

# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Parish Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA March 2019

MARCH—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12

### THE WEEKS OF MARK

Н МЕГЛИН ТЕСГАРАКОСТН • ВЕЛИКАА ЧЕТЫРЕДЕСАТНИЦА  
BEGIN THE GREAT FORTY DAYS

- 11 Mon *Day 1*
- 13 Wed 7:00 p.m. Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts *and pot-luck meal.*
- 17 Sun **SUNDAY I: CHRIST, MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN** (John 1.43–51)  
10:00 a.m. *Communal Confession Rite—first of two*  
10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Matyuf**  
6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 20 Wed 7:00 p.m. Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts *and pot-luck meal.*
- 22 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parástasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 23 Sat Saturday<sup>II</sup> of Souls
- 24 Sun **SUNDAY II: CHRIST, SOURCE OF FORGIVENESS AND HEALING** (Mark 2.1–12)  
10:00 a.m. *Communal Confession Rite—second of two*  
10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Miller**  
6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 25 Mon Feast of the Annunciation—*moves to Akathist Saturday*
- 27 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *and pot-luck meal.*
- 29 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parástasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 30 Sat Saturday<sup>III</sup> of Souls
- 31 Sun **SUNDAY III: CROSS OF CHRIST, COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST** (Mark 8.34–9.1)  
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Morrow**  
6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers

APRIL—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11

- 3 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *and pot-luck meal.*
- 5 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parástasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 6 Sat Saturday<sup>IV</sup> of Souls
- 7 Sun **SUNDAY IV: CHRIST, WITH THE FATHER, OUR SURE HOPE** (Mark 9.17–31)  
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Mosholder**  
6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 10 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 12 Fri 7:00 p.m. Akathist Hymn
- 13 Sat Saturday<sup>V</sup> of the Akathist Hymn (*the Annunciation celebrated*)
- 14 Sun **SUNDAY V: CHRIST, SACRIFICE SEALING A NEW COVENANT** (Mark 10.32–45)  
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Smith**  
6:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 19 Fri **DAY 40—END THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.**  
7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 20 Sat Saturday<sup>VI</sup> of Lazarus (John 11.1–45)—*Ancient day for final reconciliation of penitents who were required to fulfill an epitimion or penance before being restored to their place at the Lord's Table. As the gospel reading will say, "Unbind him and let him go."*



Farther Alexander Schmemmann  
**Forgiveness**

*A Homily delivered to the community at St. Vladimir's Seminary on Forgiveness Sunday of 1983.*

As once more we are about to enter the Great Fast, I would like to remind us—myself first of all, and all of you my fathers, brothers, and sisters—of the verse that we just sang, one of the stichera, and that verse says: “Let us begin the Fast, with joy.”

Only yesterday we were commemorating Adam crying, lamenting at the gates of Paradise, and now every second line of the Triodion and the liturgical books of the Great Fast will speak of repentance, acknowledging what dark and helpless lives we live, in which we sometimes are immersed. And yet, no one will prove to me that the general tonality of the Great Fast is not that of a tremendous joy! Not what we call “joy” in this world—not just something entertaining, interesting, or amusing—but the deepest definition of joy, that joy of which Christ says: “no one will take away from you” (John 16.22).

Why joy? What is that joy?

So many people *under various [outside] influences* have come to think of the Fast as a kind of self-inflicted inconvenience. Very often in the Fast we hear these conversations: “What do you give up for Lent?”—it goes from candy to, I don’t know what. There

is the idea that if we suffer enough, if we feel the hunger enough, if we try by all kinds of strong or light ascetical tools, mainly to “suffer” and be “tortured,” so to speak, it would help us to “pay” for our absolution. But this is not our Orthodox faith. The Fast is not a punishment. The Fast is not a kind of painful medicine that helps only inasmuch as it is painful.

**THE FAST IS A GIFT!** The Fast is a gift from God to us, a gift which is admirable, marvelous, one that we desire. Now a gift of what? I would say that it is a gift of the essential—that which is essential and yet which suffers most in our life because we are living lives of confusion and fragmentation, lives which constantly conceal from us the eternal, the glorious, the divine meaning of life and take away from us that which should “push” and, thus, correct and fill our life with joy. And this essential is thanksgiving: the acceptance from God of that wonderful life, as St. Peter says, “...created out of nothing...,” created exclusively by the love of God, for there is no other reason for us to exist; loved by Him even before we were born, we were taken into His marvelous light. Now we live and we forget. When was the last time I thought about it? But I do not forget so many little things and affairs that transform my whole life into empty noise, into a kind of traveling without knowing where.

