

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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SUNDAY, MARCH 24

First Sunday of Great Lent

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Forefeast of the Annunciation

Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

*When the stone had been sealed by
the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy
most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O
Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried
to Thee, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O
Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou
Who lovest mankind!”*

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 Thine own 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,
by coming to save the world.”*

Tone 4 Troparion (Forefeast)

*Today is the prelude of joy for the
universe!
Let us anticipate the feast and
celebrate with exultation:
Gabriel is on his way to announce
the glad tidings to the Virgin;
he is ready to cry out in fear and
wonder:
“Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is
with thee!”*

Tone 8 Kontakon (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

*O Master, Teacher of wisdom,
Bestower of virtue,
Who teachest the thoughtless and protectest 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!”*

Tone 8 Kontakon (Forefeast)

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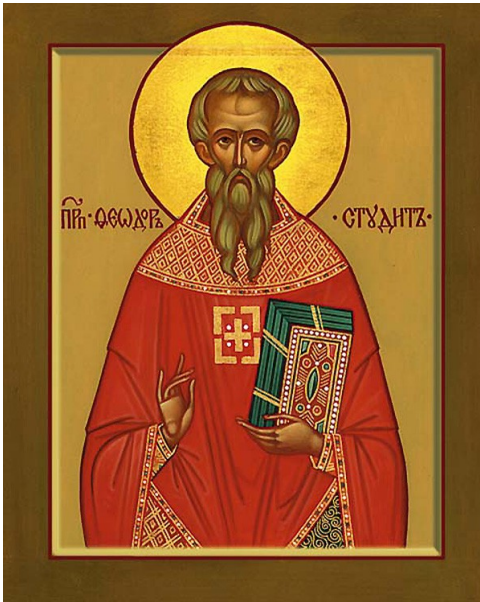
Tone 4 (Song of the Fathers)

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)*

The End of Iconoclasm



In 811, the Byzantine army, led by Emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811), was ambushed in Bulgaria, and the Emperor was killed in the devastating defeat. Not since Emperor Valens died at the hands of the Goths at Adrianople in 378 had a Byzantine emperor been killed in battle.

Two years later, a new line of imperial rulers emerged who once again attacked both the veneration and the venerators of the holy images. Again the icons were blamed for the various troubles of the Empire, especially the setbacks in warfare with the Bulgarians. Saint Theodore the Studite

In 815, Emperor Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820) ordered the icons in the churches to be placed above the reach of the faithful so that they could not be honored and kissed. Everyone in the Church knew that a second wave of persecution against the icons and their venerators was starting. In defiance of the order, on Palm Sunday in 815, Saint Theodore the Studite (759–826), the

abbot of the great Studion Monastery in Constantinople, led a public procession with the holy icons. For this he was sent into exile. He would be the main theological champion of the icons during the second wave of Iconoclasm, through his important work entitled *On the Holy Icons*.

Persecution of the Iconodules was as fierce at times during the next twenty-seven years as it had been in the previous century. Not until 842 was the persecution brought to an end. And just as it was a woman—Empress Irene—who ended the first wave of Iconoclasm after coming to the throne upon the death of her husband, Emperor Leo IV the Khazar (r. 775–780), as regent for their son who was too young to rule, so again it is a woman—Empress Saint Theodora—who brings the second wave of persecution against the icons to an end when she comes to the throne upon the death of her husband, Emperor Theophilus (r. 829–842), to rule as regent for their young son Michael III.

Empress Theodora worked quickly to restore the icons. In March of 843, John the Grammarian, Iconoclastic Patriarch of Constantinople and advisor to Emperor Theophilus, was deposed and replaced with Methodius, who had spent seven years in prison for his defense of the icons. And immediately, at a local council in Constantinople, the icons were restored, and a huge, triumphant procession with the holy images took place on the first Sunday of Great Lent in that year—March 11, 843. This great event, known as the Triumph of Orthodoxy, has been celebrated ever since in the Orthodox Church on the first Sunday of Great Lent—known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy.



The Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter 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. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward.

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.

