

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 3

March 2009

January Council Highlights

- ✖ January's Operating Income was \$7,527 and Operating Expenses were \$9,566, resulting in a deficit of **\$2,039** for the month of January.
- ✖ We have received several courtesy bids for Phase II of the Parking Lot Project. The council will review these bids to develop an estimate for the project.
- ✖ Lenten Vespers will be held at SS Peter & Paul on Sunday, March 29th. The lenten meal following the services will be hosted by St. John the Evangelist Mission. Marty Gala will serve as the liaison.



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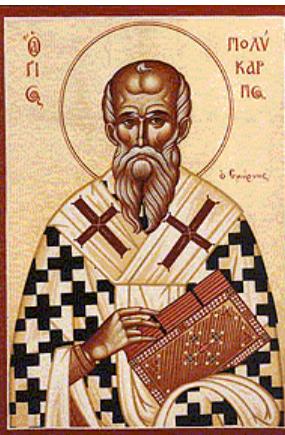
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What is Forgiveness?

This past week, a few days before the Sunday of Forgiveness, the Church celebrated the memory of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna. This man was a student of the Holy Apostles, and can teach us a something important about forgiveness.

Polycarp was appointed Bishop of Smyrna by Saint John the Evangelist and Gospel writer sometime before



John was banished to the island of Patmos in the year 96. Over the long years of his episcopacy, Polycarp attracted and taught many disciples of his own. They remembered the majesty of his countenance, the holiness of his behavior, and the conversations in which he told them the words he had heard from the Apostle John's own lips.

The one piece of writing we have from Polycarp's own hand is his letter to the Philippian Christians. In it, he mentions by name several believers who have undergone torture and died for the faith. Then, despite all the suffering he has seen, he cautions the Philippians never to be vengeful, but to forgive and show mercy to everyone.

Yet it was said that Polycarp had once met the heretic Marcion in the street, and neglected to greet him. Marcion was offended and

said, "Polycarp, what is this? Doing a false god. When urged to do so he said, "I have served Him these 86 years, and He never did me any harm, but much good, so how can I now blaspheme my King and Savior?" Polycarp would literally stop his ears and flee from the room if he heard a heretical statement.

The encounter with Marcion and the description of Polycarp's "fleeing" show us that he never confused forgiveness with acceptance of heresy or sin. That is a temptation for many people in our day. When people do or say things that contradict the teachings of the Church, we may let go in the name of tolerance, and tell ourselves that we are practicing Christian forgiveness.

But Polycarp would disagree. As he stood in the

Roman arena awaiting martyrdom, he calmly prayed and asked forgiveness for everyone, including those eagerly gathering wood to build a fire and burn him to death. But his prayers for forgiveness did not include accepting the sin and heresy of denying Christ and worship-

On this Sunday before Great Lent we are called to forgive and to ask God's mercy. Polycarp's example reminds us not to confuse forgiveness with acceptance or toleration of anything people do or say.

As we struggle to do what is right and say only what is true, we can pray for others to do the same, and guide them when we have the chance. If we make that effort, we will be able to stand in our own "arena"—whatever trials and tests come—and say that we, too, refuse to blaspheme the One who "never did me any harm, but much good."



Troparion (Tone 4)

By sharing in the ways of the Apostles,
You became a successor to their throne.
Through the practice of virtue,
You found the way to divine contemplation,
O inspired one of God;
By teaching the word of truth without error,
You defended the Faith,
Even to the shedding of your blood.
Hieromartyr Polycarp,
Entreat Christ God to save our souls.

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ's Holy Orthodox Church once again invites us to enter the season of the Great Fast, which begins March 1. We begin our Lenten observance in the spirit of repentance, both requesting and granting forgiveness. We do this in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Pascha, for our celebration of the great mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. Through the traditional, scriptural Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are called to put aside the things that distract us from fully living the Christian life, in order to more intently focus on our life in Christ, and to renew within ourselves the commitment of Holy Baptism, through which we "died with Christ so that we may also live with Him" (Romans 6:8).

