

THE GREAT FAST

2021

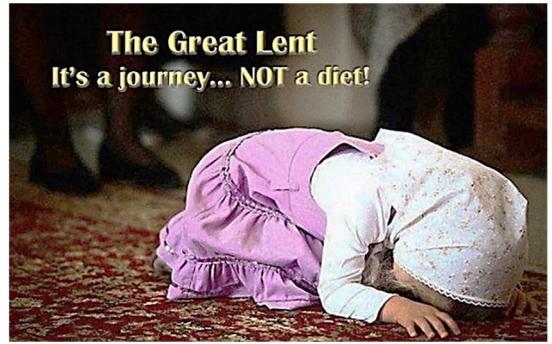


Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat.

- From the Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday

Guidelines for the Great Fast

- ❖ The Great Fast begins on Monday 15 March. This is a **Strict Fast Day**, meaning no meat or dairy products are to be eaten. Likewise, Great & Holy Friday and Great & Holy Saturday (30 April-1 May)).
- ❖ Remember the Tradition of the Orthodox Church is a strict fast the entire 40 days of the Fast and for all of Great & Holy Week is given forth to all of the faithful. If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule (see Father for some guidance) and stick to it for the duration of the Fast. *Examples: doing the strict fast on certain days while keeping at least a meat fast on the others; keeping a total meat fast for certain weeks (1st, Cross Week, last week and Holy Week) and each Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the fast.* The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be. See Fr Peter for help.
- ❖ The entire Great & Holy Week (26 April-1 May) are days of abstinence from meat and meat products.
- ❖ A minimum three (3) hour complete fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (the regular "midnight Fast" is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great)
- ❖ The sick and infirm are not bound by the fast at any time. Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician's instructions. See Fr Peter if you have any questions



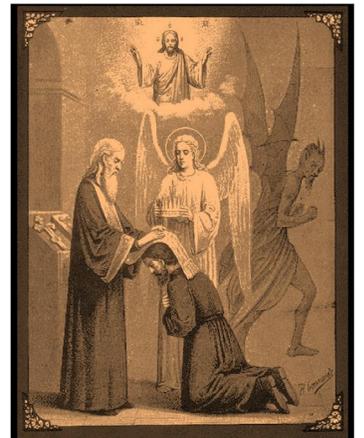
Finally, the Great Fast is not a "40-day diet program" or simply a "dietary adjustment." Attend as many of the Divine Services as possible. Come to the Sacrament of Confession and approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist.

Notes on Confession:

This year, with Covid guidelines, Confessions will be heard in the first pew in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard by appointment, after all weekday Divine Services and Sunday after Divine Liturgy. Fr Peter will also accept appointment requests for other times.

If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest for the Sacrament, please let Fr. Peter know.

The final opportunity to have your Confession heard before Pascha will be after Divine Services on Great & Holy Wednesday evening (28 April). Confessions will not be heard after Resurrection Matins or on Pascha morning!



Lenten Prayer Friends

Cards with the names of our Lenten Prayer Friends were distributed this year by mail. Praying for someone we don't know well--or not at all ... or, even, for someone we don't particularly "click with" -- is often a huge blessing for us as well as the person we're praying for. It bonds us together in a very special way that only prayer can do.

Ideas on how we can be an effective prayer friend: pray daily for the person; send the person an encouraging card during Lent; sit with your prayer friend during coffee hour and make an effort to get to know them ... ask them questions and really listen; light a candle for them, etc.

Encourage your children (especially, the little ones) to pray daily for their prayer friend. They can color pictures for their prayer friend and bring them to church, light a candle for them, etc.