The Fast returns to me, gives back to me, this essential—the essential layer of life. Essential because it is coming from God; essential because it is revealing God. The essential time, because time again is a great, great area of sin. Because time is the time of what? Of priorities. And how often our priorities are not at all as they should be. Yet in the Fast, waiting, listening, singing... you will see, little by little that time—broken, deviated, taking us to death and nowhere else, without any meaning. You will see that time again becomes expectation, becomes something precious. You wouldn’t take one minute of it away from its purpose of pleasing God, of accepting from Him His life and returning that life to Him together with our gratitude, our wisdom, our joy, our fulfillment.

After this essential time comes the essential relationship that we have with everything in the world, a relationship which is expressed so well in our liturgical texts by the word reverence. So often, everything becomes for us an object of “utilizing,” something which is “for grabs,” something which “belongs” to me and to which I have a “right.” Everything should be as Communion in my hands. This is the reverence of which I speak. It is the discovery that God, as Pasternak once said, was “...a great God of details,” and that nothing in this world is outside of that divine reverence. God is reverent, but we so often are not.

So, we have the essential time, the essential relationship with matter filled with reverence, and last, but not least, the rediscovery of the essential link among ourselves: the

rediscovery that we belong to each other, the rediscovery, that no one has entered my life or your life without the will of God. And with that rediscovery, there is everywhere an appeal, an offering to do something for God: to help, to comfort, to transform, to take with you, with each one of you, that brother and sister of Christ. This is that essential relationship.

Essential time, essential matter, essential thought: all that is so different from what the world offers us. In the world everything is accidental. If you don’t know how to “kill” time, our society is absolutely ingenious in helping you to do that. We kill time, we kill reverence, we transform communications, relationships, words, divine words into jokes and blasphemies, and sometimes just pure nonsense. There is this thirst and hunger for nothing, but external success.

Don’t we understand, don’t we understand, brothers and sisters what power is given to us in the form of the Fast. Lenten Spring! Lenten beginning! Lenten resurrection! And all this is given to us free. Come, listen to that prayer. Make it yours! Don’t even try to think on your own; just join, just enter and rejoice! And that joy will start killing those old and painful and boring sins... And with that you will have that great joy which the angels heard, which the disciples experienced when they returned to Jerusalem after Christ’s Ascension. It is that joy which was left with them that we nobly adopted. It is first of all the joy of knowing, the joy of having something in me which, whether I want it or not, will start transforming life in me and around me.

This last essential is the essential return to each other: this is where we begin tonight. This is what we are doing right now. For if we would think of the real sins we have committed, we would say that one of the most important is exactly the style and tonality which we maintain with each other: our complaining and criticizing. I don’t think that there are cases of great and destructive hatred or assassination, or something similar. It is just that we exist as if we are completely out of each other’s life, out of each other’s interests, out of each other’s love. Without having repaired this relationship, there is no possibility of entering into the Fast. Sin—whether we call it “original” sin or “primordial” sin—has broken the unity of life in this world, it has broken time, and time has become that fragmented current which takes us into old age and death. It has broken our social relations, it has broken families. Everything is *diabolos*—divided and destroyed. But Christ has come into the world and said: “...and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself”(John 12.32).

It is impossible to go to Christ without taking with me the essential. It is not the abandonment of everything as we go to Christ; it is finding in Him the power of that resur-

rection: of unity, of love, of trust, of joy, of all that which, even if it occupies some place in our life, is at the same time so minuscule. It is tragic to think that from churches, from seminaries, what comes to heaven are complaints... being tired, always something not going right.... You know, sitting in my office from time to time, I am admiring people for inventing new “tragedies” every half hour.

But we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s. And if we had—because we know—just a little bit of that which would bring us together, we would replace all my little offenses with even a little amount of that joy. That is the forgiveness we want and ask God to give us. Because if there is a strict commandment in the Gospel, it is that commandment: “if you forgive... your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive... neither will your Father forgive....” (Mt. 6.14–15). So, of course it is a necessity. But the NOW of that, I repeat it once more, is to be horrified by the fragmentation of our own existence, by the pettiness in our relationships, by the destruction of words, and by the abandoning of this reverence.

