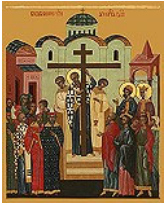


✠Bulletin✠

Week of March 2nd to March 8th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE — Tone 3

The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia (ca. 320). St. Arsenius, Bishop of Tver (1409). Virgin Martyr Euthalia of Sicily (257). Martyr Troadius of Neo-Cæsarea (3rd c.). Ven. Agathon of Egypt (5th c.). 400 Martyrs slain by the Lombards in Sicily (579).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday March 2, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Forgiveness Vespers immediately following Liturgy

Monday March 3rd

5:30 pm - Great Cannon of St. Andrew of Crete

Wednesday March 5th

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday March 2, 2025

Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

Monday March 3rd

4:15 pm – Changing of the colors from gold to purple

Wednesday March 5th

Lenten Meal to follow Presanctified Liturgy – Please bring a Lenten dish.

The Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian

By Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

Of all Lenten hymns and prayers, one short prayer can be termed the Lenten prayer. Tradition ascribes it to one of the great teachers of spiritual life - St. Ephrem the Syrian. Here is its text:

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King!

Grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother; For Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen

This prayer is read twice at the end of each Lenten service Monday through Friday (not on Saturdays and Sundays for these days do not follow the Lenten pattern). At the first reading, a prostration follows each petition. Then we all bow twelve times saying: "O God, cleanse me a sinner." The entire prayer is repeated with one final prostration at the end.

Why does this short and simple prayer occupy such an important position in the entire Lenten worship? Because it enumerates in a unique way all the "negative" and "positive" elements of repentance and constitutes, so to speak, a "check list" for our individual Lenten effort. This effort is aimed first at our liberation from some fundamental spiritual diseases which shape our life and make it virtually impossible for us even to start turning ourselves to God.

The basic disease is sloth. It is that strange laziness and passivity of our entire being which always pushes us "down" rather than "up" -- which constantly convinces us that no change is possible and therefore desirable. It is in fact a deeply rooted cynicism which to every spiritual challenge responds, "what for?" and makes our life one tremendous spiritual waste. It is the root of all sin because it poisons the spiritual energy at its very source.

The result of sloth is despair or faint-heartedness. It is the state of despondency which all spiritual Fathers considered the greatest danger for the soul. Despondency is the impossibility for man to see anything good or positive; it is the reduction of everything to negativism and pessimism. It is truly a demonic power in us because the Devil is fundamentally a liar. He lies to man about God and about the world; he fills life with darkness and

negation. Despondency is the suicide of the soul because when man is possessed by it, he is absolutely unable to see the light and to desire it.

Lust of power! Strange as it may seem, it is precisely sloth and despondency that fill our life with lust of power. By vitiating the entire attitude toward life and making it meaningless and empty, they force us to seek compensation in, a radically wrong attitude toward other persons. If my life is not oriented toward God, not aimed at eternal values, it will inevitably become selfish and self-centered and this means that all other beings will become means of my own self-satisfaction. If God is not the Lord and Master of my life, then I become my own lord and master -- the absolute center of my own world, and I begin to evaluate everything in terms of my needs, my ideas, my desires, and my judgments. The lust of power is thus a fundamental depravity in my relationship to other beings, a search for their subordination to me. It is not necessarily expressed in the actual urge to command and to dominate "others." It may result as well in indifference, contempt, lack of interest, consideration, and respect. It is indeed sloth, and despondency directed this time at others; it completes spiritual suicide with spiritual murder.

Finally, idle talk. Of all created beings, man alone has been endowed with the gift of speech. All Fathers see in it the very "seal" of the Divine Image in man because God Himself is revealed as Word (John, 1:1). But being the supreme gift, it is by the same token the supreme danger. Being the very expression of man, the means of his self-fulfillment, it is for this very reason the means of his fall and self-destruction, of betrayal and sin. The word saves and the word kills; the word inspires and the word poisons. The word is the means of Truth and it is the means of demonic lie. Having an ultimate positive power, it has therefore a tremendous negative power. It truly creates positively or negatively. When deviated from its divine origin and purpose, the word becomes idle. It "enforces" sloth, despondency, and lust of power, and transforms life into hell. It becomes the very power of sin.

