



WEEKLY BULLETIN

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

**The 39th Sunday after Pentecost,
March 14th, Tone 7, Matt. 25:31-46**

The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Para- dise of Bliss

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death! To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise! For the myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

Kontakion for Meatfare Sunday, Tone 6

Master, Teacher of Wisdom, Bestower of virtue, who teaches the thoughtless and protects the poor: strengthen and enlighten my heart. O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to Thee: have mercy on me, a transgressor, O Merciful Lord.

The Lenten Fast

The Lenten season is inaugurated in the Church with the words of the prophet Joel (Joel 2:15-17). The message is proclaimed in the midst of the congregation: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord".

On this Sunday the Holy Church focuses on the memory of the exile of our ancestral parents from paradise for disobedience and intemperance in order that through misfortune it more evidently emphasizes the importance of the presented ascetical effort for all, and in the loss of the blessedness of paradise it specifies a subject, worthy of repentance and tears.

The example of the ancestral parents shows us the whole weight of sin and its fatal consequences and teaches us to avoid intemperance as the beginning and the source of sin, and to turn to repentance, as to the unique means of deliverance from the anger and judgment of God.

"Adam was cast out", sings the Holy Church on this day, "from the sweetness of paradise, when with bitter desire he broke the commandment of the Master, and he was condemned to work the earth from which he himself had been taken, and then to eat his bread with much toil; therefore let us love abstinence, that we may not weep outside of paradise as he did, but enter into it"

"Let us keep the fast offering tears, contrition and alms",

"Let us still the passions of our soul, let us subdue the rebelliousness of the flesh";

"Girding ourselves for the good spiritual struggle of the fast" and "Taking up the armor of the cross, let us fight the enemy, having faith as an invincible wall, and prayer as a breastplate, and alms as a helmet, and fasting as a sword, which cuts away all evil from our heart";

With this tender, touching voice the Holy Church calls us as her children from the present day to forget everything that up to now occupied our thoughts and feelings and distracted them from "the one thing needful"; to reject everything from itself that serviced temptation and occasion for sin, that raised in us impure thoughts and feelings, that originated in us sinful desires and currents; to postpone for a while even our ordinary affairs and occupations, in so far as they soon distract our thoughts from a reverent deepening in our very selves, they irritate our heart with feelings of anger and envy, dreams of ambition and covetousness; to make itself thirsty for long prayerful vigils, fervent prayers and prostrations; to ignite in oneself an unshakable desire, voluntarily and vigilantly, thanking and glorifying the Lord to now enter the opening door of the saving fast, repentance and spiritual renewal; to kindle in itself a firm determination to pass the holy days of the fast fervently, reverently and joyfully. In the gospel and epistle readings, the Holy Church presents its final teachings about the spiritual efforts of the actual fast.

The Fast should begin with the forgiveness by the people of their trespasses and their rejection of the deeds of darkness consisting of an unfeigned fulfillment of the rules of keeping the fast and not to judge their neighbor. Reconciliation with all, the pardon and remission of all our transgressions, is the first, main and necessary condition of our reconciliation with God, cleansing and correcting our sins. Without this reconciliation with all, without this putting an end to mutual conflicts and en-

Announcements and Activities

Great Compline with the Great Canon of St. Andrew— Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, at 7PM. We encourage all to take advantage of this marvelous canon, which uses “examples” from both the Old and New Testament to encourage our repentance. Livestream, Tuesday and Thursday.

Presanctified Liturgy— Wednesday, at 6PM. Those desiring to receive Holy Communion should not eat or drink after their lunchtime meal.

Liturgy Commemorating the Miracle of St. Theodore— Blessed Koliva will be served after the Service. Saturday, 9AM.