In his letter to the Philippians, the Holy Apostle Paul reminds us that Christ "humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Obedience to the will of His Father and the fulfillment of the Saving Mission entrusted Him by His Father was central to the Lord's life and ministry. On the night of Holy Thursday, at that time of great anguish, as He awaited the kiss of the betrayer Judas, and faced the passion and death He was to undergo, the Lord prayed in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. As "His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground," He entreated, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless—



"less not My will, but Yours, be done" (cf. Luke 22:39-45). At this time of affliction and suffering, the Lord Jesus desired to obediently accept the divine plan for the salvation of the world.

This grace-filled season of the Great Fast provides us with the opportunity to reflect upon the obedience of the Lord to His Father as well as our own obedience to the Will of God. Reflecting upon the Word of God, especially when we attend the Divine Services, we look to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ to put aside the things that distract us from fully living the Christian life, in order to more intently accept the Will of God may find its foundation and inspiration in His own obedience and acceptance.

In a time when everyone seeks to "do his own thing," and when the rights of the individual are all too often considered to be more important than the good of the whole, obedience seems to be a little cherished virtue. However, possibly without even realizing it, our lives are filled with moments and situations in which we are given the chance to accept or reject obedience. The moment we start our cars and pull them onto the street, we choose to obey or not to obey the laws regulating traffic; whether it be stopping at a red light or adhering to the posted speed limit. We obey laws regarding taxes, moral conduct, the structure of government, etc. that all affect the common life and well-being of society. We are obedient to and obey the laws enacted to moderate the life of our city, state, and country.

Sometimes we're living in obedience without even realizing it.

Even more importantly, we are called to obediently accept the Will of God. By reading the Scriptures, through prayer, by repentance, spiritual direction, by reverently and "with fear and love" approaching the Holy Mysteries, by following the teachings of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church, by observing the practices which the Church calls us to we are able to discern what that Will is for us. And then, with humility and confidence in God's love and by His grace, we are able to accept His Will, praying in the words of the Lord Jesus "not my will, but Yours, be done."

My prayer is that this year Great Lent will be for all of us a moment in which we can reflect upon our obedience to the Lord, and, where we acknowledge ourselves in disobedience we may be given the grace to change, to repent, and to grow in the image of Christ the Obedient Servant of His Father. In doing this, we can be assured of a fruitful Lent that leads us to an ever-growing, ever-deepening relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen Savior.

Be assured of my prayers for you and yours. May this journey through Lent find its end at a bright and joyful celebration of the Lord's three-day Pascha.

With love in the Lord,

Father David

Fasting During Great Lent

Why do we fast, and from what do we fast, before Pascha?

ANSWER:

We fast before the Feast of Feasts, the Resurrection of Christ, to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's eternal victory over sin, corruption, and death, and in anticipation of our own resurrection. Hence, Great Lent is a time of preparation, during which we focus on and anticipate the resurrection of Our Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

When we fast, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to God and others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through

fasting that we indeed can gain control over those things that we too often allow to control us -- and for many people, food is a controlling factor. [We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us. Further, just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner —if we "ruin our appetite" we will hardly enjoy our dinner —so too we fast before Holy Pascha in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Feast itself.

During the Great Fast —and all lenten seasons —we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish,

wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently. If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a "must." In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Our Lord says, "WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites," not "IF you fast" or "IF YOU CHOOSE to fast."

In Christ,

Father John Matusiak

OCA Communications Director

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America website, <http://www.oca.org/QA.asp?ID=245&SID=3>

St. John Climacus

On March 30 and on the Fourth Sunday of Holy Lent the Orthodox Church commemorates our Righteous Father John Climacus. He is called Climacus due to his authorship of the great spiritual work *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. His commemoration is designated by the Church on one of the Sundays of Lent as his life and writings affirm him as a supreme bearer and proponent of Christian asceticism. The ascetic example of this great Saint of the Church inspires us in our Lenten journey.

LIFE OF THE SAINT

Saint John Climacus was probably born in the second half of the sixth century; but his country and origins are alike unknown because, from the beginning of his renunciation of the world, he took great care to live as a stranger upon earth. "Exile," he wrote, "is a separation from everything, in order that one may hold on totally to God." We only know that, from the age of sixteen, after having received a solid intellectual formation, he renounced all the pleasures of this vain life for love of God and went to Mount Sinai, to the foot of the holy mountain on which God had in former times revealed His glory to Moses, and consecrated himself to the Lord with a burning heart as a sweet-smelling sacrifice.

