

Mine Eyes Have Seen Thy Salvation



The Presentation of the Lord

Our father among the saints, Sophronius (~560-638), was the Patriarch of Jerusalem. An Arab by birth, he was a monk and theologian who was the chief protagonist for Orthodox teaching in the doctrinal controversy on the essential nature of Jesus and his volitional acts. This is one of his sermons on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Feb 2).

Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ. The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and

reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him.

The light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

The true light has come, the light that enlightens every man who is born into this world. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves as we go together to meet and to

(continued, see PRESENTATION, following page)

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Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS
Feb 4	Russian Ladies Group A (Katya F.)	J. Houser & A. Stickles	M. Fiori & M. Stickles
Feb 11	A. Stickles, M. Leathers, L. Georgiou	J. Torbic & N. Quinting	H. Torbic & B. Haupt
Feb 18	H. Torbic, A.T. Pelikan, K. Oleynik	M. & T. Chambers	K. Cattell & M. Fedkin
Feb 25	OCF Coffee Hour	M. Leathers & Mka. K. Oleynik	G. Cattell & M. Stickles
March 3	C. Swisher, T. Chambers, C. Pellock	M. Fedkin & K. Bazilevskaya	M. Fiori & B. Haupt

Presentation

receive with the aged Simeon the light whose brilliance is eternal. Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendor.

Through Simeon’s eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Simeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness.

■ PRAXIS

The True Nature of Fasting

The following is taken from Met. Kallistos Ware’s introduction to the Lenten Triodion.

In fasting, a balance must be kept between the outward and the inward. On the outward level fasting involves physical abstinence from food and drink, and without such exterior abstinence, a full and true fast cannot be kept. Yet, the rules about eating and drinking must never be treated as an end in themselves. Neither should we over-emphasize the external rules about food, nor should we scorn these rules as outdated. We are a unity of body and soul. But some, because of their heretical attitude towards human nature, create a false “spiritualism” which rejects or ignores the body and view man solely in terms of his reasoning brain. This has caused a general decline in fasting. As to the argument that fasting rules are too difficult to follow in today’s world, it can be said that fasting traditionally practiced in the Church has always been difficult and always involved hardship.

The primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of our dependence upon God. The purpose of its difficulty and hardship is to lead us into a sense of inward brokenness and contrition. On the other hand, abstinence/fasting leads us to a sense of lightness,

By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as he came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen him present among us and have mentally received him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in his honor. ■

Rector’s Note: It is clear from this sermon that in antiquity they had a custom of holding lighted candles at the Feast and processing. We should consider a return to these customs.

wakefulness, freedom, and joy. Even though it might be 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.

St. John Chrysostom says the fast is “abstinence not only from food but from sins. The fast should be kept not by the mouth alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and all members of the body.”

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are central to the Lenten season. Divorced from prayer and from the reception of the holy sacraments, unaccompanied by acts of compassion, our fasting becomes pharisaical or even demonic. Fasting, then, is valueless or even harmful when not combined with prayer. In the Gospels the devil is cast out, not by fasting alone, but by "prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17.21; Mark 9.29). Prayer and fasting should in turn be accompanied by almsgiving – the love for others expressed in practical form, by works of compassion and forgiveness.

Always in our acts of abstinence we should keep in mind St. Paul's admonition not to condemn others who fast less strictly. ■

■ NEWS & NOTES

February Adult Education

On February 28th we once again have the pleasure of welcoming Fr. Isaac Danevicius from St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Altoona to address us on an important topic. This month, he will be speaking on a series of low-level scandals that have troubled the Church in the past few decades. These scandals have centered around the insistence by some that certain confessing, communing Orthodox Christians (including priests and bishops) need to be baptized in order to be in right standing with God. This insistence on the re-baptism of Orthodox Chrisitians is often referred to as "sacramental rigorism" by its detractors. But where did this movement come from? How should we interpret it? And what theological and pastoral problems might it present to the Church? Join us as Fr. Isaac leads us in an exploration of this topic!

Help us purchase an AED

After being discussed and considered for many years, an AED (automated external defibrillator) was recently purchased by Holy Trinity. This lifesaving medical device will be located in a very visible spot in the church building and can be used by anyone in the case of a sudden cardiac arrest. Information regarding AED training will be available soon! Those wishing to help defray the cost of the AED may do so online, or write 'AED purchase' on the memo line of their physical check.

