

## “LET US BEGIN THE FAST WITH JOY!”

**A**lthough some may associate Great Lent with suffering and sacrifice, our Church gently reminds us that the 40-day Fast which precedes our Lord's Resurrection is actually a time for us to experience a great spiritual joy. The Church's service book for Lent – the Triodion – calls this period the “spiritual spring which blossoms with the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” For us to “harvest” these fruits, however, it is necessary for us to master two vital disciplines: PRAYER and FASTING.

St. John Chrysostom writes that prayer and fasting are like “two wings that carry a person to the heights of God.” They are the means for us to become mentally, physically and spiritually prepared to encounter the Lord in an intimate way. Prayer and fasting help us to become closer to God. The more time we spend in prayer, the less time we have to become consumed with the sins and temptations that are constantly placed before us. Fasting shows our willingness to cast aside the pleasures of the world, abstaining from wrong-doing as well as food.

While urging us to embrace these admirable virtues during the Lenten season, the Church reminds us of the emphasis that Christ Himself placed on prayer and fasting. There were countless times during His earthly ministry that Jesus became deeply immersed in practicing these disciplines. Indeed, when His disciples questioned why they were unable to cast out demons from a possessed young man, Christ pointed out to them that only through prayer and fasting could they ever receive the ability to do this!

Icon by Fr. Paul Drozdowski – www.pd-icons.com

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.

## ABOUT COMMUNION

*We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the “unity of the Faith” for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.*

*If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.*





# St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

4031 Aurora Rd.; Melbourne, Florida Mailing address : P.O.Box 267, Melbourne, FL 32902  
Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor & Dean of South Florida Deanery  
Phone: (305) 812-4940 , E-Mail: [elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.stanthonyvorthodoxchurch.com>

## WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community.

We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X within the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table. We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally. Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

## DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024 TONE 8 / EOTHINON 8 SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (CHEESE FARE)

VENERABLE ALEXIOS THE 'MAN OF GOD,' PATRICK, BISHOP OF ARMAGH AND ENLIGHTENER OF IRELAND

~ During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." After the Little Entrance, chant the apolytikia in the following order:

### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

### APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. Becoming a dweller in the wilderness, and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer O Father Anthony. Wherefore intercede thou with Christ our God to save our souls.

### KONTAKION FOR FORGIVENESS SUNDAY IN TONE SIX

O Thou Who guidest to wisdom, and givest understanding and intelligence, the Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor, strengthen my heart and grant it understanding, O Master. Give me word, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.

### THE EPISTLE

(For Sunday of Forgiveness)

Make your vows unto the Lord and perform them. God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. (13:11-14:4)

Brethren, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us

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ADRIANE & TED

## 2024 PLEDGE DRIVE

**The Pledge Form for 2024 is available for you, please sign one and turn it in ASAP  
Thank you to the following Parishioners  
who already signed their pledge card**

**Fr. Elia and Kh. Odette Shalhoub  
Susan Perers  
Adrian & Carrie Matos  
Priscilla Spinola  
Debbie Thieme  
Isaac Vaughn  
Ionica Dragu  
Alix Hall  
John & Joanne Karas  
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Yuliya Warner  
Patricia Smith  
Michealle Carey  
Subdeacon Michael and Alyssa Lieberman  
Olga and Carlos Munoz  
Zach Ferrel  
Ethan Packey  
Sam and Ceara Jacobs  
Jeffrey & Holly Dick  
Kevin Michael Brown  
Stephanie Enstice  
Subdeacon Michael & Janet Gorczynski  
John & Vicky Abodeeli  
Alexander Alvarez  
Deborah Abdo Dambrosio**

**Total Pledges for 2024 from 28 pledges so far is \$97,570  
(Our Goal for 2024 is \$100,000.00)**

therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. But as for the one who is weak in faith, receive him, but not for disputes over opinions. For one believes he may eat anything; but the weak person eats herbs. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to be the judge over the servant of a stranger? To his own master he either stands or falls; but he will be made to stand; for God is able to make him stand.

### THE GOSPEL

(For Sunday of Forgiveness)

#### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (6:14-21)**

The Lord said to His Disciples: If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

*~ The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

### **ABOUT THE DIVINE LITURGY**

The Divine Liturgy expresses the entire Christian faith in a continuous song of praise and prayer addressed to God. It is focused on God, not on us. There is nothing just for amusement or entertainment.

