

# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 5 No. 2.3

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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FEBRUARY 21, 2016

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN & THE PHARISEE

POST-FESTIVE OF ENCOUNTER

## PARISH CALENDAR

Sun. Feb. 21 **Sunday of the Publican & the Pharisee.** Post-festive of Encounter.  
Great-martyr Theodore Stratelates.  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets  
*Parish Board meets*

*No Fasting This Week*

Sun., Feb. 28 **Sunday of the Prodigal Son.**  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets.  
*Church School meets*

Wed., Mar. 2 Bishop Leo the Great of Rome.  
8:00 AM *Pirohi Prep*

Thu., Mar. 3 Apostle Archippus et al of the 70.  
8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

Fri., Mar. 4 Bishop Leo of Catania  
10 AM – 3 PM *Pirohi Sale*

SAT., MAR. 5 1<sup>ST</sup> ALL SOULS SATURDAY  
9 AM Divine Liturgy & Reading of Hramoty.

Sun., Mar. 6 **Meat-Fare Sunday.** Martyrs of Eugenia.  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

**Confessions** are available before Divine Liturgy.

## LENTEN SERVICES

ALL SOULS SATURDAYS: Sat., Mar. 5. The first All-Souls Saturday, when we pray for our deceased loved ones is coming up soon. If you would like to have your deceased loved ones remembered, or if you have changes from last year, please write down your list and get it to me before Saturday, March 5.

*All Souls Services:* Last year, I changed the services celebrated for the deceased for the 5 All Souls Saturdays. Because of lack of attendance, I was forced to replace Saturday Divine Liturgy with Friday night Vespers for the Deceased for some of those Saturdays. The Hramoty (List) of the deceased is read at every service. The Vespers for the Deceased is an old, traditional service created specifically for the All-Souls Saturdays during Lent, which is why we are using it. This is the list of All-Souls Saturdays and services:

1<sup>st</sup> All-Souls: Sat., Mar. 5, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

2<sup>nd</sup> All-Souls: Fri., Mar. 25, 6 PM Vespers for Deceased.

3<sup>rd</sup> All-Souls: Fri., Apr. 1, 6 PM Vespers for Deceased.

4<sup>th</sup> All-Souls: Fri., Apr. 8, 6 PM Vespers for Deceased.

5<sup>th</sup> All-Souls: Sat., Jun 18, 9 AM Divine Liturgy.

## FASTING

**No Fasting** – this week, of the Publican and the Pharisee, Feb. 21 – Feb. 27.

**Great Lent** begins Monday, March 14. Lenten Fasting rules are laid out further in the bulletin.

## PEOPLE STUFF

*Please remember in your prayers:*

*Living:* Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Stephanie Bonk. Owen Bonn. Gloria Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert Hawley. Madelyn Hodanich. Johnny Huniyack. Lorraine Kacaba. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Rose Markiewicz. Theresa Niester. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. Gary Wassel.

*At Home:* Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. Anna Senich.

*Assisted Living Homes:* Julie Roberts. Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski. Dolores Naglak. Mary Kneiss.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Breadbasket of NEPA:** Donation boxes are in the hall.

## PARISH FUND RAISERS

**Pirohi Sales:** *Thanks* to all who helped out this past week. Next sale is Friday, March 4, with the usual workdays of Wednesday and Thursday. See Parish Calendar.

**Easter Kolači Sale!** The Men's Club is now taking orders for their famous Kolači. Rolls are only \$8.00 each. Available flavors: Nut, Poppyseed, Lekvar, Apricot, Raspberry Coconut. *Pick-up Date:* Friday, March 18, 10 AM to 3 PM. To order, call 570-344-1522 and leave a message with your order. Order soon!!!

## PARISH STUFF

**Altar Society News:** The Altar Society is having a prepackaged cookie sale/bake sale on Friday March 18th along with the Men's Club nut roll sale. We are asking for baked good donations from all parishioners, including fudge, candy, Pascha Breads, Easter type cookies, etc...

Please contact Carol Pugh ([toots638@comcast.net](mailto:toots638@comcast.net), 489-2321) with your donation. Cookies will be \$9.00 a container.

