



Great Lent

St Petka Serbian Orthodox Church
Children's Sunday School

What is Great Lent

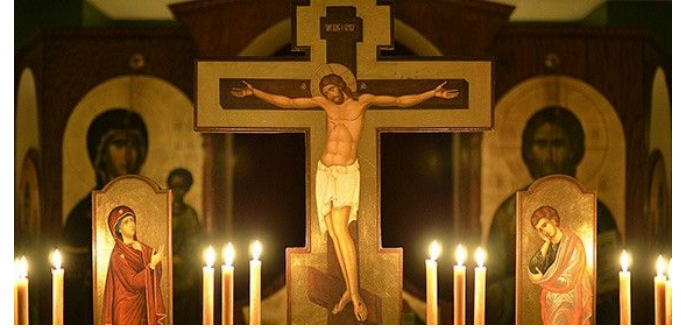
In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent marks the 40 days leading to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After 40 Days, we enter the Holy Week which is the time when Jesus Christ undergoes His Passions, is crucified and dies on the cross leading to His Resurrection known as “Easter” / Pascha.

Lent is a time for prayer, repentance, good-will, fasting and drawing closer to God.

This Year in 2024, Great Lent begins on March 18th to April 28th (Palm Sunday).

Easter Pascha is on Holy Sunday May 5th.



What we should do during Lent?

Fasting

- This is when we don't eat certain foods, particularly meat & dairy products and spiritual passions that are tempting to our soul (like partying, watching bad movies, or lying).
- We do this to show our obedience to God, to train our discipline to follow His Will, and to prepare ourselves to partake in Holy Communion.

Prayer

- During Lent, we should focus on praying more and keeping God and His Saints in our thoughts and daily lives; to give thanks, to ask for aid and forgiveness.
- Try to remind yourself to at least say a prayer in the morning when you wake up and before you go to bed as well as before you eating meals (Remember you can freely pray **anytime**).

Almsgiving / Charity

- To give alms means to be charitable and to help other people with things they need.
- During Lent, try to be observant of those in need but be kind and remember not to judge them.

Repentance & Self-Improvement

- To ask for forgiveness from God and seek to be better Christians.
- If you have a particular trouble, we confess this to the Priest to help us overcome our sins.



Forgiveness Sunday

"The Lord said, 'If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'"

(Matthew 6:14-15)

The Sunday before Great Lent begins is known as Forgiveness Sunday.

On this day, we are encouraged as Christians to turn to our family, our friends, and even our enemies and to ask both forgiveness for wronging them and to forgive them for their wrongdoings.

God wants us to forgive each other so we can also be forgiven.

Let Your Light Shine

"Nothing makes us so like God, as our readiness to forgive the wicked and wrongdoer."

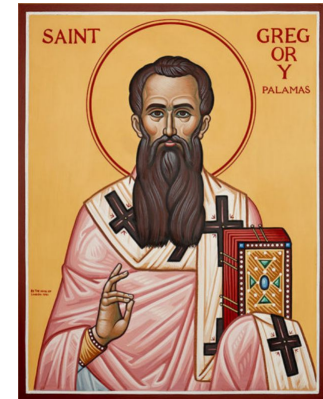
(Saint John Chrysostom)



The Weeks of Great Lent

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT - This Sunday is dedicated to the restoration of icons to the churches in 843 A.D. For 150 years prior to this, iconography was banned during this period known as the Iconoclasm and iconographer is were persecuted. Empress Theodora, a Christian, became the ruler of Constantinople and restored icons to their proper place of worship in the Church. This is called the Triumph of Orthodoxy. A procession of icons during the Liturgy commemorates this triumph.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT– We remember St. Gregory of Palamas, who taught that we need to pray with our hearts. We must pray to God with quietness and stillness, known as Hesychasm. This is difficult for us to do, for our thoughts wander, and we think of things we need to do. St. Gregory said we need to share our inability to control our thoughts with God and to continue practicing that stillness which brings us closer to God.



The Weeks of Great Lent cont.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT: This is called the Veneration of the Cross. It is the midpoint of Lent. The priest leads the procession of the cross during the Liturgy. The gospel reading of this Sunday says it all: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”. (Mark 8:34 – 9:1) Taking up the cross challenges us to deny selfishness and recognize our duty to help others.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: We recall St. John Climacus, who describe the stages of spiritual life. He said that during Lent we must keep our eyes on repentance and grow in love, holiness, and goodness

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT: St. Mary of Egypt, after years of the sinful life, converted to Christianity. Hers is a story of repentance and true conversion to God. During Lent, she is a symbol of our need to put away those things that have kept us from God and to begin a new life in Christ.



Holy Week - Palm Sunday

PALM SUNDAY – Jesus entered Jerusalem and was greeted enthusiastically by the crowds waving palms who said, “Blessed is He who comes in the Lord's name.”

We celebrate this day by worshipping this holy day at Church together and handing out either palm branches (or in our tradition, willow branches) in honor of Christ joyous time entering Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday marks the ending of Great Lent and the beginning of Holy Week leading up to Pascha



The Holy Week

Each day of Holy Week commemorates the significances leading to Christ's Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection.

HOLY MONDAY - We read the Story of Joseph preparing us to how it relates to Christ's Story.

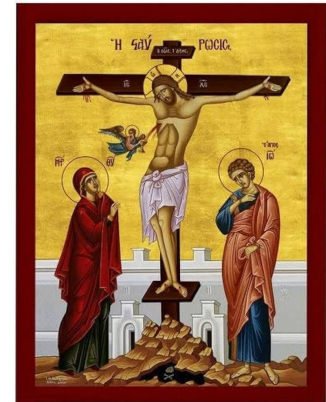
HOLY TUESDAY - Parable of the Ten Virgins who anointed Christ in preparation and were rewarded.

HOLY WEDNESDAY - Where the Priest anoints us with Holy Unction (Oil) offered for the healing of soul and body and for the forgiveness of sins.

HOLY THURSDAY- Thursday morning begins with a Vespers Divine Liturgy commemorating the Mystical Supper where the First Communion was served before Christ undergoes His Passions and Suffering.

HOLY FRIDAY - On Good Friday we commemorate when Jesus Christ dies on the Cross for the sins of Humanity. It a solemn day with strict fasting and prayer.

HOLY SATURDAY - This day is a day of hope and waiting as we anticipate Christ's Resurrection.



Easter Pascha - The Resurrection

Beginning at Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

This is the Holiest Day for all Christians and why we have prepared ourselves throughout Great Lent through fasting, prayer, repentance, and almsgiving for this joyous Day.

During Lent, remember to look forward to Pascha and Christ's Resurrection.

