

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Parish Newsletter

RESTON

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA

25 March 2020



Carlo Grubacs,
Venice: Church of St. Mark, 1878.

Beneath the gothicized domes and façade lies a rather plain Greek temple, thought to be a copy of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople destroyed by the Turks when they conquered the City in 1453.

The Origins of Quarantine in Lent

by Fr. John Panteleimon Manoussakis
(He is writing for Roman Catholic readers)

The observation of this year’s Lent finds the world under an unprecedented global quarantine. A coincidence of course, but a coincidence that might be meaningful perhaps, as coincidences often are for those who observe them.

We think of a quarantine as a confinement in space and as the name for the room or the building in which such a confinement takes place. Yet, quarantine is the name for a duration, a number of days. The word derives from the Italian expression *quaranta giorni*—that is, a period of 40 days during which any ship sailing to Venice had to remain moored away from the city’s port as a precaution against the plague. A quarantine, therefore, is first and foremost a temporal category, a mark of time, and only secondarily of space. In fact, the *quaranta giorni* spent in Venice (and I am here reminded of a later quarantine in Venice as told by Thomas Mann) borrows its name and its meaning from the 40 days of Lent (Latin: *Quadragesima*). Lent is still the number of 40 days in Italian and French (*la Quaresima* and *le Carême* respectively).

Every Lent is a quarantine. For the practices observed during Lent meant to place the world and our daily interactions with the world and with others under suspension. We call that suspension fasting. To fast is to abstain primarily from food—since digestion is our main connection with

the world and the exemplar of all the ways in which we relate to the world and to others—and, subsequently, from any other habit that attaches us to the world. By detaching us from the world, either literally or symbolically, fasting allows us to look at and reflect upon the world. Detach-

ment is a necessary condition for such reflection. For as long as we are attached to the world, we remain bound to it by a double bind: the more we occupy the world and we let ourselves be preoccupied by our worldly affairs the more difficult it becomes for us to understand what it means to live in the world. Fasting introduces a distance between ourselves and the world—the very distance that allows us to look and reflect upon the world and our worldly existence.

The quarantine of the coronavirus pandemic has forced upon all of us that distance. For the first time, Lent is “observed” by the entire world. A Lent pandemically observed offers a rather different and somewhat unorthodox appraisal of the new reality that has emerged around the globe.

I do not suggest that we should rejoice amidst the ever-rising number of infections and fatalities on account of some vague “spiritual” benefit. On the contrary. Rather, I suggest that there might be more than one way to contextualize and understand the suffering that is the result of this ongoing crisis. To read the quarantine within the context of Lent—a reading invited by the very fact that they coincided—is to avail of a richer vocabulary that derives from certain Biblical narratives (*e.g.*, Israel’s 40 year wandering in the desert; the 40-day fasting of Moses and Elijah) and thus to connect our quarantined lives today with the past, to inscribe them within a tradition, in short, to given them a language.

There has been, of course, plenty of talk about the coronavirus, an abundance of graphics and statistics, and a daily dose of reportage from the affected communities. Yet, this remains for now an experience without language. Biological and epidemiological terminology—necessary as it is—remains ineffective in giving sense to our experience of this pandemic and that is because the language of science is abstract but my experience of the dismantling of the world as I knew it remains concrete. Homer’s epic stories and parables have proven more successful in bestowing and communicating meaning to our reality than these abstract definitions and formulae.

Let us take a closer look at how the 40 days of Lent originate from the 40 days that are often mentioned in the Scriptures as a time of preparation for an encounter with the wholly (and holy) Other:

Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34.28).

And again:

So he [Elijah] got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God” (1 Kings 19.8).

While Moses and Elijah fast in preparation for these theophanies, Christ does so immediately after the theophany that occurs in his baptism at Jordan and in preparation for his public ministry.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry (Matthew, 4.1–2).