Now we have to forgive each other whether or not we have any explicit sins or crimes against each other. That reconciliation is another epiphany of the Church as the Kingdom of God. We are saved because we are in the Body of Christ. We are saved because we accept from Christ the world and the essential order. And finally, we accept Christ when we accept each other. Everything else is a lie and hypocrisy.

So, fathers, brothers, sisters: let us forgive one another. Let us not think about why. There is enough to think about. Let us do it. Right now, in a kind of deep breath, say: “Lord, help us to forgive. Lord, renew all these relationships.” What a chance is given here for love to triumph!—for unity to reflect the Divine unity, and for everything essential to return as life itself. What a chance! Is the answer we give today yes or no? Are we going to that forgiveness? Are we gladly accepting it? Or is it something which we do just because it is on the calendar—today, you follow, forgiveness; tomorrow, let’s do...? No! this is the crucial moment. This is the beginning of the Great Fast. This is our spring “repair” because reconciliation is the powerful renewal of the ruin.

So, please, for the sake of Christ: let us forgive each other. The first thing I am asking all of you, my spiritual family, is to forgive me. Imagine how many temptations of laziness, of avoiding too much, and so on and so forth. What a constant defense of my own interests, health, or this or that... I know that I don’t even have an ounce of this self-giving, self-sacrifice which is truly a true repentance, the true renewal of love.

Please forgive me and pray for me, so that what I am preaching I could first of all somehow, be it only a little bit, integrate and incarnate in my life.

—*Transcribed from tape recording and edited.*  
*Published with the approval of Juliana Schmemmann*  
*in the St. Vladimir’s Theological Foundation Newsletter.*

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### **Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe Caught between a Rock and... Moscow?**

*February 26, 2019 Orthodoxy in Dialogue*

Clergy and laity representatives of the Archdiocese of Russian Churches in Western Europe of the Patriarchate of Constantinople gathered in Paris on February 23, where they overwhelmingly voted not to dissolve the Archdiocese, despite the sudden and unexpected decision of the Phanar in late November to revoke the body’s status as an Exarchate and to direct that the parishes move under the local Greek hierarchs. The Archdiocese will decide which jurisdiction to transfer to at a later Assembly.

A translation of the letter of His Eminence Archbishop Anthony of Vienna and Budapest, the head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Synodal Department for the Administration of Institutions Abroad, to His Eminence Archbishop John of Charioupolis concerning the Russian Church’s proposals for the Archdiocese of Russian Churches in Western Europe to reunite itself to the Russian Church has been published in French on *Orthodoxie*.



Archbishop John of Charioupolis

The letter was read out by Abp. John at the General Assembly after the participants voted against dissolution. **Abp. John openly supports the option of the Archdiocese returning to the Moscow Patriarchate.** [Emphasis ours.] In an interview given the day after the Assembly, Abp. John notes that while he is getting older, Constantinople has not allowed any new bishops to be consecrated, and thus, “They have denied us in the future.”

Abp. Anthony begins by noting that His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia received Abp. John’s letter in which he wrote about the future of the Archdiocese and that he was instructed to transmit the contents of the present letter.

The Russian Church always regarded the separation from its ecclesiastical body in Western Europe, resulting from the terrible persecutions in Russia last century, to be temporary, Abp. Anthony writes, as had Metropolitan Evlogy, the head of the Archdiocese in 1931: “We will return to our previous situation when the central ecclesial authority recognized by all, as well as the normal conditions of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church will be restored... It is just a temporary pause in official administrative relations.”

“It is with joy that the Russian Church is ready to re-establish its pastoral solicitude for the communities of Russian tradition in Western Europe that lie beneath your omophorion and whose origins are in the Russian Church,” Abp. Anthony writes. Dependent upon the results of the General Assembly, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church could make such a decision, he writes, based on the following principles:

The Archdiocese joins the Moscow Patriarchate, preserving the historical integrity of its parishes, monasteries, and other ecclesiastical institutions and with all the clergy who desire it, under the leadership of Abp. John;

The Archdiocese’s historical heritage, including its liturgical and other traditions and the particularities of the diocesan and parish functioning, will be preserved;

The election of the hierarchy of the Archdiocese will be held in accordance with its own statutes after the approval by the Patriarch of the list of candidates and then with the canonical confirmation of the election by the Russian Holy Synod;

All the hierarchs of the Archdiocese will be members of the Local Councils and Bishops’ Councils of the Russian Church;



Paris, the Russian Church on Rue Daru, St. Alexander Nevsky, the community that gave us Fathers Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff.

