

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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Rev. Nicholas Dellermann – Rector (860-861-7468)

SUNDAY, APRIL 2

Fifth Sunday of Great Lent

St. Mary of Egypt

TONE 1

**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 8
Kontakion
(St. Mary of Egypt)**

*The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Mother,
for thou didst take up the Cross and follow Christ.*

*By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for
it passes away;*

but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.

*Therefore thy spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with
the angels.*

**Tone 1
Kontakion
(Resurrection)**

*As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Thyself.*

*Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has
vanished.*

Adam exults, O Master!

*Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to
Thee:*

“Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

**Tone 3
Kontakion
(St. Mary of Egypt)**

*Having been a sinful woman,
thou becamest through repentance a bride of Christ.*

*Having attained angelic life,
thou didst defeat demons with the weapon of the Cross.*

*Therefore, O most glorious Mary, thou art a bride of the
Kingdom.*

Prokeimenon

Tone 1 (Resurrection)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee! *(Ps. 32:22)*

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just! *(Ps. 32:1)*

Tone 4 (St. Mary of Egypt)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. *(Ps. 67:35a)*

Hebrews 9:11-14

(Epistle)

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Galatians 3:23-29

(Epistle, Saint)

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Hebrenjve 9:11-14

Por si erdhi Krishti, kryeprifti i të mirave të ardhshme me anë të tendës më të madhe e më të përsosur, që s'është bërë me dorë, domethënë, që s'është prej këtij krijimi. As me anë gjaku cjepësh e viçash, po me anë të gjakut të tij hyri një herë e përgjithmonë në Shenjtëroren e Shenjtëroveve, edhe fitoi shpërbllim të përjetshëm. Sepse në qoftë se gjaku i demave e i cjepëve, edhe hiri i mëshqerrës që spërkat të ndoturit, shenjtëron për pastrimin e mishit, sa më tepër gjaku i Krishtit, i cili me anë të Frymës së përjetshme i blatoi veten e tij pa njollë Perëndisë, do të pastrojë ndërgjegjen tuaj nga punë të vdekura, që t'i shërbeni Perëndisë së gjallë?

Galatianeve 3:23-29

Edhe përpara se të vinte besimi, ruheshim nën ligj, të mbyllur brenda në besimin, i cili ishte për t'u zbuluar. Prandaj ligji u bë mësuesi ynë në Krishtin, që të drejtësohemi prej besimit. 25 Por si erdhi besimi, nuk jemi më nën mësues. Sepse të gjithë ju jeni bij të Perëndisë me anë të besimit që është në Krishtin Jisu. Sepse sa u pagëzuar në Krishtin, në Krishtin u veshët. Nuk ka më Jude as Grek; nuk ka më shërbëtor, as të lirë; nuk ka më mashkull e femër; sepse ju të gjithë jeni në Krishtin Jisu. Edhe në jeni ju të Krishtit, atëherë jeni farë e Abrahamit dhe trashëgimtarë sipas premtimit.

Church Lectionary

Today

Hebrews 2:11-18
Luke 1:24-38
Hebrews 6:13-20
Mark 9:17-31

Monday

Isaiah 37:33-38:6
Genesis 13:12-18
Proverbs 14:27-15:4

Tuesday

Isaiah 40:18-31
Genesis 15:1-15
Proverbs 15:7-19

Wednesday

Isaiah 41:4-14
Genesis 17:1-9
Proverbs 15:20-16:9

Thursday

Isaiah 42:5-16
Genesis 18:20-33
Proverbs 16:17-17:17

Friday

Isaiah 45:11-17
Genesis 22:1-18
Proverbs 17:17-18:5

Saturday

Hebrews 9:1-7
Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 8:27-31

Reading the Bible in a Year

Mar 19: 1 Kings 18-22
Mar 20: 2 Kings 1-4
Mar 21: 2 Kings 5-8
Mar 22: 2 Kings 9-12
Mar 23: 2 Kings 13-16
Mar 24: 2 Kings 17-20
Mar 25: 2 Kings 21-25

К Евреям 9:11-14

Но Христос, Первосвященник будущих благ, придя с большею и совершеннейшею скиниею, нерукотворенною, то есть не такового устройства, и не с кровью козлов и тельцов, но со Своею Кровию, однажды вошел во святилище и приобрел вечное искупление. Ибо если кровь тельцов и козлов и пепел телицы, через окропление, освящает оскверненных, дабы чисто было тело, то кольми паче Кровь Христа, Который Духом Святым принес Себя непорочного Богу, очистит совесть нашу от мертвых дел, для служения Богу живому и истинному!

