

OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

*"Enter the Church and repent for your sin; for here is the physician, not the judge.
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

March 2, 2014

The Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Theodotos of Cypress

THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (CHEESE-FARE SUNDAY)

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JENNA NEHME, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Sunday 10 AM & 12:45 PM, before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (8th Tone) Page 54

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

The Kontakon of the Sunday of Forgiveness (6th Tone)

O You who guide men towards wisdom, and give them intelligence and understanding, Instructor of the ignorant and Helper of the poor, strengthen and enlighten my heart, O Lord, give me word, O Word of the Father, for behold I will not refrain my lips from crying out to You: O Merciful One, have mercy on me who have fallen.

THE PROKIMENON:

SING PRAISE TO OUR GOD, SING PRAISE!

SING PRAISE TO OUR KING, SING PRAISE!

All you peoples clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!

Today's Readings: Romans 13: 11b-14: 4 and Matthew 6: 14-21

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Fred Kfoury Jr., by his wife Lois

For the repose of Samuel Ashooh (74th), Joseph Abood (28th), Sara Anton(16th),
Rose Solomon(16th), Ernest Elhady (16th), and Stewart Spencer (9th)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Joseph "Mike" Duquette (40 Day Memorial),
by Betty Ashooh

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Eugene McGrail (34th), John Devine (38th),
and Sada Kfoury (10th)

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of John Dagher (4th anniversary)
by Elias, Linda, and George Dagher

Next Sunday: Bring an Icon!

Next Sunday is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. In celebration, we will carry icons in a procession at the end of the Divine Liturgy. As always, icons will be available here at the church for anyone that would like to carry them in the procession. However it also an opportunity for you to bring your own icons from home and have the blessing of carrying them in the procession!



TODAY IS THE SUNDAY OF CHEESE-FARE,

also known as the Sunday of Forgiveness. Our spiritual journey of Great and Holy Lent is about to begin. During this holy season the Church calls us to draw closer to God through fasting, almsgiving and prayer. To assist us in our almsgiving, mite boxes are available in the back of the church for the Shepherds Care program. The Church suggests that any money saved through fasting be placed in these boxes for later distribution to the poor. As a rule of prayer, consider attending our Lenten services. Services will be offered every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings at 7:00 PM throughout Lent.



It's Ice Cream Sundae Sunday...



All are invited to a Cheese-Fare ice cream party at 6:00 PM on Sunday, as a final celebration before Great Lent begins! If you are planning on attending please see Bridget Proulx to find out what you can bring.

And the Sunday When Lent Begins!

The ice cream party will be followed by the celebration of Forgiveness Vespers at 7:00 PM. Midway through this service the liturgical colors are changed to the dark colors of Great Lent, reminding us that Lent has begun. This first service of the Lenten season climaxes with the rite of forgiveness. People approach the priest one at a time and each asks the other's forgiveness for any way they may have offended each other during the year. The worshippers then ask one another's forgiveness, forming a large a circle around the church until all the members have asked for, received, and given forgiveness to one another.

Please pray for the release of Greek Orthodox Archbishop

Paul Yazigi and Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim who were abducted on April 22 when gunmen stopped their vehicle near the battleground northern city of Aleppo, where both are based. Please pray also for their deacon who was driving their car and was shot and killed in the attack.



Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 17 Sunday 11:00 AM: 122

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,235.⁰⁰ Mortgage: \$919.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope offering last week was \$29.⁷⁴

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 343,558.⁴⁷

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Sun, Mar. 2	7:00 PM	Vespers of Forgiveness: <i>Great Lent begins!</i>
Mon., Mar. 3	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Wed., Mar. 5	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 7	7:00 PM	Akathist Hymn
Sat., Mar. 8	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of Orthodoxy
Sun., Mar. 9	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Mar. 9	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of Orthodoxy

The Fathers Speak.....On Fasting:

Fasting is an exceptional virtue; it represses bodily impulses and gives strength to the soul to fight against the poisoning of the heart through the senses, and provides it with a remedy against any past poisoning. Fasting causes the mind to be cleansed constantly. It withers up every evil thought and brings healthy, godly thoughts -- -holy thoughts that enlighten the mind and kindle it with more zeal and spiritual fervor.