The Archdiocese’s elected delegates will be members of the Local Councils;

The decisions of the Holy Synod will be in force for the Archdiocese to the extent of its statutory particularities.

The restoration of ecclesiastical unity and communion could be confirmed by Abp. John and the clergy of the Archdiocese concelebration with Pat. Kirill at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, with the Patriarchal and Synodal Act reflecting the above principles being granted.

Abp. Anthony asks Abp. John to share the contents of the letter with the clergy and laity who were to participate in the General Assembly on February 23.

“His Holiness sends them all his love and blessing,” the Russian hierarch concludes.

*We have been keeping abreast of these developments in Europe—including the intervention taken in Ukraine—because it seems the Phanar has unifying plans—Mount Athos seems to be calling it “Hellenism,” shorthand for Greeks running the show—that may eventually involve Orthodox America with its so-far intractable canonical problems.—Ed.*

## **ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA: BROKEN PROMISES AND SHATTERED DREAMS?**

*This piece is from last Summer, but worth the read.*

On July 20 the website and Facebook page of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America showed their first sign of life in six months. Six months! The new post consists of nothing more than a new directory of clergy brotherhoods and lay organizations.

Prior to four days ago, the Assembly had posted nothing on either platform since January 30: not a Lenten greeting, not a Paschal greeting, and most certainly not a response to our White Supremacy in the American Orthodox Church: An Open Letter to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America of January 22. Its most recent “Pan-Orthodox News” is over a year old.

(By contrast, the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is a beehive of daily activity. The social consciousness of the USCCB boggles the mind.)

**The Assembly’s January 30 post contained the sobering news that almost half of our bishops in the United States reject the goal of a united Orthodox Church organized in accordance with the canons along strictly territorial lines. The percentage of dissenting bishops skyrockets to 72%—nearly three-quarters—in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese.** We reported on this here: please take the time to read it.

Why does this matter? From the About page on the Assembly’s website:

The purpose of the Assembly of Bishops of the United States of America is to preserve and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church.... To accomplish this, the Assembly has...as an express goal...the organization of the Church in the United States in accordance with the ecclesiological and the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church.

...[T]he Assembly is a transitional body. If it achieves its goal, it will make itself obsolete by developing a proposal for the canonical organization of the Church in the United States. [...T]he Assembly of Bishops will then come to an end, ultimately to be succeeded by a governing Synod of a united Church in the United States.

### **SOME RANDOM FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY**

Partial Time-line of the Assembly

In October 2008 the Synaxis of the Heads of all the Orthodox Churches, held at the Ecumenical Patriarchate, called for “the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora, with a view to overcoming every possible influence that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology.”

In June 2009 the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, held in Chambésy-Geneva, established assemblies of bishops in the regions of the “so-called Diaspora,” and charged these assemblies with certain tasks, including “the preparation of a plan to organize the Orthodox of the Region on a canonical basis.” Originally the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central America were grouped together to form a North American Assembly.

In September 2009 the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) met to discuss the establishment of an Assembly of Bishops.

In May 2010 the Assembly held its first annual meeting, dissolved SCOBA, and requested that the Mother Churches authorize a separate Assembly for Canada, and that Mexico and Central America be moved to the South American Assembly.

2010 and 2011 were marked by the formation of a Secretariat and several committees and programs.

2012 was marked by several committee meetings and Assembly communications on various matters.

In March 2012 the Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops met in Toronto, about which no information at all seems to be publicly available.

2013 saw significantly less activity than the preceding years.

In March 2014 the Holy Synaxis in Constantinople created separate assemblies for the hierarchs of Canada and the USA, while the Mexican and Central American hierarchs were incorporated into the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of Latin America.

In April 2014 the name was changed to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

The Assembly has added nothing to its Time-line since 2014.

There is no publicly available evidence that the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of Canada has ever met. The report of one meeting posted some years ago on the website of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto seems to have been removed. The Canadian Assembly has no website or any other discernible on-line presence.