К Галатам 3:23-29

А до пришествия веры мы заключены были под стражею закона, до того [времени], как надлежало открыться вере. Итак закон был для нас детоводителем ко Христу, дабы нам оправдаться верою; по пришествии же веры, мы уже не под [руководством] детоводителя. Ибо все вы сыны Божии по вере во Христа Иисуса; все вы, во Христа крестившиеся, во Христа облеклись. Нет уже Иудея, ни язычника; нет раба, ни свободного; нет мужеского пола, ни женского: ибо все вы одно во Христе Иисусе. Если же вы Христовы, то вы семя Авраамово и по обетованию наследники.

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me. *(Ps. 17:48)*

V. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. *(Ps. 17:51)*

Tone 1

V. I waited patiently for the Lord; He attended to me and heard my supplication. *(Ps. 39:1)*



Mark 10:32-45

(Gospel)

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Luke 7:36-50

(Gospel, Saint)

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."



Markut 10:32-45

Edhe ishin në udhë duke u ngjitur në Jerusalem; edhe Jisui ishte duke shkuar përpara tyre, edhe ata çuditeshin, edhe vinin prapa duke pasur frikë. Edhe ai mori pranë përsëri të dymbëdhjetët, edhe zuri t'u thotë ato që do t'i ngjanin atij, se ja tek po ngjitemi në Jerusalem, edhe i Biri i njeriut do t'u dorëzohet kryepërfetërinjve dhe shkruesve, edhe do ta gjykojnë për vdekje, edhe do t'ua dorëzojnë kombeve; edhe do ta përqeshin, edhe do ta fshikullojnë, edhe do ta pështyjnë, edhe do ta vrasin, edhe të tretën ditë do të ngjallet. Dhe atëherë vijnë tek ai Jakovi dhe Joani, të bijtë e Zevedheut, duke thënë: Mësues, duam të na bësh atë që të kërkojmë. Edhe ai u tha atyre: Ç'doni t'ju bëj unë juve? Edhe ata i thanë: Jepna të rrimë njëri nga e djathta jote dhe njëri nga e majta jote, në lavdinë tënde. Po Jisui u tha atyre: S'dini se ç'kërkoni. A mundeni të pini potirin që pi unë, edhe të pagëzoheni me pagëzimin që pagëzohem unë? Edhe ata i thanë: Mundemi. Edhe Jisui u tha atyre: Potirin, që pi unë, do ta pini, edhe me pagëzimin, që pagëzohem unë, do të pagëzoheni. Por të rrini nga e djathta ime e nga e majta ime, nuk është puna ime ta jap, po do t'u jepet atyre, për të cilët është bërë gati. Edhe të dhjetët kur dëgjuan, zunë të zemërohen për Jakovin dhe për Joanin. Por Jisui, si i thirri pranë, u thotë atyre: E dini se ata që i mbajnë për të parë të kombeve me forcë i zotërojnë ata, edhe të mëdhenjtë fort i shtypin. Por nuk do të jetë kështu ndër ju, po kush të dojë të bëhet i madh ndër ju, do të jetë shërbëtori juaj. Edhe kush të dojë prej jush të bëhet i parë, do të jetë shërbëtor i të gjithëve. Sepse edhe Biri i njeriut nuk erdhi të shërbehet, po të shërbejë, edhe të japë jetën e tij shpërblim për shumë.