-Elder Ephraim of Philotheou Mount Athos, "Counsels from the Holy Mountain"

Abba John the Dwarf said, "If a king wanted to take possession of his enemy's city, he would begin by cutting off the water and the food and so his enemies, dying of hunger, would submit to him. It is the same with the passions of the flesh; if a man goes about fasting and hungry the enemies of his soul grow weak." *-The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

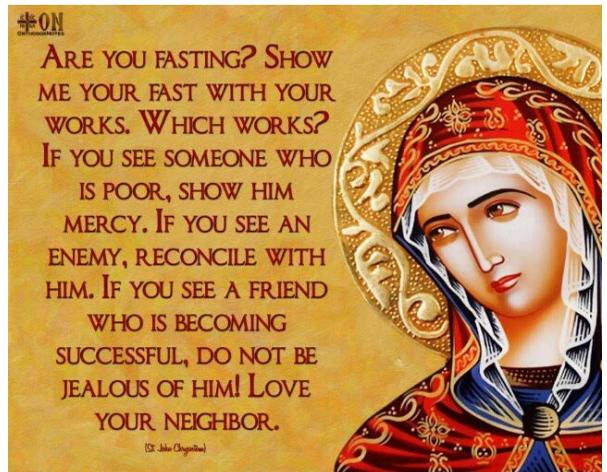
Beware of limiting the good of fasting to mere abstinence from meats. Real fasting is alienation from evil. 'Loose the bands of wickedness.' For give your neighbor the mischief he has done you. Forgive him his trespasses against you. Do not 'fast for strife and debate.' You do not devour flesh, but you devour your brother. You abstain from wine, but you indulge in outrages. You wait for evening before you take food, but you spend the day in the law courts. Woe to those who are 'drunken, but not with wine.' Anger is the intoxication of the soul, and makes it out of its wits like wine. *-St. Basil, in his homilies on the Holy Spirit*

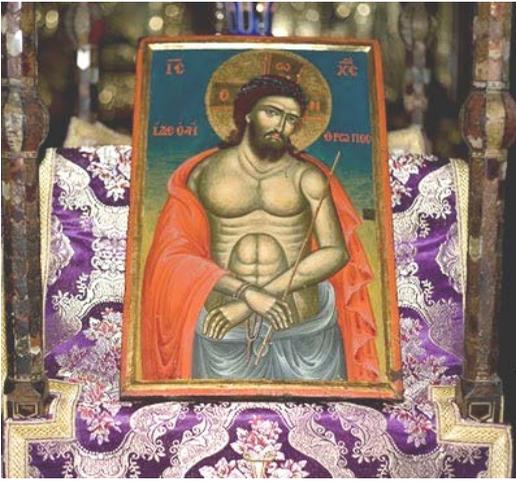
Fasting is absolutely indispensable for man. From the external aspect, it is a struggle of filial obedience to God, Who has given us the rules of fasting through His Holy Spirit. From the inner aspect, fasting is a struggle of restraint and self-limitation. In this lies the great value and sense of fasting, since a strict observance of fasts tempers one's will and perfects the character of one who is firm in his religious convictions and actions. Let us not forget that Christ Himself fasted, and foretold that His apostles would also fast.

-Metropolitan Philaret - On God's Law

It is necessary most of all for one who is fasting to curb anger, to accustom himself to meekness and condescension, to have a contrite heart, to repulse impure thoughts and desires, to examine his conscience, to put his mind to the test and to verify what good has been done by us in this or any other week, and which deficiency we have corrected in ourselves in the present week. This is true fasting.

-St. John Chrysostom.