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Coffee Hours— as you know, the Archbishop blessed us to have social hour outside— weather permitting. Please check the Coffee Hour list for your name and day. Here’s mine and council’s recommendation for the time being: let’s make it simple— bagels or croissants with margarine or jams and coffee. I say this because we are still serving and pouring with gloves and masks and it just makes it easy to set bread on a plate and to grab a cup of coffee. It also happens to fit with the Lenten rules. Remember, no meat, eggs, or dairy may be served at Coffee Hour until PASCHA on May 2nd. That includes such by-products as whipped cream, milk chocolate, sour cream, etc. The simpler the fare, the easier will be the service.

Back Indoors— up to 55 persons, masked and socially distanced. First-come, first-served. We will open the doors and employ the portico if numbers are too great.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. **Natalia**—Olga’s friend. Sunday’s brother, **Joe**, ill. **Chance**— Kerri’s nephew **Emory**—a young relative of Kirk and Kathy. **Linda**, Mary S.’s daughter. **Sarah**—the sister of John Deak

mity among us, it is impossible to draw near to the Lord. It is impossible even to begin the holy journey to Lent and repentance.

From here came a custom of Orthodox Christians to ask each other forgiveness, and is the same as when they go to the graves of the dead for this purpose and is why the day is called in popular speech forgiveness and farewell 1). It is self understood, that not only with our mouth, but also mainly with our heart we should utter a full, complete forgiveness not only for something which insults us, but also for all that is hateful and offends us, all that condemns and curses us, all that makes every evil for us. We should try to bow with true - Christian humility for reconciliation and for which the devil, according to his evil and slander, had the misfortune to offend us in word and deed. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: "We should not forgive one another only by words, but with a pure heart so that our memory of the evil will not turn the sword against us. Our having been offended will not cause us evil as much as we cause ourselves, feeding the anger in ourselves and exposing ourselves to condemnation by God for that. If we love those who offend us, then evil will be turned on its very head, and it will continue to suffer severely; but if we will be indignant, then we shall continue to suffer all the same even in spite of ourselves".

Taken from *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church

From the Lives of the Saints... THE VENERABLE BENEDICT

Benedict was born in the Italian province of Nursia in the year 480 A.D., of wealthy and distinguished parents. He did not remain long in school for he realized himself that through book-learning he could lose "the great understanding of his soul." He left school "an unlearned wise man and an understanding fool." He retreated to a monastery, where he was tonsured by the monk Romanus, after which he withdrew to a steep mountain, where he remained in a cave for more than three years in a great struggle with his soul. Romanus brought him bread and lowered it down the steep mountain on a rope to the opening of the cave. When Benedict became known in the vicinity, he withdrew from this cave in order to retreat from the glory of men. He was merciless toward himself. Once, when an unclean and raging passion of the flesh seized him, he removed all his clothes and rolled around naked in the thorns until he repelled every thought of a woman. God endowed him with many spiritual gifts: clairvoyance, healing, the expelling of evil spirits, the raising of the dead, and the ability to appear to others from a distance in visions and dreams. Once, Benedict perceived that a glass of wine served to him was poisoned. When he made the sign of the Cross over it, the glass burst. In the beginning he established twelve monasteries, and in each of them he placed twelve monks. Later he compiled the special "Benedictine" rule, which is followed even today in the Roman Church. On the sixth day before his death, he ordered that his grave, which had been prepared earlier, be opened, for the saint foresaw that his end was near. He assembled all the monks, counseled them, and then gave up his soul to the Lord, whom he had faithfully served in poverty and in purity. Scholastica, his sister by birth, lived in a convent, where, in imitation of her brother, she great subdued herself and reached a high state of spiritual perfection. When St. Benedict gave up his soul, two monks, one traveling on the road and one at prayer in a faraway cell, simultaneously saw the same vision. They saw a path extending from earth to heaven, covered with a precious woven fiber and illuminated on both sides by rows of men. At the head of the path, there stood a man of indescribable beauty and light, who said to them that this path was prepared for Benedict, favored by God. As a result of this vision, these two brothers learned that their good abbot had departed from this world. He reposed peacefully in the year 543 A.D. and entered into the Eternal Kingdom of Christ the King.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

“There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives” (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)