### **THE COUNCIL OF CRETE**

The 2016 “Holy and Great Council” of Crete issued “The Orthodox Diaspora” among its official documents. While we strongly urge you to read it thoroughly for yourself, we identify some of the more salient points:

To speak of the Church “in diaspora” constitutes an ecclesiological heresy of the greatest magnitude. If the Orthodox Church is not continuously making disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them, we cease to be the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and become an ethnic club instead. It is of the essence of

the Orthodox Church that both our *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*—indeed our very *modus essendi*—consist of being the-church-of-where-we-are, not the-church-of-where-we’re-not, the-church-of-somewhere-else, or the-church-outside-of-somewhere.

“The Orthodox Diaspora” makes decisions for the Church in the United States with a mere handful of US bishops taking part; and these, mostly from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, two from the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas, one from the Serbian Orthodox Church in North America. The Patriarchate of Antioch—and therefore the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of America—was absent. The exclusion of an episcopal delegation from the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) among the signatories of this document is patently absurd. Africa supplied more signatures than the United States to decisions directly impacting the life of the Church in America.

The heresy of ethnophyletism as a model for church governance remains in place, until further notice, “for historical and pastoral reasons...until the appropriate time arrives [read: never] when all the conditions exist in order to apply the canonical exactness.”

The president of the Assembly is *ex officio* each region’s highest ranking hierarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The full significance of this fact becomes clear in the next section of our article.

### **ARCHONS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE**

In May of this year, Steve Evstathios Valiotis received an honorary doctorate from Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline MA. In his acceptance speech he called for the autocephaly of the American Church—a presumably uncontroversial remark, ecclesiological and canonically, especially given the stated purpose of the Assembly of Bishops over which Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese presides.

The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle–Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America—a male-only lay organization of honourees designated by the Ecumenical Patriarch—issued a swift condemnation of Valiotis’ remarks as an attack against the Ecumenical Patriarchate:

The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, express their concern and disappointment that at the commencement exercises at our beloved Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, the reported public discourse included sentiments against the Mother and Great Church of Christ, as well as inopportune references to ‘autocephaly’ for the Holy Archdiocese of America. As any cleric or layperson should know, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is an Eparchy of the Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople — the First Throne of the

worldwide Orthodox Christian Church — and as such, has its ecclesial, canonical, and liturgical bases rooted in the Vineyard planted by the Right Hand of the Lord through the First Called Disciple, the Holy Apostle Andrew. All of the Hierarchy, clergy, and laity of the Holy Archdiocese owe their allegiance to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and we, the Archons, express our deep concern that while one spoke against the Mother Church, no one seems to have spoken for Her.

We pray earnestly and with every good intention that such foolishness not afflict the Body of the Church any longer, and that all of us, clergy and laity, remain steadfast to the Mother Church of Constantinople with gladness and gratitude for the blessings She has bestowed, with blood and tears, upon Her children in this great Land of Freedom and Promise. [See full report in *The National Herald*.]

Do the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its American Eparchy—the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese—support the normalization of the Church’s organizational structure in America, or do they not? The answer becomes considerably less clear, considerably more disheartening.

### **A WAY FORWARD?**

The Council of Crete’s recognition of “historical and pastoral reasons” that make a quick transition to a canonically organized American Church—one bishop overseeing all the parishes and institutions of a given, territorially delineated diocese, regardless of the ethnic make-up of his various parishes—as a near impossibility is not unfounded. In the United States and Canada does a Russian parish want a Ukrainian bishop, a Ukrainian parish a Russian bishop, a Macedonian parish a Greek bishop, a Greek parish an African-American bishop, an Aleut parish a Latino bishop? These questions are as embarrassing as they are heartbreaking, but they are the reality in far too many cases.

However, does it have to be an all-or-nothing proposition? Can we not take the long view, transition in stages, lay the foundation for a goal that may be a generation or two or three away?

Here’s what we mean:

First, the ill-conceived notion of regarding the Orthodox Church in the US and Canada as two separate ecclesiastical entities should be reversed. For the most part, the two countries share a common language and sufficiently similar culture. Yet the Canadian Church should enjoy wide autonomy within an autocephalous North American Church. The primate of the North American Church might well be a Canadian bishop.

