

PAPAGRAM

03/02/10

Volume 3, Number 21

Beloved Faithful:

Next Sunday (Mar. 7), we will celebrate the Holy Mystery of Baptism of little Gregory Cooper. The Service will begin at 8:00 AM.

The parish council met last Sunday to prepare the agenda for the upcoming Cathedral parish assembly. The agenda and date to be announced soon.

Please mark your calendars: We have reserved the days of July 15 through 18, Thursday to Sunday, at the Anderson Lodge in Washington for the Diocesan Synaxis. More information will follow soon. A wonderful time was had by last year's attendees. We will begin registration soon.

Jim Kalbasky has proposed the purchase of a cover for the Apostolos we use for Liturgy. The cost estimate ranges up to \$1,300.00. Anyone who would like to donate towards the cost is welcome to send your offering to the our mailing address:

Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Orthodox Cathedral
4550 NE 105th Ave.
Portland, OR 97220-3350

In Christ,
Father Constantine

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1. Schedule of Services:

- Monday, Mar. 1, Adult Education Class followed by Great Compline at 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, Mar. 3, Presanctified Liturgy followed by Great Compline at 7:00 PM
- Friday, Mar. 5, Presanctified Liturgy followed Small Compline with Third Stasis of the

Akathist, 7:00 PM

- Saturday, Mar. 6, Liturgy at 8:00 AM; Vigil at 5:30 PM
- Sunday, Mar. 7, Liturgy at 8:00 AM, Third Sunday of Great Lent, Worship of the Holy Cross; Vespers to follow coffee hour
- Monday, Mar. 8, Adult Educational Class followed by Vespers at 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, Mar. 9, Presanctified Liturgy at 7:00 PM, 1st and 2nd finding of the Venerable Head of the Forerunner and Baptist John.
- Wednesday, Mar. 10, Presanctified Liturgy at 7:00 PM
- Friday, Mar. 12, Presanctified Liturgy at 7:00 PM, followed by Small compline with Fourth Stasis of the Akathist
- Saturday, Mar. 13, Liturgy at 8:00 AM; Vigil at 5:30 PM
- Sunday, Mar. 14, Liturgy at 8:30 AM, Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, St. John of the Ladder; Vespers to follow coffee hour

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Because we have had many changes in our Chanters' work schedules, the schedule for the evening services may change with little or no notice. This may result in having only Great Vespers instead of our customary Vigil. It would be wise to arrive on time for Vespers to avoid missing the service altogether.

2. **Announcements:**

- Adult Education Class. As in years past we had the best attendance and participation when we met at a home of one of the participants. The next class will be on Monday, March 8, at 6:30 PM at the Church, followed by Great Compline. The topic we are covering: the teaching concerning ecclesiology. Please email me if you intend to participate: frparr60@aol.com.
- I have recently obtained new certificates for baptisms, weddings, etc. If you have not received a certificate for yourself or your child, please email me the date along with the sponsor, etc. I hope to provide these as soon as possible.
- Parish Assembly meeting is postponed.
- Protopsaltis John Presson will be available for psaltiki instruction (classical Byzantine chant and notation) on Mondays, Tuesdays, and every other Wednesday. Interested parties should contact John at protopsalti@orthodoxmetropolisportland.org.
- **An Urgent Appeal:** I wish to humbly thank all those who have assisted our small fund with your offerings and prayers. We have numerous individuals that we are assisting and our benevolent fund is nearly depleted. If you feel moved to contribute, you may mail your offering to the Church:

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Portland, OR 97220-3350

3. **Name's Days and Anniversaries:**

4. Prayer Requests:

- Pray for the health of Justina Nun, Marina, Kyrill, and Othonia.
- Pray for Andrea, and her sons Dimitri and Nicholas for difficulties and trials they are struggling with.
- Pray for Maria, who is having serious temptations.
- Pray for the Catechumens of our Cathedral Parish: Demetrius, Lawrence, Lawrence, Waros, Paul, Eustathius, and Markella.
- Pray for the Mirras Family, and for the mercy of our Lord in their struggles.
- Pray for Vladimir for health.
- Pray for Necktary (Fr. Nicholas' son) for health.
- Pray for Nelli's mom Waddad for health.
- Pray for Eustathius' two daughters who are having serious temptations: Tianna and Jennifer.

5. Questions for the Presbyter:

6. Miscellaneous Items:

- Fr. Photios is accepting commissions for his hand-painted icons. Email him at: holyimageicons@yahoo.com.

7. Protopsalti's Corner:

8. Mission Corner:

9. Catechumen corner:

The Sundays of the Lent

For most of us, unaccustomed as we are to real spiritual struggle, Great Lent can be uncomfortably demanding. After the first week of fast in one's prayers and prostrations, we begin to tire and may even feel despondent at the thought of the weeks ahead. But the Church in her wisdom knows well our human frailty and encourages us to persevere in our struggles by giving us along the way inspiring examples, incentives and even glimpses of that which awaits us at our journey's end. Week after week, Sunday after Sunday, we are led deeper into the spirit of repentance and self-denial, while we see growing brighter before us the radiance of Christ's resurrection.

