

Sunday, March 21, 2021

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1st Sunday in Great Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

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Sunday, March 21, 2021

1st Sunday in Great Lent – The Sunday of Orthodoxy

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – Tone 8. Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. James (Jacob, Iago) the Confessor, Bishop of Catania (8th-9th c.). St. Cyril, Bishop of Catania (1st-2nd c.). St. Thomas, Patriarch of Constantinople (1610).

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2021/03/21>

Notes from Fr. John: Two evening Liturgies this Coming Week

Dear Members and Friends of Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

This week, the second week of Great Lent, we will have two evening liturgies in our Parish, on Wednesday evening, and on Thursday evening. Even as we continue to work our way through the present COVID-19 public health crisis, we will serve these two Liturgies in-person at Church, observing our now well-established health safety precautions of health screening, masking, and social distancing.

Attendance at each of these two services will be limited to not more than 35 persons, total. **Pre-registration is required, and may be accomplished by informing me (Fr. John Hopko) that one wishes to attend.** Please, when pre-registering, be specific about which service (one or the other, or both) one plans to attend. We thank you for your cooperation.

Here is information about these two evening liturgies:

On Wednesday evening, March 24, beginning at 6:30 PM, as is customary on Wednesday evenings in Great Lent, we will serve the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts. The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is a solemn Lenten Vespers service, to which is added the distribution of Holy Communion from a portion (“Lamb”) of Holy Communion consecrated (“pre-sanctified”) at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the previous Sunday. This practice is followed in Great Lent because, except for certain specified feast days (such as, as we will see below, the Feast of the Annunciation), we do not serve the full, celebratory, Eucharistic Divine Liturgy on Lenten weekdays. Restricting ourselves from the privilege of serving the full Eucharistic Liturgy on Lenten weekdays is part of the Church’s ascetic effort during Great Lent. Nevertheless, the Church has blessed the distribution of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts during the week in Great Lent, using a less celebratory and more penitential order of evening liturgical worship (now called the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts), so that we can be strengthened by the reception of Holy Communion as we make our way through Great Lent. This distribution of Holy Communion on a Lenten weekday (usually only on Wednesday and Friday evenings) takes place at the end of the day, after a day of austere Lenten fasting. Indeed, we are meant to abstain entirely from food and drink the entire day before receiving the Pre-Sanctified Gifts in the evening, but, recognizing our weakness, this practice of abstinence is sometimes mitigated. However, for sure, if we are preparing to receive Holy Communion at an evening service, we should obtain from all food and drink for at least six hours in advance of the hour at which the service begins.

On Thursday evening, March 25, beginning at 6:30 PM, we will serve Festal Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom to mark the Feast of the Annunciation. The Feast of the Annunciation marks the day when, nine months before Christmas, the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the great feast days of the Church and, given the importance and joy of the feast, we celebrate the full Eucharistic Divine Liturgy with the consecration and distribution of the Holy Gifts (Holy Communion) taking place during the course of the Divine Liturgy, as it is served. Nevertheless, if March 25 falls on a Lenten weekday (as it most often does), the celebration of the Festal Vespers and Divine Liturgy is postponed to the very end of the liturgical day, and only takes place in the evening on March 25. Also, we abstain in preparation for this Liturgy, just as we do when preparing to serve the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts. That is, we abstain from all food and drink for at least six hours in advance of the hour at which the service begins. Thus, we combine a day of Lenten austerity, with, at the end of the day, permission to celebrate the Feast festively. Indeed, when we eat a meal after the conclusion of the Festal Vespers and Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Annunciation, there is a softening of the strictness of the fasting for that one meal. So, in this way, the Church finds balance on this day between the austere Lenten journey we are presently making, and the festive way in which we are looking ahead nine months (the time it takes baby to mature in the womb) to the Feast of Christmas, the Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. Such is the richness and wonderful intricacy of our Orthodox Christian liturgical life.

I hope and pray—recognizing all that we are doing here at Church to make it possible to gather safely, even as we continue to work our way through the present public health crisis—that we will prayerfully consider the possibility of attending the in-person liturgical services on one or the other (or even both) of the occasions this coming week when we will be gathering to celebrate one of the Church Liturgies.

There is much talk these days of restricting ourselves to participation only in that which is “essential.” As Christians, we must consider the practice of our Faith as being “essential,” and, thus, prayerfully consider making ourselves present in Church for the celebration of the Church’s liturgical services and in order to receive the saving sacrament of Holy Communion.

With love in Christ,

Fr. John H.