**Parish Board** meets today.

**Church School** meets next Sunday, February 28.

## YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH

Feb. 14, 2016

\$ 371.00	General Collection
\$ 10.00	1st Sunday
\$ 90.00	7 Day Light
\$ 29.00	Holy Days
\$ 13.00	Taper Candles

**\$ 513.00 Total Collection**

*Renovation Donations to date:* \$1000.

**Diocesan Constitution and Bylaws:** This week we received in the mail the following message from Bishop Gregory dated Feb 10, 2016:

“Please find enclosed the most recent printing of the Constitution and Laws of the Diocese, with Amendments ratified by Diocesan Councils since the last printing in 1996 through the XXII Diocesan Council-Sobor in 2013.

These are submitted to you in simple photocopy form, as a By Laws Committee is being formed that will submit recommended changes to these by laws, including canonical changes, for your perusal prior to the XXIII Council-Sobor this year. Once ratified, a formal printed copy will be submitted to you.

With prayerful regards, I remain sincerely, Working in His Vineyard, Bishop Gregory.”

A number of copies of the Diocesan By Laws have been printed and made available for the Parish Board. A few more copies have been printed and placed in the church vestibule for anyone who wants one. If we need more, we will print more.

## FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

**Orthodox Speaking Series:** presenting *Metropolitan Kallistos Ware* who will be giving a lecture on "The Unchanging Gospel in an Ever-Changing Culture." **Streaming Live on Saturday, March 5, 2016,** from North Park University of Chicago, IL.

The schedule for this 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Event: 10 AM to Noon 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Noon Lunch. 1 PM to 3 PM 2<sup>nd</sup> Session.

There will be 3 respondents to the lecture:

Father John Behr, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary; Dr. Hauna Ondrey, North Park University; Dr. Marcus Pleasted, Marquette University. Moderator is Professor Nassif, Professor of Biblical Studies North Park University (Main planner for event)

Please note that this event will be "live streamed" for all who are not able to come, but wish to see the event live, and to *possibly be part of the audience during the Q/A session* with Metropolitan Kallistos.

Deacon Peter Sodini of St Michael's Church in Niles, IL is a member of the steering committee at North Park University of Chicago, IL for the Orthodox Speaking Series which is funded by the Kulis Foundation.

All are encouraged to tune in. Further information can be found here: <http://www.northpark.edu/orthodox>. Please feel free to contact Fr. Deacon Peter directly (pesodini@msn.com).

**Lenten Pizza and Soup Sale:** St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St. Pittston, Pa. 18640 is having a "PIZZA & SOUP SALE" for Lent. We will offer Old Forge Style Baked (\$12) or Unbaked (\$10). Add \$1 extra for onions. Each week we will offer a soup of the week at \$8.00 per qt. Pre-order by Tues. Feb. 10 for Ash Wednesday or by Thursday at 570-905-7387 - Pick up will be from 4-7pm on Ash Wednesday and the following Fridays during Lent. Soup of the week is Homemade (Manhattan) Clam Chowder. All proceeds will benefit the Church.

**Ham Bingo** The parishioners of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church are sponsoring their annual Ham Bingo on March 13, 2016 at 1 p.m. The event will be held in the church hall at 320 Vine St, Old Forge PA. Theme baskets, door prizes, and various bingo specials will be available throughout the afternoon. The kitchen opens at 11am. A variety of food items and refreshments will be available. The church will also sponsor a bake sale during the bingo. Admission is \$3.00

**Meatless Meal for Lent:** *A Baked Haddock Fish Dinner* at SS. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church, Olyphant, PA., on Friday, March 18, 2016 being held at the Regal Room (216 Lackawanna Ave.) in Olyphant, PA from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., "sit down or take out" Call 580-383-9487 for reservations, Pre-sold dinners are \$13.00 per ticket. Web site: stcyriils.weconnect.com Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor (570-489-2271)

