



Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 44 Years

Father Andrew Clements, Pastor

Volume 33

2019

Number 10

Sunday	Mar 3	<i>40th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 7 / Meatfare Sunday</i>	
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy Brunch
Saturday	Mar 9	<i>Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste</i>	
		5:30 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday	Mar 10	<i>41st Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 8 / Cheesefare - Forgiveness Sunday</i>	
		Readings:	Rom 13:11-14-4 Mt 6:14-21
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy Coffee Hour
Beginning of Great Lent		5:30 pm	Vespers of Forgiveness / Rite of Forgiveness

ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Feb 24

Attendance: (Adults 101, Children 3)	131
Operating	\$2,459.00
OCA Assessments	208.00
Uganda Children	45.00
Charities	42.00
Icons	3.00
Maintenance	14.00
Parish Project	10.00

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS

Be planning now to be together on Sunday, Mar 10 at 5:30 pm for the beginning of Great Lent at the Forgiveness Sunday Vespers. The beautiful hymns followed by the Rite of Forgiveness offer each of us an opportunity to 'begin the fast with joy' and embark on the Lenten Journey with a firm resolve.

CHURCH SCHOOL LENTEN PROJECT

This year we will be supporting Project Hope of Lake County.

Their Mission:

To respond to the human hurts and hopes of persons in Lake County who are homeless by providing emergency shelter, care, and guidance in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Details to follow.

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, John (Adam's nephew), Ted Geletka, Nina Stehnach (Fr's frnds), Julian, John Clements, Sarah Crivella, Nancy, (Ruth B's frnd), Joella (Lu D's daughter) Laura (Lu D's sis-law), Bradley (Tina C's son), suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Anniversaries: Maureen Medakovich's Chrismation (3/4).

Birthdays: Francis Janek (3/30, Jessica Murphy (3/4), Joe Demanski (3/5), Michelle Schroeder, TJ Chongris, Elena Nicoletti (3/8), Margaret Hecht (3/9).

Newborns: Mira (David & Maria), Maxime (Colin & Tamuna), Amalie & Augstine (Daniel & Danielle), Nicholas (Vytas & Inga), Emmett (Tom & Laura).

Expecting: Tom & Stephanie, Bobby & Juliana.

Departed: Lillian Lussier (2/21, LuAnn D's mom), Eleanor Alexander (2/18, Tom's mom), Fr John Mason (2/1), Edward Gertz (2/1. Scott Carlson's uncle).

Our Seminarian: Deacon Brian Crivella & Family.

Our Missionaries: Peter & Sharon.

Newly Illumined: Nicholas.

Join us at the Vespers of Forgiveness, next Sunday, March 10 at 5:30 pm

Forgiveness Sunday

by Fr Alexander Schmemmann

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (Mark 6:14-15). Then, after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: “Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!” [and] after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people, Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says: “In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.”

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that

love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season. One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies”? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them—in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize – be it only for one minute – that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world. On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me – we begin to realize that it is Christ Who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery – and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists – we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, “opens to us the doors of Paradise.” We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting – true fasting; our effort – true effort; our reconciliation with God – true reconciliation.