Since much of the service is the same every week, worshippers know it and can participate personally, either by singing along or just by prayerful attention. Worshippers are surrounded by icons (pictures of Christ and the saints), which remind us that we are participating, while on earth, in the worship of all the angels and saints in heaven. The entire service (except for the sermon) is sung. The words are all from Scripture or ancient Christian texts. Please follow the service in the books available in the pews. Weekly changes will appear below and marked with a corresponding letter in the service book.

### **COME BACK**

We hope to see you next week. Each Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with our morning Matins service at 8:45am followed by the main Sunday service, Divine Liturgy at 10am. Sunday School for the Children Follows Communion. Fr. Elia would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have. Please fill out our Guest Form (CONNECTION CARD). There's also a place where you can let us know any specific needs or concerns and we will lift them up in prayer. We welcome everyone who would like to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. Please contact Fr. Elia either by E-Mail ([elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)) or on his cell phone (305) 812-4940

## **Announcements**

### **March is Women's month**

During this month, you will notice women reading Epistles, doing Sermons.

	<b>Epistle</b>	<b>Sermon</b>
March 17	Jenny	Patricia

March 17  
 March 24  
 March 31  
 April 7

**Epistle**

Jenny  
 Priscilla  
 Ionica

**Sermon**

Patricia  
 Ceara  
 Holly  
 Kh. Odette

**Our March Birthdays**

**March 21 Faris Adili and Jeffrey Dick;**  
**March 27 Micah Riter, March 29 Michael Lieberman**

**Our March Anniversaries**

**March 30 Adrian and Carrie Matos**  
**May God grant you many more Happy and Healthy years together!**

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR IS SPONSORED BY AMEN**

**Antiochian Men (AMen) monthly meeting**  
**today after the coffee hour.**  
**All men are invited.**



**SEWING CLASS FOR KIDS AT NANA'S HOUSE**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 23 AT 10AM**

**THIS IS A NEW PROGRAM, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE**  
**CONTACT OUR TALENTED DEBBIE THIEME AT (321) 243-3455**



**FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE PROGRAM**

**Please make sure to pick up your coin BOX to take home.**  
**They will be due back on Sunday after Pascha.**



**TEEN SOYO LENTEN RETREAT**

**All pre-teens and teens are welcome to join us**  
**Saturday, March 30th at 10 am!**

**We will meet at church to zoom with other Teen Soyo chapters and Karen Hanna!!! Food will be provided. Following, we will have a short Teen Soyo business meeting. Join us for the fellowship! Questions? Ask Holly.**

**CHURCH WORK DAY**

**Join us for Spring Cleaning Saturday, April 13 at 8:30am-12:30pm**



**Please pray for the healing of** Adriana Theodoropoulos, Lori Sorensen, Ethan Packey, Michealle and Tyrone Carey, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula.