Second, the reunified Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North America should declare itself an autocephalous Church, form a Holy Synod consisting of every diocesan bishop in the US and Canada, and elect a Patriarch. We need no one’s “approval” to do this but

our own. The other Patriarchates around the world will simply have to learn to deal with it—and quickly. They rely on us on multiple levels, and will continue to do so.

Third, at the parish level nothing changes for the foreseeable future. Each parish continues to worship in its accustomed language(s), to follow its accustomed calendar (*i.e.*, Old or New), to be overseen by its accustomed bishop. Diocesan borders might be redrawn as a goal for the future, but not enforced until it seems good “to the Holy Spirit and to us” to do so. Yet there should be broad agreement within the new Holy Synod that bishops with parishes in the same territory begin to concelebrate as often as possible in each other’s parishes; and more importantly, that the new Patriarch devote the first several years of his primatial ministry to visiting and concelebrating in every parish of the US and Canada.

Fourth, the new autocephalous Orthodox Church of North America should devote its energies to reconciling with uncanonical Orthodox groups who have separated for political reasons, but whose doctrine and praxis are otherwise sound.

*Of course, much more needs to be said. . . .*

### **Regarding the Eucharistic fast for the PreSanctifieds, and related matters.**

As we have been doing these many years, there will be potluck meals following the PreSanctifieds. Bring what you can, *if* you can. But come. There is always plenty of food.

Regarding the fast (these are the guidelines put forward so many years ago by Bishop Basil Rodzianko), keep the Eucharistic fast as best you can. If not from morning, at least from lunchtime. (In point of fact, fasting for the entire day is not all that difficult, though some may disagree—*Ed.*) As for older children: let them have a small snack when they come home from school. (Fasting is not for younger children, the ill, or the elderly.) Common sense applies.

### **Keep it simple.**

Here’s what a modern *Priest’s Service Book* (Church of Greece, Athens, 1962, pg. 211) has to say:

“The Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified, realized for the sanctification of the faithful, is served every Wednesday and Friday of the Great Forty Days, . . . Thursday of the Great Canon, [and] Great Monday, Great Tuesday, and Great Wednesday. . . .

“The Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified is served always after the Ninth Hour, at Vespers, **because of the all-day fast**. It is done usually by a single priest, alone, without a deacon. . . .

“While the Ninth Hour is being read, priestly

ministers take leave and enter the sanctuary and put on simple **black** vestments, but **no** [pectoral] **crosses** or priestly awards. . . .”

### **Apostrophe on the word *fast*.**

*Fast* is a Germanic word. Primarily it means abstaining from food; secondarily it means eating sparingly or abstaining from some foods. It comes into the Slavic languages as *post*. The Greek word is *nēsteía* and it means the same thing: not eating, and, secondarily, not eating some foods.

Everyone knows the basic meaning of the word *fast*. The doctor tells you he wants you to come in for a blood test *fasting*, you know he means that you should eat nothing when you get up on the morning and that you will have nothing to eat until after the test. Fasting is *not eating*. And, fasting is *from the morning*—*not the night before*—as some erroneously teach.

From antiquity Christians would keep a fast by not eating all day and then taking a meal in the evening. It’s the original idea behind the Wednesday/Friday fast. This is biblical stuff.

One can imagine that whatever spiritual benefits derive from fasting would come to a person regardless of how he broke his fast; in other words, regardless of what he ate.

One can fast for a day. One can fast for a period of time. The Great Forty Days (*cf.* Matthew 4.2, Luke 4.2) for example.

One may fast—not eat all day, then eat—Monday through Friday. One may not fast—not eat all day, then eat—on the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day. The Church nixes Saturdays and Sundays. Not at first, but very early in her history. It’s why the Liturgy is served Sunday *mornings*—to minimize and confine the Eucharistic fast. The first ecumenical council (Nikaia, 325 A.D.) makes an exception for the Holy and Great Sabbath which, a thousand years ago, was a day of fasting that concluded in the evening with Vespers with the Divine Liturgy during which neophytes were baptized and the Resurrection celebrated—everyone took holy Communion. (One can appreciate that the fast on this Saturday—like the eves of the Nativity and Theophany—was a *Eucharistic* fast leading into the feast.)

