

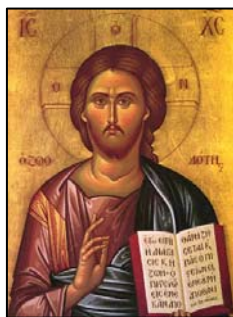


Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, February 14, 2010

ON THIS DAY, THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE TRIODION PERIOD, WHICH WE REFER TO AS CHEESEFARE SUNDAY AND THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS, WE CALL TO MIND the banishment of Adam and Eve, the first created from the joys of Paradise. WE ALSO COMMEMORATE our Righteous Father Auxentios the Presbyter (+470); Righteous Father Abraham (+422); Righteous Father Maron of Syria (+4th cent.); Holy Priest-Martyr Philemon, Bishop of Gaza; Holy and Righteous Martyr Damianos the Younger (1568); Holy New Martyr George of Mytilene (1693); Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles & Teacher of the Slavs; and Holy New Martyr Nicholas of Corinth (1554). *O Christ our God, through Your ineffable compassion, deem us worthy of the joys of Paradise, and have mercy on us, as the only Loving One. Amen. Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Mission Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

Reminder for Next Sunday

Each parishioner is encouraged to bring an icon to church next week for the Sunday of Orthodoxy and join us in the procession at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

TODAY's Spiritual Theme From the Triodion:

The fall of our first parents, *Adam and Eve*, and their banishment from Paradise are commemorated on this day. Today is also the SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS as emphasized in the Gospel reading. *We are reminded, before we enter the Lenten fast, 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.*

Please join us here this coming Saturday, February 20th,
as we commemorate

the Final Saturday of the Souls before Pascha.

Orthros, 7:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 9:00 a.m.,
followed by Memorial Service for our departed brethren.

For those who are able, please bring Kolyva.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (Third Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.106-109):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown the mighty power of His arm. He has trampled down death by death, becoming the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell and has granted to all the world His great mercy.

3. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

4. Kontakion sung for Cheese Fare Sunday – (Hymnal-pp. 264-267):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: O You Who are the source of all wisdom and discernment, instructor of the ignorant and champion of the poor; strengthen my heart, O Master, and grant me understanding. O Word of the Father, bring words to my lips, that nothing would keep me from crying out to You: In Your compassion have mercy on me, for I have fallen.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Mark 16:9-20)

Now after He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After this He appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Later He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and He upbraided them for their

lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it. Amen.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Romans 13:11-14:4)

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. ¹⁴Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matthew 6:14-21)

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the

hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store 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 your heart will be also."

MEMORY VERSE (*TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY*):

“How great is the mercy of the Lord, and His forgiveness for those who return to Him.”
(*Sirach 17:29*)

**GREAT LENT & PASCHA
IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH 2010**

Great Lent Begins February 15, 2010

Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday) - March 28 - April 3

PASCHA (Easter) – April 4

Ascension Day – May 13

Pentecost – May 23

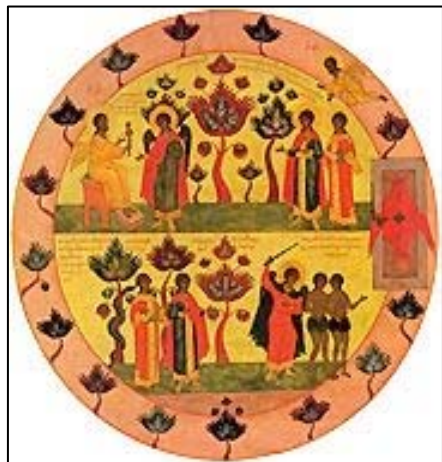
For more information on the Orthodox Christian observance of Great Lent and Pascha: <http://www.greatlent.goarch.org/>

Καλη Τεσσαρακοστη!

May God grant you a blessed lenten journey!

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

(Excerpt from the Orthros of Clean Monday morning – 1st day of Lent)



First Ode: COME, NATIONS; LET US SING A SONG TO CHRIST OUR GOD! HE DIVIDED THE WATERS AND GUIDED THE PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT, FOR HE IS GREATLY GLORIFIED!

