

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 5 No. 4.2

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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APRIL 10, 2016

REMEMBERING ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun. Apr. 10 Remembering St. John Climacus.
Monks Hilarion and Stephen.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Men's Club meets.
Church School meets.
3:00 PM Lenten Vespers here. Fr. Bob preaching.

Wed., Apr. 13 Bishop Innocent Enlightener of Alaska
8:00 AM *Pirohi Prep*
5:30 PM Confessions
6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy

Thu., Apr. 14 Canon of St. Andrew of Crete. Nun
Mary of Egypt.
8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

Fri., Apr. 15 Monk Titus the Wonderworker
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM *Pirohi Sale*
5:30 PM Confessions
6:00 PM Paraklis

Sat., Apr. 16 Akathist Saturday.
Service for holy Mother Mary on Friday night.

Sun. Apr. 17 Remembering St. Mary of Egypt.
Monks Joseph and George.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Parish Board meets
3:00 PM Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist, Nesquehoning. Deacon Michael Azar preaching.

Confessions are available before Lenten services. See Parish Calendar for times.

LENTEN SERVICES

Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. We will celebrate this service **this Wednesday** at 6:00 PM.

Paraklis to Holy Mary Theotokos. We will celebrate this service on **Friday** at 6:00 PM.

This Saturday is Akathist Saturday, dedicated to our Most Holy Lady Mary Theotokos. We will celebrate Paraklis on **Friday evening** at 6:00 PM instead of the usual Akathist Service.

The **Deanery Lenten Mission**. Today at 3:00 PM here. We will celebrate **Lenten Vespers**, with Fr. Bob preaching.

FASTING

Great Lent. Diocesan Rules require that all must fast/abstain from Meat on all Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent. These are the rules for the Traditional Fast for

- Monday through Friday inclusive, 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.
 - A reminder: *strictly speaking*, Strict Fast means total abstinence from the following: meat, Animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, etc.). fish with backbones (shellfish are allowed) oil (i.e. olive oil) and wine (i.e. all alcoholic drinks).
- On Sunday and 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.

Rose Markiewicz. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigie.

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

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

DEANERY MISSION SCHEDULE

Revised and updated April 8, 2016.

Sun., Apr. 10 @ St. Nicholas, Scranton: 3:00 PM Lenten Vespers. Fr. Bob will be preaching.

Sun., Apr. 17 @ St. John the Baptist, Nesquehoning: 3:00 PM Lenten Vespers Deacon Michael Azar from St. George parish will be preaching.

Sun., Apr. 24 @ St. George, Taylor: 3:00 PM Vespers. Fr. Dan Vaskalis from St. Michael parish will be preaching.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH

April 3, 2016

\$ 529.00	General Collection
\$ 40.00	1st Sunday
\$ 50.00	7 Day Light
\$ 731.00	Pirohi
\$ 25.00	Holy Days
\$ 93.00	Church Dues
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$ 14.00	Taper Candles
\$ 132.00	Flowers
\$1621.00	Total Collection

Renovation Donations to date: \$1000

PARISH FUND RAISERS

Pirohi Sales: *Last Sale of the Season* is this Friday, April 15, with the usual workdays of Wednesday, April 13 and Thursday, April 14. See Parish Calendar. Everyone is welcome to come and help out!

If you want to order pirohi, you need to do so this week!

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA: Donation boxes are in the hall.

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.

PARISH STUFF

BISHOP GREGORY IS VISITING OUR PARISH! Bishop Gregory will be with us on ***Holy Tuesday, April 26***, to celebrate the ***Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts*** with us at **6:30 PM**. This is Bishop Gregory's first visit to our parish, and the first Episcopal Visit that we have had in a long time. Please put this date on your calendar and plan to be a part of this day!

Church School meets today.

Men's Club News:

◆ **Kolači for Sale** The Men's Club is offering their famous Kolači for Sale for our Easter. All five flavors will be available: nut, poppy, apricot, raspberry-coconut, etc. \$8.00 per roll. *You must order to get yours – there will be no extras available.* You can place your orders on the Order Sheet in the hall.