These four are thus the negative "objects" of repentance. They are the obstacles to be removed. But God alone can remove them. Hence, the first part of the Lenten prayer; this cry from the bottom of human helplessness. Then the prayer moves to the positive aims of repentance which also are four.

Chastity! If one does not reduce this term, as is so often and erroneously done, only to its sexual connotations, it is understood as the positive counterpart of sloth. The exact and full translation of the Greek *sofrosini* and the Russian *tselomudryie* ought to be whole-mindedness. Sloth is, first of all,

dissipation, the brokenness of our vision and energy, the inability to see the whole. Its opposite then is precisely wholeness. If we usually mean by chastity the virtue opposed to sexual depravity, it is because the broken character of our existence is nowhere better manifested than in sexual lust -- the alienation of the body from the life and control of the spirit. Christ restores wholeness in us, and He does so by restoring in us the true scale of values by leading us back to God.

The first and wonderful fruit of this wholeness or chastity is humility. We already spoke of it. It is above everything else the victory of truth in us, the elimination of all lies in which we usually live. Humility alone is capable of truth, of seeing and accepting things as they are and therefore of seeing God's majesty and goodness and love in everything. This is why we are told that God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud.

Chastity and humility are naturally followed by patience. The "natural" or "fallen" man is impatient, for being blind to himself he is quick to judge and to condemn others. Having but a broken, incomplete, and distorted knowledge of everything, he measures all things by his tastes and his ideas. Being indifferent to everyone except himself, he wants life to be successful right here and now. Patience, however, is truly a divine virtue. God is patient not because He is "indulgent," but because He sees the depth of all that exists, because the inner reality of things, which in our blindness we do not see, is open to Him. The closer we come to God, the more patient we grow and the more we reflect that infinite respect for all beings which is the proper quality of God.

Finally, the crown and fruit of all virtues, of all growth and effort, is love -- that love which, as we have already said, can be given by God alone--the gift which is the goal of all spiritual preparation and practice.

All this is summarized and brought together in the concluding petition of the Lenten prayer in which we ask, "to see my own errors and not to judge my brother." For ultimately there is but one danger: pride. Pride is the source of evil, and all evil is pride. Yet it is not enough for me to see my own errors, for even this apparent virtue can be turned into pride. Spiritual writings are full of warnings against the subtle forms of pseudo-piety which, in reality, under the cover of humility and self-accusation can lead to a truly demonic pride. But when we "see our own errors" and "do not judge our brothers," when, in other terms, chastity, humility, patience, and love are but one in us, then and only then the ultimate enemy--pride--will be destroyed in us.

After each petition of the prayer, we make a prostration. Prostrations are not limited to the Prayer of St. Ephrem but constitute one of the distinctive characteristics of the entire Lenten worship. Here, however, their meaning is disclosed best of all. In the long and difficult effort of spiritual recovery, the Church does not separate the soul from the body. The whole man has fallen away from God; the whole man is to be restored; the whole man is to return. The catastrophe of sin lies precisely in the victory of the flesh -- the animal, the irrational, the lust in us -- over the spiritual and the divine. But the body is glorious; the body is holy, so holy that God Himself "became flesh."

Salvation and repentance then are not contempt for the body or neglect of it, but restoration of the body to its real function as the expression and the life of spirit, as the temple of the priceless human soul. Christian asceticism is a fight, not against but for the body. For this reason, the whole man - soul and body - repents. The body participates in the prayer of the soul just as the soul prays through and in the body. Prostrations, the "psycho-somatic" sign of repentance and humility, of adoration and obedience, are thus the Lenten rite par excellence.

Quotes

St. Moses the Strong -

You fast, but Satan does not eat. You labor fervently, but Satan never sleeps. The only dimension with which you can outperform Satan is by acquiring humility, for Satan has no humility.

St. John Chrysostom –

The Saints were not Saints because they never erred, but because they never persisted in their errors; they fell, but they arose, they sinned, but they repented, they went astray, they returned.