So. One fasts—one does not eat all day, then eats—Monday through Friday. Additionally, at the same time, one abstains from certain foods—*e.g.*, meat, dairy, *etc.* This is the only aspect of a fast period that

continues over Saturday and Sunday [the question today is, Should it?]. To use more precise language for our situation today: one *fasts*—one does not eat, then eats—and one *abstains*—one does not eat certain foods. Together they make up the Orthodox Christian notion of keeping a fast. Interestingly enough, these terms turn up in the hymnography we sing during the time of the Great Fast.

### **Abstinence**

For most of us today what “fasting” we do is better termed *abstinence*. Abstaining from meat. Abstaining from dairy. Unfortunately this has led to label reading as an exercise in seasonal piety. Furgedaboutit.

Fr. Meyendorff came down heavily on label reading. He called label reading phariseeism. “Do what you can,” he would say. Want to do more? Do more of what the Church’s tradition counsels us to do. Enter more deeply into what the Church around the world is doing. Prayer. Fasting. Almsgiving. Eschew silly—foreign—notions. Like “Giving up Coke.” Or “Giving up chocolate.” Or some such. Pious solipsism. What value can there be in that? Better, think of fasting as training for the race, for the Christian life. Think of it as the nourishment for a sovereign spirit (remember? Psalm 50?): for self-control, for prudence, and perseverance

We are a community of dependent creatures. No food and we’re done for. Fasting and abstinence have worthwhile spiritual and moral goals. The Orthodox world is full of SOBs who fast by the book. And they are still SOBs. Let us do everything and anything to avoid that.

### **One last word.**

### **Illness brings its own asceticism.**

Fasting in the strict sense, as we said, is not for the old or the very young. Neither is it for the sick and those with chronic conditions. Some medications require food. Another example, a diabetic; his/her slowed-down digestion requires a number of small meals during the course of a day to ease up on one’s pancreas and help manage the disease. So, nix to fasting. But yes to the self-discipline needed to manage disease.

On the other hand, while young growing bodies and organs need nutrition, a child 12 or 13 should be able to keep the Eucharistic fast on a Sunday morning. There are unofficial canons that would punish parents with a real fast for failing to observe this. —pnh

### **As we have been doing these many years, we will hold two Communal Confession Rites on two consecutive Sundays: March 17 and 24.**

The Pasch is coming (April 26,27,28) and the Church would prepare herself to celebrate the Death and Resurrection of the Lord by committing herself anew to the Baptism by which she is united to him. From time immemorial, through the reading of the Gospel, the Church has been calling her sons and daughters to renew themselves through confession and a season of penitence so that, come the Great and Holy Week, all come together with one heart and one mind in baptismal renewal with the same song on their lips.

**So pick a Sunday.** When we come together we evangelize one another. Come on time. Come in the right frame of mind. Bear witness to our younger members. Let us open our hearts to the word of Christ. And remember: children are welcome, but, for the concluding rite, none under age 10.

### **An Exhortation from the Apostle.**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of everything that weighs us down and the sin that clings so closely, and persevere in **running the race that lies before us** while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of [our] faith. **For the sake of the joy that lay before him** he endured the cross, ignoring its disgrace, and has taken his seat at the right of God’s throne. (Hebrews 12.1–2)





## Some Clarification about Eucharistic Renewal in Orthodox America.

In their 1976 Encyclical Letter on the Spiritual Life, our Bishops call for the Eucharistic Renewal teachers like Fathers Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff had been advocating since they came here from France:

Participation in the holy Eucharist... must become **normal and regular** for all the members of the Church. It must be **the rule and not the exception**, that the faithful come forward at the Divine Liturgy, with fear and with love, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the sake of their salvation and inspiration in the faith. It is the Lord himself who invites....

Normal and regular, yes. The rule and not the exception, yes. But. There is a condition, a guiding norm, a norm that fell in abeyance with inauthentic modern-period strictures placed upon the faithful regarding their access to holy Communion—the mandatory confessions, the fasts, the burdensome rules of prayer, *etc.*:

In times past [*i.e., in the IV century this rule is not new—Ed.*] our fathers decreed that if a layman were staying in town without coming to divine service for three Lord's Days... he should be denied Communion [*a responsibility of deacons*]... *unless* there were some pressing need or demanding obligation....

—Canon 11, Council of Serdica [=Sofia, Bulgaria], IV century  
(= Canon 80, Council in Trullo, Constantinople, 692 A.D.)