In retaining the fast of the 40 days the Lord shows the unity and continuity between the two covenants, the Old and the New; yet, by reversing its order and placing his 40 days of fasting after, instead of before, the theophany of his baptism, He shows that, unlike Moses and Elijah, he was not simply one of the Prophets in need of preparation and purification for the encounter with God. Thus, his fasting comes after the revelation at the banks of Jordan, as a preparation that would also lead him to a mountain—spiritual geography is always demarcated by holy mountains—however, his ascent to Golgotha has an entirely different purpose: not to meet God, but rather to be forsaken by God. Yet, like Moses and Elijah, though in a different way, Christ’s passion on Golgotha is the moment of his glory.

Through this brief scriptural retrospect, we can come to understand Lent as a symbolic and spiritual ascent to “God’s mountain” (Sinai, Horeb, Golgotha) where we hope, like Moses and Elijah, to encounter God, while remaining mindful that such an ascent can become cruciform—that is, it can take the form of the way of the Cross. In that sense, a Christian’s entire life can be understood as a Lent, during which the Lent we are currently traversing assumes the meaning of the “lengthening” of one’s efforts as a result of which the days become “long” (“Lent” in English derives from the German verb “to lengthen”).

Yet, the days of Lent are numbered. The enumeration of the days reveals to us a different meaning: if we can count them, this is because we could count them down. “40 days” means 40 days-until: an element of expectation and anticipation is already inscribed in the numbering of the days. They are 40 and no more: here one should hear and feel some consolation, for already from their beginning one begins to see their end. For they have an end in both senses: they have an end, that is, there is a point by which they will be over, and they have an end in the sense that they serve as means to that end. In both senses, then, the end of Lent is Easter.

The 40 days before Easter (or better yet, the 40 days until Easter) are like the 40 days after Easter: they belong to Easter. For the Church’s calendar Easter is indeed a big feast, for not only it is celebrated continuously throughout the year on every Sunday [Russian: *Voskresenye*—*Resurrection*], but its proper celebration too becomes the focal point of a long fore-feast and an equally long after-feast which, taken together, amount to almost one-third of the year. The importance allotted to Easter can be explained by, among other things, its function as our East. Easter is our east in the sense that it helps us orient ourselves in time as the geographical east provides our orientation in space. Without such an orientation, time becomes flat. One does not quite know at what time of the year we are. A time that is indistinguishable becomes unbearable and unlivable: not only because it becomes terribly monotonous, but also because without orientation time lacks direction and without direction no action can be undertaken. Temporal disorientation paralyzes man.

Precisely because Lent is a counting-down to Easter it is inevitably a period of alertness. The Bridegroom’s coming is imminent; thus we cannot anymore spend our days in forgetfulness amidst the world. Fasting—the preeminent characteristic of Lent—serves as a practice of reminding: a reminder that comes in the form of a continuous dispossessing of the world. If by eating we integrate the world into ourselves, fasting extricates us from the world. It opens up a space, a distance between ourselves and the world, in which the waiting for the Bridegroom can take place.

This temporary suspension of the world is not motivated by a hatred for the worldly and the secular, nor does it devalue the world, on the contrary; if, for the period of Lent, I suspend my worldly attachments to the world, that is not in order to avoid any moral contamination from it, but rather in order to retrieve and re-enjoy the original joy that the world held for me when I first discovered it.

If the promise of Easter is offered to all, if all nations are invited to partake to victory of life over death, it might be appropriate that we should all travel together the penitential route of this year’s Lent.

March 23, 2020

The Author: John Panteleimon Manoussakis is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the College of the Holy Cross, and an Honorary Fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy of the Australian Catholic University. He is a monastic ordained to the diaconate in 1995 and into the priesthood in 2011 (Archdiocese of Athens). He is the author of *God After Metaphysics*, *For the Unity of All*, and, most recently, *The Ethics of Time*.

Ours is a community that sings. Everyone knows the tune. Sing it in your mind. Sing it out loud.

A long time ago people sang this antiphon upon entering the church to hear God's word. The bishop chanted the Psalm verses, the people the refrain.

THE TRISAGIOS HYMN—Syrian Melody

Ho-----ly God! Ho-----ly migh---ty! Ho--ly im-mor-----tal, have mer-----cy on us! Glory: (Both) now:

PSALM 79

O Shepherd of Israel, give ear! Lead Joseph like a flock! O you who sit enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth ²on Éphraim, on Benjamin and Manásseh! Stir up your might, and come to our aid!...