◆ Meeting is today.

Parish Board meets next Sunday.

Deanery Mission here April 10. Some items have already been donated for the fellowship supper after the Vespers. If you would like to donate something, please check out the list in the hall to see what we already have, and sign up for something else. You can also talk to Carol Pugh about how you can help for the dinner.

THE BEATITUDES

[from: *Those Whom God Calls Blessed,*

by Anthony M. Coniaris]

“When Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is at hand,” He was announcing that something new was going to happen, and everything was going to change because of it...This forms the background for the Beatitudes. To prepare people for the coming of the kingdom, Jesus began by saying that because the kingdom of God is coming, we must repent. We must start to live a different kind of life—the sanctified life of those for whom the kingdom has already come.

(refer to Matthew 5:3-12)

Verses 3 through 12 make up the Beatitudes...In Greek the word for blessed is *makarios*, the exact Greek word Jesus used in introducing each Beatitude. Thus, the Beatitudes, known in Greek as the *makarismoi*, describe the new life the disciple will experience when the Triune God comes to dwell in him or her. Christianity is not a philosophy taught by Jesus; it is a new life which He imparts to those who unite themselves to Him.

Some translations translate the word *makarios* or blessed, with a word that is a total mistranslation of *makarios*. They use the word “happy.” Happy comes

from a root word, meaning “chance.” Blessedness, however, is never dependent upon chance or luck. “Happy” refers to one whose sufficiency comes from chance or happenstance. The New Testament defines a person who is “blessed” as one who is God-sufficient, in whose heart the Triune God dwells. Outside circumstances do not affect the inner peace and poise of such a God-possessed person. By contrast, the “happy” person must depend on outer circumstances or happenstance to keep him smiling.

THE WAY TO BLESSEDNESS

Jesus describes the way to blessedness very specifically in the Beatitudes:

Poor in Spirit:

recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy without God and our spiritual wealth with Him.

Mourning:

realizing the awfulness of sin and being genuinely sorry for it.

Meek:

demonstrating self-control, or rather Christ-control, even when we are mistreated.

Hungry and thirsty for righteousness:

longing to be holy and pure.

Merciful:

showing mercy to others, just as God shows mercy to us.

Pure in heart:

being single-minded, pure and sincere in our devotion to Christ.

Peacemakers:

sharing the peace Christ offers, and promoting peace with one another.

Persecuted:

being willing to suffer for Jesus' sake.

For those who strive to keep the beatitudes, Jesus says, their blessedness causes them to be “the salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.”

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Camp Nazareth Raffle Tickets are now available in the Office in the Hall. They go pretty fast, so please see Nick Polanichka for yours!

CAMP NAZARETH CABIN BLESSING AND DEDICATION!

From the Diocese:

Dear Faithful,

All of us are invited to take part in the dedication of the newly renovated and expanded cabins at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. We are invited to the Service of Dedication which will take place at 10am on that day and then to the brunch which will be served in the Main Lodge following the dedication.

If you are able, plan on attending the festivities. We are grateful to God for many blessings including the blessing of our beloved Camp Nazareth and the ministry that takes place there. Come to enjoy the festivities and give thanks to God for what He has allowed us and blessed us to accomplish.

Please see the flyer attached to the bulletin and the RSVP portion of the flyer. Please note that reservations for the event must be received by May 3, 2016!! Hurry! Space is limited!

Camp Nazareth Family Camp 2016: Our Diocese is pleased to announce its fourth annual Family Camp at Camp Nazareth this year in conjunction with Family Day. The event is exactly what it sounds like. Families “camping” together in the Camp cabins and participating in a weekend of services, games, discussions, activities and challenges that are all designed to help families deepen their relationship with God and with one another.

This year’s theme – *“Not letting Orthodoxy be your Family’s Secret Identity”*. Our Family’s Orthodoxy is both Public and Private...sometimes our family has to be like Superman and sometimes like Clark Kent!!

Family Camp is scheduled for Friday, June 3 – Sunday, June 5, 2016.

