

Glory to Thy Passion, O Lord



Great Lent and Universalism

A number of years ago, a priest from Eastern Pennsylvania named Fr. Andrew Damick authored a blog post with the provocative title “The Rejection of Universalism in the Triodion.” In this relatively short piece, Fr. Andrew quickly and successfully made the case that the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church includes a rejection of a heretical doctrine known as “universalism,” and that this rejection is particularly prominent in the services of the Church comprising the cycle of “pre-Lent,” Great Lent, and Holy Week.

Now, for those who may not have been aware of the term, “universalism” is the belief that the punishment of the damned is not eternal and that eventually all

sentient beings (or at least all human beings) will receive salvation and enjoy communion with God and eternal rest in paradise. Another variant of universalism would argue that there is simply no judgment and that God does not evaluate His creation at all. Instead, He predestines all for eternal bliss regardless of their thoughts, desires, will, or deeds.

As Fr. Andrew points out, such a position is completely at odds with the theology we actually pray in the Church. Thus, for instance, we find in the services of the Soul Saturday that precedes the Sunday of the Last Judgment a prayer for deliverance from “the ever-burning fire” and “the worm that torments without ceasing.”

(continued, see UNIVERSALISM, next page)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
April 3	Basic Coffee Hour	M. Fedkin, K. Bazilevskaya	K. Cattell, M. Fedkin	All Servers welcome each Sunday. Altar Server Co-Captains: J. Cadman and S. Oleynik
April 10	H. Torbic & A.T. Pelikan	A. Stickle, J. Carrier	M. Fiori, H. Torbic	
April 17	Basic Coffee Hour	K. Oleynik, J. Carrier	M. Fiori, M. Fedkin	
April 24	PASCHA	All Greeters	PASCHA	
May 1	Russian Ladies	M. Fedkin, K. Bazilevskaya	K. Cattell, M. Fedkin	
May 8	Basic Coffee Hour	A. Stickle, D. Swisher	M. Fiori, H. Torbic	

■ FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK

Universalism (con’t)

Likewise, on the Sunday of the Judgment itself, we find references to “everlasting torment,” “unceasing anguish,” “eternal bonds,” and “everlasting punishments.” During Lent, we find ourselves at one point praying that we might escape the “harsh and everlasting agony of Gehenna.” And we find Abraham telling the fictive rich man (from the parable “the rich man and Lazarus”), “thou art tormented in the fire eternally.” During Holy Week, we are taught prominently to beware lest we be excluded from heaven: “shut out of the Kingdom” and “outside of the [bridal] chamber of Christ.” In one particularly terrifying instance, Christ is even said to know that Judas is in fact already “beyond redemption.” And if one person can be said to be “beyond redemption,” surely the same might be able to be said about others as well.

Having thus made his case, Fr. Andrew concludes his post by saying:

No one who loves God revels in this stuff. But it’s still real. And that’s why we sing about it. Teaching universalism means we would have to stop singing about this reality. And it would be a pretty big editing job to revise the liturgical tradition of the Church to accommodate such a teaching.

Moving back one more step, it is also important to understand that universalism is at odds with both the Orthodox “rule of faith” and with the Scriptures themselves. In John, the Lord Jesus states unequivocally that “all that are in the graves... shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (5:28-29). In Matthew, the Lord says that those who live in an unmerciful manner will “go away into everlasting punishment,” which he then immediately contrasts to the fate of “the righteous” who will inherit “eternal life” (25:46). Describing the devil, St. John tells us in his Revelation that he “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” in “the lake of fire” (20:10). He then subsequently describes those

human beings that God judges negatively as also being cast into “the lake of fire” (20:13-15). And there are many other places in the Scriptures where such teaching is either alluded to or stated directly as well.

Our popular culture very strongly wants to influence us to believe that there is no God, but if there is a God, He is surely not “the Judge of all the earth” who is described in the Scriptures (Gen 18:25). But biblically, liturgically, dogmatically and historically, universalism is untenable as an Orthodox Christian belief. However unpleasant it may seem to us, there is a hell and it is eternal. Part of the reason we have periods of Church life like Great Lent or sacraments like Confession is so that we examine the state of our souls and seek to avoid the damnation of hell. To use Fr. Andrew’s words again, as Christians “even though we are definitely running *toward* something, we are also very much running *from* something.”

God is infinitely merciful, but there comes a point when His mercy no longer has any effect on the hardened soul which has made a firm and final choice to reject Him. We cannot know at what point we (or anyone else) may have made such a decision, but this should be a major motivator for us to desire to be free of sin. Because God is merciful, we should never despair or believe ourselves to be unforgivable as Judas did. Nevertheless, we cannot know what fruit evil deeds will bear in our soul, and we need to make a conscious attempt to flee from any “sin that leads to death” (1 Jn 5:16). This is what Lent is all about. Let us examine ourselves, continue to run our race well, excise all sin, and prepare to present ourselves before “the Judge of all the earth” and “the God who sees” (Gen 16:13). Amen.

