

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 3

March 2014

February Council Highlights

- ✘ January's Operating Income was \$9,736.42 and Operating Expenses were \$11,075.92 resulting in a deficit of **\$1,339.50** for the month of January.
- ✘ MBAS will host the Cheese fare luncheon on Sunday, March 2nd.
- ✘ Our parish will host a Lenten Retreat led by Archpriest John Behr, Dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary on March 8, 2014.
- ✘ SS Peter & Paul will host the Inter-Orthodox Lenten Vespers on March 30th; Marty Gala will coordinate refreshments.

Second Chances

On March 4th the Church celebrates the memory of Saint James the Faster. He was, as his title tells us, a man who fasted and prayed, but he also faced temptations that almost killed him.

He lived in the sixth century, and entered the monastic life at a young age. Because of his holy life, he was granted the ability to cure the worst diseases. People traveled great distances to be prayed over and healed by this wonder-working monk.

One of the devil's wiles for monks is to tempt them with lust, and so it was with James. A woman came to him, having been challenged by cynical companions to see whether she could undermine his composure. She pretended to weep bitterly and to need his help desperately. Then she tried to seduce him.

Knowing that lust was a strong personal temptation for him, James put his hand into the fire and let it be badly burned, in order to force his attention away from his aroused desire. The horrified woman, as we

might imagine, never forgot this. She changed her own life, and repented of having tried to lead him into sin.



James continued to alleviate the most severe illnesses and conditions, while still being pursued by his own demon of lust. When a mother and father brought their suffering daughter to him, he used his gift of healing, and the girl was cured. But then he failed to honor the gift of his monastic calling, and had sexual relations with her.

Perhaps he panicked, or perhaps he feared being found out and losing his reputation for holiness. Whatever it was that drove him, he killed the girl, and threw her body into a river.

James wandered into the wilderness, grieving over his sin. He came upon a desert monastery, and confessed his sin before all the brothers. The abbot urged him to stay, fearing that in his misery he might harm himself. But, feeling unworthy of such kindness, he left and continued to wander. He made a kind of grave for

himself, and stayed there for many years, begging God to forgive him and comfort the girl's parents.

At first, the prayers of this monk whose prayers had been so powerful seemed to go unheard. But a severe drought hit the area where he was living, causing immense suffering and loss. He prayed humbly for rain, and when big raindrops began splashing down on the dry earth, he knew he had been forgiven.

During this first week of Great Lent we begin reading from Proverbs. On March 5th we read: "...if you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (2: 3-5).

Saint James the Faster "cried out" and "raised his voice" in his long wilderness repentance. He found God's understanding and experienced His willingness, even after the most deadly sins, to give us a second chance.



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Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Let us begin the fast with joy!

Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!

Let us cleanse our soul and cleanse our flesh!

Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!

Let us rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and fulfill them in love, that we all may see the Passion of Christ our God, and rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!

Vespers, Monday of the First Week of Lent



Lent, a selection of verses from the Paschal Canon is sung as a reminder of the joy that awaits us at the end of the Fast.

It is the Day of Resurrection! Let us be radiant, O people! Pascha! The Lord's Pascha! For Christ our God has brought us from death to life, and from earth unto heaven, as we sing triumphant hymns!

Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, radiant with inaccessible light of the Resurrection, and shall hear Him saying clearly, "Rejoice!" As we sing the triumphant hymns!

As we enter into Great Lent, it's not unusual, however, for the initial joy we feel and the sense of anticipation with which we begin the Lenten fast to soon turn to tedium, to a sense of boredom or burden, or to a longing for the Fast to soon end so we can return to regular schedules, regular menus, and to "things as usual." However, the Church calls our attention to the fact that the joy we feel while also feeling the weight, soberness, and somberness of the season are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they easily co-exist. For, in the end, Lent with its penitential practices and emphasis is really a time for us to recognize who we

are and how we stand before the Lord: sinners who have missed the mark, but also sinners who are redeemed through the Paschal Mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent invites us to embrace the Cross while looking ahead to the Empty Tomb and the joy of the Resurrection.

