

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR THE DAY

Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 12:1-10

BRETHREN, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father.

Gospel Lesson: Gospel According to St. Matthew 6:14-21

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Monthly Calendar Available. Our calendar of services for the month of March is available in the narthex of the church. The calendar contains all scheduled services for the month with times so that you can make a plan now to attend these services. The first week of Great Lent is particularly full; but each week provides several different opportunities for attendance. While it would be nice if everyone could attend everything, it is hoped that each person will be able to attend at least one service a week beyond their regular Sunday attendance. If you don't come regularly on Sunday, this would be a good season to start. For those that cannot attend services due to illness, live broadcasts of services are available on the internet from St. Nicholas Church in Ann Arbor at www.stnickaa.org; click on the "watch online" tab.

First Holy Confession Classes. Great Lent is a good time to get familiar with the Mystery of Holy Confession in the church. For our young people, it provides a springboard for discussion of the need for private confession, the command of the Apostle Iakovos that we "confess your sins to one another", and the mechanics of the Mystery. In order to do this, Fr. Iakovos would like to meet with our young people on four different occasions throughout Great Lent, culminating in their making a private confession during Holy Week. Parents are encouraged to speak with Father so that we can arrange a mutually acceptable time to schedule these classes.



TRAVERSE CITY ORTHODOX MISSION

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

Meeting at 1030 Hastings St., Traverse City, Michigan

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Pastor: Presbyter Iakovos (Olechnowicz)

Pastor's e-Mail: iakovos@charter.net

Pastor's Residence: 720 Westminster Rd

Pastor's Phone: (231) 668-6583

Traverse City, MI 49686

Pastor's Cell Phone: (231) 590-2038

✠ PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS ✠

- Sunday 9 March** **Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Cheesefare Sunday. Forgiveness Sunday.**
9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11 AM Church School
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour followed by Vespers of Forgiveness
- Monday 10 March** **St. Kondratos of Corinth. First Day of Great Lent. Clean Monday.**
Strict Fast Day
5:30 PM Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Tuesday 11 March** **St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem.**
Strict Fast Day
5:30 PM Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Wednesday 12 March** **St. Theophanes, the Confessor.**
Strict Fast Day
5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts
7 PM Discussion Group Topic—Putting Temptation Into Perspective
- Thursday 13 March** **St. Nicephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople.**
Strict Fast Day
5:30 PM Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Friday 14 March** **St. Benedict of Nursia.**
Strict Fast Day
9 AM Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts
5:30 PM Akathistos Hymn Stasis A'

Saturday 15 March **Martyrs Agapios and Companions. 3rd Saturday of Souls.**
Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed
9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos followed by Memorial Services
4:30 PM Ninth Hour and Vespers
5:30 PM Choir Rehearsal

Sunday 16 March **First Sunday of Great Lent. The Triumph of Orthodoxy.**
Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed
9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11 AM Church School
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour
Church Maintenance Duty
4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Ruth Wilkey and Matthew Bemis Received into the Orthodox Faith. Last Sunday, 2nd March we witnessed the reception into the Holy Orthodox Church of Ruth Wilkey, wife of Daniel Wilkey. Daniel was received into the Church in 1986 and has assisted Ruth in her search for the truth. After years of inquiry and study Ruth made the decision to become an Orthodox Christian and with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, was received into the Church this past Sunday. Her sponsor is Makrina Patterson. She and Daniel will have their marriage sanctified in the Church today as we stand on the threshold of the beginning of Great Lent. Congratulations to Ruth, Daniel and Makrina on this momentous event for them personally as well as for our community collectively.

In other news, on Saturday, 1 March, Matthew Bemis, son of Pamela and Steve Bemis (who are catechumens in our parish) was received into the Holy Orthodox Faith at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in Upland, CA. Matthew is a senior at Azusa Pacific University in Los Angeles and was inquiring into Orthodoxy while attending school there. Following catechesis by the parish priest and others, Matthew received the Holy Mysteries at the hands of Fr. Alexander Stavrinides. Matthew's sponsor is Maria Lambros. We congratulate the Bemis family on this happy day and look forward to their full participation in the life of the Church when they too are received.