GLORY TO YOU, OUR GOD, GLORY TO YOU.

How shall I begin to weep for my failures? Where can I make a start for salvation? I have lived as a Prodigal. Save me by the ways that are Yours, O Bountiful One.

This is the time of repentance. This is the day of salvation. This is the beginning of the fast. Be vigilant, my soul! Close the door of your passions, and seek the Lord.

The tempest of my sins has drawn me to the depths of despair. But I flee to the sea of Your mercy: O Lord, save me!

I have become a slave to sin. I alone have opened the doors to passion, O Word, but convert me by Your compassion, O Savior!

Katavasia COME, NATIONS; LET US SING A SONG TO CHRIST OUR GOD! HE DIVIDED THE WATERS AND GUIDED THE PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT, FOR HE IS GREATLY GLORIFIED!

This is the time of great spiritual efforts, the course of the Fast. Let us all begin with sincerity, bearing good works to the Lord as gifts.

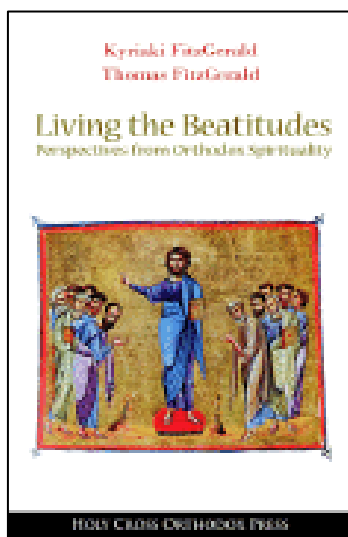
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Let us praise the simple unity of three Lights, the most powerful and ever-existing and ever-acting Lord and God: The Father Almighty, the Son and the Spirit!

Both now and ever and until the ages of ages. Amen. Let us sing of the holy mount of God, of the immaculate Mary, from whom the Sun of Righteousness arose, and shone light on those who were in darkness: Christ the life of all.

“Living the Beatitudes” Lenten Worship & Study Series Begins THIS Wednesday, February 17th

The First Day of Great & Holy Lent is tomorrow – “Clean Monday”, February 15th. Fr. George invites you to join us for Great Compline Service that evening at 6:00 p.m. for a reflective service that focuses on Scripture readings, prayers, and simple repetitive and easy-to-learn hymns.

Lenten Study Series - Each of the six Wednesdays beginning the



first week of Great Lent, Fr. George will lead our faithful in a discussion of assigned chapters from “*Living the Beatitudes*”. This book, published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press, offers reflections from an Orthodox spiritual perspective on the Beatitudes of Jesus. In each chapter, the authors clearly present the Christian faith with counsel for

Christian living. It is ideal for study groups such as ours. It was written by Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, Dean of the Holy Cross School of Theology, and his wife, Presbytera Kyriaki Karidoyanes.

Lenten Worship Services – Our schedule on Wednesdays will be the Service of the 9th Hour/Presanctified Liturgy (Vespers/Communion Service) beginning at 6:00 p.m., followed by a community lenten dinner beginning at 7:15 p.m. and followed by our Family Community Program using “*Living the Beatitudes*”. We will end around 8:30 p.m. Our Bookstore will be selling this text (207 pages). Each Wednesday, we invite you to bring fasting food to share. You and your family are encouraged to attend as much of the series as possible. The dates are February 17 & 24, March 3, 10, 17, and 24 (Eve of Feast of Annunciation, so Orthros and Divine Liturgy will be offered instead of 9th Hour/Presanctified Liturgy).

Salutations Services – Our parish will offer Salutations to the Theotokos Services at 7:00 p.m. during the Fridays of Great Lent. Dates include Friday, February 19, 26, March 5 (at Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta), March 12, & the Akathist Hymn on March 19.