The first Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of Orthodoxy, celebrates the ending of the iconoclast heresy and the restoration of icons to the Churches in 813 A.D. by the blessed Empress Theodora. Icons are important in that they affirm the dogma of the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—the Word of God made flesh. As this dogma is central to Christianity, the victory over the Iconoclasts came to broadly

represent the victory of the true faith over all errors. The Epistle reading (Heb. 11:24-26, 32-12:2) presents us with examples of saints, "icons" of Christ, who struggled and suffered, many enduring martyrdom for the sake of defending and preserving the Faith whose triumph we celebrate on this day.

The Gospel reading (John 1:13-51) is also appropriate in this early stage of our Lenten journey. In answer to Nathaniel's question, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus replies mysteriously, "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," whereupon Nathaniel confesses Him to be the Son of God. What it was that Nathaniel was thinking under the fig tree we do not know, but Christ penetrated his innermost thoughts, just as He mysteriously penetrates our hearts when He calls us to Himself. And He calls us now, during this Lenten period, to rededicate ourselves to Him, to the true faith of holy Orthodoxy, and to declare with all the saints: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, One God of all."

After the Divine Liturgy, the celebration of this day usually includes a procession around the church, with many of the faithful carrying icons.

The second Sunday is dedicated to St. Gregory Palamas the Athonite ascetic who became Archbishop of Thessalonica. In many ways it is a continuation of the celebration of the triumph of Orthodoxy.

St. Gregory successfully fought against a prevailing heresy of his day which denied the possibility of ever experiencing or knowing God — in a way surpassing the knowledge of the mind. Adherents of this heresy claimed that in this life one could only know about God. St. Gregory made a distinction between the divine essence of God, which remains inaccessible to men, and the divine energies, such as the light of Mt. Tabor, which are uncreated but accessible to human vision. From his own mystical experience, St. Gregory defended the possibility of attaining true union with God, which is, in fact, the aim of all Christian endeavor: "The kingdom of God lies within" (Luke 17:21). This is the essence of the teaching called hesychasm which advocates the constant repetition of the Jesus Prayer and quieting of both soul and body in order that the prayer might act to warm the heart with unceasing remembrance and burning love for God. What greater incentive can there be in our struggle for perfection during Lent — and throughout our lives?

Midway through the fast, on the Third Sunday of Lent, we are given the image of the holy Cross. This serves to remind us of Our Lord's Passion through which we were redeemed and which we are soon to witness. At the Vigil, after the Great Doxology, the priest raises the Cross above his head and carries it from the altar to the middle of the church where he places it, surrounded by flowers, on a table or analogion. The choir, meanwhile, slowly chants "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us." The Cross is censed and then everyone prostrates before it singing, "Before Thy Cross, we bow down, O Master..."

The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Mark 8:34-9:1) impresses upon us the importance of carrying our own cross. We too must be crucified, we must die to our

passions, to our egos, if we wish to reign with Christ. More than a symbol of death, however, the Cross is an emblem of victory, and the dominant tone of this Sunday and the week that follows is one of joy, that through His death on the Cross, Christ destroyed the power of death and reopened unto fallen mankind the doors of Paradise. The irmoi of the canon for this Sunday are the same as for Pascha, strengthening the faithful by giving them a foretaste of the joy that awaits those who successfully complete the course of the Fast.

The fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus, the seventh-century ascetic desert father who wrote the book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* ("Klimacos" in Greek means ladder). This is a handbook which sets forth various steps in the progress towards Christian perfection, thereby leading those who faithfully practice these instructions to mount step by step to heaven. Although originally written for monks, The Ladder is a spiritual classic appointed by the Church to be read during the weekday Lenten services. The importance of ascetic struggle—which should be of particular concern to us during the Holy Lent—is supported by the Gospel reading (Mark 9:17-31) which stresses the need for prayer and fasting.

The fifth Sunday presents us with another example of an ascetic struggler, St. Mary of Egypt. The emphasis here is on repentance and on God's abundant mercy towards repentant sinners. On Thursday of the fifth week there is a service called "St. Mary's vigil," during which the entire Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read, together with the life of St. Mary. After many years of debauchery, St. Mary repented, and spent the rest of her life in a desert in prayer and fasting. The Church holds her as an example that no one should despair of their sins; even the greatest sinner can become a saint through repentance.

The forty days of Lent end the following Friday, as we prepare for Lazarus' Saturday, followed by Palm Sunday and Passion Week. During this Friday service we sing "Having now finished the soul—healing forty days, grant us, Lover of mankind, to witness the holy week of Thy Passion." With what is left to us of this holy Lenten season, may we truly give ourselves over to the cleansing of our souls that we may with enlightened minds and hearts shout Hosanna to our King and worthily celebrate His glorious Resurrection.

—Unknown Author

10. Church School News:

11. Benevolent Fund Acknowledgments:

- Hillsboro, OR
- Portland, WA

Please forgive if we inadvertently omitted your city/state.

12. Links

- Our Metropolis website: www.orthodoxmetropolisportland.org/
- Kiouisis GOC website: www.hotca.org/
- Orthodox TV: www.youtube.com/GreekOrthodoxTV