The Sunday Before Lent. The last of the preparatory Sundays has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and it is also the Sunday of Forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of the Great Fast. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more. So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise...

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. As the commemoration of ascetic saints on the previous Saturday has just made clear to us, we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from our fellow men

but link us to them with ever stronger bonds. The Lenten ascetic is called to be a man for others. *From The Meaning of the Great Fast by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia.*

Fasting Rules for This Week. With the beginning of the Great Fast tomorrow it is not too late to consider our participation in this spiritual ascetic struggle. For those that are willing and of the physical strength to do so the following traditional fasting rules apply as stipulated by the Holy Church: all meat products, all dairy products, all fish with backbones, olive oil and wine are forbidden on the weekdays of Great Lent. Fruits, vegetables, grains and shellfish are permitted on all days of Great Lent. On Saturdays and Sundays we are permitted to have oil and wine as the Fast is moderated by our celebration of the Resurrection.

For those that are planning to commune at the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts on Wednesday evenings, it is recommended that they take a light breakfast in the morning and then abstain from eating or drinking for the balance of the day. For those that must work or are involved in physical labour, it is recommended that they take their dinner (lunch) no later than 1 PM and then abstain from eating or drinking for the balance of the afternoon until having received the Holy Communion. For those that are under a doctor's supervision or have a health condition, the fasting rules are moderated and these persons should speak with Fr. Iakovos for direction. Additionally, persons planning to commune should read the appropriate prayers before communion as included in most good prayer books. For those that are communing at the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts on Friday morning, the same rules apply as for communing on the Saturday or Sunday morning liturgies—no food or drink prior to the Liturgy (from midnight).

Lent will be upon us tomorrow. What will you do to welcome this season into your life? It is truly a spiritual springtime for us even though there is snow on the ground. This is a time of great spiritual struggle but also great spiritual joy. Make your plan and purpose yourself to follow through. For additional suggestions on what you can do to make this season meaningful, contact Fr. Iakovos.

Lenten Discussion Group Forming. The Traverse City Orthodox Mission will be sponsoring a Lenten Study Group which begins this Wednesday and continues to meet for the next four Wednesdays throughout Orthodox Lent. The group will meet at 7 PM immediately following the 5:30 PM celebration of the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts.

In Our Hearts and In Our Prayers. This week we offer up heartfelt prayers for the health and salvation of the following persons who are struggling with illness or difficult life situations. Please remember them in your prayers. They are: Brigette Barbas, John Batsakis, George Baryames (E. Lansing), Nancy Brieghner (California), Niki and Alexander Chibucos (Chicago), Helen, Bob, Samantha, and Elisabeth Dalbo, Eugene and Angeline, Barbara and Gerasimos Denno, Kalliope Drudge (Frankfort), Angeliki and Nicholas Dunlap, David Ealy, James Elliot (New York), Peter Farougi, Rebekah Foster (France), Bud Fromholz, Novice Michael (St. Nektarios), Irene and Elias Govatos (Florida), Elizabeth Husby, Alexandra Karagiannis (Chicago), Helen Knapp, Stephanie Long, Pamela and Leon Lysaght (Plymouth), Fr. Michael Michelapoulos (New York), Elan Nichols, Rebekah Olechnowicz (Ypsilanti), Angeliki O'Non, Constantinos Pappas (New York), Antonia Psaros, Jerry Slomba (Flint), Christina and Katerina Stavros, Gabriel Underwood (Florida), Judy Weston, George, Catherine, Konstantinos, Mary, Anastasios, Nicholaos, George, Catherine, Zefira, and Argyris.

O Lord and Master of my life; take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk; but give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant; Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.