## EASTERN REGION DIOCESAN LENTEN RETREAT SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016

9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

AT

THE CONFERENCE CENTER AT VALLEY  
FORGE

1485 VALLEY FORGE ROAD  
PHOENIXVILLE, PA

**COST TO ATTEND (INCLUDES LUNCH):**

**\$20.00 ADULTS / TEENS**

**\$7.00 (AGES 6 TO 12)**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:**

**APRIL 2, 2016**

CONTACT

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NATIONAL A.C.R.Y**

*Sign Up Sheet is in the hall. Please sign up and  
we will send in one form for everyone.*

*All are encouraged to attend.*

**TRIP TO UKRAINE!** St. Vladimir Ukrainian Greek Catholic Parish of Scranton is sponsoring a trip to Ukraine from September 8 to 20, 2016. The 13 day itinerary will include Kyiv, Lviv, Yaremche in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, Ivano Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Podilsky, Zarvanytsia [the Lourdes of Western Ukraine] and Ternopil. Included are visits to centuries old sacred sites such as the Pecherska Lavra/Monastery of the Caves, Sunday Divine Liturgy at the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kyiv and St. George Ukrainian Greek Catholic Cathedral in Lviv, the Maidan Memorial, Dnister riverboat cruise, Lviv Opera House, etc.

Tour land cost twin per person is \$2,290. Air fare is estimated to be approximately \$990. For full details contact Jean Stasyszyn Pedley at 570 698-6838 or Scope Travel at 201 463-4656.

**Open House:** St. Mary's Villa, One Pioneer Place, Elmhurst Twp., 18444, will be hosting an Open House on Saturday, 3/5 8am - 4pm. Details are on the poster in the hall.

**International Dinner:** St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 320 Mifflin Ave., Scranton, Pa. is honoring the "Irish" on Thursday March 10, 2016. Seatings are 5:30 and 6:30pm. Reservations can be made by March 7 at 570.343.5151. The price for this culinary delight is only \$20.00 per person. The menu will start with a Emerald Isle Spring Mix Salad with tomato, craisins, candied almonds, feta cheese and topped with a raspberry vinaigrette. The Entree will be County Cork Ham & Cabbage served with Parsley Broiled Spuds and side vegetable. Irish Soda bread will accompany the meal and there will be a Special Irish Dessert Surprise. Enjoy a cold Guinness or a delicious, hot Irish Coffee for only \$5.00. Coffee, Tea, Water, Soda are included and a cash bar is available.

### THE RULES OF FASTING FOR LENT

excerpt from *The Lenten Triodion* by Abp Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary, London: Faber & Faber, 1978. Pp. 33-37. Brief commentary at the end by Fr. Nik. Note: anything in *brackets []* is an addition by Fr. Nik. Updated February 20, 2016.

Within the developed pattern of Lent, what precisely do the rules of fasting demand? Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there ever been exact uniformity, but most Orthodox authorities agree on the following rules:

I. During the week between the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and that of the Prodigal Son, there is a general dispensation from all fasting. Meat and animal products may be eaten even on Wednesday and Friday.

II. In the following week [*the week before Meat-Fare Sunday*], often called "Meat-Fare Week," the usual fast is kept on Wednesday and Friday. Otherwise there is no special fasting.

III. In the week before Lent, meat is forbidden, but eggs, cheese and other dairy products may be eaten on all days, including Wednesday and Friday.

IV. On weekdays (Monday through Friday inclusive) during the seven weeks of Lent, there are restrictions both on the number of meals taken daily and on the types of food permitted; but when a meal is allowed, there is no fixed limitation on the quantity of food to be eaten.