Setting aside, from the moment of his entry into the stadium, all self-trust and self-satisfaction through unfeigned humility, he submitted body and soul to an elder called Martyrios and set himself, free from all care, to climb that spiritual ladder (*klimax*) at the top of which God stands, and to "add fire each day to fire, fervour to fervour, zeal to zeal." He saw his shepherd as "the image of Christ" and, convinced that his elder was responsible for him before God, he had only one care: to reject his own will and "with all deliberateness to put aside the capacity to make [his] own judgement," so that no interval passed between Martyrios' commands, even those that appeared unjustified, and the obedience of his disciple. In spite of this perfect submission, Martyrios kept him as a novice for four years and only tonsured him when he was twenty, after having tested his humility. Strategios, one of the monks present at the tonsure predicted that the new monk would one day become one of the great lights of the world. When, later, Martyrios and his disciple paid a



visit to John the Savaite, one of the most famous ascetics of the time, the latter, ignoring the elder, poured water over John's feet. After they had left, John the Savaite declared that he did not know the young monk but, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he had washed the feet of the Abbot of Sinai. The same prophecy was confirmed by the great Anastasios the Sinaite (April 21), whom they also went to visit.

In spite of his youth, John showed the maturity of an elder and great discernment. Thus one day, when he had been sent into the world on a mission, and finding himself with lay-people, he had preferred to give in somewhat to vainglory by eating very little, rather than to gluttony; for, of these two evils, it was better to choose that which is less dangerous for beginners in monastic life.

He thus passed nineteen years in the blessed freedom from the care that obedience gives, freed from all conflict by the prayer of his spiritual father and on "a safe voyage, a sleeper's journey," moved towards the harbor of impassibility. On the death of Martyrios, he resolved to continue his ascension in solitude, a type of life suitable for only a small number, who, made strong on the rock of humility, flee from others so as not to be even for a moment deprived of the "sweetness of God." He did not commit himself to this path, one so full of snares, on his own judgment, but on the recommendation of the holy elder George Arsilaites, who instructed him in the way of life proper to hesychasts. As his exercise ground, he chose a solitary place called Tholas, situated five miles from the main monastery, where other hermits lived, each not far from the others. He stayed there for forty years, consumed by an ever-increasing love of God, without thought for his own flesh, free of all contact with men, having unceasing prayer and vigilance as his only occupation, in order to "keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body," as an angel clothed in a body.

He used to eat all that was compatible with his monastic profession, but in very small quantities, thus subduing the tyranny of the flesh while not providing a pretext for vainglory. By living in solitude and retreat, he put to death the mighty flame of greed, which, under the

pretext of charity and hospitality, leads negligent monks to gluttony, the door to all passions, and to the love of money, "a worship of idols and the offspring of unbelief." He triumphed over sloth (acedia)—that death of the soul which attacks hesychasts in particular—and laxity, by the remembrance of death. By meditating on eternal rewards, he undid the chain of sadness; he knew only a single sadness: that "affliction which leads to joy" and makes us run with ardor along the path of repentance, purifying the soul from all its impurities.

What still prevented him from arriving at impassibility (apatheia)? He had long since conquered anger by the sword of obedience. He had suffocated vainglory, that three-pointed thorn which forever harasses those who battle for holiness, and which entwines itself with every virtue like a leech, by solitude and even more by silence. As a reward for his labors, which he took care to season constantly with self-accusation, the Lord gave him the queen of virtues, holy and precious humility: "a grace in the soul, and with a name known only to those who have had experience of it, a gift from God."

As his cell was too near the others, he would often withdraw to a distant cave at the foot of the mountain, which he made an antechamber of heaven by his groans and the tears which fell effortlessly from his eyes like an abundant spring, transfiguring his body as with a "wedding garment." By this blessed affliction and these continual tears, he "did not cease to celebrate daily" and kept perpetual prayer in his heart, which had become like an inviolable fortress against the assaults of evil thoughts (logismoi). Sometimes he was ravished in spirit in the midst of the angelic choirs, not knowing if he was in the body or out of it, and then with great simplicity he asked God to teach him about the mysteries of theology. When he came out of the furnace of prayer, he sometimes felt purified as if by fire, and sometimes totally radiant with light.