St. Theophan the Recluse -

Every Christian has the power to heal infirmities; not of others, but his own, and not of the body, but of the soul, that is, sins & sinful habit, and to cast out devils, rejecting evil thoughts sown by them, and extinguishing the passions enflamed by them.

Announcements

- **God Grant you Many Years!** Congratulations to the North family on the birth of their baby girl, Ellie. She was born February 13th.
- A new Kinetico water system will be installed this Wednesday, March 5th at the church. This is a reverse osmosis system that will provide the church with drinking water.
- Sand-blasting and painting of the cupola will be done on March 8th and March 9th. See John Pound for more details.

God Grant you many years!

Birthdays

Unice Alcarraz 3/10

Lukah Graham 3/19

Edward Christopher Jacobs 3/19

Brandon Barahona 3/25

2025 Monthly Donations for Church Votive Candles

The church uses 12 hour - 51% Beeswax votives, which are a cleaner burning candle and protect the church walls from soot. The approximate monthly cost of these votives for weekend Vespers & Divine Liturgy is \$100.00 per month. If you would like to donate (as a memorial, thanksgiving, or just to donate), please see David Bartos. Thank you!

March – Open

March Lent - Anonymous

April – Open

April Lent - Open

Holy Week/Pascha - Anonymous

May - Anonymous

June - Open

July – Open

August – Open

August Feast Days - Open

September - Open

October - Open

November – Open

December – Open

December Feast Days – Open

Lent/Holy Week/Pascha Calendar

For planning purposes, the calendar is now available for the entire Lenten season through Pascha Sunday. This calendar is also online at www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

tithe.ly.com

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

Prayer Requests

Oniko (Anna) and baby Anastasia
Anne and Scott Peatross
Annette Bartos – David Bartos’ sister
Robert (John) Forster
Robert Kozera
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,
Roman, Mykola
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know if there is anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 3 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Tone 6 Kontakion *(from the Lenten Triodion)*

O Master, Teacher of wisdom,
Bestower of virtue,
Who teachest the thoughtless and protectest the poor,
strengthen and enlighten my heart!
O Word of the Father,
let me not restrain my mouth from crying to Thee:
“Have mercy on me, a transgressor,//
O merciful Lord!”

Tone 8 Prokeimenon *(from the Lenten Triodion)*

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! *(Ps. 75:10a)*
V. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

Romans 13:11-14:4 (Epistle)

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who

are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Tone 6

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High. (Ps. 91:1)

V. To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night. (Ps. 91:2a)

Matthew 6:14-21 (Gospel)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

14. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Again, He teaches us not to remember wrongs. He reminds us of the Father so that we might revere Him, since we are the children of such a Father, and not act as fierce beasts, refusing to forgive.

15. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. God, Who is meek, hates nothing more than cruelty.

16. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

"Disfigurement of the face" is an artificial discoloration of the face, painting

it pale, so that one does not appear as he really is, but feigns mournfulness.

17-18. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Men of old would anoint themselves with oil after bathing as a mark of their joy and well-being. So, you also, O reader, should appear joyful when you fast. The oil used to anoint we also understand to mean almsgiving. Our Head is Christ, which we should anoint with deeds of mercy; and our face, that is our senses, we should wash with tears of repentance.

19-21. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Having first cast out the sickness of vainglory by what He said before, now He speaks about non-possessiveness. For men possess more than they need because of vainglory. He shows how unprofitable earthly treasure is: moth and corruption consume food and clothing, and thieves steal gold and silver. And then, so that no one should say to Him that not all treasure is stolen, Jesus says, even if nothing is lost in this manner, are you not wretched for being nailed down by your worries over wealth? This is why He says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

Reader: Psalm 104

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.

Hear me, O Lord.

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.

Receive the voice of my prayer,

when I call upon Thee.//

Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer arise

in Thy sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice.//

Hear me, O Lord.

Tone 2 *(from the Lenten Triodion, by Joseph) (Joseph of Arimathea)*

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence,
as we follow the divine path of pure fasting!
With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord, Who saves us!
Let us put an end to anger, crying out:
“Save us for we have sinned against Thee!
Save us, O Christ our King, as Thou didst save the men of Nineveh,//
and make us partakers of Thy heavenly Kingdom, O compassionate One!”