Weekday Lenten Divine Services

- This year, to try to help more of our faithful attend Lenten Services we will have the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday evenings at 7pm and Friday mornings at 9:30am. Friday is reserved for those of our parish family 65+ (the Wednesday evening PreSanctified Liturgy will be livestreamed as well)



~~~~~  
Fasting is wonderful, because it tramples our sins like a dirty weed, while it cultivates and raises truth like a flower.

(St. Basil the Great)



# HOLY RESURRECTION ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Parish of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese  
 Ecumenical Patriarchate  
 10201 Democracy Blvd  
 Potomac, Maryland 20854  
 301-299-5120(Office) 301-367-9051(cell)  
[www.holyresurrection.com](http://www.holyresurrection.com)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/hroc25](https://www.facebook.com/groups/hroc25)  
 YouTube: HROC Media

Very Rev. Peter Zarynow, Pastor  
 Protoperbyter John Fedornock

Subdeacons Anastasios Davis & Theodoros Zarynow Reader Stephen Sudik

## Sunday 14 March 2021

Sunday of the Expulsion from Paradise  
 Sunday of Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday  
 Martyr Antonina of Nicea

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

Tone Seven

**14 Mar (SUN) Cheesefare (Sunday of Forgiveness)**  
**Daylight Saving Time Begins**

Chanting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour 9:10am  
 Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am/Group B  
 Panachida: +Met. Nicholas (10<sup>th</sup> Anniv of repose)  
 +George Medvigy, by wife Joan  
 Rite of Forgiveness at the beginning of the Great Fast

Socially distanced Coffee Social to follow

**15 Mar (Mon) First Day of the Great Fast (Clean Monday)**

Canon of St Andrew of Crete 7:00pm

**17 Mar (Wed) 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the Great Fast**

Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts 7:00pm

(Fast from 4pm if receiving Communion)

**19 Mar (Fri) 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the Great Fast**

Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts 9:00am  
 (attendance limited to those 65+)

**21 Mar (SUN) 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Great Fast**

**Sunday of Orthodoxy**

Chanting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour 9:10am

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great 9:30am/Group A

Panachida: +Pañi Jeannette Moriak, by sister Christine Fallon

Socially distanced Coffee Social to follow

## ***Announcements:***

**Confessions** be heard by appointment. Please contact Fr Peter to schedule. All faithful are encouraged to come to the Sacrament every 8-10 weeks, on average, to help maintain spiritual health. Lent is approaching, so make an appointment as soon as possible! This year, with Covid guidelines, Confessions will be heard in the first pew in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard, by appointment, after all weekday Divine Services and Sunday after Divine Liturgy. Fr Peter will also accept appointment requests for other times.

For the Great Fast, we will still keep our tradition of our Lenten Prayer Friends. Names have been mailed to everyone and should have been delivered by now. If you have not yet received your Lenten Prayer Friend, please contact Faith Breno.