As for sleep, he allowed himself just the measure necessary to keep his spirit vigilant in prayer and, before sleeping, he prayed at length, or wrote down on tablets the fruit of his meditations on the inspired Scriptures.

He took great care over many years to keep his virtues hidden from human eyes, but, when God judged that the time had come for him to

Continued on page 4

St. John Climacus cont'd

(Continued from page 3)

transmit to others the light he had acquired for the edification of the Church, He led a young monk named Moses to John, who, thanks to the intervention of the other ascetics, succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the man of God, and was accepted as his disciple. One afternoon, when Moses had gone a long way away to find earth for their little garden, and had lain down under a large rock to rest, Abba John, in his cell, received the revelation that Moses was in danger, and he immediately seized the weapon of prayer. In the evening, when Moses returned, he told John that in his sleep he had, all of a sudden, heard the voice of his elder calling him, at the very moment when the rock began to break away from its moorings and threatened to crush him.

Saint John's prayer also had the power to heal visible and invisible wounds. It was thus that he delivered a monk from the demon of lust, which had pushed him to the point of despair. On another occasion, he made rain fall. Yet it was above all in the gift of spiritual teaching that God manifested His grace in him. Basing his teaching on his personal experience, he generously instructed all those who came to him on the snares which lay in wait for monks in their battle passions and against the prince of this world. This spiritual teaching, however, attracted the jealousy of some who then spread around calumnies about him, accusing him of being a conceited chatterer. Although his conscience was clear, Abba John did not attempt to justify himself but, seeking rather to take away any pretext from those who sought one, he stopped teaching for a whole year, convinced that it was better to do some slight harm to his friends rather than to exacerbate the resentment of the wicked. All the inhabitants of the desert were edified at his silence and by this proof of humility, and it was only at the insistence of his repentant calumniators that he agreed to receive visitors again.

Filled with all the virtues of action and contemplation, and having arrived at the summit of the holy ladder through victory over all the passions of the old man, Saint John shone like a star on the Sinai peninsula and was held in awe by all the monks. He thought himself no less of a beginner for all that and, avid to find examples of evangelical conduct, undertook journeys to various Egyptian monasteries. He visited in particular a great coenobitic monastery

in the region of Alexandria, a veritable earthly paradise which was governed by a shepherd gifted with infallible discernment. This brotherhood was united by such charity in the Lord, exempt from all familiarity and useless talk, that the monks had scarcely need of the warnings of the superior, for they mutually encouraged each other to a most divine vigilance. Of all their virtues, the most admirable, according to John, was the way they were especially careful never to "injure a brother's conscience" in the slightest. He was also very edified by a visit to a dependency of this monastery, called "The Prison," where monks who had gravely sinned lived in extreme asceticism and gave extraordinary proofs of repentance, straining by their labors to receive God's forgiveness. Far from appearing as hard and intolerable, this prison seemed rather to the Saint to be the model of monastic life: "A soul that has lost its one-time confidence and abandoned its hope of dispassion, that has broken the seal of chastity, that has squandered the treasury of divine graces, that has become a stranger to divine consolation, that has rejected the Lord's command...and that is wounded and pierced by sorrow as it remembers all this, will not only take on the labors mentioned above with all eagerness, but will even decide devoutly to kill itself with penitential works. It will do so if there is in it only the tiniest spark of love or of fear of the Lord."

When the Saint had sojourned these forty years in the desert, he was charged by God, like a second Moses, to be at the head of this new Israel by becoming abbot of the monastery at the foot of the holy mountain (c. 650). It is recounted that, on the day of his enthronement, six hundred pilgrims were present, and when they were all seated for the meal, the great prophet Moses himself, dressed in a white tunic, could be seen coming and going, giving orders with authority to the cooks, the cellarers, the stewards and the other helpers.