Letra e Apostull Pavlit drejtuar Hebrenjve 11:24-26, 32-40

Me anë të besimit Moisiu, si u bë i madh, mohoi të quhej i biri i së bijës së Faraonit; sepse zgjodhi më tepër të heqë keq bashkë me popullin e Perëndisë, se të ketë kënaqësi mëkati për pak kohë; duke numëruar poshtërimin e Krishtit për pasuri më të madhe se thesarët në Egjipt; sepse shikonte në shpërblimin. Edhe ç'të them më? Sepse nuk do të më arrijë koha të tregoj për Gedeonin, për Barakun e Samsonin, edhe Jeftaenë, për Davidin e Samuilin dhe profetët, të cilët me anë të besimit mundën mbretëri, punuan drejtësi, fituan premtime, mbyllën gojë luanësh, shuan fuqinë e zjarrit, shpëtuan nga tehu i thikës, morën fuqi nga dobësitë, u bënë të fortë në luftë, thyen ushtritë e të huajve. Gra morën të vdekurit e tyre të ngjallur; edhe të tjerë u munduan, sepse nuk pranuan shpëtimin, që të fitonin një ngjallje më të mirë. Edhe të tjerë u provuan me të përqeshura e me të rrahura, po edhe me të lidhura e me burgime. U vranë me gurë, u sharruan më dysh, u nganë, vdiqën të vrarë prej shpate; endeshin lart e poshtë veshur me lëkurë dhensh, e me lëkurë dhish, në nevojë, në shtrëngime, në keqtrajtime, ata për të cilët bota nuk ishte e denjë; – duke u endur nëpër shkretëtira e nëpër male e nëpër shpella e nëpër vrimat e dheut. Edhe këta të gjithë, ndonëse morën dëshmi të mirë me anë të besimit, nuk morën premtimin, sepse Perëndia pati urdhëruar që përpara një gjë më të mirë për ne, që të mos bëhen të përsosur pa ne.

К Евреям 11:24-26, 32-40

Верою Моисей, придя в возраст, отказался называться сыном дочери фараоновой, и лучше захотел страдать с народом Божиим, нежели иметь временное греховное наслаждение, и поношение Христово почел большим для себя богатством, нежели Египетские сокровища; ибо он взирал на воздаяние. И что еще скажу? Недостанет мне времени, чтобы повествовать о Гедоне, о Вараке, о Самсоне и Иеффае, о Давиде, Самуиле и (других) пророках, которые верою побеждали царства, творили правду, получали обетования, заграждали уста львов, угашали силу огня, избегали острия меча, укреплялись от немощи, были крепки на войне, прогоняли полки чужих; жены получали умерших своих воскресшими; иные же замучены были, не приняв освобождения, дабы получить лучшее воскресение; другие испытали поругания и побои, а также узы и темницу, были побиваемы камнями, перепиливаемы, подвергаемы пытке, умирали от меча, скитались в милотях и козых кожах, терпя недостатки, скорби, озлобления; те, которых весь мир не был достоин, скитались по пустыням и горам, по пещерам и ущельям земли. И все сии, свидетельствованные в вере, не получили обещанного, потому что Бог предусмотрел о нас нечто лучшее, дабы они не без нас достигли совершенства.

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. *(Ps. 98:6)*

V. They called to the Lord and He answered them. *(Ps. 98:7a)*

✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

The Gospel According to 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."

Ungjilli Sipas Joanit 1:43-51

Edhe e pruri tek Jisui. Edhe Jisui hodhi sytë mbi të, edhe tha: Ti je Simoni, i biri i Jonait. Ti do të quhesh Qefa, që përkthehet Pjetër (gur). Të nesërmen Jisui deshi të dalë në Galile; edhe gjen Filipin e i thotë: Eja pas meje. Edhe Filipi ishte nga Betsaida, nga qyteti i Andreas dhe i Pjetrit. Filipi gjen Nathanailin, edhe i thotë: Kemi gjetur atë për të cilin shkroi Moisiu në ligj, edhe profetët, Jisuin, të birin e Josifit nga Nazareti. Edhe Nathanaili i tha: A mund të dalë ndonjë gjë e mirë nga Nazareti? Filipi thotë: Eja dhe shih. Jisui pa Nathanailin duke ardhur drejt tij, edhe thotë për të: Ja një Izraelit i vërtetë, tek i cili nuk ka gënjeshtër. Nathanaili i thotë: Nga më njeh? Jisui u përgjigj e i tha: Para se të të thërrasë Filipi, të pashë kur ishe nën fik. Nathanaili u përgjigj e i thotë: Rabbi, ti je Biri i Perëndisë, ti je mbreti i Izraelit. Jisui u përgjigj e i tha: Sepse të thashë që të pashë nën fik beson? Do të shohësh më të mëdha se këto.

