of the image of God that we possess, and the correct use of it is indeed the likeness that we strive for. This month, we celebrate that freedom. It is indeed the beginning of our liberation from the bond of sin and death. But it was freedom that put us in this position in the first place. This is true because freedom exists in persons and is not a concept. In other words, freedom is genuine and not just a philosophical theory. Let us take a few moments to look at how two women used their freedom and what the consequences are to us.

The first woman was the first Eve. Eve was created by the hand of God directly and, thus, was not born like us. She was created in the image (being a person like God), the likeness (limitless potentials), free and spiritually immature. She saw God deeply and personally and had a relationship with God, who was at the same time her father, mentor, and Lord. Life in Eden was carefree in that they had no concern for food, water, shelter, or even death. It was the land of plenty! God's presence was obvious and this presence encouraged the development of the relationship with Him and thus growing in image and likeness. God gave her one commandment, yet how did Eve use her freedom? She ignored the word of God and listened to the serpent. She declared herself as an individual and considered herself to be self-sufficient. She did not need either God, Adam, or anything else. In fact, by listening to the serpent who said, "You will be like God," she declared herself equal to God and destroyed her relationship with God, Adam, and even creation as a whole, finding herself naked without God's grace. These actions led Adam to sin by her example, allowed death to enter into humanity, and got them expelled from Eden. Her point of view changed; Adam was a possession and no longer a co-worker. She lost true freedom by taking it to herself.

The second woman is the Second Eve, that is the Virgin Mary. She was born just like us and was thus separated from God because of Eve's choice. Life was filled with struggles. She needed food, shelter, water. She could only gain this through toil and hardships. And she had to get married to reproduce to survive death. God's presence was not apparent in that God hid himself and was not always apparently active. This happened because of sin, both original and personal, and the result of sin, which is death. How did this Second Eve use her freedom? She listened to the word of God and entered into a relationship with God in this way, becoming a person. She realized that she needed God and declared herself God's servant. She gave her will to God and followed His will, finding herself overshadowed by the glory of God. These actions led all humanity to holiness by her example. She allowed the Life of the world to enter through her womb, bringing humanity back to the paradise of old and beyond. She gained her true freedom by giving it to God.

So we can see that one woman who had everything going for her chose wrong, and the whole created order was affected because of her choice. Through Eve's choice, we lost our freedom, our relationship with God, and paradise. Through Eve's choice, we ceased to be persons in the image and likeness of God and became individuals who dared to think we did not need God or His blessings. Through Eve's choice, we attained slavery and death. The other woman in the world, as we know it and had all the associated pressures, made a correct choice and affected the entire created order. God re-enters the world through the Virgin's choice and gives us back our freedom, relationship with Him, and paradise. Through the Virgin's choice, we become again persons in a deep and permanent relationship with God. Through the Virgin's choice, we become liberated from sin, and the Life of the world enters into the world. Let us then use the example of the New Eve and stay clear of the Old Eve. Let us join ourselves with God so that having been freed through the Virgin's choice, and we may bring the whole world the joy that the Hymnologist gives us: Today is the crown of our salvation.



This issue:

Pastoral Thoughts

PAGE 01

Epistle Readers

PAGE 02

Parish Council Groups

PAGE 02

Evening Meal Volunteers

PAGE 02

Prospora Makers/Coffee
Social Hosts

PAGE 02

Lives of the Saints

PAGE 03

Church Calendar

PAGE 04

PARISH NEWS

Epistle Readers

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader,
Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, March 3, 2024:

Sunday of the Prodigal Son: Alexa Florence

Sunday, March 10, 2024:

Judgment Sunday: Loukia Constantinides

Sunday, March 17, 2024:

Forgiveness Sunday: Georgjean Pitsoulakis

Sunday, March 24, 2024:

1st Sunday of Lent: Mary Rankin

Sunday, March 31, 2024:

2nd Sunday of Lent: Gus Pappas

Evening Meal Volunteers

March 27, 2024: Diane Whitehead.

April 24, 2024: Helen Moorehead and

Marge Stratton

Anyone interested in taking part in
this worthwhile ministry should
contact Mary Winters at 563-726-
2880

PARISH COUNCIL SUNDAY DUTY SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 3, 2024: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

Sunday, March 10, 2024: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Vickie Pyevich

Sunday, March 17, 2024: Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, Ted Pitsoulakis and Diana Spurgetis

Sunday, March 24, 2024: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

LENTEN SCHEDULE:

Saturdays of Souls:

March 9, 16, and 23: 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine
Liturgy.

Monday, March 25, 2024: The Annunciation of the Theotokos

8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy*.

Great Compline on Mondays:

6:00 p.m. March 18, 2024, April 1, 2024*, April 8, 2024*, and
April 15, 2024*.

Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays

March 20, 2024**, March 27, 2024***, April 3, 2024**,

April 10, 2024***, and April 17, 2024**

Salutations on Fridays

7:00 p.m. March 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19.

*@ASSUMPTION

**6:00 P.M. @ SAINT GEORGE

***5:30 P.M @ ASSUMPTION

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Sunday, March 3, 2024: Open

Sunday, March 10, 2024

No Coffee hour/Mardi Gras Luncheon

Sunday, March 17, 2024: Open

Sunday, March 24, 2024: Open

Sunday, March 31, 2024: Open

PASTORAL NOTES:

- The week of March 10, 2024, the third week of the Triodion, is fast-free from everything except meat. That means we are allowed to eat anything except meat on any day including Wednesday and Friday, and still receive Holy Communion on Sunday.
- The week of March 17, 2024, the fourth week of the Triodion, is we begin the Lenten Fast. That means Monday through Friday we fast from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil while on Saturday and Sunday we are allowed to have oil and wine, and still receive Holy Communion on Sunday.
- March 17, 2024: 5:00 p.m. Forgiveness Vespers service at Assumption Church followed by a Cheese-fare potluck (all foods permitted except for meat). After the meal, the service of Small Compline will also be offered.
- March 24, 2024: Sunday of Orthodoxy- the faithful are to bring an icon from home to participate in the procession of icons!



St. George Philoptochos' Meat Fare Luncheon



Lunch • Fellowship

Sunday
March 10th

Following
Liturgy

Gold
Room

Adults: \$15

Children (12-under) \$10

Greek Salad, Chicken Kapama, Desert

Please join us for our meat fare luncheon!

Saturday of Souls

Name Lists for the Saturday of Souls

March 9, 2024

March 16, 2024

March 23, 2024

List the first names (Baptismal Names) of your loved ones that have fallen asleep in the Lord

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Sunday of the Prodigal Son (March 3)

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

Judgment Sunday (March 10)

The foregoing two parables -- especially that of the Prodigal Son -- have presented to us God's extreme goodness and love for man. But lest certain persons, putting their confidence in this alone, live carelessly, squandering upon sin the time given them to work out their salvation, and death suddenly snatch them away, the most divine Fathers have appointed this day's feast commemorating Christ's impartial Second Coming, through which we bring to mind that God is not only the Friend of man, but also the most righteous Judge, Who recompenses to each according to his deeds.

It is the aim of the holy Fathers, through bringing to mind that fearful day, to rouse us from the slumber of carelessness unto the work of virtue, and to move us to love and compassion for our brethren. Besides this, even as on the coming Sunday of Cheese-fare we commemorate Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight -- which exile is the beginning of life as we know it now -- it is clear that today's is reckoned the last of all feasts, because on the last day of judgment, truly, everything of this world will come to an end. All foods, except meat and meat products, are allowed during the week that follows this Sunday.

Forgiveness Sunday (March 17)

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.

Sunday of Orthodoxy (March 24)

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.

Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas (March 31)

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica. A full service was composed for his feast day by the Patriarch Philotheus in 1368, when it was established that his feast be celebrated on this day. Since works without right faith avail nothing, we set Orthodoxy of faith as the foundation of all that we accomplish during the Fast, by celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy the Sunday before, and the great defender of the teachings of the holy Fathers today.

2024 MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Fast Free	2 Fast Free
3 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion	4	5	6 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	7 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom	8 Fast Day	9 1st Saturday of Souls 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy
10 Judgment Sunday (Meat Fare Sunday) 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion Philoptochos Apokreatiko Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy	11 Fasting from Meat only	12 Fasting from Meat only	13 Fasting from Meat only 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	14 Fasting from Meat only 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom	15 Fasting from Meat only	16 Fasting from Meat only 2nd Saturday of Souls 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy
17 Forgiveness Sunday (Cheese Fare Sunday) Fasting from Meat only 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion 5:00 p.m. Forgiveness Vespers service at Assumption Church	18 Clean Monday Great Lent Begins Fast Day 6:00 p.m. Great Compline	19 Fast Day 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	20 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 6:00 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy	21 Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom.	22 Fast Day 7:00 p.m. 1st Salutations	23 Oil and Wine Allowed 3rd Saturday of Souls 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy
24 Sunday of Orthodoxy Oil and Wine Allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy <i>*The faithful are to bring an icon from home to participate in the procession of icons! *</i>	25 The Annunciation of the Theotokos Fish, Oil and Wine allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption	26 Fast Day	27 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum Evening Meal 5:30 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ Assumption	28 Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom.	29 Fast Day 7:00 p.m. 2nd Salutations	30 Oil and Wine Allowed
31 Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas Oil and Wine Allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion						