

Some see this season of the year as a spiritual marathon. They rise from their sedentary spiritual lives, set off in a sprint and fail before the first week is out. The failure comes in anger, self-recrimination, even despondency. The first year that I “chose” to fast in the Orthodox manner (it was 4 years before I was received into the Church), the priest I discussed the fast with said, “You can’t keep the fast.” I argued with him until I realized his wisdom. “Do something easier,” he told me. “Just give up red meat.” “What about chicken?” I asked. “Nope. Eat chicken. Eat everything except beef and pork. And pray a little more.” And so I returned to my Anglican life, a little disappointed that my zeal had made such a poor impression. But my family accepted the proposal and we ate no red meat for Lent. It was, in hindsight, the best Lent my family had ever had. No longer were we musing over “what to give up for Lent,” and instead accepted a discipline that was given to us. In subsequent years that same priest (who is now my godfather) increased the discipline. And we were ready for it. It is interesting to me, however, that my first experience of an Orthodox fast was being told not to be so strict. The “strict” part was learning to do what I was told. That is sometimes the most difficult fast of all. Lent is a time to “get real.” Not eating some things is actually normal. In our modern world we have to embrace a natural “gravity” that we could easily leave behind – at least, we have to do this if we want to avoid an atrophy of the soul. In 2000, the average American ate 180 pounds of meat a year (and 15 pounds of fish and shellfish). That was roughly a third more than in 1959. Scarcity is not an issue in our diet. Our abundance is simply “not real,” and the environment frequently shows the marks of the artificial nature of our food supply. But we have no way of studying what is going on with our souls. What I know to be true is that – as goes the body – so goes the soul. Those who engage the world as consumer are being consumed by the world to an equal measure. And so we get real. Getting real means accepting limits and boundaries. Our culture is a bubble of make-believe. It rests on an economy of over-consumption. The crash of 2008 came close to a much greater disaster and could have easily gone into free-fall.

Many fail to understand just how fragile our lives truly are. In the season of Lent (and on all the fasting days of the year) we embrace the fragility of our lives. We allow the world to say “no” and take on extra burdens and duties. It is worth keeping in mind that such things do not make us spiritual heroes, first they have to make us human.

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

--Church School Resumes Today--
 Akathist to St Gregory Palamas – Wed. Feb 28th – 6pm
 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – Friday, Mar. 2nd – 6pm
 Memorial Divine Liturgy – Saturday, March 3rd – 9:30am
 ICAN Training – Saturday March 3rd - 11-2pm

THIS MONTH—

- See Lenten Calendar for service details- one correction this Friday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm
- Orthodox Bible Study - Resuming Thursday March 1st and 15th
- Altar Servers - see schedule
- Parish Council Meeting – Mon. Mar. 5th
- In Home Meals are available from Lizzy’s Catering. See flyers in the hall.
- The book “Daily Lenten Meditations for Orthodox Christians” is available in our book store – See Jane for more info
- House of Hope Thrift Store is looking for either a Part-Time Volunteer or May work 10-20 hours a week paid by PathStone senior program if you are 55 or older with low income. Talk to Fr. Daniel

MISSIONS TEAM

Anyone wishing to serve as a missionary for a summer trip may inquire of the missions team. Also, OCMC sponsors various trips around the world. See the poster in the Hall. *Please support our Kenyan Orthodox children. Please contact Marilyn Filipos. Thank you for your donations to the Kenyan children.

Missions Team Meeting – Mar. 2nd after Pre-Sanctified

Missions Team will sponsor Coffee Hour on April 1st

“Rejoice” scripture verse for the week:

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD.
 Zech. 2:10

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – Rector **Lord’s Day – Feb 24th , 2018** Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 5. Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople (806).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Mary, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound..., Tanya, Richard, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers... ..Catechumens – Rick and Christian Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – John Sekel, Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra, Raquel

Today’s Hymns Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 2 Troparion (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One; and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh

and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy.

Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:

“Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,//
for Thou alone hast come to save the world.”

Tone 8 Kontakion (from the *Lenten Triodion*)

No one could describe the Word of the Father;

but when He took flesh from thee, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described,

and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty.//

We confess and proclaim our salvation in words and images.

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (*Song of the Fathers*)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and

glorified is Thy name forever! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3*)

v: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us! (v. 4)

Tone 4 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. (Ps 99/100:6)

v: They called to the Lord and He answered them. (Ps 99/100:6)

Today's Scripture Readings:

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 (*Epistle*)

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better

resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 1:43-51 (*Gospel*)

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Get Real For Lent

By Fr. Stephen Freeman

According to St. Basil, God is the “only truly Existing.” Our own existence is a gift from God who is our Creator. None of us has “self-existing” life. We exist because God sustains us in existence – in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).

Sin is the rejection of this gift of God – a movement away from true existence.

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Much of our attention in the modern world is engaged seemingly with things that have no “true existence.” We engage with illusions, with digital constructs. Our economy allows us to escape the normal necessities such as seasonal scarcity or other mundane concerns. We are increasingly removed from the very environment in which we naturally live.

It is said that astronauts, after spending a prolonged time in space, have lingering effects of zero-gravity. Our bodies are made for gravity and require its constant pull for everything from muscle tone to bone density. But we now live in situations in which many forms of natural “gravity” have been reduced or removed. What effect does the long-term ability to have almost any food at any time of year have on the human body? As someone who has spent the better part of my life at a desk, I can attest to the effect of a sedentary existence. My lower back, my range of motion, the flexibility of my joints are all consistent with the modern white-collar worker.

What effect do such things have on the soul? For the soul requires “gravity” as well. Plato stated in his Republic, that all children should learn to play a musical instrument because music was required for the right development of the soul. We give far too little thought to such things, assuming that no matter what environment we live in, our inherent freedom of choice remains unscathed and we can always decide to do something different, or be something different. I could decide to run a marathon tomorrow, but I know that the first quarter-mile would leave me gasping for breath and exhausted. You cannot go from 40 years at a desk to the demands of a marathon – just because you choose to do so. And so we come to Great Lent.