*Food for Hungry People 2024*  
*50th Anniversary*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	MARCH 18 How many clocks do you have in your home? Deposit .25 for each in your Food for Hungry People Box because "time" is running out for those who are starving.	19 "Put a little love in your heart," get FFHP off to a good start. Put in a dime for all the "loves" in your life.	20 Count the number of Bibles in your home and deposit .50 for each, because Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food."	21 Count the number of soda cans or water bottles in your home. Put in .15 each, because Jesus said, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink."	22 How many tablets do you own? Deposit .25 each. Tablets can be a means of communication. Let's communicate our love for the hungry.	23 Count the number of steps (inside and outside) of your home. Pay .10 for each step. Help the hungry "step" into a new future.
24 How many mirrors are in your home? Pay .15 for each. Let your "mirror" reflect the image of one who cares.	25 Count the locks in your home. Pay .20 for each lock. Let's "unlock" the door that gives hope to the hungry.	26 How many rings do you have? Deposit .15 per ring. This will help us b"ring" food to the hungry!	27 How many eggs are in your refrigerator? Pay .15 for each. Hungry people have to "scramble" for their food.	28 How many doors does your home have? Pay .20 for each. Help open a "door" to a better future for the world's hungry.	29 Have everyone in the family deposit all the loose change they have in their pockets or purses. It makes "cents" to help the hungry	30 How many electrical outlets are in your kitchen and living room? Pay .15 each. You'll get a "charge" out of feeding the hungry.
31 "Button up your overcoat" - so simple to do. They are not only hungry but very cold too. Deposit .50 for each coat in your home.	APRIL 1 For every cellphone in your home, pay .30. It is "long distance" to hungry areas in most parts of the world. Let's make it a toll-free number.	2 How many extension cords do you have in your home? Pay .25 for each. Let's "extend" a helping hand to those who need it.	3 For each pie or cake in your home, deposit .40. We should never "dessert" the hungry.	4 How many Apple products do you own? For every one deposit .35. Let's never "tune out" the hungry.	5 For every salt and pepper shaker, pay .25. Let's all "sprinkle" their lives with a little seasoning.	6 For every TV show that was watched today pay .35. TV helps us see around the world; this money will help us feed the hungry around the world.
7 How many computers do you own? Pay .30 for each. Let's take a "byte" out of hunger!	8 How many pictures do you have on your walls? Just "picture" yourself without food & deposit .15 for each picture.	9 Pay .30 for each pair of contacts or eyeglasses you have. This will help us "see" clearly the need of caring for the hungry.	10 Do you have musical instruments in your home? Pay .75 for each. This is a "key" to sharing and caring.	11 How many phone chargers can you find in your home? Pay .25 for each. You'll get a "charge" out of helping the hungry.	12 Count your tea or coffee cups and deposit .10 each. Our "cup" runneth over, so let's fill theirs.	13 "I've got my love to keep me warm," that's true, but the hungry have only you. Pay .15 for each blanket in your home.

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan SABA



Archbishop of New York  
and Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: 049/2024

Great Lent, 2024

**TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PRINTED IN THE BULLETIN**

Beloved Hierarchs, Clergy, and Faithful of our Archdiocese,

Greetings in the name of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

During this holy season of repentance, we strive with renewed focus to live rightly, being “doers of the word and not just hearers” (James 1:22). Along with increasing our prayers and abandoning self-indulgence, we especially focus on caring for the needs of others. As we hear on Meatfare Sunday, we will be judged by God on how we have responded to the sufferings of the “least of these” (Matthew 25), so we must strive to give attention to their needs as we would to Christ’s.

Although our Lord Jesus Christ taught and exemplified this law of love in the most perfect way, it is also beautifully stated in the Old Law, where God commands, “If one of your brothers happens to be in need . . ., you will not harden your heart nor shut your hand to your needy brother. You will surely open your hands to him” (Deuteronomy 15:7–8). Such giving is not just some humanitarian project but a relational act: opening our hearts and hands to our brothers and sisters. It is a determination to actually see the homeless woman we pass on the street and to remember the friend or acquaintance who has fallen on hard times. Although the magnitude of suffering in the world tempts us to insulate ourselves against the needs of others, the law of love reminds us that each person is a treasure and that his need is not a problem but an opportunity to embrace him.

As we have for 50 years now, we again encourage you to open your hearts and hands to the needy by contributing to our Food for Hungry People program this Lent. We appeal to your well-known generosity and ask the blessing of Almighty God on all who participate in this worthy effort.

With prayers for an edifying and enriching Great Lent and a glorious celebration of Pascha, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

  
SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

**Support Clergy Wives**

Our ladies will be raising funds for their Annual NAB project "Endowment Fund for Widowed Clergy Wives" to show support and appreciation for the women who serve Christ as helpmates to their priest-servant husbands.

St. Anthony the Great AWO has two opportunities for your participation in this!

**1.** Last chance to snag an amazing raffle basket (each valued \$25-30+) They will be raffled today during the coffee hour. We have baskets for everyone!! Pets, Kids, Men, Toiletries, Chocolate, Italian, Movie Go'ers, BBQ Lovers and more.

Tickets are: 6 for \$10, 3 for \$5 or 1 for \$2

See Priscilla or Holly to purchase tickets and cast your vote for which basket you want a chance(s) to win!!



You do not need to be present to win raffle baskets.

All present losers will go into a pot for second place mystery prizes!

**2.** Join us for a Fish Luncheon sponsored by AWO to celebrate the feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos on Sunday, March 24th Coffee Hour.

All the proceeds for this Fish Luncheon will go to support Widowed Clergy Wives.

Our suggested meal price is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child.