¹⁸Give us life that we may call on your name; never again will we turn from you. ¹⁹Lord God of power and might, return to us! Let your face shine on us, that we may be saved!

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

Ho--ly im-mor-----tal, have mer-----cy on us!

Glory: Both now:

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

REPRISE:

Holy God! Holy mighty!
Holy immortal, have mercy on us!

⁷O God of power and might, return to us! Let your face shine on us, that we may be saved!

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

A new kondakion for this Time of Renewal Tone VI:

⁸You brought forth a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹You cleared a place for it; it took root and spread through the land. ¹⁰Mountains were covered by its shade, and its shoots climbed the towering cedars....

At various times and in different ways * you spoke to our fathers through the prophets. * But in our own time you speak to us through your Son * through whom you made everything there is.* He is the radiant light of your glory. * He is the perfect copy of your very being. * By his powerful word he sustains the universe. * Now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, * he has gone to take his seat at the right hand of your Majesty. ^{Heb. 1.1-3} * Father in heaven, * in this season of renewal * turn our minds more attentively to what we have been taught. * Do not let us drift away. ^{Heb. 2.1}

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

¹⁴O God of power and might, return to us, we beseech you! Look down from heaven and see! Visit this vine ¹⁵and care for what your right hand has planted!...

HOLY IMMORTAL, HAVE MERCY ON US!

MESSAGE REGARDING COVID-19
by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople

March 19, 2020

Brother hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord,
From the Phanar, from the heart of the Queen of Cities,
from the City of the Great Church and of Aghia Sophia,
we are communicating with each and every one of you—
women, men, and children—because of the unprecedented
conditions and tribulation that we are facing as a human
race as a result of the global threat posed by the pandemic
of the new coronavirus, called COVID-19.

The voice of the Church, of the Mother Church, cannot
be silent in such times. Our words, then, take the form
we have learned through the ages: through the liturgy and
through instruction, with encouragement and consolation.

We sincerely thank all those who struggle with self-sac-
rifice, even neglecting themselves and their families,
including:

Medical and nursing professionals at the front lines,
beside our brothers and sisters who are suffering,

Researchers and scientists searching for proper medica-
tion and vaccination to deliver us from this virus, but also

All those actively working hard to address this pan-
demic.

Your contribution is invaluable. It is an offering to all
of society. It is a sacrifice that deserves every honor and
gratitude. All of us thank you and applaud you, not only
from the windows of our homes, but everywhere and at
all times. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you.

In this struggle, our appointed states, governments
and appropriate health authorities have the primary re-
sponsibility for planning, confronting and overcoming
this crisis. We might describe them as Commanders on
the battlefield against an invisible, but now well-known,
enemy. An enemy that has turned against humanity.

The burden of the responsibility, that they bear on their
shoulders, by necessity demands the cooperation of us
all. Now is the time of personal and social responsibility.

Therefore, our dear children, we entreat you as your
spiritual father to respond faithfully and patiently to all the
difficult but necessary measures proposed by our health
authorities and nations. Everything is being done for our
protection, for our common good, in order to contain
the spread of this virus. Our liberation from this distress
depends entirely on our own cooperation.

Perhaps some of you have felt that these drastic mea-
sures undermine or harm our faith.

However, that which is at stake is not our faith—it is
the faithful.

It is not Christ—it is our Christians.

It is not the [God-man]—but human beings.

Our faith is firmly established in the roots of our cul-
ture. Our faith is a living faith, and there is no exceptional



circumstance that can limit or suppress it. What must be
limited and suppressed in these extraordinary circum-
stances are gatherings and large congregations of people.
Let us remain in our homes. Let us be careful and protect
those around us. And there, from our homes, strengthened
by the power of our spiritual unity, let each and every one
of us pray for all humankind.

We will pass through this period like a journey through
the desert to reach the Promised Land, where science, by
the grace of God, will overcome this virus.

We are certain that, through our prayers as well, science
will indeed prevail. So it is good for us to remain united
in spirit, as we continue the struggle of repentance and
holiness.