От Иоанна 1:43-51

На другой день [Иисус] восхотел идти в Галилею, и находит Филиппа и говорит ему: иди за Мною. Филипп же был из Вифсаиды, из [одного] города с Андреем и Петром. Филипп находит Нафанаила и говорит ему: мы нашли Того, о Котором писали Моисей в законе и пророки, Иисуса, сына Иосифова, из Назарета. Но Нафанаил сказал ему: из Назарета может ли быть что доброе? Филипп говорит ему: пойд и посмотри. Иисус, увидев идущего к Нему Нафанаила, говорит о нем: вот подлинно Израильтянин, в котором нет лукавства. Нафанаил говорит Ему: почему Ты знаешь меня? Иисус сказал ему в ответ: прежде нежели позвал тебя Филипп, когда ты был под смоковницею, Я видел тебя. Нафанаил отвечал Ему: Равви! Ты Сын Божий, Ты Царь Израилев. Иисус сказал ему в ответ: ты веришь, потому что Я тебе сказал: Я видел тебя под смоковницею; увидишь больше сего. И говорит ему: истинно, истинно говорю вам: отныне будете видеть небо отверстым и Ангелов Божиих восходящих и нисходящих к Сыну Человеческому.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following)

Hymn to the Theotokos

*All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a Child:
our God before the ages.
He made thy body into a throne,
and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace.
Glory to thee!*

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! (*Ps. 32:1*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. There is a painting of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century. The Council of Toledo in 656 mentions the Feast, and the Council in Trullo in 692 says that the Annunciation was celebrated during Great Lent.

The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as “good tidings.” This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The background of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of Saint Luke (1:26-38). The troparion describes this as the “beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery,” for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man.

There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God’s promise to send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15): “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel.” The Fathers of the Church understand “her seed” to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled.

We see this echoed in the Liturgy of Saint Basil, as well: “When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself.”

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to Saint Joseph: “Hail, thou who art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

In contrast to Eve, who was readily deceived by the serpent, the Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel’s message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature.

Then said Mary unto the angel, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34).

“And the angel answered and said unto her, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.’ And Mary said, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.’ And the angel departed from her.” (Luke 1: 35-38)

In his Sermon 23 on the day of the Annunciation, Saint Philaret of Moscow boldly stated that “the word

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		
<p>Newly Departed Matthew Newly Departed Benjamin</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>March 10-16</i></p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u> Llukan Dylgjeri – health Tina Murianka - Health</p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><i>Today</i> Hebrews 11:24-26,32-40 John 1:43-51</p> <p><i>Monday</i> Hebrews 2:11-18 Luke 1:24-38</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Nina, Sophia, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Llukan, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell, Christina, Anastasia, Mary, Martin, Elena, Tatiana, Lauren, Tracy, Anita, Sandi, Anibal, Kakha, Christina,</p>		<p><i>Tuesday</i> Isaiah 5:7-16 Genesis 4:8-15 Proverbs 5:1-15</p> <p><i>Wednesday</i> Isaiah 5:16-25 Genesis 4:16-26 Proverbs 5:15-6:3</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>The community of Ss. Peter & Paul Miami, Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Marsha, Ann, Lilly, Stephen, Gela, Gabriel Joseph, Lombrino, Kondakciu, Diana, Tyler</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish in these places, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><u>March</u> 17 24 31</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><i>Thursday</i> Isaiah 6:1-12 Genesis 5:1-24 Proverbs 6:3-20</p> <p><i>Friday</i> Isaiah 7:1-14 Genesis 5:32-6:8 Proverbs 6:20-7:1</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> Hebrews 3:12-16 Mark 1:35-44</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Mar 10: 2 Samuel 5-8 Mar 11: 2 Samuel 9-12 Mar 12: 2 Samuel 13-16 Mar 13: 2 Samuel 17-20 Mar 14: 2 Samuel 21-24 Mar 15: 1 Kings 1-4 Mar 16: 1 Kings 5-8</p>

WHAT TO DO AFTER PRAYER?