*Lenten Women Retreat*

*Embrace the Season*

*Join the Antiochian Women of DOMSE*

*for our 3rd Annual Hub & Spoke Zoom Lenten Retreat*

*We will meet at the Church at 9am-1pm Saturday, April 20*

*(Zoom meeting is at 10am-12pm). There will be food and refreshments.*



**MARCH 17<sup>TH</sup>**

**SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS**

**CHEESE FARE SUNDAY**

Beloved In Christ,

**PREPARING FOR GREAT LENT**

Have you started making plans for your summer vacation? Maybe you're planning on seeing different parts of our country, or maybe a cruise, or even a trip overseas to see loved ones. Before we leave for a vacation, much planning is

needed - how are we getting there, where are we going to stay, what are we going to do, and ultimately, what is the cost. If we plan accordingly, our vacation can be most rewarding and enjoyable.

For Orthodox Christians worldwide, this coming Monday, March 17th, begins the journey of Great Lent. From Clean Monday through the following 40 days and Holy Week, we journey along a path with a clear goal in mind; The Light of the empty tomb of Christ - Great and Holy Pascha! With our fasting, our prayers, almsgiving and charity, we are also called to reset our spiritual lives and turn our attention to the Kingdom of God.

As we undertake this lenten journey, we should sincerely reflect on the essence of our lives, and our relationship with God. Are the things of this world consuming us and becoming earthly treasures? Jesus Christ teaches us in this Sunday's gospel reading (Matthew 6: 14-21) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."

Great Lent should be the impetus to always seek and cultivate in our hearts love, mercy, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, compassion, faithfulness, truthfulness, acts of charity, hospitality and bearing witness to God's love to others. These are the true treasures that lead to the Kingdom of God.

Though Great Lent is not an exciting vacation, it is a journey into paradise for which we were created. Let us begin this journey with love, mercy and forgiveness abiding in our hearts. Let us plan to fast with a purpose and a goal, using it as a tool to reach our destination. And let us make the time to seriously reflect on our lives and evaluate what we consider as truly important, and then ask ourselves, "Am I storing up my treasure in heaven?" May our lenten journey to the Light of the empty tomb of Christ be blessed.

**In Christ,**  
*Fr. Elia Shalhoub*  
**Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor**



**TODAY'S FEAST SUNDAY, MARCH 17<sup>TH</sup> 2024**  
**SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS OR**  
**CHEESE FARE SUNDAY**  
**4<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF THE TRIODION**

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined,

**Antiochian Women's Educational Grant**

If you are a female, 26 of age or older and need help with the cost of education or training, which you have undertaken to improve your circumstances or those of your family.

Each year, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America awards grants, in the minimum amount of \$500.00 each.

The grants get awarded in July at the NAB Summer Meeting. The qualifications for the grant are as follows. Applicants must: • Be a female, 26 years of age or older • Be a member in Good Standing of their Antiochian parish • Be actively involved in the worship, service, and social life of her parish • Be applying for, or registered in, an academic or trade study program (applications for seminars & workshops are not covered) • Demonstrate financial need. The deadline for the Committee to receive the application and material is June 1, 2024. Please ask Father or Priscilla for the application.

**Francis Maria Scholarship**

This scholarship is being offered for adults and young adults in good standing in the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America.

Applicants must be a U.S. or Canadian citizen entering any of the first four years of an accredited undergraduate college or university.

This year, we increased the amount of the award to \$10,000 per student to help meet the challenges of high tuition costs.

With this Premier Scholarship, we hope to encourage more Orthodox young people to seek higher education becoming stronger, well-educated, Orthodox Christian leaders.

In Christ,  
**Kh. Kathleen Purpura, Director**  
Francis Maria Scholarship  
Scholarships@OrthodoxYouth.com

*Food for Hungry People &  
Charitable Outreach - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign*

Our parish families collected over 180,970.57 last year.

With just a little extra effort from every parish we can try to collect and distribute more this year to those in need.



**FUNDING LOCAL CHARITABLE INITIATIVES**

Our FFHP&CO Funding Committee will continue to accept applications submitted by parishes for grants aimed at establishing or enhancing charitable initiatives on the local level.

Grant applications are available on the Archdiocese website.

**Letter from His Eminence Metropolitan SABA to the Youth on the Occasion of the Orthodox Youth Day. The Patriarchate's Orthodox Youth Movement celebrates Orthodox Youth Day every March 16, the day of its founding in 1942.**

To my sons and daughters, the youth of this blessed Archdiocese,

It is my joy to address you on the occasion of the Orthodox Youth Day (March 16):

You are the blossoms of the Church, how delightful is the flower with its fragrant scent.