We had a wonderful time together last year and we are looking forward to being together again this year. A variety of events and activities have been planned that will allow families to learn, have fun and pray together, and simply be together in the peaceful

environment of the Camp. With the newly renovated and expanded cabins, together with the new High and Low Ropes Course the Camp has even more to offer our families this year.

Don’t miss out on this opportunity for you and your family. Space is limited to the first 10 families, so please send in your registration forms soon. They are due by Friday, May 20, 2016 and can be found at the Camp website -- campnazareth.org

The Diocesan 3rd Annual Young Women’s Encounter will take place from Sunday June 26th to Wednesday June 29th, 2016. The YWE will be held at Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. Young women in our Diocese ages 12 - 18 are strongly encouraged to attend.

Please do not miss this wonderful opportunity for the young women of our Church and Diocese to gather with one another and grow in their faith. We ask for your prayers and support as we plan this event. With God’s help and your participation, we hope this event will continue to bless our wonderful young women.

Registration details are forthcoming on our Diocesan website acrod.org. Please register as soon as possible – Space is limited! For more information or if you have any questions please contact Pani Eleni Stagon at acrodywe@gmail.com.

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St., Pittston is having a **"TRUNK SALE"** on June 4th, 2016 in the Church Parking Lot. Clear your garage and sell your stuff without strangers at your house. Pack up your "junk" and throw it in the trunk and make dollars! We will open from 8am to 3pm; set-up at 7am. Pre-paid spots are only \$10.00 each. Limited Space available. 1st Come - 1st Served. No Refunds. Call today to reserve your spot! 570-905-7387. E-Mail - lindahando@hotmail.com. Rain Date is June 11th. Food will be available.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES CENTER OF FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESENTS *Upcoming Lectures and Events:*

- ◆ **YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: WISDOM FROM CHRISTIAN TRADITION FOR THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY.** Saturday, April 16, 2016 | 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Fordham Law School | Room 4-01 | 150 W. 62nd St. Lincoln Center Campus | Fordham

University | New York City. Co-sponsored with the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

- ◆ **IS THE POPE CATHOLIC? A CONVERSATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.** Tuesday, April 19, 2016 | 6:30 p.m. Pope Auditorium| Lowenstein Center | 113 W. 60th St. Lincoln Center Campus | Fordham University | New York City. Co-sponsored with Fordham Theology
- ◆ Other events are listed on the Calendar in the hall.

**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

TRACEY BILANIN

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Sign Up Sheet is in the hall. Please sign up and we will send in one form for everyone. All are encouraged to attend.

SUNDAY THEMES FOR GREAT LENT

While there is a popular notion about the unchanging nature of Orthodox liturgical practices, any study of history shows that Orthodox liturgical practice has undergone numerous and significant changes over history. One area where we can note significant change is the themes assigned to the

Sundays of Great Lent. The big change in Sunday Lenten themes begins in the 12th Century when Sundays of preparation were introduced into the liturgical practice. This somewhat further lengthened the time of Great Lent and these additional pre-Lenten Sundays found their way into the Triodion, the Liturgical book guiding Great Lent. According to Archimandrite Job Getcha in his book, *the Typicon Decoded* (p 38), The Ancient Triodia of the Orthodox Church had the following themes for the Sundays of Great Lent:

- 1] Sunday of the Holy Prophets
- 2] Sunday of the Prodigal Son
- 3] Publican and Pharisee
- 4] Good Samaritan
- 5] Rich man and Lazarus [*Week also ends with a Lazarus on Saturday - a different Lazarus but ties the theme together.*]
- 6] Palm Sunday

The themes were all based in Scripture. At some point, maybe about the 12th Century, the Gospel lessons associate with these themes were moved, some to the Sundays before Great Lent. In their place, a lectionary taken from Mark's Gospel became the determining factor for the Gospel lessons each Sunday of Lent.