Having penetrated into the mystical darkness of contemplation, this new Moses, having been initiated into the secrets of the spiritual Law, and coming back down the mountain impossible, his face transfigured by divine grace, was able to become for all the shepherd, the physician and the spiritual master. Carrying within him the Book written by God, he did not have need of other books to teach his monks the science of the sciences and the art of arts.

The Abbot of Raitho, who was also named John, having been informed of the wonderful manner of life of the monks of Sinai, wrote to Saint John, asking him to explain briefly but in an methodical way what those who had embraced the angelic life should do in order to be saved. He who did not know how to go against the wishes of another, thus engraved with the stylus of his own experience the Tablets of the Spiritual Law. He presented this treatise as a Ladder of thirty steps, that Jacob, "he who supplanted the passions" contemplated while he was lying on the bed of asceticism (Genesis 28:12). In his Orthodox Summa of the spiritual life, which has remained for centuries the outstanding guide to evangelical living, both for monks and for lay people, Saint John does not institute rules but, by practical recommendations, judiciously-chosen details and short pithy maxims and riddles often full of humor, he initiates the soul into spiritual combat and the discernment of thoughts. His "word" is brief, dense and tapered, and it penetrates like a sword to the depths of the soul, uncompromisingly cutting out all self-satisfaction, and tracing hypocritical asceticism and egoism to their roots. Like that of Saint Gregory (January 25) in the theological domain, this "word" is the Gospel put into practice, and it will lead most surely those who let themselves be impregnated by it through an assiduous reading to the gates of heaven, where Christ awaits us.

At the end of his life, the blessed John designated his brother George, who had embraced the hesychast life from the beginning of his renunciation, as his successor at the head of the monastery. When he was about to die, George said to him: "So, you are abandoning me and leaving! I prayed, however, that you would send me to the Lord first, for without you I cannot shepherd this brotherhood." But Saint John reassured him, and said: "Do not grieve and do not be afraid. If I find grace before God, I shall not let you complete even a year after me." And it was so: ten months after John's falling asleep, George departed in his turn to the Lord.

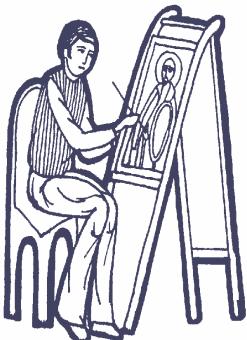
References

John Climacus. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Translated by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

The Lenten Triodion. Translated by Mother

2009 Lenten Vespers Services

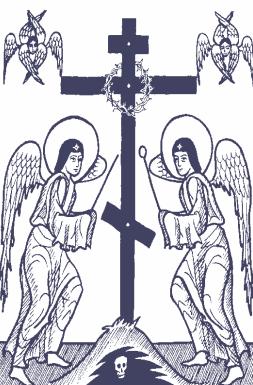
Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches
All Vespers Services Begin at 6:00 PM



The Sunday of Orthodoxy

March 8, 2009

St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church,
2716 N. Dobson Rd., Chandler, AZ



The Third Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2009

St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church,
4436 E. McKinley Street, Phoenix, AZ



The Fifth Sunday of Lent

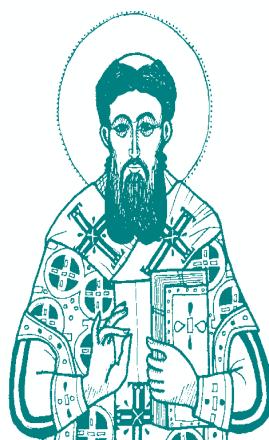
April 5, 2009

St. John Romanian Orthodox Church,
3749 W. Behrend Drive, Glendale, AZ

The Second Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2009

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church,
4530 E. Gold Dust Ave. Phoenix, AZ



The Fourth Sunday of Lent

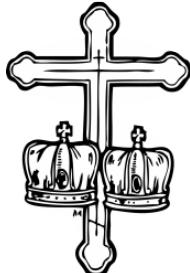
March 29, 2009

Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church,
1614 E. Monte Vista Rd., Phoenix, AZ

*Please join our Brothers & Sisters at the host parishes for these
Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers Services*

Marriage Enrichment Seminar

Marriage Enrichment Seminar



Speaker: Dr. Philip Mamalakis

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ

Saturday, March 14, 2009

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM



Lunch Included ♦ Free

Why is it that so many couples begin marriage as soul-mates, but over time act like roommates, and even end up as cellmates? We all began our marriages with the hopes of having a peaceful, intimate, supportive and loving marriage until the very end. Why is it that most people seem to be enduring their marriages rather than enjoying them? Did God intend us to endure our marriages, or to thrive in them? Isn't marriage about living happily ever after, or is that just a message we get from Hollywood?