Llukait 7:36-50

Edhe një nga Farisenjtë i lutej të hante bashkë me të; edhe ai hyri në shtëpinë e Fariseut dhe ndenji në tryezë. Edhe ja, një grua në atë qytet, e cila ishte mëkatore, kur mori vesh se kishte ndenjtur në shtëpinë e Fariseut, pruri një alabastër me miro. Edhe ndenji prapa pranë këmbëve të tij duke qarë, edhe zuri të lagte këmbët e tij me lot, edhe ia fshinte me flokët e kokës së saj, edhe puthte këmbët e tij, edhe ia lyente me miro. Edhe Fariseu që e kishte thirrur, kur pa, foli me veten e tij duke thënë: Ky po të ishte profet, do ta njihje cila dhe çfarë gruaje është ajo që e prek, se është mëkatore. Edhe Jisui iu përgjigj e i tha atij: Simon, kam diçka për të të thënë. Edhe ai i thotë: Mësues, thuaj. Një huadhënës kishte dy huamarrës; njëri i kishte detyrim pesëqind dinarë, edhe tjetri pesëdhjetë. Edhe pasi nuk kishin t'ia lanin, ua fali të dyve. Thuaj pra: Cili nga ata do ta dojë më tepër? Edhe Simoni u përgjigj e tha: Më duket se ai, të cilit i fali më të shumtat. Edhe ai i tha: Drejt gjykove. Edhe si u kthye nga gruaja, i tha Simonit: A e sheh këtë grua? Hyra në shtëpinë tënde, dhe ti nuk më dhe ujë për të larë këmbët; po ajo me lot më lagu këmbët, dhe me flokët kokës së saj i fshiu. Ti nuk më puthe; po ajo, që kur hyra, nuk pushoi së puthuri këmbët e mia. Ti me vaj nuk më leve kryet; po ajo me miro leu këmbët e mia. Prandaj po të them: Janë ndjerë mëkatet e saj të shumta, sepse deshi shumë. Por atij që i ndjehen pak, pak do. Edhe i tha asaj: Të janë ndjerë mëkatet. Edhe ata që kishin ndenjtur bashkë në tryezë zunë të thonë me veten e tyre: Cili është ky që edhe mëkate ndjen? Edhe ai i tha gruas: Besimi yt të shpëtoi; shko në paqe.

От Марка 10:32-45

Когда были они на пути, восходя в Иерусалим, Иисус шел впереди их, а они ужасались и, следуя за Ним, были в страхе. Подозвав двенадцать, Он опять начал им говорить о том, что будет с Ним: вот, мы восходим в Иерусалим, и Сын Человеческий предан будет первосвященникам и книжникам, и осудят Его на смерть, и предадут Его язычникам, и поругаются над Ним, и будут бить Его, и оплюют Его, и убьют Его; и в третий день воскреснет. [Тогда] подошли к Нему сыновья Зеведеевы Иаков и Иоанн и сказали: Учитель! мы желаем, чтобы Ты сделал нам, о чем попросим. Он сказал им: что хотите, чтобы Я сделал вам? Они сказали Ему: дай нам сесть у Тебя, одному по правую сторону, а другому по левую в славе Твоей. Но Иисус сказал им: не знаете, чего просите. Можете ли пить чашу, которую Я пью, и креститься крещением, которым Я крещусь? Они отвечали: можем. Иисус же сказал им: чашу, которую Я пью, будете пить, и крещением,

которым Я крещусь, будете креститься; а дать сесть у Меня по правую сторону и по левую--не от Меня [зависит], но кому уготовано. И, услышав, десять начали негодовать на Иакова и Иоанна. Иисус же, подзвав их, сказал им: вы знаете, что почитающиеся князьями народов господствуют над ними, и вельможи их властвуют ими. Но между вами да не будет так: а кто хочет быть большим между вами, да будем вам слугою; и кто хочет быть первым между вами, да будет всем рабом. Ибо и Сын Человеческий не для того пришел, чтобы Ему служили, но чтобы послужить и отдать душу Свою для искупления многих.

От Луки 7:36-50

Некто из фарисеев просил Его вкусить с ним пищи; и Он, войдя в дом фарисея, возлег. И вот, женщина того города, которая была грешница, узнав, что Он возлежит в доме фарисея, принесла алавастровый сосуд с миром и, став позади у ног Его и плача, начала обливать ноги Его слезами и отирать волосами головы своей, и целовала ноги Его, и мазала миром. Видя это, фарисей, пригласивший Его, сказал сам в себе: если бы Он был пророк, то знал бы, кто и какая женщина прикасается к Нему, ибо она грешница. Обратившись к нему, Иисус сказал: Симон! Я имею нечто сказать тебе. Он говорит: скажи, Учитель. Иисус сказал: у одного заимодавца было два должника: один должен был пятьсот динариев, а другой пятьдесят, но как они не имели чем заплатить, он простил обоим. Скажи же, который из них более возлюбит его? Симон отвечал: думаю, тот, которому более простил. Он сказал ему: правильно ты рассудил. И, обратившись к женщине, сказал Симону: видишь ли ты эту женщину? Я пришел в дом твой, и ты воды Мне на ноги не дал, а она слезами облила Мне ноги и волосами головы своей отёрла; ты целования Мне не дал, а она, с тех пор как Я пришел, не перестает целовать у Меня ноги; ты головы Мне маслом не помазал, а она миром помазала Мне ноги. А потому сказываю тебе: прощаются грехи её многие за то, что она возлюбила много, а кому мало прощается, тот мало любит. Ей же сказал: прощаются тебе грехи. И возлежавшие с Ним начали говорить про себя: кто это, что и грехи прощает? Он же сказал женщине: вера твоя спасла тебя, иди с миром.

