

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 13, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT begins this Monday, March 14th. To prepare us for our journey toward Pascha, as is our Church's tradition, **we will ask forgiveness of one another** at the end of Divine Liturgy today.

BAKING ORDERS FOR THE WESTERN EASTER need to be in this week. Make sure you get your order forms to Betty Anderson.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES sponsored by the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches will begin on **Wednesday, March 16th at 6:00 pm** here at St. Nicholas. **We will be hosting the Lenten meal** following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on that evening. **Donations of prepared Lenten foods are needed as well as help with set up, serving and clean up** following the service. There will be a sign up sheet at the candle stand for donations. Please see Presvytera Maria or Chris Toda during coffee hour today! **ALSO**, persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon. You are also invited to remain for a "pot-luck" Lenten meal after that service.

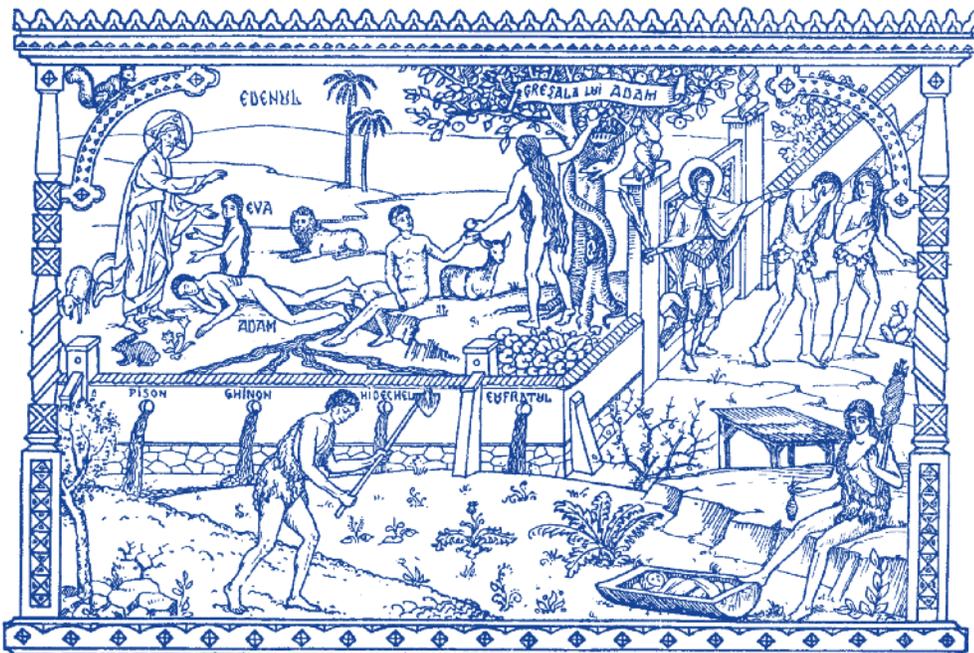
GREETERS TEAM 1

V. GERALD BELBA AND
MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:

KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY OF THE CASTING OUT OF ADAM & EVE FROM PARADISE

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 13:11-14:4 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21

(CHEESEFARE SUNDAY / FORGIVENESS SUNDAY)

TONE 8 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 8

THANKS TO THE BAKERS who worked yesterday, and regularly. God bless them!

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will be held each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent, beginning March 12th. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

TODAY IS MISSION SUNDAY. What better way to approach our journey toward Pascha than to pray for and support the Church's mission to share the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ with the world! **On March 13th** please say a prayer for Orthodox Missions and Orthodox Missionaries serving around the world, consider volunteering to serve as part of an Orthodox Mission Team, and support this eternal

work of the Church with a gift to the Mission Center. For more information or to get involved, visit www.ocmc.org, e-mail: missions@ocmc.org, or call 1-877-463-6784.

THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY is **March 20th**. All of the clergy and faithful of our area will gather at 6:00pm at St. George Cathedral to celebrate Great Vespers marking the Feast. Please plan on attending! Click here for more information.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, March 13 Mission Sunday
- Mon, March 14 Great Lent Begins
- Wed, March 16 PreSanctified Lit, St Nicholas, 6pm
- Sat, March 19 Vespers & Confession, 5pm
- Sun, March 20 Sun of Orthodoxy Vespers, St. George
- Wed, March 23 PreSanctified, St. Spyridon 6 pm
- Sat, April 2 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
- Sat, April 9 Electronics Recycling 9 am-2 pm
- Sun, April 24 Palm Sunday
- Sun, May 1 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

THE 2016 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT package has been mailed out. Please review the materials and prayerfully consider what your family is able to offer in support God's work in our parish and our larger community. Please return the form as soon as possible. If you did not receive the materials in the mail, they are available at the candle stand.

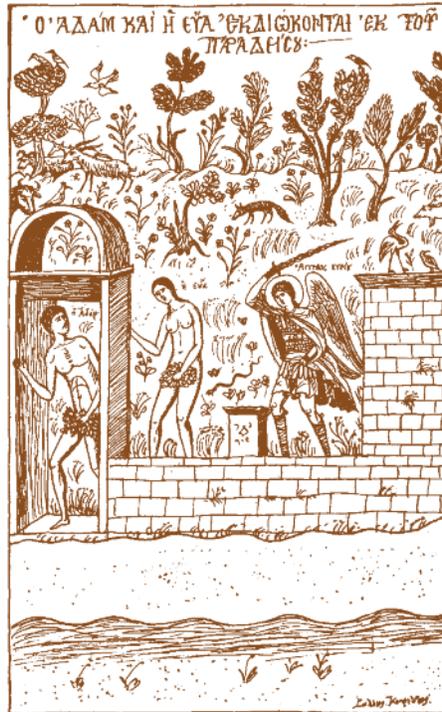
THE 2016 ARCHDIOCESAN YEAR-BOOK / ALMANAC has arrived and is available at the candles.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LEND AN EAR, LORD, AND ANSWER US, for we are poor and miserable! Look after our souls, for we are your friends; save your servants, O God, for we trust in you! Attend to our prayers, and show us a sign of your favor as we struggle for true repentance during this lenten season. Enable us to grow in the spirit of the prophets, to exercise the faith of the apostles, to win the nobility of the martyrs, to attain the wisdom of the fathers, and to imitate all the virtues of the saints, so that with them we may arrive at the paschal mysteries of your only Son.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.



SUNDAY OF THE CASTING OUT ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we

NAMEDAYS

March 3

Henricus, hermit martyr in Norway

Eric Lolo
Erik Mayer

March 9

The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

Mircea Nedelcu

March 17

St. Alexios the Man of God

Alex John Johnson
Alex Leo Toda

St. Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland

Padraic Donnchadh Peterson
Patricia Thanas

might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

FOR IF YOU FORGIVE OTHERS ...

THIS is last Sunday before beginning Great Lent. Today we remember the Casting out of Adam and Eve from Paradise — the price they paid for not obeying God and eating from the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sharing in their condition, we too feel the pain of living outside of Paradise. Our Lenten journey is meant to help us find our way back.

The Gospel reading for today (Matthew 6:14-21) is like a road map for that journey. We call today the “Sunday of Forgiveness.” In the opening verse of the Gospel lesson the Lord tells us: “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (v. 14). The first step on our Lenten journey is to forgive one another.

We have the custom on this day, as a necessary precondition for entering Lent, to go and ask forgiveness of each other, sealing our request with a holy kiss. It is a powerful ritual. In asking our loved ones to forgive us the small and large hurts that we might have inflicted on them during the past year, we can lift a weight from our shoulders, lightening our load for the journey. Asking and giving forgiveness from those friends and acquaintances who we might have truly offended brings healing to our heart and theirs.

