

SS Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

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FORGIVENESS SUNDAY/ST. TARASIOS

Sunday March 10, 2019

Romans 13:11 – 14-4, Matt 6:14-21

Tropars and Kondaks Tone 8 and p 178

Welcome! We welcome to our church this morning all visitors, guests, relatives, and friends of Saints Peter and Paul Church. We pray your visit with us is spiritually rewarding, holy and life-giving. Visit often!

Ladies Altar Society Meeting after the liturgy today.

Forgiveness Sunday Prayers – end of the Liturgy today.

St. Andrew of Crete – Service begins at 6:00 PM Monday evening. Confessions 5:30 PM.

Moleban to the Cross – Wednesday 6:00 PM. Study group afterward. The Lenten Spring by Fr. Hopko.

PreSanctified Liturgy – Friday at 6:PM. Confessions 5:30 PM.

Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers 3/17 at St. John the Baptist Church in Johnstown 6 PM with a meal to follow. Please consider going to pray with our brethren from other parishes.

“The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”
+ St. Mark the Ascetic

WEEKLY SUNDAY REPORT OF INCOME AND CANDLES, 2/17/19		
Sunday Offering \$680.00	Candles \$12.00	
Yearly Assessment \$305.00	Eternal Light \$ 10.00	
Rent \$750.00	Pierogies \$55.00	Total \$1812.00

Candles

8 – For Family/ by Steve and Lois 3 - Anonymous 1 – In Memory of Marie/ Altar Society
4 – Special Intention/ Brett 2 – Randy 4 – In Memory of Sam, for Family, Health, and Thanksgiving

“God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination.”
St. Augustine of Hippo

Annual Women’s Retreat: The Way of a Woman – At Christ the Saviour Seminary March 30th, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This retreat has been organized yearly for over a decade. Matushka Sophie Daniels gives a talk and leads a discussion on practicing Orthodoxy in our modern times. She has been a spiritual inspiration and guide to many people. Fr. Matthew once again, reminds the women of our parish to not miss this opportunity. Pani Mary-Margaret and her sister-in-law Susan Mesko plan and organize this event each year with love and attention to detail. Please support your growth in Christ and ... “may your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to our Father who is in Heaven.” Matthew 5:15-16 RSVP 814-322-7677 or susanmm7@hotmail.com

Spring Young Adult Retreat at Camp Nazareth, from March 29-31, 2019. See the flier downstairs or call 724-662-4840 for more information.

DIOCESAN LENTEN RETREAT, sponsored by the National ACRY. St Nicholas Church, Homestead, PA, Sat April 6, 2019, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. *Presenters will be* Metropolitan Gregory, “Focusing on the Ladder of Divine Ascent and Our Spiritual Journey One Step at a Time”, and Fr. David Urban, “Windows to Heaven – Icon of Divine Ascent and the Feasts of the Church.”. *Registration Deadline is* March 31, 2019.

Saturday March 9th Lenten Retreat at Holy Resurrection Church in Belle Vernon. See flier downstairs.

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org> Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>
You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>



FASTING. . . Fr. Nik Ferencz

. . . Guidelines:

This First Week of Lent: 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 backbone.]; 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).

Diocesan Rules: Diocesan Regulations merely require *Strict Fast* on Clean Monday. Wednesday and Friday one must fast from meat, and preferably eat one meal a day.

Exceptions to Fasting: 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.

Looking Forward: When fasting 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. 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. The Church calls us to perfection in Jesus Christ. Perhaps we will compare our own practices of fasting against the traditional guidelines 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.”

Fasting for Holy Communion: For morning Divine Liturgy (Saturday or Sunday), the usual midnight fast is still in effect. For evening Holy Communion (Presanctified, etc.), we are called to fast completely at least 3 hours before the beginning of the service (i.e., starting at 3 PM). This is the Diocesan minimum. A stricter observance calls for fasting from at least the end of lunch.

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE: EXPULSION OF ADAM FROM PARADISE

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ. At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: “Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit....”