I pray you have a “Blessed Lent!” +Fr. George

Catechetical Homily On the Commencement of Holy and Great Lent

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

† B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy

Archbishop of Constantinople the New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch
To the Plenitude of the Church

Grace and Peace be to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Together with our Prayer, Blessing, and Forgiveness

Beloved brothers and sisters, children in the Lord,

Tomorrow, we enter the period of Holy and Great Lent. In the Lenten vespers of Forgiveness chanted this evening, we shall hear the sacred hymnographer urging us to "begin the time of fasting with joy, submitting ourselves to spiritual struggle" in preparing to welcome the great Passion and joyful Resurrection of our divine-human Lord.

Therefore, what is demanded is a joyful disposition in order to embrace fervently the spiritual struggle of this period of contrition in purification and prayerfulness. Fasting, abstinence, frugality, restriction of personal desires, intense prayer, confession, and similar ascetic elements are essential to the period of Great Lent and should not be considered burdensome obligations or unbearable duties that result in despondency or dejection. When doctors recommend diet or exercise as necessary prerequisites for psychosomatic health and vigor, the first advice they offer by way of a mandatory condition of success is a pleasant mental disposition, which includes smiling and positive thinking. The same also applies to the spiritual period of fasting that opens before us. Great Lent should be regarded as an invaluable divine gift. It is a sacred time of divine grace, which seeks to detach us from things material, lowly and corrupt in order to attract us toward things superior, wholesome and spiritual. It is a unique opportunity to remove from the soul every passion, to rid the body of everything superfluous, harmful and mortal. Accordingly, then, it is a time of immense rejoicing and gladness. A genuine feast and exhilaration!

Nevertheless, my beloved children, the fasting expected of us by the Church, as well as the abstinence, frugality, restriction of personal desires and unnecessary pleasures or expenses, literally constitute a prescription for salvation. This is especially true this year, when our world has experienced a global economic crisis, filled with imminent danger of bankruptcy not only for individuals and companies, but also for entire nations throughout the planet, with destructive consequences in skyrocketing unemployment, the creation of entire hosts of people plagued by poverty, depression, social turmoil, increase in crime, and other such tragedies. Great Lent instructs us to journey daily with a little less, without the arrogance of extravagance, waste and display. It encourages us to surrender all forms of greed and ignore the challenges of commercial advertising, which constantly promotes new and false necessities. It incites us to limit ourselves to what is absolutely essential and necessary in an attitude of dignified, deliberate simplicity. We are not to be a consuming or compulsive herd of thoughtless and heartless individuals, but a society of sensitive and caring persons, sharing with and supporting our "neighbor" that is in poverty or recession. Finally, Great Lent informs us about patience and tolerance in moments of smaller or larger deprivation, while simultaneously emphasizing the need to seek God's assistance and mercy, placing our complete trust in His affectionate providence. That is how Christ envisions Great Lent. That is how the Saints lived Great Lent. That is how the Church Fathers undertook the struggle of Great Lent. That is how our faith has traditionally understood Great Lent. That is how the Church of Constantinople, in its wide experience and unceasing vigilance, has always projected and proclaimed Great Lent, and particularly in the current global circumstances.

In sharing these pastoral thoughts and words from the historical and holy Phanar, we extend to all of you our paternal prayer and spiritual blessing for a fruitful journey through the period of Great Lent.

Holy and Great Lent 2010

† BARTHOLOMEW

Fervent supplicant before God

SCOBA Encyclical for Sunday of Cheesefare and Mission Sunday

STANDING CONFERENCE of the CANONICAL ORTHODOX
BISHOPS in the AMERICAS

February 14, 2010

Sunday of Cheesefare and Mission Sunday

*"The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few.
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest
to send out laborers into His harvest."* (Matthew 9:37-38)

**To the Most Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics and
The Devout Faithful of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the
Americas**

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

We greet you in the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Lenten fast that precedes the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha is upon us. Like the dawn of a new day, the beginning of this 40-day journey provides opportunities for us to recommit ourselves and our whole lives to Christ our God. **The Sunday before Great Lent, February 14th, 2010, is Mission Sunday** as designated by the hierarchs of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). Over the past two millennia, the work of making disciples has been a focal ministry of saints, and billions of people have accepted life in Christ. Today, sixty-six percent of the world's population is still non-Christian; thus missionary service remains a core ministry of the Church and a collective movement of the faithful.

