



Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 45 Years

Father Andrew Clements, Pastor

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See note below regarding these Services

Saturday	Apr 11	<i>Eve of Palm Sunday</i>
		5:30 pm Great Vespers
Sunday	Apr 12	<i>The Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem / Palm Sunday</i>
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy

STEWARDSHIP / Mar 29

Operating	\$1,452.00
OCA Assessments	98.00
Maintenance	50.00
Charities	20.00
Uganda	80.00
Cleveland Deanery	200.00
Icons	20.00
St Herman's Food Appeal	380.00
Ordination Luncheon	55.00
Alms	220.00

SERVICES SCHEDULED

The Services listed above will be served at the Church. Once Frs Andrew and Brian and Subdeacon Daniel have arrived, the Church will be locked. Since the Liturgy is served "on behalf of all and for all," the Holy Synod feels that it should be continued to be offered for all with these limitations. Bishop Paul has also blessed serving Great Vespers in order to give Fr Brian additional experience before he assumes his Pastorate at St John's in Warren in mid May. The services will be streamed live on Facebook. The Bishop and the Deans are meeting via Zoom on Monday to discuss what Holy Week and Pascha will look like.

STEWARDSHIP NOTE

Please keep up with your weekly or monthly contributions (however you do it) to maintain our cash flow. Include your 'envelope' and designate your funds as usual, place it in another envelope and mail to the Church address. Thanks for your cooperation in this regard during this challenging time.

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, John (Adam's nephew), Ted Geletka, Nina Stehnach (Fr's frnds), Julian, John Clements, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn D's dghtr) Linda Peterman (Gloria H's cousin), Kristen Robinson, Margaret Pellack (Peg Walker's Mom), our Parish Faithful, the Furman family, Joe Chupa, suffering Christians in the Middle East.

Newly Ordained: Fr Brian Crivella.

Our Catechumen: Joseph Chupa.

Birthdays: Emily Schlotzer (4/8), Leonard Heim IV, Nikolai Zasukhin, Ben Sherman (4/10).

Newborns: Alexander (James & Lisa), Van (Wes & Sarah), Nathan (Joe & Jessica), Merrick (Mitch & Winnie).

Expecting: Andy & Mara, Matt & Lea, Ryan & Valeria, Cole & Sarah, Tom & Miranda, Joe & Ashley, Vitaly & Luba.

With the sword of abstinence, you cut down the corrupt desires of your soul and the passions of your flesh. With the silence of the wilderness you strangled your sinful words and thoughts. You watered the desert with the streams of your tears. You made the fruits of repentance grow for us. We celebrate your memory, O Holy One.

— Vespereal Hymn of St. Mary of Egypt —

Celebrating 50 Years of Autocephaly as The Orthodox Church in America

Thoughts at the Fifth Week of Lent

At this juncture coming up on the fifth week of Lent I cannot help but compare our present situation with an incident in the life of Mary of Egypt whom we commemorate this Sunday.

St. Mary of Egypt, an attractive prostitute from Alexandria, out of curiosity and boredom joined a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem. (In the ancient world people did not take vacations in the modern sense – but a pilgrimage was an acceptable act.)

After arriving at the Church of the Holy Resurrection in Jerusalem a powerful force kept her from entering no matter how hard she tried. She suddenly realized it was her dark and cynical soul, worn out by the depravity of human passion, that kept her out.

Saying a prayer, she retired to the desert beyond the Jordan and lived alone as a hermit for decades until discovered by a monk coming out to pray in Lent. Mary attained great sanctity through repentance and the door to Paradise was opened again to her.

Like Mary of Egypt we are deprived of the comfort of the Divine Liturgy, the freedom granted by confession and repentance at this most sacred time of the year. We now find ourselves “over Jordan” in the desert of the heart and feel its aridity, its sameness, its boredom and emptiness – the absence of God.

Our sinfulness, our spiritual apathy, especially among the younger people, have locked us out of the Kingdom – the Church. Like Mary of Egypt before the door of the Church of the Resurrection, like Adam and Eve before the locked gates of Paradise we stand before our locked church doors and ask the Lord for mercy and forgiveness. The Corona virus is not the cause but only the means by which God is reminding us to come to our senses.

It is this loss of the Church and its mysteries and fellowship that helps us to realize how important those things are to us. It is an Orthodox saying that “when you are saved you are saved in the group, when you fall, you fall alone.”

“Falling alone” in our isolation is exactly what we have been doing these past weeks. To help find the comfort of the Church again try the following:

1) Reach out and talk to people from the Church; visit via telephone or internet with fellow church members. Another true saying, “Our Life is with our brother.”

2) Use your time wisely; start the day with a prayer and a Psalm; make a point to read each day one chapter from the Gospel of Matthew, Mark or Luke. Don't worry if you don't understand everything. Practice the Prayer of St. Ephraim. Your priest would love to hear from you to answer any questions! Remember this has a toll on those who serve also!

3) Keep the fast as best you can! In the close living forced upon us it would be really good if we fast with our tongue and refrain from bickering and pettiness with family members especially and with others outside the house. Be reconciled and work to stay that way. Recall the words of St. Augustine: “There is no greater invitation to love than loving first.”

4) Remember that even though we are not having all the services tune in to the ones we are serving and streaming.

5) Also remember that even though we are not gathering for services, the Church still has expenses. Please be faithful to your pledge and mail it to the Church on a regular basis.

6) Lastly, Look for the Resurrection! Not outside of yourself but inside your heart and know that through it the world will be healed of sin and the Doors to Paradise will be opened again!

Remember that this closing of services is not a test of faith but a test of “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord Thy God”. (i.e. My faith is so strong God won't let me get sick!)

It is not a time for lamenting our loss of our ability to come and go but to lament our sins and truly experience what it is like to be “out of the Kingdom.” The air is even heavy with doubt and uncertainty as it must have been at the Crucifixion.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom wrote in his book on prayer that: True prayer begins in the absence of God.” Perhaps this Lent and Pascha will more than any other, by their absence, teach us the real meaning of the Fall of Humanity and the Message of the Cross. Through their absence perhaps we will come together with a new sense of purpose and renewed love for His Church by all of us near to God or far from Him.

But we know that after Golgotha and its suffering come the joy of the Empty Tomb and the Resurrection: Christ is Risen and we are raised with Him!

Adapted from an article by Fr. Lawrence Barriger of the Carpatho Russian Archdiocese