Join Dr. Philip Mamalakis, professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, for a time of Lenten reflection and renewal. We'll explore how God wants us to live happily ever after in marriage, and how to build a marriage that you look forward to coming home to each day. He'll discuss how couples grow apart and against each other, and offer some real, faith-based strategies and perspectives on how to deepen your connection to your spouse, and to God.

Sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Churches of the Valley
St. Haralambos, Holy Trinity Cathedral, St. Katherine, and Assumption

Around SS Peter & Paul

MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Stephanie Homyak
March 10

Irene Wolosz
March 11

Sasha Golowatsch
March 13

Elizabeth Michel
March 14

Mike Wagner
March 17

Greg Smith
March 28

Tania Booriakin
March 29

**Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!**



FAREWELL

Our thoughts, prayers, and best
wishes are with Jim and Eva
Baker as they leave SS Peter
and Paul. Jim and Eva have
moved to Palm Springs, CA to
be closer to their family. They
have promised they will be back
often to visit. We wish them
many happy and healthy years
in their new home.

PRAYER LIST

"I was sick and you visited me."
Matt 25:36

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners
who are ill or unable to attend services:

Dorothy Yost

Mary Maul

Marie Yevin

Joe Kurowski

Dennis Tarasevich

Eva Baker

Peg Linderman

Pauline & Dan Vinay

Helen Malecki

Beatrice Washington

Helen Costello

Anna Michkofsky

If you know of anyone else in need of our
prayers, please contact Father David.

Bits and Pieces

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

March 14, 21, and 28, are Memorial Saturdays, also known as Soul Saturdays. The Church sets these days aside for the special commemoration of those departed this life before us. Commemoration of the Departed Faithful will take place during a Panikhida on each of these days, prior to Vespers, at 4:30 p.m. If you would like your departed loved ones to be remembered by name, please submit your commemoration list to Father David. The lists will be retained throughout March and those who are remembered will also be prayed for at the Proskomedia of the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will be held beginning March 4 on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm and will be followed by a Lenten meal and informal discussion. Please note that Wednesday, March 25, is the Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos. The Vesperal Divine Liturgy for the feast will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m. and there is no evening service that day.

PAN-ORTHODOX LENTEN VESPERS SERVICE AT SS PETER & PAUL

The Lenten Sunday Vespers Services, sponsored by the Phoenix Area Orthodox Clergy Council, will be hosted by our parish on Sunday, March 29, at 6:00 p.m. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending.

MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

Following the Wednesday's Pre-Sanctified service, a lenten meal will take place (soups, fruit and bread). There will be a sign up sheet for those Wednesday's. Please see Vi Wasilenko.

Orders will be taken for Easter Paskas starting March 8th. Price \$7.50. There will be no baking of rolls. Bake days are March 10, 24th, and 31st. See Elizabeth Michel if you can help us on these days.

Elizabeth Michel
President

"Oh, what great happiness and bliss, what exaltation it is to address oneself to the Eternal Father. Always, without fail, value this joy which has been accorded to you by God's infinite grace and do not forget it during your prayers; God, the angels and God's

BOOKSTORE UPDATE

The bookstore has a three step plan to help you on your passage to Pascha.

STEP ONE: READ A SPIRITUAL BOOK

The bookstore has three books specifically written for the journey of Great Lent. They are: The Lenten Spring by Fr. Thomas Hopko, \$15, Great Lent by Fr. Alexander Schmemann, \$14, and Daily Lenten Meditations for Orthodox Christians, \$7. Pick one up or re-read the one you already own!