You are the dynamism of the Church, and how many dreams lie before you to become reality with your youthful capabilities.

You are in the age of zeal and vitality, so may you use your energies in the service of your souls, not just your bodies and minds.

You are the hope of the Church because you are its future, and how many great deeds have been achieved by individuals like you.

\*\*\* I dream of you as strong in grace and insightful in the matters of your lives.

I dream of you as brave in facing evil, and enthusiastic in supporting what is good.

I dream of you as rejectors of what is presented to you for imitation, and examining everything before adopting it.

I dream of you as distinguishing between the behaviors of a world that is not inspired by God, and the behaviors required by the Gospel.

I dream of you as humble and fruitful trees, and as upright as cypress trees, brave, fearing nothing, because through Christ you can overcome the world.

I dream of you being successful and excelling in your lives, so that your church will be proud of you, and the name of your Lord may be glorified wherever you go. I dream of you seeking your salvation and placing Christ above everything else.

I dream of you as saints, for your calling is nothing less than this.

\*\*\* I encourage you to delve deeper into your faith and examine the validity of things presented today as if they are necessary or not.

I encourage you to find true and lasting joy in the embrace of your church and be assured that there is no joy or peace except in living in the sweet presence of your Christ.

I encourage you to experience the sweetness and power of living with Christ that makes the mountains dance.

\*\*\* I know how much evil awaits you, And how many challenges you face, And I also know, my beloved, that you need courage to be true Christians.

But I also know that your Christianity deserves this courage. Or else the world is heading towards more slavery, despair, and coldness.

I encourage you to ignite your hearts with pure love and lit up the world around you and warm it.

You are the ones who will warm the world, or else woe to us all.

May God bless you and keep you,

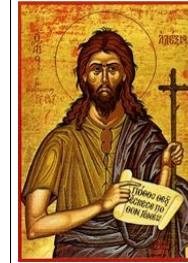
With all my love, my prayers, and blessings.

Yours in Christ,

+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

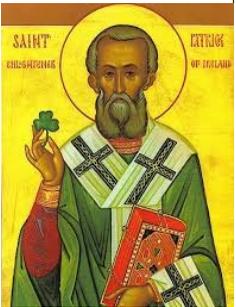


### ALEXIOS THE MAN OF GOD

Saint Alexis was born in old Rome of illustrious parents named Euphemi-anus and Aglais, and at their request was joined to a young woman in marriage. However, he did not remain with her even for one day, but fled to Edessa, where he lived for eighteen years. He returned to Rome in the guise of a beggar and sat at the gates of his father's house, unknown to all and mocked by his own servants. His identity was revealed only after his death by a paper that he had on his person, which he himself had written a little before his repose. The pious Emperor Honorius honoured him with a solemn burial. The title "Man of God" was given to him from heaven in a vision to the Bishop of Rome on the day of the Saint's repose.

### PATRICK THE ENLIGHTENER OF IRELAND

Saint Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, was seized from his native Britain by Irish marauders when he was sixteen years old. Though the son of a deacon and a grandson of a priest, it was not until his captivity that he sought out the Lord with his whole heart. In his Confession, the testament he wrote towards the end of his life, he says, "After I came to Ireland - every day I had to tend sheep, and many times a day I prayed - the love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. And my spirit was so moved that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many at night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain; and I would rise for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm." After six years of slavery in Ireland, he was guided by God to make his escape, and afterwards struggled in the monastic life at Auxerre in Gaul, under the guidance of the holy Bishop Germanus. Many years later he was ordained bishop and sent to Ireland once again, about the year 432, to convert the Irish to Christ. His arduous labours bore so much fruit that within seven years, three bishops were sent from Gaul to help him shepherd his flock, "my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord - so many thousands of people," he says in his Confession. His apostolic work was not accomplished without much "weariness and painfulness," long journeys through difficult country, and many perils; he says his very life was in danger twelve times. When he came to Ireland as its enlightener, it was a pagan country; when he ended his earthly life some thirty years later, about 461, the Faith of Christ was established in every corner.