Archpriest John Hopko, Pastor

News and Notes

General Memorial Service (“Panikhida”), ONLINE: During Great Lent, we make a special effort to remember and pray for those who have departed this life, especially on each Friday evening and Saturday morning. Our usual custom here in our Parish (when not navigating our way through a public health crisis) is to serve Vespers on Friday evenings during Great Lent, and to include at the end of those Vespers services a brief memorial service for the departed. **This Great Lent, in our Parish, we will be gathering on Friday evenings, online, in a “virtual” setting, via video teleconference (“Zoom”), to memorialize and pray for the departed.** The necessary ZOOM link will be distributed using the Parish email group list, by which we usually communicate such things. Please watch for that link in your email inbox, or contact Fr. John for more details.

NO Bible Study this week, the second week of Great Lent: This week, Fr. John has evening commitments every weekday evening, so we will not have a Bible Study session. Bible Study will return soon. Check next week’s bulletin for an update.

NO Wednesday Morning Matins Services during Great Lent: During Great Lent, since we are planning to have Wednesday *evening* services, we will not be having Wednesday *morning* services.

Saturday, March 27, First Anniversary of Repose, Beverly Kuzmich: On Saturday, March 27, we will mark the first anniversary of repose of our sister-in-Christ, Beverly “Bev” Kuzmich. Weather permitting, that Saturday morning, March 27, at 11:30 AM, we will gather at her gravesite in the Parish Cemetery, and there we will sing a Memorial Service (“Panikhida”) in her memory. We will, also, remember John Kuzmich, Beverly’s husband, who entered repose on October 2, 2017. Memory Eternal!

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation “button” (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal’s fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Archpriest Vladimir Lecko—native of Terryville	d. 3/16/2021
Archpriest John Tkachuk—Fr. John’s uncle through marriage	d. 2/19/2021
Archpriest John Chupeck	d. 2/10/2021
Reader Stephen Bradford—once of the Willimantic Parish	d. 2/21/2021
Byron—uncle of a friend of the Parish	d. 2/26/2021
Job—victim of a freak accident; at request of Fr. John H.	d. 2/23/2021
Walter—uncle of a friend of the Parish	d. 2/20/2021
Kate—acquaintance of the Nimcheks; a tragic passing at a young age	d. 2/18/2021
George Giba—of the Waterbury Parish; once the Waterbury “sexton”	d. 2/17/2021

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Mildred Glowa	3/21/1997
Lyba Duke	3/23/1925
John Muchka	3/23/1970
Theodore Mychniow	3/24/1956
Anna LaRoche	3/24/1998
Myron (Miroslav) Toropilo	3/24/2002
Joanna Cefaratti	3/25/2012
Maria Hubchik	3/26/1946
Nicholas Maichak	3/26/1961
Martha Grabchuk	3/26/1965
Arlene Osuch	3/27/2011
Beverly Kuzmich	3/27/2020

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD’S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
 Archpriest Peter P.—former pastor in Waterbury; very unwell
 Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
 Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
 child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
 Darilyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
 Donna—Ann S.’s niece, Deb W.’s cousin; kidney disease
 Dayrl—Ann S.’s niece, Deb W.’s cousin; kidney disease
 JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
 MaryEllen—Louine K.’s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington’s Disease
 Yelena “Lenna” M.—overcoming, by God’s grace, serious health challenges
 Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
 Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage
 Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer
 Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support
 James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell

Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
 Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
 Michael “Mike” L.—ongoing health issues
 child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
 Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
 Paula—friend of Jim L.; struggling with cancer
 Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
 child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
 Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
 Thomas—Patty N.’s nephew; battling cancer
 Wayne—Donna O.’s father
 Sarah—a young woman for whom we have been asked to pray (D.B.)
 Vickie—a woman for whom we have been asked to pray
 Sam—Vickie’s husband, struggling with multiple health issues
 Richard—a man struggling with cancer, for whom we have been asked to pray
 Jody—Jacob J.’s father; recovering from significant back surgery
 Sue—acquaintance of the Hopkos; unwell and requiring prayers
 Helen—acquaintance of Helena G; in long-term care
 Candace—acquaintance of Helena G; in need of prayers
 Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recently injured in fall, now in PA with family
 Joanne—acquaintance of the Hopkos; slow recovery from recent illness
 Stephen—family member of a parishioner; quite ill and in need of prayers
 George K.—our fellow parishioner; unwell at this time
 Lorraine—friend of Joan M.; cancerous blood disease
 Joseph—friend of Jeanne M.; in need of prayers
 Joan—dear and close friend of Carolyn P.; back surgery
 Marcia—wife of newly departed Thomas M.
 Antonio—brother-in-law of a parishioner; suffering with COVID-19
 Joseph—prayed for at the request of Jeanne M.
 Elaine H.—recovering from hip replacement surgery; our fellow parishioner
 Dianna—Jennifer W.’s mother; suffering some health problems
 Wayne—prayed for at the request of Carolyn P.; upcoming surgery
 Thomas—fighting cancer; father of a friend of the Parish