STEP TWO: GO TO CHURCH

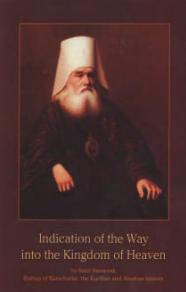
The service books for the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts are available for purchase for \$3. Additionally, although not the same as actually being in church, you still can enjoy the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts and other Lenten hymns on CD sung by the choir at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary Choir, \$17. Also, if you would like help preparing yourself for Confession, the bookstore carries two different prayer books (\$5 and \$15) and a small booklet specifically about confession, \$3.

STEP THREE: EAT LENTEN FOOD

Finally, after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy this year, surprise everyone at the potluck with a new recipe from Lenten Recipes for Orthodox Christians, \$14. The chocolate cake is almost too yummy to be Lenten!

Yes, I realize that this list is a far cry from The Ladder of Divine Ascent by St. John Climacus (who we remember on the 4th Sunday of Great Lent March 29th and whose book we do not carry), however I do hope it can be helpful in some way.

And just one more thing... On March 31st we remember the repose of one of the greatest missionaries in the modern history of the Orthodox Church, St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow and Apostle to America. His biography is one of the most incredible stories you will ever read, \$20 and his small instruction manual to the native Alaskans is a gem, Indication of the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven, \$5.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Pre-K/K students have been putting together their own version of Noah's ark. They have worked very hard on their arks, so make sure to compliment them on their unique work of art. Our first to third-graders continue to learn about their life in Christ. A colorful mobile decorates their class window. Our older students continue their study of the Holy Bible in class. Parents, please encourage your child to find and read the Epistle and Gospel readings for each day. They are listed on the 2009 St Tikhon's Lectionary Wall Calendars that are available at the back of the church. If you would like to purchase a Bible for your child to read at home, we have a limited number available in the bookstore. We are offering these at our cost of \$7.00. These are the same Bibles that the children are using in Sunday School. As always, we thank for your continued support.

STEWARDSHIP/PLEDGES

If you haven't already done so, it is time to start thinking about your PLEDGE for 2009 to help SS Peter and Paul meet the 2009 Budget. As you are all aware, operating and utility expenses have been increasing. Consequently, more income will be required from pledges and other sources.

Please be generous when filling out your 2009 Pledge Form. You can pick up your pledge forms in the Church vestibule or office. Please complete and return as soon as possible. Also, be sure to pick up your 2009 box of Contribution Envelopes. If you have any questions please see or contact the Church office.

WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to take a look at our bookstore.



NEWSLETTER

We would appreciate donations of 11x17 paper for the newsletter.

March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Forgiveness Sunday Cheesefare Sunday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Cheesefare Luncheon Followed by Forgiveness Vespers	2 Beginning of Great Fast 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	3 	4 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	5 Cheesefare Luncheon Sunday, March 1 Sponsored by the Myrrh Bearers Altar Society	6 Czestochowa Icon 6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	7 St. Theodore Sat. Icon 'Surety of Sinners' 5:00pm Great Vespers
8 Sunday of Orthodoxy Kurst Root Icon 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting 6:00pm Vespers St. Katherine	9 Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste 6:00pm Council Mtg Meeting	10 EASTER BAKE 6:00pm Council Mtg Meeting	11 6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	12 13 We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.		14 Memorial Saturday Feodorovskaya Icon 9:00am-3:30pm Marriage Enrichment Seminar Holy Trinity Cathedral 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Great Vespers
15 St. Gregory Palamas 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00pm Vespers St. George	16	17	18 6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	19 Icon 'Our Lady of Tenderness' at Smolensk	20	21 Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Great Vespers
22 Veneration Precious Cross 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00pm Vespers St. Sava	23	24 Forefeast Annunciation EASTER BAKE	25 Annunciation Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Vesperal Divine Liturgy	26 Leavetaking Annunciation	27 Glykophylousa & Akathist Icons	28 Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Great Vespers
29 St. John Climacus 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00pm Vespers SS Peter & Paul	30	31 Repose St. Innocent, Metr of Moscow and Apostle to Americas EASTER BAKE	1 6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	2	3 'Unfading Bloom' Icon	4 Akathist to the Theotokos 5:00pm Great Vespers