(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)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	COFFEE HOUR
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i></p>		
<p>Newly-Departed Jonas, Newly Departed Evgeniy, David</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: 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>April 2 - 8</i> Eleni Demas (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Michael - health</p>	<p><u>April</u> 02 – Desloges Family 09 – David Lane 16 – Pascha Agape Meal 23 – Dellermann Family 30 – Hot Dog Sunday</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i></p>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Milorad, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Luke and his family, Natalia, Otari, Lasha</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. Often, people will donate these candles in honor of a loved one or along with special prayers. 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>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 style="text-align: center;"><i>Prayers In General</i></p>		
<p>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, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Juliya and the child to be born of her, Isaac, Jemima and the child to be born of her, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara</p>		
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p>		
<p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p> <p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for our spiritual well-being, • unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith, • commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name. <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Our Lenten Collection</p>	<p>Our church has been collecting funds for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center throughout Lent as a way for us to give and support something outside of ourselves. Through its many ministries, OCMC has shared the love of Christ offering a living witness of the Orthodox Christian Faith in more than 30 countries around the world. Each of these ministries works to build up the Church and help transform the lives of people who hunger and thirst for salvation through a vibrant Eucharistic life in Christ. Please keep this worthy cause in mind for donations during these final Sundays of the fast. Donations can be given to Donna Bacon, earmarked for the OCMC and given to Jim Schaeffer, or given to the Sunday School children when they come around for the collection during coffee hour.</p>

Sing For Joy!

March 30, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann once said, “The greatest charge against a Christian is that he has no joy.” Frankly, the normal Christian faith is incompatible with life without joy. It is specifically joy, regardless of the outward circumstances that should be the “normal” Christian life.



Now I know what you’re going to say: “But father, we will be accused of being unrealistic if we are joyful all the time.” Well, sure we will. But that shouldn’t keep us from a normal, joyful, Christian life. No, our faith isn’t meant to be subject to the darkness of the current society, but it is meant to stand in stark contrast to the joyless doubt and fear of a modern society that has actually lost its collective mind! Besides, the term “joy” doesn’t mean “giddy delusion.” “Joy” is the description of the soul that is untouched by the changing

external circumstances of life. “Joy” is the peace the Lord gives to His children to forever banish every other lesser “master” to control our inner peace. A joyful Christian is one who refuses to allow external troubles to disturb his inner peace!

Look at our lesson today in Isaiah 42:5-16:

Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: “I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the coastlands. The LORD goes forth like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes.

For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant. I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbage; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they know not, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground.

These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.

There is no greater expression of joy than singing. We do it all the time to celebrate a great event or just to share our feelings. Song is a gift from God to give voice to our hopes and dreams and even our fears. An old Orthodox expression says it best “He who sings, prays twice.” And singing flows from an inner place in our hearts. This alone should give us a hint about why song and music are so very powerful ways to form a person. Pay attention to what you pour in your ears because that ends up in your heart!

And here, the prophet Isaiah gives the motivation for joyous singing: God has not been silent or hidden. He has made Himself known and accessible to His creation. But He has done even more. God has reached out to His creation and given His creation the ability to know Him and be in communion with Him. AND He has given His people a ministry to serve in creation for the rest of the population. God has made a relationship with His people SO THAT they will be a guide and a light for the rest of the world. And His people are meant to be light and lead by first learning how to adore their Creator with joy!

No wonder Isaiah ends the passage with a cry of joy. He says he has been silent long enough. He has been restrained long enough. It's time to "cry out" like a woman giving birth; by leading the blind on the right path!

Of course, this is the normal result of finally coming to realize the treasure God has given to us in our precious faith. Once it dawns on a soul what God has given in this joyous Christian life, silence is no longer an option! In fact, Jesus says that if the People of God won't cry out then the rocks themselves will cry out praise to God!