On Fasting and Prayer. Part 2/4

St. Justin (Polyansky) of Ufa and Menzelinsk

Every true Christian must always remember and never forget that he needs to be united with the Lord and Savior with his whole being—we must allow Him (the Lord) to dwell in our hearts and minds; we must learn to live His all-holy life. He received our flesh, and we must receive His flesh and All-Holy Spirit—receive and keep them forever. Only such a union with our Lord will bring us that peace and favor, that light and life that we lost in the first Adam and is now being returned to us in the face of the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. And for such a union with the Lord, after the Communion of His Body and Blood, the best and most reliable means is the noetic Jesus Prayer, which is as follows: “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!”

Many Holy Fathers teach us this prayer in various ways. St. John Climacus says:

Strive to enclose your mind in the words of the Jesus Prayer—pray aloud and with your mind, and attentively: The heart cannot but participate in attentive prayer. Thus, whoever prays in this way will pray with his mouth, mind, and heart. And succeeding in prayer, he will acquire the prayer of the heart and nous [or mind], drawing Divine grace to himself.

This method of St. John of Climacus is the simplest, the most comprehensible, and the best.

Among our Russian ascetics, St. Nilus of Sora counsels silence of thought—not thinking about anything during prayer, be it good or bad. Instead of any thought, he directs us to constantly gaze into the depths of the heart and say: “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” You can pray, according to the teaching of St. Nil of Sora, whether standing, sitting, or lying down, without constraining the body so the spirit might freely act in it, only holding your breath so that you breathe quietly and infrequently.¹

Fr. Seraphim of Sarov advises beginners to continually practice the Jesus Prayer. When praying, he says, take heed to yourself, that is, gather the mind and unite it with the soul. At first, for a day or two or more, say this prayer only with the mind, separately, paying special attention to every word. When the Lord warms your heart with the warmth of His grace and unites you into one spirit, then this prayer will unceasingly flow within you and will ever be with you, delighting and nourishing you. At first you should say the Jesus Prayer with your voice, that is, with your mouth, tongue, and speech—audible to yourself. When the mouth, tongue, and senses are sated with prayer pronounced aloud, then audible prayer ceases and it begins to be pronounced in a whisper.

“Then,” says the holy Russian Monk Dorotheos,² “the prayer of the heart and mind will begin to move of its own accord, to work unceasingly, circulating and acting, at any time, during any work, in any place.” In order not to get lost in the various methods and definitions of the Jesus Prayer, it’s enough to follow these teachers: St. John Climacus, St. Nilus of Sora, Fr. Seraphim of Sarov, and Dorotheos. So, whether you’re standing, sitting, walking, or lying down, train your thoughts to detach from everything, silence your mind (St. Nilus of Sora); take heed to yourself, gather the mind and unite it with the soul. At first, for a day or two or more, say this prayer only with the mind, separately, paying special attention to every word (St. Seraphim of Sarov); strive to enclose your mind in the words of the Jesus Prayer—pray aloud and with your mind, and attentively, with the participation of the heart (St. John Climacus); first say the prayer aloud to yourself, then in a whisper, and learn to say it with your mind (Dorotheos).

Based on all that has been said about the Jesus Prayer, we can form an idea of its praxis. “When you inhale, say: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,’ and thus mentally bring the Lord into your heart; and when you exhale, continue: ‘have mercy on me, a sinner!’ and thus mentally expel your sinfulness by the name

of the Savior.” This method of reciting the Jesus Prayer is the easiest to learn, and it can be prayed day and night.

What is the prayer rope? What does it mean? The prayer rope we carry reminds us of our duty to pray the Jesus Prayer without ceasing; but it also serves as an aid in counting prayers, especially when reading the rule of St. Pachomius the Great,³ which calls for 1,200 Jesus Prayers during the day and 1,200 at night—2,400 in total, with 100 prayers an hour.

Is the Jesus Prayer necessary for the laity as well—not just for monastics? It is absolutely necessary, because every Christian, as was said at the beginning of this teaching, must be united with the Lord in his heart: And the best means for this connection is the Jesus Prayer.
Amen.

¹ Other Russian Fathers, such as St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov), caution, however, that practicing the Jesus Prayer in this way, with special breathing, can be harmful without an experienced guide, or spiritual father.—OC.