May this Great Lent be a time for each one of us to respond to the Lord's call to "Repent and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Through our fasting, prayer, participation in the Divine Services, and reaching out to those in need, we repent. We grow in holiness. We turn from sin and turn to Christ. We die to self to rise with Christ.

As we joyfully enter into this Holy Season of Prayer, Reflection, Repentance and Penance, let us pray for the whole Church, for all our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world. May this Lent be a time of grace in which God leads us, in union with the Crucified and Risen Lord, through the experience of the desert to the joy and hope brought by Christ's Holy Resurrection.

With love in the Lord,

Father David

SS Peter and Paul Pascha Card

Name(s) : _____

Name(s) to appear on card:

Mailing Address:

Suggested Donation: \$10.00

Amount of Donation: \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other _____

Deadline: April 6, 2014

Return completed form to Stephanie Homyak



Annunciation: Exalting Those of Low Degree

Fr. Lawrence Farley

In most Orthodox churches, the image of the Mother of God towers over us—sometimes literally, as her icon fills the upper apse of the church temple, proclaiming there how she united heaven and earth by her willing assent to the Incarnation of the divine Messiah. In all her icons, she is a majestic figure—regal, composed, serene. Many icons of the Annunciation portray her as seated on a throne, and with a small footstool, as befits royalty. In all her images, she is a person of power.



This is as it should be, since icons portray the eschatological reality, and present not a naturalistic perspective, but a heavenly, hieratic one. An icon is not a painted photo or a portrait, but a proclamation of the person's heavenly glory. Thus, it is appropriate that Mary of Nazareth be presented as exalted by God to a place "more honourable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim."

But these heavenly images of her present power should not blind us to the low degree and powerlessness that she had while she lived and walked in Palestine. At the time of the Annunciation, Mary was not a person of power, but a simple peasant girl in a small town in Galilee, far from the halls of the mighty in Jerusalem and further afield in Rome, and unconnected with the movers and shakers of the world. It would be hard to exaggerate her powerlessness as far as this world was concerned. She was a

member of a despised race, the Jews, a nation that had lost the last bit of its national sovereignty when the Romans took over in 63 BC. In a world that respected age, she was young; in a culture that valued marriage, she was single; in a society that revered wealth, she was poor. She lived in Galilee, derisively called "Galilee of the Gentiles" by those in Judea, and the town of Nazareth was looked down upon even by others in Galilee. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" was a proverbial taunt uttered by Jews in neighbouring Cana (John 1:46). And we must remember that at the time of the Annunciation she was of the usual marriageable age—that is, about thirteen years old.

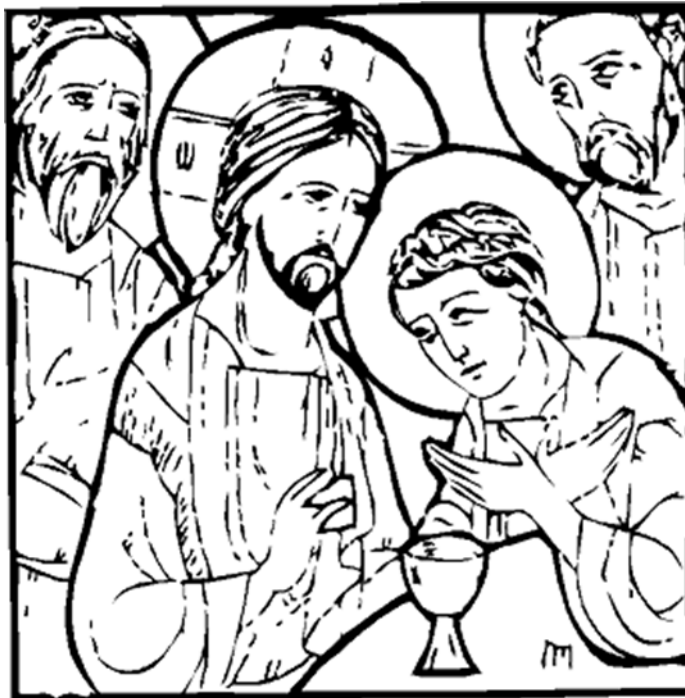
Later, loving devotion would adorn her story with other details, like tinsel on a beloved Christmas tree. The so-called *Protoevangelium of James*, written in the second century as a kind of devotional attempt to fill in the blanks of her life, supplies a number of biographical details not strictly historical. But the sober history of the Gospel preserves a picture of what we might expect—a young girl, unknown and poor, coming face to face one day with the eternal and the incalculable. Saint Luke's Gospel presents her as a young girl "betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph," and when the angel Gabriel informed her that she had been chosen to bear the Messiah and was about to conceive Him, she was naturally "greatly troubled," asking how this was possible

since she had "never known a man" (Luke 1:27f). When it came time to offer the sacrifice required from those who had given birth, she and Joseph offered "the sacrifice of the poor" — two young pigeons (Leviticus 12:8, Luke 2:24). Neither does Saint Matthew's Gospel present her as a celebrity: when Joseph receives news of her pregnancy, he considers divorcing her quietly (Matthew 1:18f). In neither of these accounts is Mary presented as famous or rich and powerful. And later in our Lord's ministry, when people stumbled at His claims, they invoked His family with no suggestion that they were special: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" (Matthew 13:55f). It is clear enough from the Gospel records that Mary was not considered a celebrity by the world around her.

This is her greatest boast, for her "low degree" was rooted in her invincible humility. She herself said it first and best: God's plan was to scatter "the proud in the imagination of their hearts," to "put down the mighty from their thrones," "and to exalt those of low degree" (Luke 1:51f). Her Son echoed His Mother: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). Mary was humble, of low degree, powerless in this age. And because of this, God exalted her, making her honourable and powerful — indeed, more honourable than the cherubim, and reigning with her Son in heaven: "The Queen stood at Thy right side, arrayed in golden robes all glori-

Continued on page 6

Becoming Human: A Word From the Early Fathers



LENTEN RETREAT

led by

ARCHPRIEST JOHN BEHR

DEAN, SAINT VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CRESTWOOD, NEW YORK

Becoming Human: a word from the Early Fathers for us today

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2014
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
1614 East Monte Vista Road
Phoenix, AZ 85006

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED
SUGGESTED DONATION: \$10.00

2014 Inter-Orthodox Lenten Vespers

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

All Vespers Services Begin at 6:00 PM



The Sunday of Orthodoxy

March 9, 2014

Host Parish: Holy Trinity Cathedral

1973 E. Maryland Avenue, Phoenix (602) 264-7863

The Second Sunday of Lent

March 16, 2014

Host Parish: Assumption Church

8202 E. Cactus Road, Scottsdale (480) 991-3009



The Third Sunday of Lent

March 23, 2014

Host Parish: St. Sava Church

4436 E. McKinley Street, Phoenix (602) 275-7360

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 30, 2014

Host Parish: Sts. Peter & Paul Church

1614 E. Monte Vista Road, Phoenix (602) 253-9515



The Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 6, 2014

Host Parish: Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church

10030 N 32nd Street, Phoenix (623) 693-4639

Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches
More Information at: WWW.AZORTHODOX.ORG

Annunciation: Exalting Those of Low Degree

(Continued from page 3)

ous" (Psalm 45:9).

Her exaltation from low degree was the first of many such exaltations. We find this divine delight in exalting the humble playing like a theme-song throughout the New Testament. "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to nullify things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:27f). "Has not God has chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom?" (James 2:5). The world utterly misunderstands the nature of true greatness, and equates greatness with outward strength and self-assertion. In the world, the one in first place is the one who rules, who exerts his will, who makes a big splash. God overturns all this, for in His

Kingdom the one in first place will be the one who serves as the slave of all (Mark 10:44). It is the humble, and self-effacing, and powerless servant who is truly great. God's Kingdom inaugurates a revolution, and the revolution began with the Annunciation.

Mary is an image of the Church, and her exaltation prophesies and prefigures ours. It is important therefore that we see and appreciate her humble estate and her powerlessness during her life, for they form the basis for her exaltation after her death. It is right that our icons dress her in the robes of royalty and place her upon a throne, for these images simply acknowledge in art what God has done for her in heaven. But as we venerate these images, let us not fail to appreciate the revolution they portray: that God took a humble, young girl from a small town, and exalted her to a place unmatched in the cosmos or

the Kingdom. He exalted her who was of low degree, so that we and all generations may see His work, and call her blessed.