We see our neighbors suffering from the consequences
of the virus, while others have already fallen and departed
from among us. Our Church hopes and prays for the healing
of the sick, for the souls of the departed, and for courage
and strength to the families of the afflicted.

This trial, too, shall pass. The clouds will clear, and the
Sun of Righteousness will eliminate the deadly effect of
the virus. But our lives will have changed forever. This
trial is an opportunity for us to change for the better. In
the direction of establishing love and solidarity.

Beloved children in the Lord, may the blessing of the
Lord, through the intercessions of the All-Holy Mother of
God, accompany us in our journey, transform our volun-
tary isolation into genuine communion, and become our
prayer and destination to appreciate the meaning of this,
so that we may return to that which is true, to that which
is pleasing to God!

Have courage! And may God be with us!

Turn Not Your Face

Tone VIII, Kievan Chant

DO **Turn not your face from your servant for I am in
trouble. Hasten to hear me. * Attend to my soul and
deliver it!**

This responsory psalm is sung on Sunday evenings in the Great Forty Days. Church fathers see in it a way into the mind of the Lord Jesus. Into his suffering and distress. (When you think about it, the four Gospels tell us very little.)

Prokimenon, Tone VIII:

Turn not your face from your servant for I am in trouble. Hasten to hear me! * Attend to my soul and deliver it! (v.17)

PSALM 68(69)

NOTE.—A messianic psalm: the exemplary suffering of an innocent man who relies on God for deliverance bespeaks the messiah-Christ; “the waters” is a common metaphor in psalms for affliction. “With Psalm 21(22), this prayer is most frequently quoted in the New Testament in relation to Christ’s suffering.” (*Jerome Biblical Commentary*)

Save me, O God, for the waters have risen to my neck! I am sinking into the mire, and there is nothing to hold on to. Into deep waters have I fallen, and the rushing current is sweeping me away.

I am exhausted from crying out; my throat is on fire; and my eyes grow dim looking for my God. More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without reason....

May they never be disappointed in me, those who trust you, Lord of power and might! May they never be shamed in me, those who seek you, O God of Israel!

It is for you that I put up with insults, that shame covers my face, that I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s sons. For the zeal of your house consumes me, and insults aimed at you fall on me!...

As for me, I pray for your favor, O Lord; in your great love, O God, answer me now with your saving help that never fails. Rescue me from this morass! Let me not be sucked in! Let me escape my foe; let me not be caught by the deep!

Let not the current carry me away, nor the whirlpool suck me under; let not this pit close its mouth about me! Answer, Lord! In your loving mercy, in your great tenderness, look at me! **Turn not your face from your servant for I am in trouble! Hasten to hear me! Attend to my soul and deliver it;** from my foe deliver it!

You see how they abuse me; disgraced and shamed, I stand before you. Scorn has broken my heart; I have reached the end of my strength. In vain I waited for one to share my sorrow, for someone to comfort me, but there was none. For food they gave me poison; in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink....

But me—bent over, full of pain—let your help renew me, O God!

We resonate with what we read above. And to our benefit. But here’s the kicker. In our misery, apprehension, and fear, what follows is how our prayer must end:

I shall praise God’s name with a song; I shall exalt him with thanksgiving!... When they see it, the poor will jump for joy; you who seek God, your hearts will live forever!...

The Work of His Hands

Susan Mafyuf

Not one to sit idle in a time of sequestration and social distancing, Maria Hawkins found a way to keep busy and serve those in need. Maria heard a news story stating that there was a national shortage of face masks and thought, “I can make those.” After searching the Internet for instruction and patterns, Maria set to work. She uses breathable material like T-shirt fabric, and lines the masks with dish towel or bed sheet fabric as the filter. The toughest part has been locating the ¼-inch elastic needed to secure the masks.

So far, Maria and a couple of friends have made 37 masks and have 20 more in the making. Her first blue masks were donated to the Sterling Park Post Office, who gratefully received the gifts. Once completed, Maria will bring the masks to Joanne’s Fabrics for collection and distribution. The Joanne’s Fabrics in Leesburg is donating free fabric for making the masks, but Maria has not been able to take advantage of that yet. If you’d like to help, Maria needs more ¼ inch elastic. “I hope in a tiny way to contribute something grander in this time of need.”