— Fr. Ignatius

■ NEWS & NOTES

New Matthew 25 Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome Kyra Quinn as our new coordinator for Matthew 25, the local charity organization of our parish. If you are interested in getting involved in this ministry, or have suggestions or questions, please contact her.

Parking Reminder

As we approach the end of Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, where services are more frequent, we would like to remind parishioners about our parking situation. On Sunday morning, *all spaces*, both paved and gravel are open for parking from 9am-1pm. At all other times, only the gravel spaces are open. Students rent parking spaces from the parish and it is crucial that we all them to park in the spaces they are renting. Thank you.



Purchase a Pascha Lily

If you are interested in purchasing a Pascha lily to help beautify the church for Pascha, please use the online form at holytrinity-oca.org or sign up in the narthex.

Lenten Confession

Those who wish to receive Holy Communion on Pascha are reminded that they must make a Confession during Lent. Time is already getting short, and the lines for confession will become longer as we get closer to Holy Week and Pascha. The last day that Father will be available to hear your confession will be Holy Wednesday. Please, plan ahead!

April Adult Ed: St. John Climacus

April’s Adult Education will be held on April 2nd at 10:30am with a lecture on the monastic saint and writer, John of the Ladder (Climacus). Sr. Brittney, a novice at Holy Transfiguration will be the presenter. Sr. Brittany is a graduate of St. Vladimir’s and has an academic background in patristic writings. Come out and join us for this lecture!

Workday & Cleanup for Pascha

Please come join us at 9am on Saturday, April 9th for an indoor/outdoor work day and clean up for Pascha. For those who prefer the be outside, there is weeding, planting, and raking to be done. For those who would rather help out indoors, there’s sweeping, polishing, and de-waxing to be done. Many hands make light work!

Opportunity to Assist in Ukraine

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has had a missional presence in Ukraine for many years, and therefore is in a good position to help refugees and others affected by the current war. If you would like to assist them in their charitable task, please visit IOCC.org and click the yellow “Donate Now” button in the top right corner. Thank you!

Eggs for Pascha

As is traditional in Orthodoxy, we will have red eggs for Pascha. If you are interested in donating or dying eggs for Pascha, please contact A.T. Pelikan. If you dye eggs, please make sure the dye is completely dry before Pascha morning.



■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Out of Hatred (con't)

from God; and so even if the cause of anger is ‘righteous’, its fruit ends up being a poison that kills us.

It is the devil who whispers in our ear that we should cease to care for or even mention the names of those who offend us and hurt us and do wrong to us and to others, even in our prayers. But God comes to us and says *‘Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you’* (Luke 6.27, 28). This is hard counsel, and a difficult commandment from our Lord; but it is the only way that leads out of hatred.

It is the devil who urges us to allow political strife and evil machinations to become dividing lines in families, in friendships, in communities and even in churches; to put up boundaries to our love, on account of the dividing lines created by our human sins. And yes, this ‘feels natural’ in moments of sorrow and conflict, and so too many fall into this trap. But God comes to us and says that it is the lost who are in most need of being found, the sick who are the most in need of healing, and the evil-doers who are in as much need of His mercy as the good — truly, even more so. And yes, these are again hard words, especially when we experience anew the suffering that evil brings: but the Lord gives us these words because they are the only words that lead to life, rather than death — and when death is the word the world is speaking, it is in precisely this moment that it needs the words of life and healing and restoration.

This is why, my dear ones, we must always be swift to reject the devil’s voice, recognizing that he is especially active in periods such as the present. And this is why, in such circumstances, we do not race to abandon our customs or our traditions or practices on account of his efforts to stir up our emotions; rather, we rest all the more resolutely in the arms of the Church, which is the hospital for every suffering soul. We will not, on account of the provocations of the evil one, alter our life of Liturgy, worship and prayer — except that we will pray

even more fervently for those in peril and in need. We will pray for the lands and peoples of Ukraine, and their long-suffering pastors and the faithful who are our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters and our children; and we will pray also for the lands and peoples of Russia, and our pastors and hierarchy and the faithful there, who are our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters and our children — just as you heard us do today. God’s love knows no political boundaries, nor does our prayer. All need our fervent prayer, love and care; and all will receive it.

