

O God, be attentive
unto helping me!
O Lord, make haste
to help me!



HOW CAN WE KEEP GREAT LENT?

by Fr. Alexander Schmemann

We are approaching again the Great Lent, the time of repentance, the time of our reconciliation with God. Repentance is the **beginning** and also the **condition** of a truly Christian life. "Repent!" was the first word of Christ when He began to preach (*Matt. 4:17*).

Great Lent is indeed a school of repentance, to which each Christian must go every year in order to refresh the understanding of his faith. It is a **wonderful pilgrimage** to the very sources of Orthodoxy, a rediscovery of a truly **Orthodox way of life**. Let us try to make these forty days as meaningful, as deep, and as rich, as possible.

"Fasting appears gloomy until one steps into its arena. But begin and you will see what light it brings after darkness, what freedom from bonds, what release after a burdensome life."

+ Bishop Theophan the Recluse (19th c.)

Worship

The meaning and the spirit of Great Lent find their first and most important expression in worship. Not only individuals but the **whole Church** acquires a penitential spirit, and the **beautiful Lenten services more than anything else** help us to deepen our spiritual vision, to reconsider our life in the light of the Orthodox teaching about man.

Fasting

The Orthodox idea of fasting is first of all that of an **ascetical effort**. It is the effort to subdue the physical, the fleshly man to the spiritual one, the "natural" to the "supernatural." Limitations in food are **instrumental**; they are not ends in themselves. Fasting thus is but a **means of reaching a spiritual goal** and, therefore, an **integral part of a wide spiritual effort**. Fasting, in the Orthodox understanding, includes more than abstinence from certain types of food. It implies prayer, silence, an internal disposition of mind, an attempt to be charitable, kind, and—in one word—**spiritual**. "Brethren, while fasting bodily, let us also fast spiritually..."

The Typicon and the canons of the Church give the description of an ideal fast: no meat or dairy products, total abstinence on certain days. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (*Matt. 19:12*). But, whatever is our measure —our fasting must be a total effort of our total being.

Prayer

We must always pray. But Lent is the time of an increase of prayer and also of its deepening. The simplest way is, first, to add the Lenten prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian to our private morning and evening prayers. Then, it is good and profitable to set certain hours of the day for a short prayer: this can



be done "internally"—at the office, in the car, everywhere. The important thing here is to remember constantly that we are in Lent, to be spiritually "referred" to its final goal: renewal, penitence, closer contact with God.

Spiritual Reading

We cannot be in church daily, but it is still possible for us to follow the Church's progress in Lent by reading those lessons and books which the Church reads in her worship. A chapter of the Book of **Genesis**, some passages from **Proverbs** and **Isaiah** do not take much time, and yet they help us in understanding the spirit of Lent and its various dimensions. It is also good to read a few **Psalms**—in connection with prayer or separately. Nowhere else can we find such concentration of true repentance, of thirst for communion with God, of desire to permeate the whole of life with religion. Finally, a **religious book**: Lives of the Saints, History of the Church, Orthodox Spirituality, etc. is a "must" while we are in Lent. It takes us from our daily life to a higher level of interests, it feeds us with ideas which are usually absent from our "practical" and "efficient" world.

Change of Life

And, last but not least: there must be an effort and a decision to **slow down** our life, to put in as much quiet, silence, contemplation, meditation as possible. TV, [web browsing, Facebook, movies], social gatherings—all these things, however excellent and profitable in themselves, must be cut down to a real minimum. Not because they are bad, but because we have something **more important** to do, and it is impossible to do without a change of life, without some degree of **concentration and discipline**. Lent is the time when we **re-evaluate** our life in the light of our faith, and this requires a very real effort and discipline. Christ says that a **narrow**

"Do not neglect the Forty Days; it constitutes an imitation of Christ's way of life."

+ St Ignatius the Godbearer (late 1st c.)

path leads to the kingdom of God and we must make our life as narrow as possible. At first the natural and selfish man in us revolts against these limitations. He wants his usual "easy life" with all its pleasures and relaxations. But once we have tasted of such spiritual effort, once we have made by it one step towards God, *the reward is great!* We discover a **joy** that cannot be compared to any other joy. We discover the **reality of the spiritual world in us**. We begin to understand what St. Paul meant by "the joy and peace in the Holy Spirit." **God Himself enters our soul:** and it is this wonderful coming that constitutes the ultimate end of Lent:

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John 14:23)

Let us make this Lent a **real Lent!** ~ Amen!

For more lenten resources visit our parish website.