THE TRUE NATURE OF FASTING

Edited from an article

by Mother Mary and Bishop Kallistos Ware

Until the fourteenth century, most Western Christians, in common with their brethren in the Byzantine East, abstained during Lent not only from meat but from animal products, such as eggs, milk, butter and cheese. In East and West alike, the Lenten fast involved a severe physical effort. But in Western Christendom over the past five hundred years, the physical requirements of fasting have been steadily

reduced, until by now they are little more than symbolic.

The primary aim of fasting is to make us *conscious of our dependence upon God*. If practiced seriously, the Lenten abstinence from food - particularly in the opening days - involves a considerable measure of real hunger, and also a feeling of tiredness and physical exhaustion. The purpose of this is to lead us in turn to a sense of inward brokenness and contrition; to bring us, that is, to the point where we appreciate the full force of Christ's statement, 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15: 5). If we always take our fill of food and drink, we easily grow over-confident in our own abilities, acquiring a false sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency. The observance of a physical fast undermines this sinful complacency and gives us the saving self dissatisfaction of the Publican (Luke I 8: 10-13). Such is the function of the hunger and the tiredness: to make us 'poor in spirit', aware of our helplessness and of our dependence on God's aid.

Yet it would be misleading to speak only of this element of weariness and hunger. Fasting leads not merely to this, but also to a sense of lightness, wakefulness, freedom and joy. Even if the fast proves debilitating at first, afterwards we find that it enables us to sleep less, to think more clearly, and to work more decisively. As many doctors acknowledge, periodical fasts contribute to bodily hygiene. While involving genuine self-denial, fasting does not seek to do violence to our body but rather to restore it to health and equilibrium. Fasting liberates our body from the burden of excessive weight and makes it a willing partner in the task of prayer, alert and responsive to the voice of the Spirit. The Fathers simply state, as a guiding principle, that we should never eat to satiety but always rise from the table feeling that we could have taken more and that we are now ready for prayer.

If it is important not to overlook the physical requirements of fasting, it is even more important not to overlook its inward significance. Fasting is not a mere matter of diet. It is moral as well as physical. True fasting is to be converted in heart and will; it is to return to God, to come home like the Prodigal to our Father's house. In the words of St. John Chrysostom, it means "abstinence not only from food but from sins." "The fast," he insists,

“should be kept not by the mouth alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and all the members of the body”: the eye must abstain from impure sights, the ear from malicious gossip, the hands from acts of injustice. It is useless to fast from food, protests St. Basil, and yet to indulge in cruel criticism and slander: “You do not eat meat, but you devour your brother” .

The inner significance of fasting is best summed up in the triad: *prayer, fasting, almsgiving*. Divorced from prayer and from the reception of the holy sacraments, unaccompanied by acts of compassion, our fasting becomes pharisaical or even demonic. It leads, not to contrition and joyfulness, but to pride, inward tension and irritability.

Prayer and fasting should in their turn be accompanied by almsgiving - by love for others expressed in practical form, by works of compassion and forgiveness. It is no coincidence that on the very threshold of the Great Fast, at Vespers on the Sunday of Forgiveness, there is a special ceremony of mutual reconciliation: for without love towards others there can be no genuine fast.

This love for others should not be limited to formal gestures or to sentimental feelings, but should issue in specific acts of almsgiving. Such was the firm conviction of the early Church. The second-century *Shepherd of Hermas* insists that the money saved through fasting is to be given to the widow, the orphan and the poor. But almsgiving means more than this. It is to give not only our money but our time, not only what we have but what we are; it is to give a part of ourselves. For the mere giving of money can often be a substitute and an evasion, a way of protecting ourselves from closer personal involvement with those in distress. On the other hand, to do nothing more than offer reassuring words of advice to someone crushed by urgent material anxieties is equally an evasion of our responsibilities.

The season of Lent, it should be noted, falls not in midwinter when the countryside is frozen and dead, but in spring when all things are returning to life. The English word “Lent” originally had the meaning “springtime”; and in a text of fundamental importance the Triodion likewise describes the Great Fast as “springtime”: *The springtime of the Fast has dawned, The flower of repentance has begun to open. O brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all impurity And sing to the Giver of Light: Glory be to Thee, who alone lovest mankind.* (Vespers for Wednesday in the week before Lent.)