When I think of my deeds, O Lord,
I am filled with despair,
and know that I am worthy of every torment.
I have despised Thy commandments, O Savior.
I have spent my life as a prodigal.
I pray to Thee, O only merciful One:
“Cleanse me by repentance,
enlighten me through prayers and fasting,//
and despise me not, O most gracious Benefactor of all!”

Let us begin the fast with joy!
Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!
Let us cleanse our soul and cleanse our flesh!
Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!
Let us rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and fulfill them in love,
that we all may see the Passion of Christ our God,//
and rejoice in spirit at the holy Pascha!

Rejoice, O strange and wonderful report, O chaste Virgin;
rejoice, holy tree of Paradise, planted by God;
rejoice, blotting out of evil demons;
rejoice, two-edged sword, beheading the enemy by thy strange and
marvelous birth-giving!
O Maiden, all-holy and supremely blameless,//
call us back, who are in exile.

O Gladsome Light

O Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory of the Immortal Father, Heavenly, Holy,
Blessed Jesus Christ. Now we have come to the setting of the sun and
behold the light of evening. We praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For
meet it is at all times to worship Thee with voices of praise, O Son of God
and Giver of Life, therefore all the world doth glorify Thee.

Tone 8 Great Lenten Prokeimenon

Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: / hear me
speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it! *(Ps. 68:21-22a)*

V. Thy salvation, O God, has upheld me! (Ps. 68:34b)

V. Let the poor see and be glad! (Ps. 68:37a)

V. Seek God, and your soul shall live! (Ps. 68:37b)

✠**The Great Fast Begins**✠

*(The vestments of the clergy and servers and the altar cloths are changed
from light to dark. The Royal Doors are closed. At the Litany, the choir begins
using the Lenten melody in the responses.)*

Reader chants, slower than usual: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night
without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and
glorified be Thy name for ever. Amen. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as
we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy
statues. Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy
commandments. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy
precepts. Thy mercy, O Lord, endures forever. O despise not the work of Thy
hands. To Thee belongs worship. To Thee belongs praise. To Thee belongs
glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

Aposticha

Tone 4 Idiomelon *(from the Lenten Triodion)*

Thy grace hath shone forth, O Lord:

the grace which illuminates our soul.

This is the acceptable time!

This is the time of repentance!

Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light,
that passing through the Fast as through a great sea
we may reach the Resurrection on the third day//
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls.

*V. To Thee I lift up mine eyes, O Thou Who art enthroned in the
heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their
master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our
eyes look to the Lord our God, till He have mercy upon us.*

(Ps 122:1-2)

(Repeat: "Thy grace hath shone forth, O Lord...")

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud. (Ps. 122:3-4)

Tone 4 (for the Martyrs)

Thou art glorified
in the memory of Thy saints, O Christ God.//
At their supplications, send down on us Thy great mercy!

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

Tone 4 (from the Lenten Triodion)

The angelic hosts glorify thee, O Mother of God,
for thou gavest birth to God,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
Who, by His own desire, created the angelic hosts out of nothing.
Beseech Him to deliver from corruption and to enlighten//
the souls of those who rightly praise thee, O most pure one!

St. Symeon's Prayer

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

Reader: Trisagion Prayers

Tone 8 The Lenten Troparia

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace: the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb; //
for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

O Baptiser of Christ, remember us all,
that we may be delivered from our iniquities;//
for to thee is given grace to intercede for us!

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Intercede for us, O holy Apostles and all the saints,
that we may be delivered from perils and sorrows;//
for we have acquired you as fervent intercessors before the Savior!

Beneath thy compassion we take refuge, O Theotokos.
Do not despise our supplications in adversity;//
but deliver us from perils, O only pure and only blessed one!

Prayer of St. Ephraim

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. (Prostration)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. (Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother; For Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen (Prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (x12)

(Then follows the ceremony of mutual forgiveness. The priest stands beside the analogion, and the faithful come up one by one, before the priest, and saying: Forgive me, a sinner. The priest, saying the same words; and then the other receives his blessing and kisses his hand. After receiving the priest's blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of one another, making a line around the church.)