There are 4 ACRY Annuals available for sale. Copies are \$15 each. If you would like to purchase one, please contact Faith Breno.

Please pray for the following: Metropolitan Gregory, Bishop Matthias, Fr. Frank & Pañi Connie Miloro; Pañi Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. John Fencik, Fr. Paul Stoll, Fr. Robert Teklinski, Fr. John Gido, Dn. Peter Skoog & family, Pañi Kathy Dutko, Fr. Gregory Allard, Fr. Lawrence Barriger, Fr. James Gleason, Fr. Luke Mihaly, Fr. Ted & Pañi Marjorie Mozes, Fr. Thomas Blaschak, Hieromonk Michael, Fr Thomas Kadlec; Pañi Donna Smoley, Fr. Michael & Pañi Annamarie Slovesko, Fr John & Pañi Patricia Duranko, Fr. Christopher Rozdilski, Fr John & Pañi Cindy Zboyovski, Fr. Jonathan & Pañi Marsha Tobias, Fr Robert Lucas, Pañi Delores Zuder; Pañi Amy George, Pañi Dorothy Hutnyan, Fr Michael & Pañi Elenore Polanichka; Presbyteria Tulla Pateras, Elisa Castilla, Ann Thear, Beth & Ed SkeetsqWilliams, Carol Miller, Cindy Russell, Michael Buchko, Dorothy Mastronicola, Angie Wali, Nancy Lynn Arthur, Tony Zanke, Justin Popek, Karen Ogden, Joshua, Faye & Tess, Emilie Dixon, Shirley Miree, Michael Rake, Olga Vasconez, Diane Dupere-Lindell, Gerry Sadler, Ann Eckert, Lois Hall, Marshal Smith, Dave Stanton, Florence Gregoric, James & Melody Peyton, Louann Giger, Daniel Ward, Jennifer Brady, Carol Blum, Katie Bleeker, Alexi Williams, Missy Johns, Susan Buckley, Constance Amey, James Lazor, Debbie Dell, Rose & Douglas Eade, Grace Yoon, Michael Dinneen, Kellie Barrett, Joan Detwiler, Joan Kondratick, John Homick, Jim David, Melanie Samson, Mary West, Laura Gary; Richard & Wendy Sulich; James Durachko, Julia Rapach, Randi Caffalle, Hayley Marshall, Jon Green, Aleia Dick, MaryJane, Kyle & Rosie Brant, Mary Agnes, Alicia, Lisa Chernob, Stephen Branch, Emily, MaryMargaret, Leslie Perez, Thomas & Deborah Delare, Diana Hannan; Ed Murphy; LeLe Luu; Bridget Myers; Devan Merrill; Joann Wiant; Bob Fitzurka; Richard, Kari, Nicholas & Daniel Zarynow; Olga Vovk; infant Emilia Zak; Susan B.; Gregory Naugle; Dorothea Fotis; Daniel Winsky; Lela; Vladimir; Carly; Robert; Charleen Myers; Anna Fallon & baby; Brittany Arata & twins; Pañi Kathryn Dutko & baby

***May Our Lord Jesus Christ Touch Them with His Healing Hand!***

## **Follow Your Diocese On-Line**

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org> Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

**NOTE:** While we are in the situation where we are not able to meet fully, if you are able, please continue to make your regular tithe/offering to the parish. Even though we are not together, the bills continue to come in (electric, water, communications, etc.) Your continued support is necessary and appreciated. Your offering can simply be made through the PayPal button on our parish website homepage or by sending it in the mail to the church.

During this time of Covid-19, if you have any candle requests, please email or text them to Fr Peter by no later than Wednesday evening. Candles will be lit as requested.

# CANDLE OFFERINGS

**Eternal Light:** Happy Birthday Jeanne Delasko-Lois (Many Years!)

## Vigil Candles Offered For the Living (Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!)

1-health of Mom-your loving family- Chrysa, Taina & Craig  