But what really stops our joyful life is our unwillingness to confront actual repentance. And I always add that repentance IS NOT being simply sorry for breaking a rule, but it actually is a "changing" of our minds; changing the way we think! Hence, the annual focus in Orthodox Great Lent on the penitential canon of St. Andrew of Crete, and on this 5th Thursday of Great Lent we are called to confront this canon of prayers of repentance in a serious manner. Here's an excerpt from Song 2 of the Canon of St. Andrew: "I have sinned, O Savior, have mercy! Awaken my mind to conversion, accept me who repent, have compassion on me as I cry: Against You only have I sinned and acted lawlessly; have mercy on me." Notice, it says "awaken my mind to conversion. It is here where the spiritual war for your soul is won or lost; in your mind. And it is why the constant call to repentance is the forever work of reorienting your thinking to agree with God's thinking. IF you will actually repent, you will have joy!

Today, are you awake enough to realize the treasure you have in your relationship with God through Christ? Do you see how an eternal perspective makes joy possible? If not, perhaps it's time to take the blinders off and actually explore what it means to be Orthodox on Purpose!

My soul, my soul, arise! Wherefore do you slumber? The end is drawing nigh, and you shall be troubled. Arouse yourself, therefore, that Christ God may spare you; for He is everywhere present and filling all things. AMEN

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2023/03/sing-for-joy/>

The Greater Philadelphia Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood

invites everyone to attend the 2023
Lenten Vespers Services

**April 2
4:00pm**

**Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church
2300 W Huntington Dr, Wilmington, DE 19808**

**April 9
4:00pm**

**While not usually included with the Lenten Vespers, all are welcome to attend the service of Bridegroom Matins at
St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral
8598 Verree Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19115**

April Events

April

- 02 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
05 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
08 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy
Lazarus Saturday
09 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Palm Sunday
12 – 6:30pm Service of Holy Unction
13 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
6:30pm Matins with the 12 Gospel Readings
14 – 3:00pm Vespers
6:30pm Matins and Lamentations
15 – 9:30am Vespers and Divine Liturgy
PASCHA
11:30pm Midnight Office
24 – 12:00am Matins & Divine Liturgy
1:00pm Vespers of Pascha

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>



The Church is taking donations for flowers for Palm Sunday, Decorating the Tomb during Holy Week, and for Pascha.

Guidelines and Hints for Lent and Holy Week

Our Mother the Church offers us an amazing opportunity to change our lives for the better – to gain inner strength and peace and experience much spiritual joy. She does this by encouraging us to make use of three powerful spiritual weapons during the Great Fast, that of Prayer, Fasting and good works..

Regarding Prayer... if you look at the schedule of services for this week, you will see there are services every day and on Monday, both morning and evening. You will notice a again this year, the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete will be offered on Monday, Tues and Thurs Evenings which is a beautiful poetic hymn of repentance that serves as a wonderful diagnostic tool in helping us to see what areas of our life need attention. We sing some beautiful melodies and respond over and over, "Have Mercy on Me O God, Have Mercy on Me." And of course the beautiful Presanctified Liturgy on Wed and Friday evenings (fast at least 3 hours before) . And at home we have the opportunity to be stronger in our daily prayer life and in reading of the bible and spiritual books.

About Fasting... we must realize that without fasting, there is no Lent! To that end, the Fathers of the Church established in ancient times through their collective experience the guidelines for Lenten Fasting. **Essentially, the rule of the Church for Lent is to "Strict Fast" - abstaining from meat and dairy products from the First Monday of Lent until Pascha.** This time includes both Saturdays and Sundays, which in the Orthodox reckoning are considered a part of Lent, unlike the reckoning of the Western Churches. **All parishioners are wholeheartedly encouraged to partake of this practice as much as they are able.** On the other hand, the Fathers of the Church have also put forth that a light and steady rule that is kept is preferable to a difficult one that is soon broken and forgotten. **With the realization that not everyone is able to strict fast for the whole of Lent, one might consider simply fasting from meat. And if it is not possible to fast entirely from meat, perhaps fasting from meat during the weekdays of Lent, may be a more manageable discipline. It is suggested, as has been the practice of many in the Diocese over the years, that the following fasting discipline be observed as a minimum baseline upon which to build with each passing year: A strict fast from meat and dairy products on the first day of Lent, Good Friday and Holy Saturday and abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, and the entire Holy Week.** I encourage you to speak to me for guidance in determining a fasting regimen that makes sense for your personal and family life situation, that sufficiently challenges you, yet is not detrimental to ones physical and spiritual health. Please keep in mind the elderly and infirm are not bound by the physical fast. Also, fasting without increased prayer and acts of charity is merely a "diet" and will have no spiritual benefits. Make the most of the time, pray fast and help others and your church community. You will certainly be blessed! A beautiful Lenten Journey to All!