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.’s brother; suffering permanent effects of stroke
 Dolores—Bob M.’s mother; resident in long-term eldercare

Expectant Mothers

Katherine and the child to be born of her—Fr. John’s nephew’s wife and her child

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Fr. James Parnell, Chaplain (MAJ)—deploying with the CT ARNG
 Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman (“medic”)
 Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
 Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John’s; U.S. Army officer and pilot
 Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
 Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
 Ian H.—Fr. David K.’s son-in-law; overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

Maria Luise Oraschewsky	3/21
Cynthia Belonick-Giuliano	3/21
John Nicholas (called Nicholas) Osuch	3/24

Pertaining to Great Lent

Preparation for the Reception of Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (which we, generally, celebrate on Wednesday evenings in Great Lent)

Most correctly described, the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is a solemn Lenten Vespers (evening) service, celebrated at the end of a day of strict Lenten abstinence, at which we receive, as the first food of the day, the divine and life-giving food that is the broken Body and spilled Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Holy Communion is the food that satisfies our deepest need for meaningful life in communion with God, our Heavenly Father.

The following paragraph is excerpted from the Introduction to the order of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as prepared and printed by the Department of Religious Education of the Orthodox Church in America:

“The evening reception of Communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is fulfilled after a day of prayer and fasting, with the total abstinence from food and drink at least from the early morning hours of the day. Some consider the taking of even light, Lenten food on the morning of the Presanctified Liturgy as a “lessening” of the discipline. Those who have fasted a whole working day in preparation for the evening participation in the Holy Sacraments, however, know the great difficulty of the effort, as well as the very special spiritual fruits it brings from God.”

In view of this teaching, each of us needs to make a prayerful and pious decision concerning how we ourselves are going to prepare for the reception of Holy Communion during the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. **The minimum fast for a healthy adult preparing to receive Holy Communion at the evening celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts should be complete abstinence from all food and drink (and, if you use it, from tobacco!) from 12:00 noon.** Others—children, seniors, those with medical issues, etc.—should fast before the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as they are able, and in consultation with their pastor. In every case, serious and significant effort must be made in this fasting (abstinence) as we prepare to receive Holy Communion.

We note that this practice of abstinence in preparation for receiving Holy Communion in the evening, parallels the usual practice for receiving Holy Communion on Sunday mornings, and other morning celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. During the hours that come before morning Divine Liturgies, we prepare for receiving Holy Communion by:

- attending Church services the previous evening (for example, Vigil on Saturday night)
- keeping the rest of the evening free from inappropriate activity,
- praying our pre-communion prayers,
- and completely fasting from food and drink from at least 12:00 midnight until the time we receive Holy Communion in the morning.

In any case, whatever the specifics of the manner in which we personally prepare for the reception of Holy Communion, we must not be heedless and simply come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist without forethought or preparation—preparation which includes fasting.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please see Fr. John.

ON FASTING DURING GREAT LENT

Fasting, specifically as it affects the issue of what and how much we are to eat, is always a topic that receives much attention when we prepare to begin Great Lent. Fasting is an ancient tradition in the Church and not one that we should easily ignore or dismiss. **We all must fast during Great Lent. What then should we do?**

We should begin by reminding ourselves of the basics of the Church's traditional discipline of fasting. During Great Lent the strictest levels of fasting are prescribed, with certain exceptions allowed for weekends and feasts. The traditional norm, as developed and followed over many centuries in the Orthodox Church, is that we would abstain from the following items (listed here in order, beginning with those items which are eliminated first, on down to those items that may be permissible at some times):

- Meat and meat products (must be restricted)
- Milk and Egg Products (often referred to as "dairy." These items are perhaps permissible for some, for example, young children, the elderly or those in poor health.)
- Fish (permissible on certain feasts during Great Lent)
- Olive Oil (permissible on weekends and certain feasts in Lent)
- Wine (this means all alcoholic beverages; they are permissible on weekends and certain feasts during Great Lent)

So then, generally speaking, during Great Lent we are to make do with the following types of food:

- Shellfish (shrimp, clams, etc.)
- Vegetables
- Vegetable Products
- Fruit, Grains (breads, pasta, rice, etc.), Nuts, etc.
- Non-alcoholic, dairy-free beverages

Having laid out the traditional guidelines for fasting, certain points must be made in reference to them. **First of all, each of us must make an honest, prayerful assessment of how well we can maintain the fasting discipline. If we are unable—due to age, illness, or some other weakness—to follow completely the traditional order of fasting, we must then make a decision about what we are going to do.** Over-scrupulosity in this regard will not save us, but neither will any rationalizing away of the need to fast. Each and every person, usually together with the other members of his or her family and, if necessary, in consultation with his or her parish priest, needs to make an honest and prayerful decision about how he or she is going to keep the Fast.