The Lord continues his admonition by reminding us; “If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (v. 15). The remembrance of wrong is like a cancer that eats away at us. To not forgive others is just as wrong as to deny our own sin and not ask to be forgiven. A right-relationship with God can only be had if we have a right-relationship with one another. In these two verses Jesus is explaining the words of the Lord’s Prayer, in which we ask our heavenly Father “to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who



trespass against us.”

The Lord then goes on to speak of the three aspects of what is often simply referred to as “fasting”: abstinence from food, prayer, and almsgiving. Embracing these three elements comprise the essence of what it means to truly observe the Fast. Fasting is spiritual discipline; it is like athletic training. We must build up to it, carefully balancing each aspect of the training, never neglecting or overdoing any part. Also, like athletic training, we submit ourselves to it in obedience. We don’t make up our own rules. We seek the advice of someone with experience, ideally our spiritual father.

By abstaining from food we aim to lighten ourselves, both physically and spiritually. Abstaining from animal products gives our bodies a rest from the heaviness of certain foods. Consigning food to its proper place by eating lightly and appropriately, allows our spirit to control our body, not the other way around.

Abstinence from food is also a way for us to understand and practice abstaining from all the other material distractions that lead us away from Christ. Abstinance from food is an especially useful spiritual exercised because there are few things that can compel us more strongly than our stomach. By control-

ling our stomach we can come to understand the subtle ways in which the glitzy things of this world can control us. Our spiritual struggle is to learn how to control the pull that material things have on us.

Devoting ourselves to more regular prayer strengthens and focuses us. Fasting is not simply dieting; it is spiritual exercise. It does us no good to abstain from food if we do not feed our souls. Our true food is “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). When we read and meditate on the Holy Scriptures, when we open our hearts to God in prayer, when we remain still and silent giving God room to speak to us, we nourish ourselves with the food of everlasting life.

Finally, we are not to store up for ourselves treasures on earth, but rather in heaven (cf. v. 19-20). Sharing with those in need is a natural development of growing into the fullness of Christ. We show the fruits of our growth by loving and helping others, tangibly. Almsgiving is a critical part of the “three-legged stool” that is the Fast. We must fast from food, pray regularly, and give to those in need, all in equal measure. To neglect one or the other inhibits our growth during Great Lent.

And so, in the words of the hymn: “Brothers and Sisters, as we fast bodily, let us also fast spiritually. Let us untie everything that binds us to iniquity. Let us cut through the tangle of every settlement made by intimidation; let us tear up all unjust agreements. Let us give bread to the hungry and welcome the homeless poor into our homes, so that we may receive from Christ our God great mercy.”

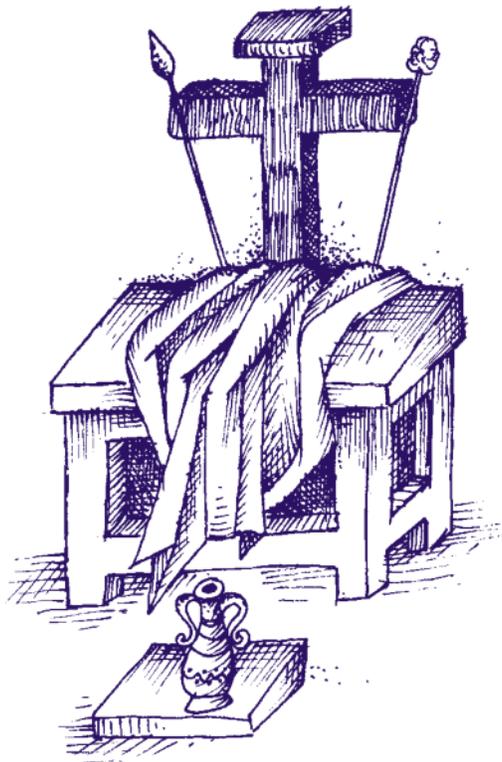
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2016

Wednesday, March 16, 2016
St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 30, 2016
St. George Cathedral



Wednesday, April 6, 2016
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, April 13, 2016
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, April 20, 2016
St. George Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.