BOOKSTORE

Great Lent is upon us once again which means it's time to pull out your favorite fast-friendly recipes! New to the Orthodox faith? No worries...the bookstore has you covered. The *When You Fast Cookbook* has many wonderful (and easy!) recipes to cover you no matter what the occasion. As an added bonus, the cookbook also contains spiritual reflections on fasting in the Orthodox Christian tradition. \$24

A new title for women has been added and you will love it!!! *The Scent of Holiness* chronicles the "adventures" of a lay woman in a women's monastery. Written candidly and with tremendous love, this book details the daily life in a women's monastery with all its prayerfulness, busy-ness and joy. It's a lovely read and will not disappoint! \$18

Around SS Peter & Paul

MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

- March 10 Stephanie Homyak
 13 Sasha Golowatsch
 14 Elizabeth Michel
 17 Mike Wagner
 Jacob Sieckman
 19 Christi and David Sourk
 22 Ann Michkofsky
 25 Trish Sieckman
 29 Tania Booriakin



Mnogaya Leta! Many Years!

LENTEN APPEAL

The 2013 Diocesan Assembly in Santa Rosa, CA designated the St Petersburg Children's Hospice as the official diocesan Lenten charity for 2014. Please consider giving to this amazing organization. We will take a special collection on Sunday, March 23, to participate and do our part in this annual diocesan appeal.

Brochure with photos (in English): <http://dowoca.org/files?stpetersburghospicebrochure.pdf>
 Hospice blog (in Russian): <http://www.kidshospice.ru/p/blog-page 3.html>



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:

Rose Koval
 Ann Garza

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

Bits and Pieces

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

The Great Fast begins on Monday, March 3rd. Forgiveness Vespers will be celebrated on Sunday, March 2nd, after the Cheesefare Luncheon. The Canon of St Andrew will be sung on Monday and Tuesday of that week, at 6:00 p.m. The first Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts of this Lenten Season will be on Wednesday, March 5th, at 6:00 p.m. and every Wednesday of Lent. The Pre-sanctified Liturgy will be followed by a Lenten meal and a small presentation, discussion, or Question & Answer session.

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

Upcoming pre-Lenten and Lenten Memorial Saturdays are March 15, 22, and 29. If you need to update your memorial prayer list or submit a new one, please see Fr David. All persons whose names are provided are prayed for at the Memorial Services on these Saturdays. It is a thoughtful and prayerful way to remember your loved ones who have fallen asleep. The Memorial Services/Panichidas will be held on each of these Saturdays, before Vespers at 4:30 p.m.

DIOCESAN LENTEN APPEAL

This year's Diocesan Lenten Appeal will benefit the St Petersburg Children's Hospice in St Petersburg, Russia. This is the first children's hospice to be established in Russia. Fr Alexander Tkachenko, Founder and Director, oversees the good work and fine services provided to children and their families in very difficult times. A special collection will be made on Sunday, March 23.

SUNDAY VESPERS

Again this year, the local Orthodox Clergy Council will sponsor the celebration of Vespers on the Sunday evenings of Great Lent. Our parish will host the local community on Sunday, March 30, at 6:00 p.m. Vespers will be followed by the traditional fellowship reception in our parish hall. Please contact Marty Gala to let her know what dish you can bring to share at the reception.

LENTEN RETREAT

Mark Saturday, March 8, on your calendars now. Our parish will host a Lenten Retreat led by Archpriest John Behr, Dean

of Saint Vladimir's Seminary. Father Behr will also preach at the Inter-Orthodox Vespers Service on Sunday. Lunch will be served. A \$10.00 offering is suggested.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGIES

Each Wednesday of Lent, at 6:00, our parish community will celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. As a preparation for participation in this Liturgy or as part of your Lenten study, you might like to review two short articles on this ancient service at the following links:

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-div/liturgy-of-the-presanctified-gifts>

http://orthodoxwiki.org/Liturgy_of_the_Presanctified_Gifts

Please also plan on joining us for a simple Lenten meal (soup, salad, bread, & fruit) following these Liturgies every Wednesday during Lent. Sharing in the Church's Lenten cycle of services, being nourished mid-week with the Holy Mysteries, and joining in fellowship with your brothers and sisters will add greatly to your experience of this grace-filled season.