A) On weekdays in the First Week [*often called "Clean Week"*], fasting is particularly severe. According to the strict observance, in the course of the five initial days of Lent, only two meals are

eaten, one on Wednesday and one on Friday, in both cases after the Liturgy of the Presanctified. On the other three days, those who have the strength are encouraged to keep an absolute fast; those for whom this proves impracticable may eat on Tuesday and Thursday (but not, if possible, on Monday), in the evening after Vespers, when they may take bread and water, or perhaps tea or fruit-juice, but not a cooked meal. It should be added at once that in practice today these rules are commonly relaxed. At the meals on Wednesday and Friday 'xerophagy' [*what we call Strict Fast*] is prescribed. Literally this means 'dry eating.' Strictly interpreted, it signifies that we may eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread and honey. In practice [*in Mediterranean countries*] octopus and shell-fish are also allowed on days of xerophagy [*NOTE: this probably comes from a time when shell-fish were not considered delicacies as such, but rather were 'poor man's food.'* Also, shell-fish were not considered to be animals since they did not have a back-bone.]; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil, not made from olives [*are allowed*]. But the following categories of food are definitely excluded:

- 1) meat;
- 2) Animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, etc.).
- 3) fish (i.e., fish with backbones)
- 4) oil (i.e. olive oil) and wine (i.e. all alcoholic drinks).

B) On weekdays (Monday through Friday inclusive) in the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks, one meal a day is permitted, to be taken in the afternoon following Vespers, and at this one meal xerophagy [*Strict Fast*] is to be observed.

C) Holy Week.

- 1) On the first three days there is one meal each day, with xerophagy [*Strict Fast*]; but some try to keep a complete fast on these days, or else they eat only uncooked food, as on the opening days of the first week.
- 2) On Holy Thursday one meal is eaten, with wine and oil (i.e. olive oil) [*after the Divine*

*Liturgy*].

3) On Great Friday those who have the strength follow the practice of the early Church and keep a total fast. Those unable to do this may eat bread, with a little water, tea or fruit-juice, but not until sunset, or at any rate not until after the veneration of the Shroud at Vespers.

4) On Holy Saturday there is in principle no meal, since according to the ancient practice after the end of the Liturgy of St. Basil the faithful remained in the church for the reading of the Acts of the Apostles, and for their sustenance were given a little bread and dried fruit, with a cup of wine. If, as usually happens now, they return home for a meal, they may use wine but not oil; for on this one Saturday, alone among the Saturdays of the year, olive oil is not permitted.

V. The rule of xerophagy [*Strict Fast*] is relaxed on the following days:

A) On Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, with the exception of Holy Saturday, two main meals may be taken in the usual way [i.e., cooked], around mid-day and in the evening, with wine and olive oil; but meat, animal products and fish are not allowed.

B) On the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25/April 7) and on Palm Sunday, fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but meat and animal products are not allowed. If the Annunciation falls on the first four days of Holy Week, wine and oil are permitted but not fish. If it falls on Great Friday or Holy Saturday, wine is permitted, but not fish or oil.

C) [*Wine and oil are permitted on certain days because they are a minor feast day and because of special services which are celebrated on that day. The rule would ordinarily apply only if a person is attending the services for that day. These days include the following:*]

1) If they fall on a weekday in the second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth week:

Feb. 24/Mar. 8, 1st & 2nd Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist. Mar. 9/22, Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste. Mar. 24/Apr. 6, Forefeast of the Annunciation. Mar. 26/Apr. 8, Synaxis

of the Archangel Gabriel. Patronal Feast of the Parish if it falls during this time.

2) The Wednesday and Thursday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week, because of the Vigil for the Great Canon of Andrew of Crete [*a special Matins service which includes over 300 (or 900 in some places) full prostrations.*]

3) Wine is allowed—and, according to some authorities, oil as well—on Friday of the same week, because of the vigil for the Akathistos Hymn [*another special service*].

## COMMENTARY ON FASTING RULES

by Fr. Nicholas Ferencz

So, what does all of this mean? Is it just a lot of hocus-pocus, making up arcane rules for the sake of making rules? Have we become Pharisees in our observance of the Law?

First, note what Archbishop Kallistos says at the beginning of this excerpt: “Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there ever been exact uniformity, but most Orthodox authorities agree on the following rules . . .” The rules just described are the most common rules from all different areas of the Orthodox world, and minor variations exist everywhere. This shows that the rules were not just made up and imposed on people, but rather developed over centuries from the practice of *the people themselves*.

