

## Holy Scripture Lessons for the Day

### Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 11:24-26; 32-40

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated -- of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

### Gospel Lesson: Gospel According to St. John 1:43-51

At that time, Jesus decided 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 he 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." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

*On the Holy Icons...* We venerate Thy Most Pure Image, O Good One...

" the person who refuses to venerate an icon is the enemy of Christ , the Blessed Theotokos and the Saints and is an upholder of the Devil and his demon host showing by his act grief that God and the saints are honoured and glorified and the devil put to shame. The image is a canticle and manifestation and monument to the memory of those who have fought bravely and won the victory to the shame and confusion of the vanquished." St. John of Damascus

*Devote yourself to stillness and know that I am God - Psalm 45:10 (LXX)*

## Traverse City Orthodox Mission Church

*Traditional Worship for Modern Life*

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### PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, 8 March	<b>First Sunday of Great Lent. The Triumph of Orthodoxy.</b> Fast Day--Wine and Oil Permitted. 9 AM Orthros/10 AM Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 11:30 AM Fellowship Hour/Strategic Planning Meeting 5 PM 9th Hour and Vespers
Monday, 9 March	<b>St. Caesarios the Righteous.</b> Fast Day
Tuesday, 10 March	<b>St. Kodratos the Martyr and Companions.</b> Fast Day 5:30 PM Monthly Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, 11 March	<b>St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem.</b> Fast Day 5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts
Thursday, 12 March	<b>St. Theophanes the Confessor.</b> Fast Day
Friday, 13 March	<b>Removal of the Relics of St. Necephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople.</b> Fast Day 5:30 PM Akathistos Hymn Stasis B'
Saturday, 14 March	<b>St. Benedict the Righteous of Nursia.</b> Fast Day-Wine and Oil Permitted. 4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers No Choir Rehearsal This Evening
Sunday, 15 March	<b>Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas.</b> Fast Day--Wine and Oil Permitted. 9 AM Orthros/10 AM Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 11:30 AM Fellowship Hour 5 PM 9th Hour and Vespers



[www.tcorthodoxchurch.com](http://www.tcorthodoxchurch.com)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2356, Traverse City, MI 49685

Meeting Address: 1030 Hastings St., Traverse City, MI 49686

Church Phone: 231.668.6583 Cell: 231.590.2038 e-Mail: [iakovos@charter.net](mailto:iakovos@charter.net)

**Procession with the Holy Icons.** Today the Church commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons into the Church. As a result of the iconoclast controversy of the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries the status of iconography within the worship and praxis of the Church was in question. During the seventh century, a Byzantine Emperor attempted to remove all icons from our Churches believing that icons should not be worshipped but only God. He actually succeeded in doing away with icons, and for over 150 years Orthodox Christians were banned from using icons in any manner, shape or form. While the 7th Ecumenical Council (787 Nicea) had definitively established the veneration and use of icons in the Church the controversy continued even after the council with iconoclast bishops, priests, theologians and politicians demanding that icons be removed from the churches as they were thought to be idolatrous and violations of the Second Commandment. After much heated debate, many martyrs and confessors rose up to defend the Orthodox teaching that holds that the icon is one of the strongest testaments to the humanity of Christ. With the order of the Empress Theodora in 843 the findings of the Seventh Ecumenical Council were confirmed and the famous statement of faith and the anathemas issued at that council (which will be read in both English and the original Greek at this morning's service) were reinstated. With that action, the icons were "restored" to the churches. The procession of the icons this morning harkens back to the great celebration that took place at the Church of Agia Sofia in Constantinople on 11 March 843 when the icons were brought back into the Temple in a solemn procession..

**Strategic Planning Meeting Sunday, 8 March.** Our parish will have its second in a series of meetings aimed at developing a strategic plan today immediately following the Holy Services. Critical to the entire process is the participation of as many "stakeholders" as possible. This is why you are cordially invited to join us at our next meeting and help with the process. Today we will be following up on our first meeting by continuing the visioning process which was begun earlier. We are currently involved in brainstorming the things that we value about our community, how we desire to be of greater service to the external community and what we want our church to be. Stephanie Long of our parish has been leading this process and will help facilitate our work this afternoon. Put your thinking cap on and come prepared to do some visioning as we work to discern God's will for our parish.