ADDENDUM: Fr. Paul intended to have this missive out yesterday (the 25th), feast of the Annunciation and Maria Hawkins’s name day — Belatèd happy name day, Maria. And if we had Divine Liturgy this coming Sunday, the 29th, we would have come to the side of her husband Burt in Prayer for the Dead. Which is beyond us just now. So remember him in your prayer, an example for us, a Christian who persevered to the end.

TROPARIA

Tone IV

With the spirits of just men made perfect^{Heb. 12.23} give rest^{Mt. 11.28} to the soul of your servant, Burt, O Saviour. Preserve him for that blessed life with you, O Lover of man.^{Wis. 7.23}

In that sabbath-rest of yours,^{Heb. 4.9} O Lord, where all your holy ones find rest,^{cf. Rev. 14.13} give rest also to the soul of your servant, for only you love man.

Glory:

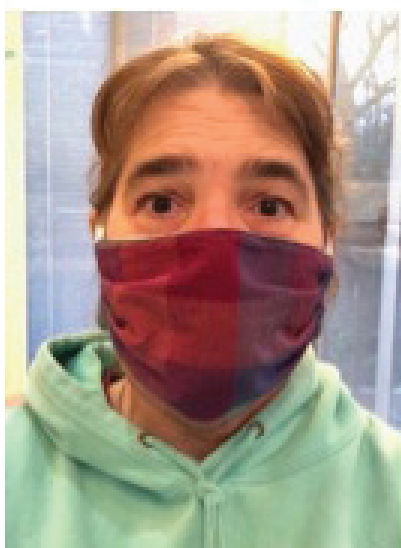
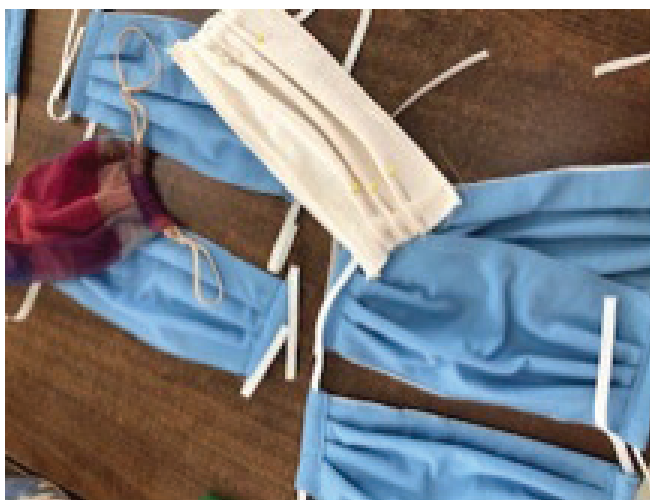
You are the God who went down to hell and shattered the bonds of its captives: Give rest to the soul of your servant.

Both now:

Only pure and spotless Virgin, you bore God without seed: Intercede to save his soul.

*In blest repose, grant eternal rest
to your servant, Burt, O Lord.
Let his memory be eternal.*

We might commend to the Lord all those succumbing to the plague the angel of death is visiting upon our world. Beginning with the self-sacrificing doctors, nurses, care givers, first-responders....



Father Paul here. I meant to have this missive out yesterday, but I more or less got shot in the foot. Sometimes I wear what are called support stockings. They’re really tight; beneficial, yes, but it’s a struggle putting them on. Well, to make a long story short, a gathering of the compressing fabric used cut a small gash into my foot, just above the ankle, almost to the muscle. And it got infected. No one over 65 is allowed in my doctor’s office. But eventually I got a prescription for an antibiotic and am on the mend.

Tonight is not just the 26th of March. Tonight is the first day of the biblical month of Nissan. Night of a new moon. The moon that announces the coming Pasch. Fourteen days hence it will be full. The celebration—in all its bright sadness as Father Alexander Schmemmann like to say—will commence. But not this year for us. Maybe in some secluded monasteries. But not here.

All his years among us—Luke’s Gospel tells us he began his work at about thirty years of age—the Lord Jesus would look up into the night sky on 1 Nissan with understanding. Imagine his dread looking up at that last Paschal moon.