Lent signifies not winter but spring, not darkness but light, not death but renewed vitality. Certainly it has its somber aspect, with the repeated prostrations at the weekday services, with the dark vestments of the priest, with the hymns sung to a subdued chant, full of compunction. In the Christian Empire of Byzantium theatres were closed and public spectacles forbidden during Lent; and even today weddings are forbidden in the seven weeks of the fast. Yet these elements of austerity should not blind us to the fact that the fast is not a burden, not a punishment, but a gift of God's grace.

With joy let us enter upon the beginning of the Fast. Let us not be of sad countenance. . . Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; And let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments. . . All mortal life is but one day, so it is said, To those who labor with love. There are forty days in the Fast; Let us keep them all with joy.

(From Matins for the first Monday)

Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving: From Bishop Nicholas

....The opening prayers at Sunday Forgiveness Vespers on the eve of Great Lent tell us clearly “...*enter the season of the radiant Fast with joy, giving ourselves to spiritual combat, ...as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion. Rejoicing in the virtues of the Spirit, may we persevere with love*”.....

The Great Fast is a time then for us to change our style of life, bringing it more in conformity to Christ’s life. Conversion (the Greek word is *metanoia* or even *metany*) is an act of turning, retracing our steps and coming back to godly ways. We recognize our shortcomings and we repent with every metany or bow that we make; we stand upright and the Lord’s embrace is open wide.

Take hold of the many opportunities offered by the Church during Great Lent. First and foremost are prayer, fasting and good works – the *tripod* of Great Lent. Many services are offered on the weekdays of Lent in your parish, so check your church bulletins and clear some time in your life to participate in them. Special themes are given on each Sunday of the Fast for our edification, calling us to change. We are called to be icons of Christ and imitators of the saints. The Lord’s cross is our call to duty. We reflect upon the virtues needed to make a drastic change in our lives. Don’t be passive, but make your Great Lent an active time of “doing” and recommitting yourselves to Christ.

Enter the Lord’s passion during Holy Week, walk with Him to His death and die with Him to your old self. When the first proclamation of “Christ is risen” is shouted out, His joy will be your joy and you can say “and I am risen too,” a new person recommitted to being another Christ in the world.....

What is the traditional fast and abstinence?

Fasting: is abstaining from any food and drink from midnight until Vespers (prayers at sunset). So, the person fasting eats only one meal a day after Vespers or the Presanctified Liturgy.

Abstinence: is abstaining from meat, dairy products, and eggs, while fish is permitted on the Annunciation and Palm Sunday. Wine and oil are permitted on certain days.

Days of fasting during Great Lent: Monday through Friday throughout Lent and Holy Week. Great and Holy Saturday is the only Saturday of the year on which one must keep a fast; otherwise it is forbidden to fast on Saturdays. Sunday, the day of Resurrection, is never a fast day.

Days of abstinence: the whole of Great Lent, including Sundays and all of Holy Week, except Annunciation and Palm Sunday when fish may be eaten.

Rule of fasting in the Eparchy of Newton

So as not to burden anyone’s conscience, the Holy Synod of the Melkite Church permits each eparchial bishop to ease the canonical obligations of fasting, while, at the same time, exhorts all the faithful to fast according to the ancient tradition.

The minimum rule that Melkites in the Eparchy of Newton must observe: ***Fasting*** from all food and drink from midnight until noon must be observed on the first day of Great Lent (Monday, 11 February), and on the last three days of Holy Week (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday). ***Abstinence***, at least from meat, must be observed on every Friday of Great Lent. These requirements are the minimum. The faithful are encouraged to do more, such as also abstaining from meat every Wednesday or throughout the whole of Great Lent.

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Betty Bilodeau, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Danielle Caron, Meghan Connors, Lucy Corriveau, Julie Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Nicholas Daniak, Lynn Dargie, Marie Dargie, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Anne Gallagher, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, James McCloskey, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Virginia Pichette, Jean Poleatewich, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Robert Siwik, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.



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