 1-health father Michael-love Alex & Melanie  
 2-for health-love Mom & Dad  
*Jonathan & Lara; Stephanie*  
 2-for health-John & Sheila  
*HROC parishioners; Family members*  
 3-special intention-John & Sheila  
*Fr. Peter & family; Diocesan Priests & their families; OCMC Missionaries*  
 1-health of Chris Fallon-Michael, Kathleen, John & Anna  
 1-special intention Lee Roby-Scott  
 2-special intention-brother George  
*Archbishop Michael; Barbara Knighton*  
 2-special intention-George Dahulich  
*Metropolitan Gregory; Bishop Matthias*  
 8-for health-George Dahulich  
*Fr Tom Kadlec; Fr Jim Dutko; Chris Fallon; Charlie Myers; Barbara Knighton; Pañi Kathy Dutko Kamilah Wimberly; Randy Wimberly*  
 2-happy birthday-George Dahulich  
*Jeanne Delasko; Steve Ellis*  
 1-health of Savannah, Chloe, Caroline, Christopher, Natalie, Cole-love Grandparents  
 5-for health-Ray & Georgene  
*Lois Erhard; John & Marie Smith; Mark & Marie Sudik; John Homick; Marge Tomasevich*  
 20-health & healing-John & Marie Smith  
*Irene Dzubak; Melanie Samson; Fr Tom Kadlec; John & Barbara Homick; Chris Hudack; Ray & Georgene Ammon; Marge Tomasevich; Carol Miller; Marie Skasko; Pañi Eleanor Pribish; Lois Erhard; Chris Fallon; Emilia Zak; Stephen Brancho; Charlie Myers; Debbie & Tom Delare; Rose Marie Jung; Pañi Jean Hutnyan; Tim Dzubak; Jessica Kadlec-Krchmar*

6-special intentions-the Breno Family  
*Breno Family; Fedornock Families; Peart Family; Nakonecznyj Family; Zankey Family; Fabian Family*  
 1-special intention Natalie Farnsworth on your baptism-the Breno Family  
 1-for the health of all who are ill-the Breno Family  
 2-specail intention-Mom & Dad  
*Angela & Brian; Stephen*  
 1-special intention Mark-love Marie  
 1-special intention Marie-love Mark  
 8-for health-Mark & Marie  
*Mom/Baba; Ann Thear; Verna Czap; Nancy Shields; Mike & Josie Czap; Skeets; Williams Family; Charlene Myers*  
 12-health & special intention- Mark & Marie  
*Chris Hudack; Ray & Georgene Ammon; Marge Tomasevich; Irene Dzubak; Carol Miller; Alex & Eleanor Breno; Fr John & Pañi Marge; James Battaglini; Bridget Myers; Charlie Myers; Pañi Bernadette; Fr Peter*  
 1-health of Charlie-love Debi  
 1-health of Skeets-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey  
 1-birthday blessings Grammy-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey  
 2-specail intention-love Mom & Dad  
*Jacob; Joey*  
 1-birthday blessings JT-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey  
 1-health & healing Hayley, Bob, Chris Hudack, John Homick, Peggy and Bruce, Andrea and all who are sick -Lois  
 1-for health Savannah, Caroline, Natalie, Karen K, Elizabeth Michel, Marge Tomasevich, Aunt Ann, Georgene-Lois  
 1-birthday blessings Steve Ellis-Rose Plowchin  
 3-for health-Rose Plowchin  
*Tom Knipple; John Homick; Lois Erhard; Carol Miller*  
 1-health of Dorothea Fotis-daughter Linda  
 1-sp. int. Fr Peter, Pa i Bernadette & Alex-Linda Fotis

## Vigil Candles In Loving Memory: (Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!)

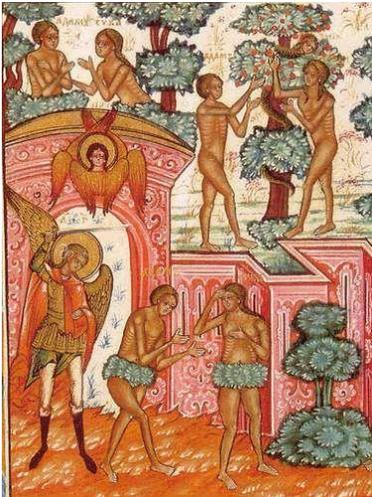
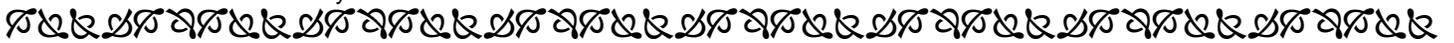
1+in loving memory of Les-love Carol  
 1+in memory Mother & Father. Carol Miller  
 1+loving memory of my husband Tom-your loving wife Ann  
 1+in loving memory of our father-Chrysa, Taina and Craig  