² The Flower Garden of the Holy Monk Dorotheos is a monument of ancient Russian writing from the beginning of the seventeenth century, which is a guide to monastic life.—Trans.

³ <https://www.saintjonah.org/services/stpachomius.htm>

St. Justin (Polyansky) of Ufa and Menzelinsk
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<https://orthochristian.com/157714.html>



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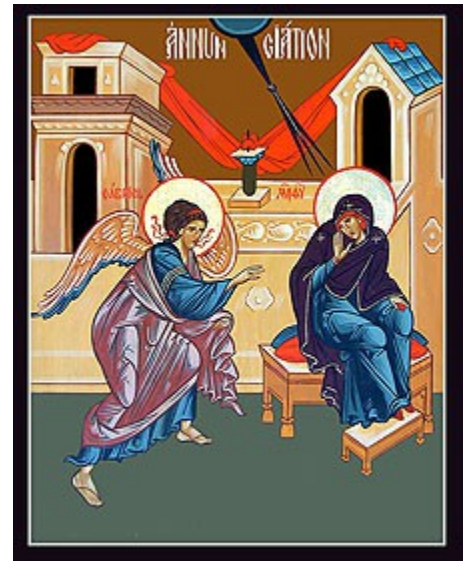
of the creature brought the Creator down into the world.” He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God’s will, but also involves the Virgin’s free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God’s will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.

The icon of the Feast shows the Archangel with a staff in his left hand, indicating his role as a messenger. Sometimes one wing is upraised, as if to show his swift descent from heaven. His right hand is stretched toward the holy Virgin as he delivers his message.

The Virgin is depicted either standing or sitting, usually holding yarn in her left hand. Sometimes she is shown holding a scroll. Her right hand may be raised to indicate her surprise at the message she is hearing. Her head is bowed, showing her consent and obedience. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon her is depicted by a ray of light issuing from a small sphere at the top of the icon, which symbolizes heaven. In a famous icon from Sinai, a white dove is shown in the ray of light.

There are several famous icons of the Annunciation. One is in the Moscow Kremlin in the church of the Annunciation. This icon appeared in connection with the rescue of a prisoner by the Mother of God during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Another is to be found in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow (July 8). It was originally located in Ustiug, and was the icon before which Saint Procopius the fool (July 8) prayed to save the city from destruction in 1290. One of the most highly revered icons in Greece is the Tinos icon of the Annunciation (January 30).

The Annunciation falls during Lent, but it is always celebrated with great joy. The Liturgy of Saint Basil or Saint John Chrysostom is served, even on the weekdays of Lent. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).



SUNDAY EVENING
LENTEN VESPERS SCHEDULE 2024
ALL SERVICES ARE SCHEDULED FOR 4:00 PM

- 1 st Sunday (24 Mar) St Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia PA 8598 Verree Road, 19111
- 2 nd Sunday (31 Mar) Holy Trinity Church, Wilmington DE 808 N. Broom Street, 19806
- 3 rd Sunday (07 Apr) St Vladimir Church, Trenton NJ 812 Grand Street, 08610
- 4 th Sunday (14 Apr) Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown PA 1236 Juniper Street, 19464
- 5 th Sunday (21 Apr) St Nicholas Church, Elkins Park PA 506 Stahr Road, 19027

PAN-ORTHODOX CLERGY BROTHERHOOD OF PHILADELPHIA

March/April Events

March

- 27 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
- 29 – 7:30am Matins
- 31 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
4:00pm Lenten Vespers (*see schedule*)