The Lenten Triodia apparently underwent further change so that by the 14th Century new themes emerged to form the Contemporary Triodia. For one thing a pre-Lenten Preparatory Period was added to the Church Calendar. These are, for those in the Orthodox Church, the now familiar pre-Lenten Sunday themes:

- 1] Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee [*used to be the 3rd Sunday of Lent*]
- 2] Sunday of the Prodigal Son [*used to be the 2nd Sunday of Lent*]
- 3] Meatfare Sunday [*Gospel of the Last Judgment*]
- 4] Cheesefare Sunday [*How to Fast*]

The Meatfare and Cheesefare themes are not Gospel themes, but, of course, there are Gospel lessons on these Sundays (Last Judgment and fasting). The themes seem to reflect a more monastic development. One might say the Church began emphasizing more Lent and fasting as themes in their

own right. Some modern critics would say the emphasis moves away from Christianity to churchianity. The practice of the religion is being emphasized more in the Church's message.

The ancient themes of the Lenten Sundays which were displaced to before Lent, were replaced by the following themes in the contemporary Tiodia:

- 1] Sunday of Orthodoxy
- 2] St. Gregory Palamas
- 3] Veneration of the Cross
- 4] St. John Climacus
- 5] St. Mary of Egypt
- 6] Palm Sunday

One can see what is happening: the expansion of Great Lent by creating the Preparatory Sundays, and then transferring what were the original and ancient Lenten themes to the Preparatory Sundays. What in the ancient church were the main themes and emphases of Great Lent get moved to before Lent, as they are seen as really only preparing the faithful for Lent. Lent is about something else which the ancient themes no longer reflected. Scriptural/ Gospel themes for Great Lent are replaced by new Lenten themes which are mostly monastic.

It could be argued that the first two themes (Sunday of Orthodoxy/ Icons and Gregory Palamas) represent theological issues/ triumphs, but these were theological issues which had heavy monastic support. The replacement of the original Scriptural themes after the 12th Century with monastic themes is consistent with other liturgical changes that take place at the same time in Orthodoxy reflecting the ever increasing monastic influence over Orthodox liturgical practice.

[Editor's note: Fr. Ted does not mention here an interesting fact. When the Church changed the Sunday Readings of Lent (and so the theme for Sunday) to the present ones, it did not change the rest of the week. So, the hymns and services during the week during Lent (Presanctified Liturgy, Vespers, etc.) still keep the original theme. So, for instance, the 4th Week of Lent, which is the week after the ancient Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee still has that as its theme. All of the hymns and services that week talk about us being Pharisees or Publican. So the Gospel readings of Lent are not in sync with the Lenten services anymore.]

The use of the Markan lectionary in Great Lent strikes me as in some ways being more catechetical. The focus of them is on teaching, "who is Jesus?" That seems to me to be what the question both the Epistle and Gospel lessons is answering. But the monastic Sunday themes reflect the dominance monasticism had over Orthodox liturgical life, Orthodoxy spirituality and the Church itself at this point in Orthodoxy's history. The ancient "cathedral" rite and the liturgical practice which governed the non-monastic churches will disappear, and monastic practice will come to dominate the Orthodox Church.

There may be pastoral reasons why this occurred, but I don't know exactly why the changes occurred. Archimandrite Job's book explains the changes but doesn't tell us completely why the changes occurred. What is clear is that the unchanging nature of the Orthodox Church isn't its liturgical practice. One would hope the liturgical changes were done to try to preserve the unchanging theology and Gospel of the Church. What might be interesting for some future Great Council of the Church is to discuss the reasoning behind all of the liturgical changes which occurred beginning in the 12th Century that led in the next couple of centuries to the monastic take over of church life and practice. It would be good to discuss the disappeared cathedral rite and the "secular" parishes which once predominated in Orthodoxy. How can we best serve the contemporary membership of our Church? The Church's liturgical life has undergone great changes over time so there should be no reason why we can't discuss today what liturgical practice is best for the catechetical and evangelical work of the church in the 21st Century.

Fr. Ted Bobosh is a priest in the Orthodox Church in America. He has degrees from the Ohio State University, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Fordham University. He is the parish priest of St. Paul the Apostle Church in Dayton, OH.

Accessed from <https://frted.wordpress.com/>

2016/02/18/sunday-themes-for-great-lent/

April 8, 2016