 1+in memory of Steve Sheftic-love your family  
 2+loving memory-the Fallons  
*Pañi Jeannette; Anna & John Luchok*  
 1+in memory of Marion Fallon-Diane  
 1+in loving memory of Helen Rowland-Diane  
 1+in loving memory Parents & Grandparents-Diane & Brian  
 1+Memory Eternal Parents/Grandparents-Koval Family  
 2+Memory Eternal-Koval Family  
*Uncle George & Uncle Tony*  
 3+Memory Eternal . love Alex, Melanie  
*mother Katherine; father John; mother Elaine*

5+in memory-John & Sheila  
*Dad Kraynok; Mom Kraynok; Charles Hrapchak; Anna Hrapchak; Evelyn Hrapchak*  
 1+In loving memory of Metro-Love, Joan and Family  
 1+in loving memory of parents Peter & Ann Dahulich-love son George  
 1+in memory Helen Beveridge-Mark & Marie  
 3+in loving memory-Linda Fotis  
*Charles Fotis; Evangelina & Vasilios Fotis; Maria & Stavros Girdis*  
 1+in memory of George & Betty Ellis-son Steven

## For the Special Intentions of Our Lenten Prayer Friends

1-Jay Carrol-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Lenda Taveira-DaSilva- Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Sem. Dania Katz-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Jeanne Delasko-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Cyndi Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Mike Fallon-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Will Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend

1-Irene Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Ella Antonishek-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Janet Miller-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Linda Antonishek--Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Marie Sudik-Your Lenten Prayer Friend  
 1-Christopher Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend



# FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine

commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.



# 2021 Easter Candy Sale

There are only a few weeks left in our Sarris Candies Easter Candy Sale. Last day to order is 30 March 2021! Log on to [sarriscandiesfundraising.com](http://sarriscandiesfundraising.com) Group Name: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church Group ID: 10-2493



Keep in mind that all proceeds go to benefit our Sunday School Program!

## DIOCESAN LENTEN RETREAT

Saturday April 3, 2021  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

*NEPESIS-WATCHFULNESS: BEING  
ATTENTIVE IN A DISTRACTED AGE*

Open To All  
Sponsored

By The  
National  
Senior  
ACRY



Keynote  
Presentation  
By  
Fr. Jonathan  
Bannon



An Online Spiritual Gathering For Adults and Teenagers

Free Admission. Register Now:  
<https://www.acrod.org/retreat>

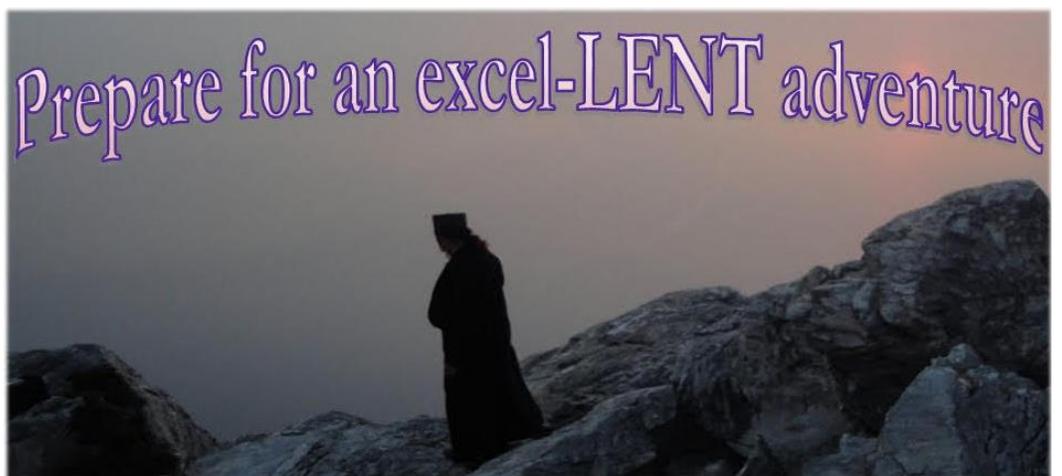
Register at [www.acrod.org/retreat](http://www.acrod.org/retreat)

by no later than 21 March 2021

But don't wait too long. Spaces are limited!!



During the Journey of the Great Fast we all need the prayer of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Remember your Lenten Prayer Friend in your daily prayers. They struggle as you do. Attend as many of the Lenten PreSanctified Liturgies as possible. Come to the Sacrament of