Over the past 15 years, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), as the official missions agency of SCOBA, has provided the faithful of North America with opportunities to answer their call to make disciples of all nations. Over 70 people who serve as OCMC Ambassadors are taking this call to parishes across the country, and the mission

ministries of our Orthodox Churches that are outside of America are growing as a result.

Today, through the prayers and support of the faithful, there are 20 men and women who are serving, or preparing to serve, as long-term missionaries in places like Albania, Romania, and Tanzania. Likewise, young, growing seminaries around the world are receiving support to provide theological training to over 250 local priests, catechists, and ministry leaders in places where the Church is newly emerging. With assistance from OCMC's Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) Program, there are 400 priests in 19 countries who are bringing the Faith to those who may never have heard the Gospel's message of salvation. And, in 2010, OCMC plans to train and send over 100 Orthodox Christians from across North America to serve on 14 short-term Mission Teams, bringing a living witness to the Orthodox Faith in Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America, and Alaskan North America.

It is our responsibility to ensure that these efforts continue. There is no greater way to invest our abundant blessings than in the salvation and eternal life of others. Let us pray, give, and serve to welcome our brothers and sisters around the world into the open arms of Christ.

In urgent expectation of Christ's awesome Resurrection, let us work boldly to make disciples of all nations. Truly, *the harvest is plentiful*, but we need the prayers and active support of all the faithful for OCMC, so that laborers will answer the call of the Lord and enter into His abundant and glorious harvest.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

† Archbishop DEMETRIOS
Chairman
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of
America

† Metropolitan PHILIP
Vice Chairman
Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese Of North America

† Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER
Secretary

Serbian Orthodox Church in
North and South America

† Metropolitan NICHOLAS of
Amissos
Treasurer
American Carpatho-Russian
Orthodox Diocese in the USA

† Archbishop NICOLAE
Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese
in the Americas

† Metropolitan JOSEPH
Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox
Church

† Metropolitan JONAH
Orthodox Church in America

† Metropolitan CONSTANTINE
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the
USA

† Archpriest Alexander Abramov
Acting Representative of the
Moscow
Patriarchate in the USA

† Bishop ILIA of Philomelion
Albanian Orthodox Diocese of
America

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS ON THE BEGINNING OF GREAT AND HOLY LENT

My dearly beloved in the Lord,

As we gather together this Sunday for the Forgiveness Vespers, our Church is giving us the opportunity to start a different style of life, with a different focus. Our Church knows that changing our ways is difficult – it is a struggle. That is why we are given the tools of prayer, fasting, charity and repentance to enable us to build up a better relationship with God and with each other. In one of the hymns of Orthros on Sunday, we sing:

“The arena of virtues is open. Let all who are willing to compete enter, girding themselves. For those who genuinely compete will be deservedly crowned. Let us do battle with the enemy. Let us take on the armor of the Cross, having Faith as an invincible rampart, prayer as our breastplate, and charity as our helmet.”

All this so that we can center our lives more closely on Christ, so that we can experience His love and mercy and enter into Paradise. Because disobedience to our Lord and His teachings distances us from the Body of Christ, the Church, as Adam and Eve were disobedient to God in the Garden of Eden.

“Adam, as disobedient, was driven out of Paradise because he partook of food. Moses, cleansing the eyes of his soul through fasting, beheld God. If, therefore, we desire to dwell in Paradise, let us free ourselves from unnecessary foods. And, if we desire to see God, let us fast for forty days as did Moses.”

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, clergy and laity, let us not fool ourselves for the time is upon us. If we use this time wisely, if we use the tools

our Church provides, we will be able to find holy joy and blessings in this life while preparing for the next. As the hymnographer reminds us:

“The time has come for the beginning of spiritual struggles, for victory against the demons, for the armor of abstinence, the comeliness of angels, and confidence before God, or it was with this confidence that Moses communed with the Creator and heard the invisible voice. Deem us also worthy of this confidence, O Loving Lord, that we may worship Your Passion and Your Holy Resurrection.”