For Church events—such as Sunday morning "Coffee Hours," and "Bring and Share" meals following the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts—we need to keep strictly to the traditional disciplines of the Fast so that those who are following those norms will not be placed in any sort of awkward situation.

That being said, we must remember that the purpose of fasting (along with its "siblings" among virtuous acts—almsgiving, and prayer) is to make us better able to carry out the two great commandments of our Savior, that is, to love God and to love our neighbor. **If we fast from food, but do not increase in love for God and others, our fasting is without purpose.** The same is true for both charitable giving (almsgiving) and prayer. Love is the highest rule, above and beyond any other pious disciplines. Therefore, a consistent teaching of the saints is that, while we are to make every effort to keep the Fast, the law of love teaches us that we are not to make a spectacle of ourselves in our fasting, and if we are presented with a situation where love requires us to break the fast, then we must do so, and make up for that break in discipline through our care for one another.

Fasting, of course, does not concern just changes in our diet. **When we fast we should be making a concerted effort to change our entire style of life.** Just as when we embark on a program of physical fitness we not only adjust our diet, but also other facets of our lifestyle including exercise and rest, so too when we fast we are called to make changes in our entire life. The point of Great Lent is to restore our life to its proper state through a process of repentance that involves and encompasses our whole person. Therefore, when (not if!) we fast, we must also redouble our efforts in prayer and charity. We must "re-program" ourselves, and consider carefully our use of time. We must consider not only what we are allowing to enter us as food, but also what is entering us through what we read, hear, and watch. **We must make and keep a plan of renewal during Great Lent that encompasses our whole person and life.** This plan should have as its aim not just to redeem the time of Lent, but also to help us make lasting changes in our lives for the sake of our salvation and the salvation of those around us—positive changes that will persist even after Great Lent is over.

A holy person of our time has pointed out that when we judge other people, we often lose the opportunity to love them. Let us all remember during Great Lent to open ourselves with honesty and humility to God's judgement and leave the judging of others to Him: He is the only just judge and only He knows the true condition of a man or woman, His creature. **Let us receive the coming of Great Lent and Lenten fasting with joy, with "bright sadness," grateful for this time of repentance and renewal made possible by God's perfect love for us, His humble and unworthy servants.**

Lent is here! Ongoing! Present! To be embraced!

Lenten Confessions – Make your appointment now! Great Lent began this week. Each and every Christian should participate in the saving Sacrament of Holy Confession during the Lenten season, as part of his or her own “Lenten journey.” Please contact Fr. John now to make your Confession appointment, even if you want your appointment to take place later on during Lent. Please make your Lenten confession before the end of Great Lent, that is, by Friday, April 23. By the time we reach Holy Week and Pascha, every member of the Parish should (must!) have participated in the Sacrament of Confession in the Lenten season.

(NOTE: Even if you are not regularly attending in-person services at this time, because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, it is essential for you to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. If special arrangements need to be made to meet your particular needs, please contact Fr. John Hopko directly. Fr. John can be best reached, by voice or text, at his cellphone number, which is 860-944-3486.)

Annual ONE Stewards Appeal

ONE (Orthodox New England) Stewards is a group within the Diocese of New England who contribute money to the Diocese for the purpose of supporting outreach (and “in-reach”) ministries in the Diocese beyond what the annual budget of the Diocese is able to support. These ministries include charitable grants, scholarships and youth programs. Historically, our parish membership has a wonderful record of ONE Stewards membership. Many members of our parish have been annual supporting members of ONE Stewards for many consecutive years. Every year at about this time ONE Stewards conducts its annual membership appeal. Please consider supporting this program. Donations may be made by writing a check made out to “ONE Stewards—Diocese of New England” and then sending it to ONE Stewards, PO BOX 1182, Torrington, CT 06790-1182. Alternatively, you may go to the Diocese of New England website and use the [“Donate Now”](#) feature to contribute online.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the 1st Sunday of Great Lent, which is also called the Sunday of Orthodoxy

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:24-26, 11:31-12:2)

Brothers and Sisters: 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 armies 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. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. John (Jn. 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 Beth-saida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and 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.”