Confession and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ! As the cycle of the year starts anew each spring, our spiritual lives do as well each Lent. Especially now, as we begin to see an end to the current pandemic, let us pray that during this time we all begin to restore health to soul and body and, in seven weeks, we can celebrate together the Resurrection from the Dead of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

above image courtesy of Fr Matthew Stagon  
Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church  
Rockaway, NJ

**Seminary Graduate Daniel Katz** completed his thesis for graduation and has had permission to distribute it. He has given HROC a copy and has invited our parish family to read it. The title is “An Analysis of Eudaimonia, Goodness and Virtue Ethics According to the Orthodox Christian Perspective” If anyone would like to read it, please contact FrPeter. We will set up a reserve list so that all who wish to read it may do so. (Eudaimonia is defined as happiness or blessedness). Currently Daniel is going to be spending the Lenten Season and Holy Week at the St Rphmanos Heritage in Williamston, Michigan. We hope to see him sometime after Pascha. *Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!*

**Congratulations to Philip Breno** who leaves today for Madison Wisconsin. He has signed a contract with the Forward Madison FC of USL league One, where he will be Goalkeeper for the team. We wish him well as he travels to the Midwest and also for a successful season! *Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!* (Go Flamingos!)



\*\*\*\*\*



There will be a Bake Day on Saturday 17 April. It will be a “simple bake” with Breads and Nutrolls only. Order forms were distributed with the bulletin. Orders are for parishioners only! Orders are due in by 04 April so that we can plan for supplies. No orders will be accepted after that date. Order forms can be dropped off at church, mailed back or sent in via email.

More details on Bake Day procedure as the day gets closer.

CAMP NAZARETH STAFF APPLICATIONS are now available on the Camp Nazareth website: [campnazareth.org](http://campnazareth.org)!! Anyone interested in being a part of the 2021 CN Staff Family is encouraged to apply for a Staff position. Applications are due April 5, 2021 so don't delay!! If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Stephen Loposky, Camp Nazareth Director ó 724-662-4840 or [campnazareth@acrod.org](mailto:campnazareth@acrod.org).

**CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER 2021 INFORMATIONAL MEETING!!!**

Camp Nazareth is offering a live online INFORMATIONAL MEETING about the 2021 Summer Camping Program **for potential CN Staff!!!** The Informational Meeting will take place on Wednesday, 3/17/21 at 8pm. Camp strongly encourages anyone interested in being a part of the 2021 CN Staff to attend this Informational Meeting. We will be discussing important information about the 2021 Summer and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

The link to join the meeting is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85974599591>

Staff Applications are available on the Camp Website [campnazareth.org](http://campnazareth.org). Please contact Fr. Stephen Loposky, Camp Nazareth Director, if you have any questions ó 724-662-4840 or [campnazareth@acrod.org](mailto:campnazareth@acrod.org).

**CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER 2021 INFORMATIONAL WEBINARS!!!**

Camp Nazareth is offering 2 live INFORMATIONAL WEBINARS about the 2021 Summer Camping Program **for Campers, Parents, Clergy and Volunteers!!!** The Informational Webinars will take place on Thursday, 3/18/21 at 7pm (EST) and on Tuesday, 3/23/21 at 7pm (EST). Camp strongly encourages anyone interested in attending Camp this summer (campers and their parents, clergy, and volunteers) to attend ONE of these two Informational Webinars. We will be presenting important information about the 2021 Summer and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. You must register for the Webinars. Registration is quick and easy. (You DO NOT need to register each family member, only one of you.) Once you register, you will receive an email with the link to attend the webinar. The links to register for the Webinars are below:

Thursday, 3/18/21 -- 7pm

(EST): [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_SKks02XcSeyTLfGTVsM33w](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SKks02XcSeyTLfGTVsM33w)

Tuesday, 3/23/21 -- 7pm

(EST): [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_DUSIakAGQXy08qpUIBoeMg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DUSIakAGQXy08qpUIBoeMg)

**2021 SPRING CLEANING Saturday, April 24**

Calling all Parishioners! Help clean our church in preparation for Easter! Join us after the Saturday, Lazarus Holy Day Liturgy starting at 10:30 am until everything is done around mid-afternoon. Sign the “I am coming to clean on April 24” sign-up sheet on the hall bulletin board to let us know you are coming so we can plan for a continental brunch, lunch and cleaning supplies.

OR – IF YOU CAN'T COME ON THAT DATE, you can still help by doing one of the items at a time that is convenient to you before April 24.

Just write your name next to the item on the Cleaning List flyer located on the hall bulletin board. After you clean, check it off to indicate completion.

If you have questions, talk to Mark Sudik, Curator. Thank you for helping to keep our church beautiful!



## BEATITUDES PART X: THE PERSECUTED

**“Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake”** (Mt 5.10-11). In saying these words, Christ promised that those who would follow Him would certainly be persecuted. This is a central prediction of the Gospel and an essential condition of those who accept it.

Remember the word that I said to you, “A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecute Me, they will persecute you; if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you on My account, because they do not know Him who sent Me (Jn 15.20-21).

True Christians will always be persecuted for Christ’s sake. They will be persecuted with Christ and like Christ, for the truth that they speak and the good that they do. The persecutions may not always be physical, but they will always be spiritual and psychological. They will always be mindless, unjust, violent, and without cause (Ps 69.4, Jn 15.25). They will always be painful and the cause of much suffering. For indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3.12).

A person embarking on the spiritual life must expect persecution and slander. He must be wary, however, of any false persecution-complex, and must be absolutely certain that the suffering he meets is solely for righteousness’s sake and not because of his own weaknesses and sins. The apostolic scripture makes this precise warning:

*For one is approved if, mindful of God, he endures pain while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it, you take it patiently. But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God’s approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God (1 Pet 2.19-21, 4.14-16).*

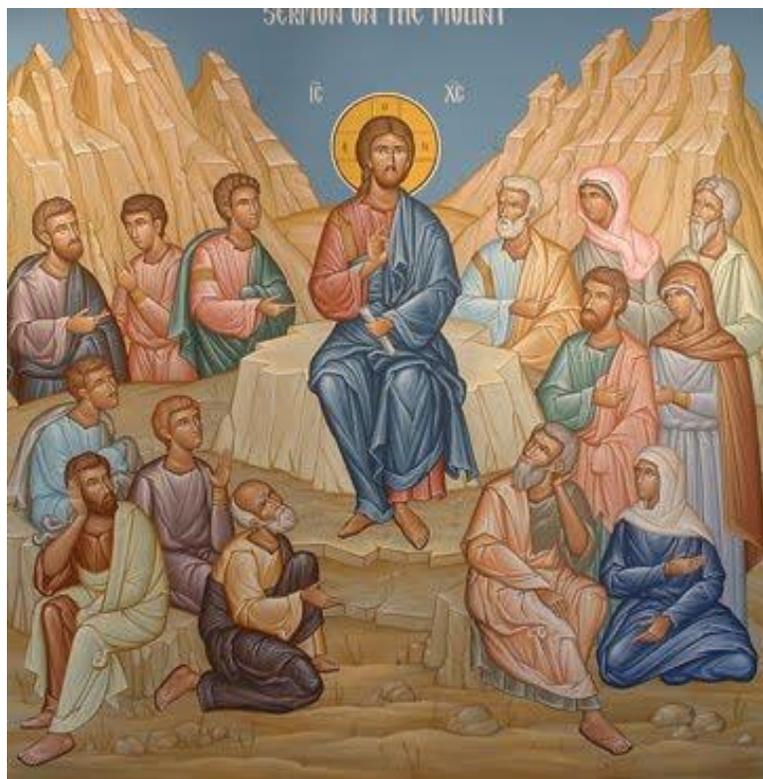
The suffering of Christians must be accepted gladly, with mercy and love to those who inflict it. Here once again is the Lord’s own example, as well as that of His prophets, apostles, martyrs and saints. As Christ said, “Father, forgive them” (Lk 23.34), while hanging on the Cross; and as the first martyr Stephen prayed, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7.60), while being stoned, so all those who follow

God’s righteousness must forgive their offenders from their hearts (cf. Mt 18.35).

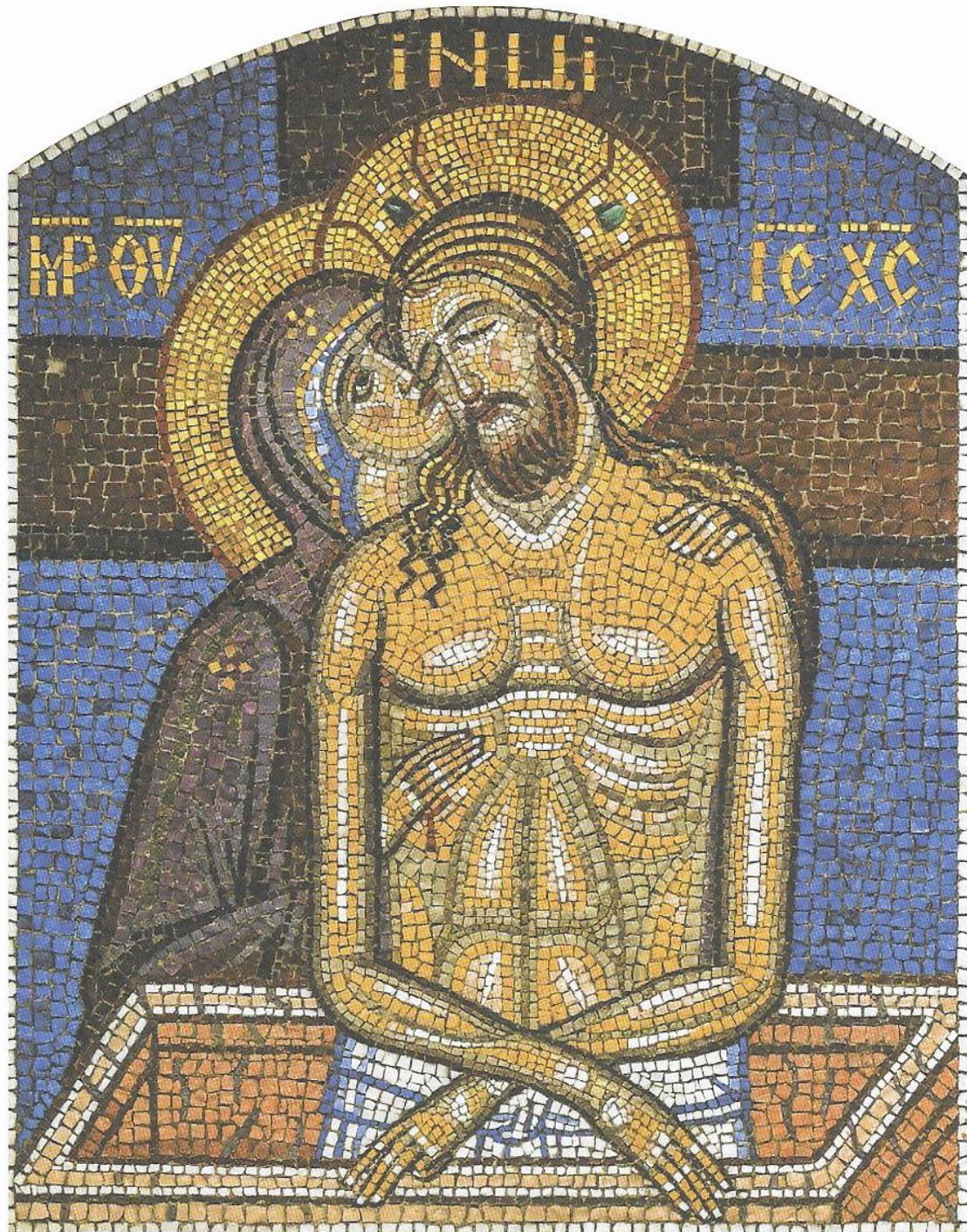
But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your cloak do not withhold your coat as well. Love your enemies, and do good, and give, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you (Lk 6.27-38).

The generous and loving forgiveness of the persecuted for the persecutors is an essential condition of the spiritual life. Without it, all suffering for righteousness’s sake is in vain, and does not lead to the Kingdom of Heaven.

“Adorn yourself with truth, try to speak truth in all things; and do not support a lie, no matter who asks you. If you speak the truth and someone gets mad at you, don’t be upset, but take comfort in the words of the Lord: Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of truth, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5:10).”







## LET US CLEANSE OUR SOULS AND FLESH

**T**oday, Orthodox Christians everywhere stand at the brink of the solemn season of Great Lent. The liturgical theme for this Sunday is FORGIVENESS, a message that will be stressed repeatedly during the ensuing weeks. In fact, this Sunday prior to Great Lent is widely known as FORGIVENESS SUNDAY.

While we are called upon to prepare our bodies for the physical challenges of Lent by abstaining from dairy products the entire week before Lent (Cheesefare Week), the Church also calls us to prepare our souls for the spiritual battles we will face for the next 40 days by making peace with our fellow man.

In our Holy Orthodox Church, a touching custom exists which affords us the opportunity to do this at the conclusion of Forgiveness Sunday Vespers. The faithful are encouraged to exchange a mutual expression of forgiveness with everyone present as they embrace one another and give each other the kiss of peace. It is traditional in some churches to sing the sticheras from Pascha while this is taking place, reminding us that we must mutually seek pardon for our offenses against one another in the name of Christ. He fasted, suffered and rose from the dead for our sake. The moving words of these verses - EVEN FROM THOSE WHO HATE US, LET US FORGIVE ALL THINGS - beautifully capture the spirit of the up-coming Lenten period.

As we prepare to enter Lent, let us recall what St. Basil the Great wrote concerning this fast: "FASTING IS NOTHING NEW, BUT IS A TREASURE HANDED DOWN FROM OUR FATHERS."