And there's the norm:

- *Regular* presence at the Sunday Liturgy.
- Coming on time.
- Coming in time to hear the public readings of Holy Scripture which, St. Nicolas Cavasilas reminds us, “prepare and cleanse us... for the great sanctification of the Holy Mysteries.” (See our Liturgy Book, pg. 60.) (This built-in preparation for Communion is something that has been forgotten by the rule-makers.)

Modern inauthentic pieties may have obscured authentic Tradition. This is not easily explained. But the Church can and does forget. And when she does, it is Tradition that reminds and renews her. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>cf. John 14.26</sup>

Consider what Father Alexander says in this regard:

For the early Church [receiving Communion] was the organic fulfillment of the whole service, the sealing of the Eucharist, our offering, sacrifice and thanksgiving, *by our corporate participation in it*. Therefore only the “excommunicated” were excluded from Communion.... The Divine Gifts were received by the body of the Church, transforming it into the Body of Christ. We cannot enter here into explanations of how, why and when this corporate and liturgical understanding of Communion was replaced by an individualistic understanding, how and when the body of the faithful became a “non-communicant” body, and why the idea of *participation, central to the teaching of the Fathers*, was replaced by that of *attendance*.... But this much is clear: whenever and wherever a spiritual revival took place, it always originated in and also led to a “thirst and hunger” for real participation in the Mystery of Christ's Presence.

We can only pray that in the **crisis** which today so deeply marks the life of both the Church and the world, Orthodox [Catholic] Christians will be led to understand that herein lies the only real *center* of the whole Christian life, the source of and the condition for the regeneration of the Church.

—*Liturgy and Life*, pg. 69

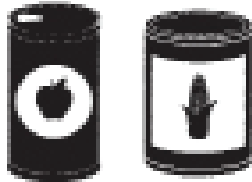
### The bottom line is this:

To participate in this Eucharistic Renewal fruitfully—to partake of the holy Mysteries at the Sunday Liturgy—a Christian *must acquire* the “habit” of attending the Lord's Day Eucharist. One's presence must become “normal and regular,” “the rule and not the exception.” —pnh

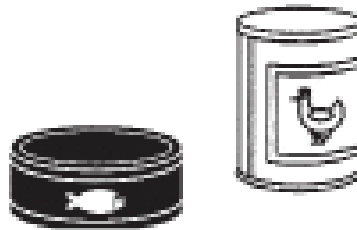


# FOOD PANTRY MOST NEEDED ITEMS

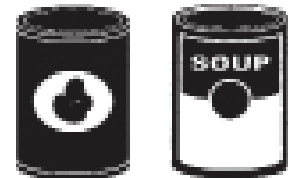
## Canned Fruits & Veggies



## Canned Meat



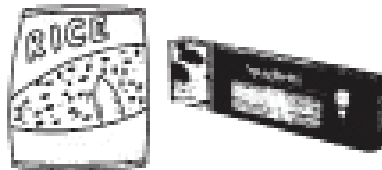
## Canned Beans & Soup



## Cereal



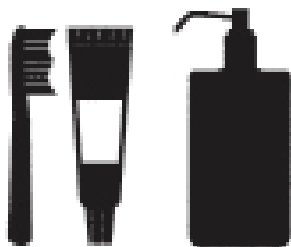
## Whole Grain Pasta & Rice



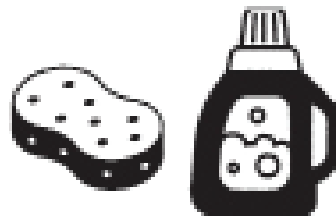
## Peanut Butter



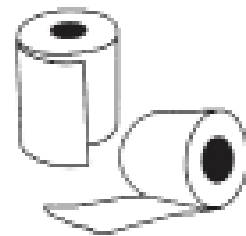
## Hygiene Items



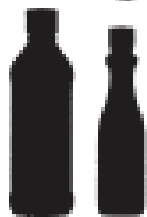
## Household Items



## Paper Products



## Cooking Oil



## Fresh Fruits & Vegetables



## Other

Diapers      Fruit Cups  
Wipes      Granola Bars  
Formula      Popcorn  
Infant Cereal  
Nutritional Shakes  
and Drinks

**PopTop Cans and Microwavable Cups Preferred**  
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