St. John Mission in Tempe will celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts every Friday at 6:00 pm. St John Mission is located at 916 S 52nd St, Tempe, AZ 85281.

PARISH PASCHA CARD

Instead of sending individual Pascha greetings, why not list your name(s) on a beautifully designed Orthodox Pascha card and support SS Peter and Paul at the same time? If you would like to participate, please fill out the form at the bottom of page 2 and return it to Stephanie Homyak by April 6, 2014. The suggested minimum donation is \$10.

CHURCH CALENDARS

Thank you to Nick Enoch, Jr. for donating the 2014 Calendars!

BAKING OF EASTER PASKAS

Orders for Easter Paskas (\$7.50) will be taken on Sundays during Fellowship Hour. Latest date to order is March 16. Please see Elizabeth Michel.

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. Katrina can help you find whatever you need!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY PROCESSION OF ICONS

Youth will participate in the annual procession of icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 9, 2014. Icons will be provided for all youth to carry in the procession around the church. The children are also welcome to bring their own favorite icon from home to carry in the procession.

MBAS

The Cheesefare Sunday luncheon will be held on Sunday, March 2nd. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Starting Wednesday, March 5th, a lenten meal will take place (soups, fruit, and bread) following Presanctified Liturgy. There will be a sign up sheet for those Wednesdays. Please see Barbara Peterson to sign up.

SS Peter and Paul will be hosting the Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers on Sunday, March 30, 2014. The MBAS will host a Lenten meal after the service. Marty Gala will be coordinating the meal, so please show your usual generosity by contacting her and letting her know what dish you will be able to bring.

BOOKSTORE

Great Lent is upon us once again which means it's time to pull out your favorite fast-friendly recipes! New to the Orthodox faith? No worries...the bookstore has you covered. The *When You Fast* Cookbook has many wonderful (and easy!) recipes to cover you no matter what the occasion. As an added bonus, the cookbook also contains spiritual reflections on fasting in the Orthodox Christian tradition. \$24



March 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p style="text-align: center;">Cheesefare Sunday Luncheon Sunday, March 2, 2014 Sponsored by the Myrrhbearers Altar Society</p>						1 Departed Righteous Monastics
2 Cheesefare Sunday Forgiveness Sunday 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Cheesefare Luncheon followed by Forgiveness Vespers	3 Beginning of Great Fast 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	4 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	5 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	6	7 Icon "Surety of Sinners" 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts St. John Mission, Tempe	8 Kursk-Root Icon 11:00 am—4:00 pm LENTEN RETREAT Archpriest John Behr 5:00pm Vespers
9 Sunday of Orthodoxy Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>Holy Trinity Cathedral</i>	10	11 6:00pm Council Mtg Meeting	12 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	13	14 Feodorovskaya Icon 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts St. John Mission, Tempe	15 Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
16 St Gregory Palamas 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>Assumption Church</i>	17 Join us for a light lenten meal and discussion following Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Please contact Barbara Peterson to sign-up to bring soup, fruit, or bread.	18	19 Our Lady of Tenderness Icon 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	20	21 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts St. John Mission, Tempe	22 Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
23 Ven Precious Cross 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>St. Sava Church</i>	24 Forefeast Annunciation 6:00pm Vespers	25 Annunciation Most Holy Theotokos 9:00 Divine Liturgy	26 Leavetaking Annunciation 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	27	28 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts St. John Mission, Tempe	29 Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
30 St John Climacus 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>SS Peter & Paul</i>	31 Repose of St Innocent	1	2 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	3 Icon "Unfading Bloom" 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	4 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts St. John Mission, Tempe	5 Akathist to the Theotokos 5:00pm Vespers