**Painting "Bee" a Stunning Success.** Yesterday thirteen of our parishioners rolled up their sleeves and got to work fitting up our community and education centers. Participants in the "bee" were: John Batsakis, Matthew and Steven Bemis, Sharon and Andrew Foster, Karen, Malena and Randy Kain, Holly, Jenna, Jacob and James Olszewski, and Tom Sebestyen. Our crew worked diligently sanding, priming, painting, cleaning, and performing other maintenance to make our facility friendlier and more utilitarian for our community. We owe a debt of gratitude to these people who gave over six hours of their time to this project. Mrs. Olszewski catered a wonderful Lenten meal of lentils, breads and other fasting foods for the workers. Please make it a point to thank each of these "saints" personally for their hard work.

**New Arrangement in the Church.** With the new entry door cut from our community center into the church proper, we have relocated the coat rack, etc, to the community center. We ask that everyone enter the church through the door that used to be used for the community center alone. The exterior church door will no longer be used as an entry. It can be used as an emergency exit. Also notice that we have relocated the candle stands to the south side of the church along with the memorial cross dedicated to Fr. John Paul. We are trying this arrangement out for now in order to see how we like it. Finally, the analogion with the menological icon is placed at the west end of the church in the center for veneration. With this new access to the community center from the church, we ask that persons that would like to socialize following the Holy Services excuse themselves from the church and carry on their conversations in the

community center. Now that we have this additional space, it is important to protect the quiet and prayerful atmosphere in the church by maintaining silence so that those that would like to pray quietly or say their post communion prayers can do so without distraction. Over the next few weeks we will be reminding people that the nave of the church is not a place for socialization and trying to encourage people to reserve this space for prayer alone. Please cooperate as we try to make this church "an house of prayer."

**On-Going Church School Projects.** The church school is sponsoring a number of projects as our young people learn to observe the Holy Season of Great Lent. Everyone is invited to participate in these projects.

**Coin Drive to Benefit Crisis Fund.** There are two empty five gallon water bottles in the church. One bottle is for adults, the other is for the youth of the parish. The idea is that each group will collect coins and loose change and place them in the bottles. At the end of Great Lent, we will tally the amount of coins in each bottle. The funds will be deposited to help bolster our crisis fund which is used to provide financial aid to our parishioners that find themselves facing some kind of crisis. The group generating the most coins will receive a prize for their efforts. Don't forget to bring your loose change and donate toward this worthwhile cause.

**Rice Night.** Did you know that rice is a staple food for a large part of the world's human population, especially in tropical Latin America, and East, South and Southeast Asia, making it the second-most consumed cereal grain, after maize? During the season of Great Lent, our Church calls us back to the simplified diet that has been part and parcel of ascetic practice for millennia. In order to encourage the discipline of fasting as well as developing an appreciation of the life circumstances of a majority of humanity, our church school is encouraging all members of the parish to participate in a "Rice Night". It works like this: one night each week during lent, our people are asked to choose rice as the staple for the meal. The idea is to have a simple meal that has you leaving the table a bit hungry and not satisfied. After changing your meal plan for this one day a week, you are next asked to take the money or food that would have been used in preparing a more elaborate dinner to a local food pantry to benefit the poor. Finally, during your dinner you are encouraged to talk about the significance of rice and other simple foods in freeing you from the tyranny of a preoccupation with food preparation and consumption as well as eradicating the problem of world hunger.

**Lenten Grandparent Programme.** This programme matches up children of the parish with "grandparents." It is an amazing way to encourage children throughout the 40 days of Lent and connect them with a loving adult from our parish family. As part of the programme, our children and grandparents make a commitment of praying daily for one another and writing a note of encouragement once a week. They are asked to communicate via letter once a week and praying daily for one another. On the Saturday of Lazarus, we invite our Lenten Grandparents to attend services side by side with their "grand kids," share in a Lenten breakfast and afterwards make Palm Crosses and decorate candles with their Lenten Grandchild.

**Parish Council Monthly Meeting This Week.** The parish council will have their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday of this week beginning at 5:30 PM in the community center. Agenda, financial statements and other items have been sent to council members electronically via e-Mail. Members are asked to review these materials prior to the meeting to speed our conduct of the meeting. Meetings are open to all stewards of the parish and there is a time for "public comment" for those that would like to bring a suggestion, thought or concern to the council for consideration.