And we will do this because we know something that the devil does not want us to know: that God is stronger than human sin, and that the perils which our sin creates, however terrible, can only be brought to a good end through our deep adherence to His love and His Will. Today is the Sunday of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and the devil would have us believe that was an occasion of torment and punishment. But in reality, what we see in their lives is the proof of God’s love. Yes, sin has a consequence — and all the evil in the world, in every age, in every situation, is a result of the sin that we permit to exist in the depths of our hearts. But God does not simply ‘banish’ Adam and Eve from Paradise: He *leads them out*, and takes them by the hand, and creates for them a path that leads back to its gates — a path that ultimately will make them stronger, and their hearts purer. This Sunday is a day of hope: that whatever the evils we may have created for ourselves, or that others impose upon us, God’s love is stronger, His power is greater, and He will lead us all back to Himself, if only we will let Him.

Great Lent is about to begin. Do not waste this gift, my dear ones. Some demons are cast out ‘only by prayer and fasting’ (cf. Matthew 17.21), as the Lord once told His disciples. There are demons at work in our spiritual world today: let us cast them out the way the Lord instructs. And be assured that in this spiritual war, there is only one victor: God, Who loves each of His children with a love stronger than any force of evil, now and forever. Amen.

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

The Only Way That Leads Out of Hatred

This homily was delivered by Bishop Irenei (Steenburg) of London on the Sunday of Forgiveness, 2022

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

My brothers and sisters, I wish to say a brief word to you about evil, and the devil, and rejection, and despair. Not because these are themselves the theme of this final day before the beginning of Great Lent — which is dedicated to Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise — but because our experience of life in this world, on this side of the gates of Paradise, often draws us into the experience of these things. And surely we are experiencing them now, for in times of internecine conflict and strife and warfare, we always experience evil — and with it, its author, the devil; and from it the sense of rejection and despair he seeks to instill in our hearts.

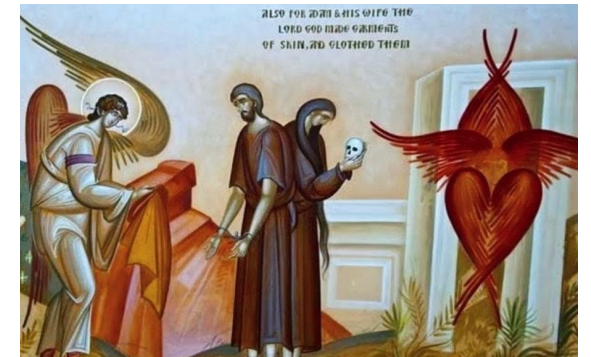
My brothers and sisters, in such troubling times, we must know first of all what comes from God, and what comes from the devil — for the devil is cunning and deceitful, and knows that he can claim space in our hearts most easily when he convinces us to listen to him, rather than our Maker, just as once he did to Eve in the Garden.

It is the devil that sows discord, disunity and hatred. These things never come from God. But the devil knows that simply feeding us hatred directly is not effective: we will resist it, or at least try. So he inspires us first with fear, and then encourages us to let that fear build up into anger; and when we permit the roots of anger to take hold in our souls, the devil needs only to apply a little water, and this evil fruit grows into hatred with amazing speed.

And so the devil comes to us now, to stoke and fuel our passions. We all have deepest concerns over what is happening to our brothers and sisters in this terrible moment of bloodshed and fratricidal war; such concern is born out of love, and our concern for family, friends,

and every child of God. Our hearts break, because our hearts long for love, and in our Orthodox Church we have known only too well in the past century the agony of a lack of love in the world, in governments, in societies. But the devil knows how to take that concern and turn it into bitterness, and then to anger, and then all the rest. This, my brothers and sisters, we must be on our guard against at all cost.

The devil’s voice often sounds ‘reasonable’ to our modern ears — for example, when he comes and tells us that we ought to be filled with anger because evil things take place around us; or to become bitter because people do things worthy of condemnation; or to break our communion of love with each other because others are acting in hateful ways. In worldly, secular terms, all these exhortations sound ‘rational’, for hating a



wrongdoer and learning to be suspicious and wary of our brethren are familiar enough customs in this world. And so it is that little bit easier to convince ourselves that this path is a good one, and that such counsel is right and proper, rather than evil.

But the devil is not a friend — not now, not ever. The devil wishes to fuel our anger, not because it is ‘righteous’, but because an angry heart will turn all the more easily from brother and sister, and eventually even

(continued, see OUT OF HATRED, next page)

Holy Trinity Calendar






























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to join remotely, visit holytrinity-oca.org/zoom.

LIVE

this service will be livestreamed on YouTube (visit holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube).