### I. DIFFERENCES IN FASTING

The average person tends to fast the same way every day of Lent. The positive aspect of this is that it is relatively simple to make sure that we fast. The down side is that fasting in this way can become as monotonous and mindless as not fasting. However, you will notice that the rules offer a great variety in fasting practice—some days much more, some days much less. Further, the rules specify two *different meanings of fasting: abstinence and fasting.*

*Abstinence* means not eating certain foods. This is what most people mean when they say they are “fasting.”

*Fasting* mean specifically “not eating.” So “fasting” is actually not eating at all, or eating much less in quantity.

We can *fast* without *abstaining*, and vice-versa. The fast of Great Lent calls us *to do both!* As you look

at the rules, you will notice that there are rules about *fasting* and different rules about *abstinence*.

*Fasting rules* tell us how many times a day we can eat, and when we should eat. They also state or imply *how much* we should eat—after all, how many cold, boiled potatoes can you down in one sitting!

*Abstinence rules* tell us what we can eat, on any given day. There are four basic levels of abstinence (which we still call fasting), each adding more restrictions to the one above:

1. [lowest] No meat or meat products
2. No fish with backbones (*All shellfish are permitted*)
3. No dairy, including eggs
4. No wine or oil (usually means olive oil. Some people include all oils or fats in this category, since the average American diet still does not usually use olive oil as a staple.)

## II. ATTITUDE IN FASTING.

The variety in type and amount of food, and the time of day to eat, is itself a part of the fasting rule. Fasting in the manner described is virtually a service of worship in itself, requiring the faster to *think, reflect, pray and consider carefully* each action, and then *doing it carefully and prayerfully*, just as we do when we pray and worship in church. This ritual can be very spiritually beneficial to one who truly wishes to enter into the spirit of Lent. The fasting rules then are not intended to be a burden, but a blessing. Nevertheless, following rules just for the sake of the rules is not only absurd, but sinful. As Archbishop Kallistos reminds us,

At all times it is essential to bear in mind that ‘you are not under the law but under grace’ [Rom 6:14], and that ‘the letter kills, but the spirit gives life’ [2Cor 3:6]. The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism; ‘for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ [Rom 14:17].

When fasting, therefore, we are called to remember that fasting, worship, praying, almsgiving (charity) and reception of the Holy Eucharist all go hand in hand. Each is as important as the other.

## III. EXCEPTIONS TO FASTING.

In the light of what we have seen above, if we see Lenten fasting as part and parcel of our daily life, we

can begin to understand the allowances made for lesser fasting rules. Again, Archbishop Kallistos notes:

Personal factors need to be taken into account, as for example the situation of an isolated Orthodox living in the same household as non-Orthodox, or obliged to take meals in a factory or a school cafeteria.

There are other exceptions to the rules which are built into the rule of the Church. Some common ones:

1. *Pregnancy*: Pregnant women are not permitted to fast, since their obligation to care for the welfare of their child far outweighs their efforts for personal spiritual growth (they must sacrifice their good for that of the child).

2. *Illness or Infirmary*. Likewise, those who are infirm or have specific medical needs must take care of their bodies by following their doctor’s prescribed diet.

3. *Age*: Sometimes the elderly or the very young may be exempted from some fasting because of physical weakness, although I have known 80 year olds who regularly fast more strictly than most and remain in very good health! Age therefore can be a factor in mitigating (lessening) the fast, but it is not a blanket free pass.

## IV. LOOKING FORWARD.

Finally, in practice, most people have not yet been able to follow the strict rules noted here in their everyday life. Everyone is at a different spiritual level and therefore can do more or less. This is why the Church makes only *very minimal requirements* that all people must follow. It allows each of us to find our own level of fasting, while encouraging us to try a little harder each year, hopefully doing more than we have done in the past as we continue to grow spiritually.

I have published this excerpt so that we can all get a first-hand look at the expectations of the Church which calls us to perfection in Jesus Christ. Perhaps we will compare our own practices of fasting against it and be encouraged to ‘raise the bar’ for ourselves this Lent. Perhaps it will stimulate some thought and conversation about the true meaning of living our Faith. May it at least help us to strive a little harder to “be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.”