As we begin our Lenten Journey to Holy Pascha, as I am praying for you, I ask you to remember me in your prayers also. May Great and Holy Lent be a time of prayer, humility and reflection that will allow us to be spiritually uplifted and renewed. May the light of Christ illumine our darkness and fill our hearts with hope and love. With my paternal blessings and love during this special time in our Ecclesiastical Year, I wish you a Blessed Lent!

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS ON FASTING

“...I humbled myself with fasting; and my prayer would return to my own heart.” Psalm 35:13

My beloved,

At this time of year, we must do special things in relationship to our Church in order to approach our Lord. Already our Church has directed us in prayer, both reasons why we should pray and the way we should pray, but also to assist us in understanding that prayer is a way of life, not just an action. One way to do this is by fasting, not only because the person who fasts prays more, but most importantly thinks of his neighbor more. Practiced together, prayer and fasting will help us to become closer to God and to others by cultivating a lifestyle that is personally sacrificial.

Unfortunately today’s materialistic society doesn’t support or even recognize our human need for a relationship with our Creator and our fellow man. In our modern era, we have replaced the spiritual practice of “fasting” with the secular practice of “dieting”. Of course, we deny ourselves on a diet to improve our health or our appearance – which has nothing to do with the other part of our individual nature, our spiritual nature. Fasting improves our spiritual health, freeing us from the things of the world that hold us down.

Another aspect of fasting is thinking of others, sacrificing for others, and becoming meek and humble. In this way we can really live out the will of God,

and practice what our Lord Jesus Christ did after His Baptism, when He started His vocation of meeting people and bringing them the Good News of the New Covenant.

Fasting is not easy; indeed it is very difficult, combining obedience and self-denial. Unlike the rest of the year we can't eat what we want when we want, but rather we eat in the way our Church has guided us from the days of the Holy Apostles. Indeed our Church teaches us that there will be difficulties and obstacles as we strive to follow the path of fasting and prayer. Even our Lord was tempted as He fasted in the wilderness after his Baptism.

Our Lord fasted to set us an example of overcoming temptation. To be tempted is to be tested in fundamental ways, but also to show us that we can control our bodies instead of letting our bodies control us. We can overcome temptation by using the other tool – prayer.

Therefore if we really want this Pascha to be different from the past, we must practice, from our hearts and to the best of our ability, this beautiful way of ecclesiastical and spiritual life of fasting and prayer. This is what the Church offers to all Orthodox Christians.

I pray fervently that we may all receive abundant strength and wisdom from above to enable us to live the life of fasting and prayer and love for one another. Amen.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta



And on this *the three hundred and seventh* Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

Today is the 4th Sunday of the Triodion Period – *Great and Holy Lent begins tomorrow, February 15th.*

Sunday, February 14 (Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday –no dairy products after today for those seeking strict fast during Great Lent):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:15 a.m. Vespers of Forgiveness (*see handout*)
- 11:30 a.m. Philoptochos “Ladies Tea” Planning Meeting
- 11:45 a.m. Parish Council Meeting

Great and Holy Lent begins Monday, February 15th

Monday, February 15 (“Clean Monday” – “Kathara Deftera”):

- 6:00 p.m. Great Compline Service (*note earlier start time*)

Wednesday, February 17 (1st Wednesday of Great Lent):

- 6:00 p.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy
- 7:15 p.m. Community Lenten Dinner & Lenten Family Program (*Please bring fasting food to share and join us for our Family Lenten Program series that concludes each Wednesday by 8:30 p.m. For six consecutive weeks, we will focus on the book, Living the Beatitudes by Kyriaki and Thomas FitzGerald. You and your family are encouraged to attend.*)

Thursday, February 18:

- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Friday, February 19 (1st Friday of Great Lent):

- 7:00 p.m. Salutations to the Theotokos Service

Saturday, February 20 (Saturday of the Souls – Bring Kolyva):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service (Bring Kolyva)

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!