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.
Events listed at **Trinity House** take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div>27<div>Sunday of the Cross Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am LIVE (Hours, 9:40am) CommonFood Presentation, 12pm</div></div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30<div>Confessions, 4pm-6pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm</div></div>	<div>31<div>OCF @ Penn State, 7pm, Pasquerilla 126</div></div>	<div>April 1<div>Confessions, 5pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm</div></div>	<div>2<div>Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 9am Adult Education: St. John Climacus, 10am Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm LIVE Confessions, following</div></div>
<div>3<div>Sunday of St. John Climacus Baptism of Genevieve Swisher, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am LIVE (Hours, 9:40am)</div></div>	<div>4</div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6<div>Confessions, 4pm-6pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm</div></div>	<div>7<div>Deanery Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten Meal, 7:30pm</div></div>	<div>8<div>Confessions, 5pm Akathist to the Theotokos, 6pm</div></div>	<div>9<div>Parish Workday, 9am Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm LIVE Confessions, following</div></div>
<div>10<div>St. Mary of Egypt Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am LIVE (Hours, 9:40am)</div></div>	<div>11</div>	<div>12</div>	<div>13<div>Confessions, 4pm-6pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm</div></div>	<div>14<div>OCF @ Penn State, 7pm, Pasquerilla 126</div></div>	<div>15<div>Confessions, 5pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm</div></div>	<div>16<div>Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy, 9am Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Pascha Preparations and Palm Cross workshop, 4pm Vigil of Palm Sunday, 6pm LIVE</div></div>
<div>17<div>Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy, 10am LIVE (Hours, 9:40am) Myrrhophore Practice, noon Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, following PASCHA Christ is risen! Divine Liturgy, 12 midnight Blessing of the Baskets/M meal, 2:30am Agape Vespers, 4pm</div></div>	<div>18<div>Holy Monday Presanctified Liturgy, 9am Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, following Paschal Divine Liturgy, 9am</div></div>	<div>19<div>Holy Tuesday Presanctified Liturgy, 9am Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, following</div></div>	<div>20<div>Holy Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy, 9am Matins of Holy Thursday, 6pm Confessions, following Paschal Vespers, 6pm</div></div>	<div>21<div>Holy Thursday Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil, 9am Matins of Holy Friday (Passion Gospels), 6pm OCF @ Penn State, 7pm, Pasquerilla 126</div></div>	<div>22<div>Holy Friday Royal Hours, 9am Vespers of Holy Friday (Unnailing), 4pm Matins of Holy Saturday (Lamentations), 7pm Men's Barbecue @ Father's house, 6pm</div></div>	<div>23<div>Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday, 9am Paschal Nocturns, 11:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm LIVE</div></div>
<div>May 1<div>Thomas Sunday Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am LIVE (Hours, 9:40am) Easter Egg Hunt, 12:15pm</div></div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div>	<div>4<div>Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following</div></div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6</div>	<div>7<div>Great Vespers, 6pm LIVE Confessions, following</div></div>

Chapel Calendar

All events take place at 145 North Kern Street in Beavertown, unless where noted.

Sunday 17

Great Vespers; Confessions following, 6pm; Akathist for the Repose of the Departed served at 5:15pm

Sunday 3

St. John Climacus; Divine Liturgy 10am; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately thereafter, catechesis at 1:30pm

Tuesday 5

Choir rehearsal, 6pm

Tuesday 6

Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm; Lenten soup/bread following

Saturday, 9

Great Vespers; Confessions following, 6pm; Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos served at 5:00pm

Sunday 10

St. Mary of Egypt; Divine Liturgy 10am; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately thereafter, catechesis at 1:30pm

Tuesday, April 12

Choir rehearsal

Wednesday 13

Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm; Lenten soup/bread following

Saturday 16

Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy 10am; Hours 9:40am

Saturday 16

Decorating for Palm Sunday, 12 noon

Saturday 16

Great Vespers; Confessions following, 6pm

Sunday 17

Palm Sunday; Divine Liturgy 10am; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately thereafter

Sunday 17

Great and Holy Monday Bridegroom matins, 6pm

Tuesday 19

Choir rehearsal, 6pm

Wednesday 20

Great and Holy Wednesday Vesperal Divine Liturgy, 6pm

Thursday 21

Great and Holy Friday Matins with Reading of the Passion Gospels, 6pm

Friday 22

Great and Holy Friday Unnailing Vespers, 6pm

Saturday 23

Great and Holy Saturday Mystery of Holy Baptism, 10am; Decorating for Pascha afterwards

Saturday 23

Nocturns (Midnight Office), 11:30pm

Sunday 24

Pascha Matins/Hours and Divine Liturgy, 12 midnight

Sunday 24

Blessing of Paschal Baskets and Agape Meal, 2:30am

Sunday 24

Agape Vespers, 4pm

Sunday 30

Great Vespers, 6pm

NOTE: traditionally, no extra activities are scheduled for either the Week of the Great and Holy Passion or for Bright Week

Consult the CHS website or FB page for schedule changes and/or other information

April 2022