GREAT LENT 2021

*"The Way is narrow
that leads to Life..."*

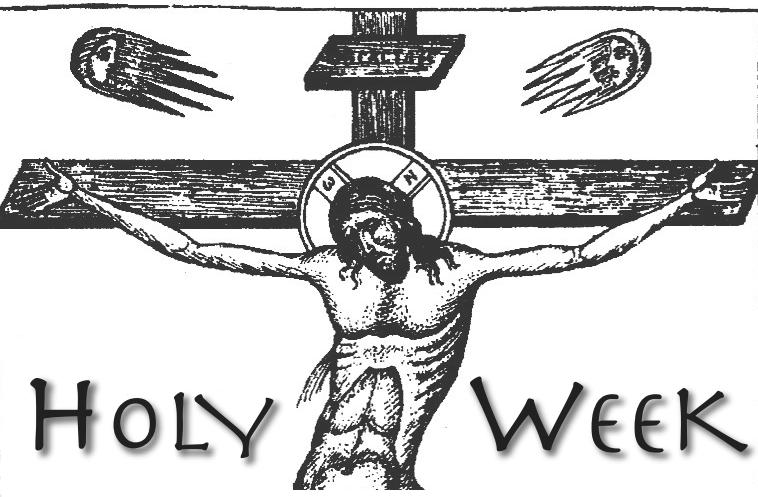


The desert

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PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 25 (Fish, Wine, Oil)

Hours ~ 9:10am
Divine Liturgy ~ 9:30am
Bridegroom Matins ~ 7:00pm



HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 26

Bridegroom Matins ~ 7:00pm

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 27

Bridegroom Matins ~ 7:00pm

HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28

Service of Anointing w/Oil ~ 7:00pm

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 29 (Wine, Oil)

Vesperal Divine Liturgy (*Institution of the Eucharist*) ~ 9:30am
Matins (*12 Passion Gospels*) ~ 7:00pm

GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY, APRIL 30 (STRICT FAST)

Royal Hours: 9am, 10am, 11am, Noon
Vespers (*Descent from the Cross*) ~ 3:00pm
Matins (*Lamentations at the Tomb, w/Procession*) ~ 7:30pm

GREAT & HOLY SATURDAY, MAY 1 (Wine)

Vesperal Divine Liturgy ~ 10:00am (*15 OT Prophecies*)
Nocturns ~ 11:30pm

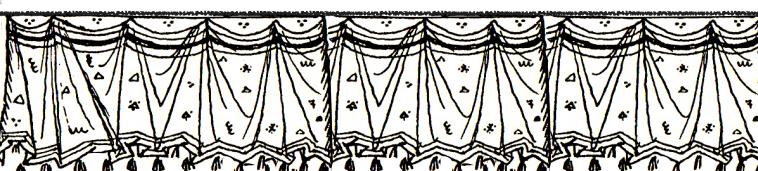
Paschal Procession, Matins, Divine Liturgy ~ Midnight

GREAT & HOLY PASCHA, SUNDAY, MAY 2

Agape Vespers ~ 2:00pm (*Gospel read in many languages*)

BRIGHT MONDAY, MAY 3

Paschal Divine Liturgy ~ 9:30am



GREAT LENT 2021



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
MARCH 14 Cheesefare 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy Forgiveness Vespers (after Liturgy)		15 CLEAN WEEK Great Lent Begins 7pm Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete	16 7pm Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete	17 7pm Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete	18 7pm Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete	19 6pm Presanctified Liturgy	W/O 20 6pm Great Vespers & Confessions
W/O 21 Sunday of Orthodoxy 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great		22 23 W/O 24 6:00pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy			F/W/O 25 ANNUNCIATION W/O 26 7pm Akathist Hymn	W/O 27 Memorial Saturday 9:30am Divine Liturgy 6pm Great Vespers & Confessions	
W/O 28 St Gregory Palamas 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great		29 30 W/O 31 6pm Presanctified Liturgy			APRIL 1 7pm Akathist Hymn	W/O 3 6pm Great Vespers w/Procession of Cross	
W/O 4 Veneration of the Cross 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great	5 6 7 6pm Presanctified Liturgy				8 7pm Akathist Hymn	W/O 10 6pm Great Vespers & Confessions	
W/O 11 St John Climacus 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great	12 13 W/O 14 6pm Presanctified Liturgy			15 7pm Great Canon w/Life of St Mary of Egypt	W/O 16 7pm Akathist Hymn	W/O 17 6pm Great Vespers & Confessions	
W/O 18 St Mary of Egypt 9:10 Hours 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great	19 20 21 6pm Presanctified Liturgy				22 7pm Vespers of Lazarus Saturday	W/O/Caviar 24 Lazarus Saturday 9:30 Divine Liturgy 6:00pm Vigil for Palm Sunday	

SERVICES LIVE-STREAMED ON YOUTUBE + SYNC TO OUR ONLINE CALENDAR + MORE RESOURCES ON OUR WEBSITE

F = FISH ALLOWED + W = WINE + O = OIL