April

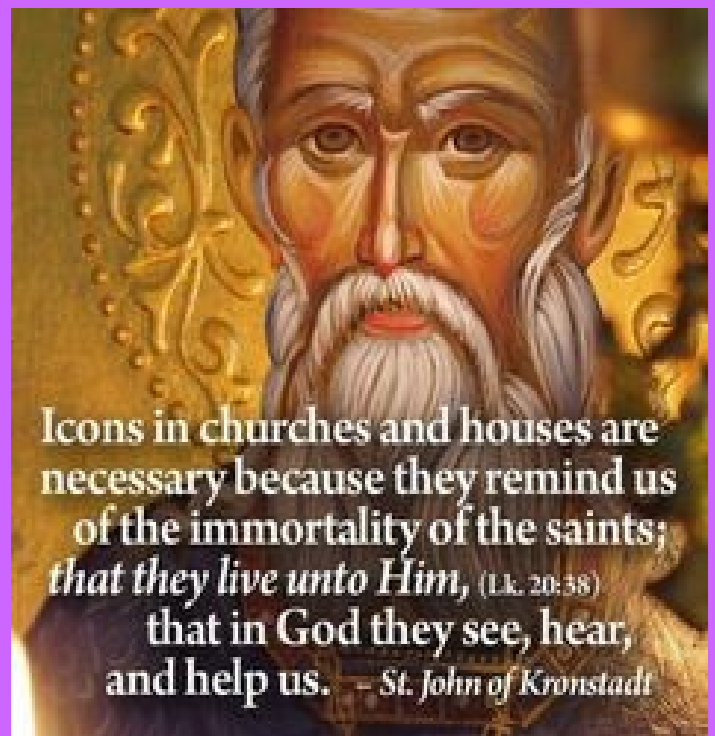
- 03 – NO SERVICES
- 05 – NO SERVICES
- 07 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
4:00pm Lenten Vespers (*see schedule*)
- 10 – 12:00pm Sixth Hour
6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
- 12 – 7:30am Matins
- 14 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
4:00pm Lenten Vespers (*see schedule*)
- 17 – 12:00pm Sixth Hour
6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
- 19 – 7:30am Matins
- 21 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
4:00pm Lenten Vespers (*see schedule*)
- 24 – 12:00pm Sixth Hour
6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
- 26 – 7:30am Matins
- 28 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy (*Palm Sunday*)

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxhurcho1810>

Want to donate by Venmo?

St Peter St Paul Alb Orth Ch James Schaeffer



Our Freedom to Choose

We are not Compelled to Love God

We are not compelled to love God, having been created with free will. God does not, nor can He, compel His creatures to love Him. Mutual love requires, by its very nature, freedom to either respond in love, or not. Yet when we respond to God's love with love His mercy leads us into holiness, for entering into this relationship with our Creator transforms us, changes us. When we respond to God's offer to commune with Him, He changes us into His likeness. We were meant from the beginning to be in His image and likeness and our positive response to the invitation to enter into divine communion leads to holiness. Like Saint Paul we can say that whatever good we do is Christ in us. We can do nothing good without God's grace, which is why Saint John Chrysostom tells us, "faith's workings themselves are a gift of God, lest anyone should boast." No man can call Jesus the Christ but by the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith implants in us the grace to do good works. Can good works save us? No! God's mercy and grace saves us.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (James 1:17)

Our Christian vocation is to acquire holiness (become whole), something that can only take place by the power of the Holy Spirit. Faith by itself, without good works, is indeed dead. Yet good works can only be done with God's grace (Christ in us).

If we claim Christ to be our Savior yet have no love in us and do no good works, we delude ourselves, thinking we have Christ when in reality we simply have religion. Religion is dead, but Christ in us is alive! Works don't save us, Christ saves us. Good works are a sign that we are being transformed, made holy, because Christ dwells in our hearts. Anything good we do is because Christ is in us, and His grace abounds.

Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

<https://abbottryphon.com/our-freedom-to-choose/>

"Each March we mark two important occasions in the history of our diocese, days of note drawn from our spiritual ancestry: 13 March 1965 as the date of repose, the falling asleep in the Lord, of our first hierarch, the ever-memorable Theophan (Noli) and 22 March 1908 as the Sunday on which the first ever Divine Liturgy was offered in the Albanian tongue, intoned and prayed in Boston, Massachusetts by Noli and by the faithful founders of what would become this archdiocese.

I have instructed your fathers, the pastors of our parishes, to offer additional prayers at the close of Liturgy on the Sunday before the Feast of the Annunciation, hoping that this may become an annual tradition, a yearly opportunity for thanksgiving and earnest recommitment of ourselves and our communities to a shared purpose as one diocesan family. Additionally, I have asked that your pastors institute a practice on this same day of offering memorial prayers following the Liturgy for all of our departed diocesan hierarchs and for the priests and priftëresha who so faithfully served our local parishes. "

This is a quote from His Grace, our Bishop Nikodhim. While our church building was closed on Sunday, March 24, we will remember these two events and the priests and hierarchs who have served this parish and archdiocese on Sunday March 31 with the special remembrances and prayers requested by His Grace.