## PREPARING FOR GREAT LENT

### *CHEESE FARE SUNDAY (Sunday of Forgiveness)*

*By Metropolitan ANTHONY of Sourozh*

**In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The weeks that have preceded Forgiveness Sunday are weeks during which, in the form of stories that actually took place or of parables, we are presented with the basic sins, the basic brokenness of ours.

This was the time when we should have examined ourselves deeply, deeply; stood before God, at times with horror at what we have accepted to be, at times with pain at what has become of us in the consequence of the life which was ours.

And now we have come to a point which is called Lent. Lent is an Old English word derived from the German that means spring, the beginning of life. Lent is no longer the time allotted to us for repentance. It is the time which, having repented week after week, we should be able together to move along a path that will lead us, through the examples of saints, first to Calvary with Christ and see there what the consequences are of our own sinfulness; because as we read in the life of one saint, in response to a priest who was begging Christ to punish the evil-doers, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'Never ask Me for that. If there was only one sinner in the world I would become man again, and again die upon the cross for him or her to be saved.'

When we will stand together at the foot of the cross on Great Thursday night or by the tomb of Christ on Great Friday, we must realize that this has happened because of each of us — not for the totality of mankind taken wholesale, but because of each of us. Christ died for each of us. And we must at that moment bring to Him ourselves in such a way as to show Him that for us, His death upon the cross was not in vain. And then move towards the Resurrection to rise with Him, to rise in exultation, to rise in gratitude, but to rise also renewed, a new creature — not perfect yet, because we have years during which we will have to follow the same path step by step, again and again, until we reach our full maturity and can enter into God's Kingdom.

Today we will ask forgiveness from one another. This is totally unrealistic if we imagine that we can approach each of those who have hurt us, wounded us, at times destroyed our lives, and say, 'Let us agree that the horror that you have brought into my life does not exist. I forgive you. Go in peace.'

We are not mature enough for this. The martyrs were capable of this; we are not. But a thing which we can do, which each of us can do, is to say, 'Because you are so loved of God, so loved by Christ, that He became man, lived, taught and died for you, and not only for me, I accept you as you are. Indeed, I would be so happy if you were different, if you were not a cross on my shoulders, a wound in my heart, a terror in my life, a humiliation. But there is still time ahead of us, and for the moment I accept you as you are and I shall carry you, this acceptance, on my shoulders. As St. Paul says, 'Carry one another's burdens, because it is the way in which

you will have fulfilled the law of Christ.'

And carrying the burden upon our shoulders means primarily to accept my neighbor as he is, hoping that things will change, praying for him or for her that the grace of God should transform, transfigure this person — but also me, because what judge am I of another's sins while I am a sinner, while I am a temptation, a wound in the life of so many others?

So let us make this attempt. When we come to one another and say, 'Forgive me' it will not mean, if you answer 'Yes I do' that nothing that was wrong between us is annihilated, exists no more. But it means 'I accept you as you are, sinful, a wound in my flesh, a wound in my heart, a problem in my life — but I accept you and I will carry this acceptance, and you, throughout life, and pray for God's blessing to be on you and pray for God to heal both of us, that I should become such that I do not lead you into temptation, be the cause of your own fall.

Let us therefore pray together during this service, bring to God true repentance of what we are and what we have been, but also bring one another to God. Moving towards Calvary, moving towards the resurrection has been compared by one of the ancient writers to travelers who board the same ship. They will never arrive safe if there are quarrels between them, if they are not at one. Let us be at one, with Christ who is at the rudder, with Christ who has given His life for each of us, however difficult we are for one another. And when we say, 'Yes, I forgive,' it means, 'I accept you as you are with whatever consequence.'

## UPCOMING SUNDAY CALENDAR

Below lists the upcoming Sundays from February 18th until Holy Pascha, which falls on May 5th this year. We invite you to join us each week for Sunday Liturgy to celebrate this special commemoration of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

Please mark these special dates on your calendar.

March 17	Cheesefare Sunday (Forgiveness Sunday)
March 18	Beginning of Great Lent
March 24	1st Sunday of Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy) & Feast of the Annunciation
March 31	2nd Sunday of Lent
April 7	3rd Sunday of Lent (Sunday of the Cross)
April 14	4th Sunday of Lent
April 21	5th Sunday of Lent
April 28	PALM SUNDAY
May 3	GOOD FRIDAY
May 5	HOLY PASCHA
May 12	THOMAS SUNDAY