House Blessings

It’s house blessing time! Sign-ups with time slotting are available in the narthex and online. For any questions, coordination matters, or to schedule a blessing for a day and time that is not listed, please contact Anna Stickles at annastickles4@gmail.com. College students – you are more than welcome to sign up to get your dorm room/apartment blessed! If you don’t know what you need or how to set things up, don’t worry; Father will come with everything he needs and show you!

Archdiocesean Laity Retreat

On Saturday, March 9th, Steven Christoforou will speak on “What Do People Need from the Church?: How to lead Effective Christian Ministry” at the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (8290 Thompson Run Rd., Allison Park, PA). The day will begin with a Memorial Liturgy at 9am followed by a continental breakfast. Session 1 will begin at 11AM, Lunch at 12PM, and Session 2 at 1:15PM. There is a \$20 registration fee at the door. Please, consider attending! To register, please contact Fr. David Vernak at frdavidvernak@verizon.net or (201) 704-6217.

Retirement Celebration for Mr. Ed

Please join us after Divine Liturgy on February 25th as we hold a celebration for Ed Miranda and his recent retirement from his position as parish custodian.



A Pharisee, overcome with vainglory, and a Publican, bowed down in repentance, came to Thee the only Master. The one boasted and was deprived of blessings, while the other kept silent and was counted worthy of gifts. Confirm me, O Christ our God, in these his cries of sorrow, for Thou lovest mankind.
- Vespers for the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

■ CATECHESIS

The Holy Altar

Within the holy of holies is the altar upon which Jesus Christ is enthroned. The altar of an Orthodox Church has placed upon it many different items of great significance. The Temple of old centered and radiated from the ark of the covenant upon which God appeared to his people from between the two angels. If we recall, within the ark there lay the ten commandments, a jar of manna, the budding rod of Aaron, and the further works of Moses. Since the advent of Christ, all these things have found their fullness on the altar of Orthodox churches. The ten commandments and the works of Moses are fulfilled within the Gospel book which lays upon the altar. Here, the fullness of God’s Law is revealed in the life and work of Jesus Christ as given to us by the four evangelists. It is in the reading of the Gospels and the subsequent preaching which make our Lord’s royal, priestly, and prophetic word known to us. St. Germanus describes the four gospel writers as characterized by four faces, each representing, in their different ways, the Son of God. Drawing on an earlier tradition, ultimately from the prophet Ezekiel, St. Germanus characterizes the gospel writers as four animals: For the Gospel of John recounts His [Jesus’] sovereign, paternal, and glorious birth from his Father. The Gospel of Luke, being of priestly character, begins with the priest Zachariah burning incense in the temple. Matthew tells about His birth according to His humanity – “the book of the genealogy.” Therefore, this gospel is in the form of a man. And Mark begins from the prophetic spirit, which comes to men from on high, making the beginning say: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophets: “Behold, I send my messenger.” It is through the proclamation of the Gospel, the reading as well as the preaching, that the royal, prophetic, and priestly ministry of our Lord is made clear and accessible to God’s people. The jar of manna being held within the ark of the covenant was a continual reminder of God’s providential care for his people as they traversed the desert toward the promised land. In the Church, this is fulfilled in the continued feeding of God’s pilgrim people from the altar upon which the holy sacrifice of our Lord is again and again offered to the faithful. St. Germanus refers to the

altar as “the spot in the tomb where Christ was placed. On it lies the true and heavenly bread, the mystical and unbloody sacrifice. Christ sacrifices His flesh and blood and offers it to the faithful as food for eternal life.” He goes further telling us that the altar was “prefigured by the table of the Old Law upon which the manna, which was Christ, descended from heaven.” On Orthodox altars, there stands within the tabernacle a vessel containing the sanctified gifts of our Lord’s Body and Blood, which are drawn upon in order to care for those faithful who are sick and unable to attend the Divine Liturgy. Beside the Gospel book lies a blessing cross which is used to bless the faithful. This is the true budding rod of Aaron, the first high priest of Israel. The Cross is the true fruitful tree which has brought salvation and joy into the world. At the back of the altar stands the seven branched candelabra which replicates the



candelabra of the Temple and was a symbol of the tree of life. We could continue making parallels and giving commentary from the Holy Fathers upon the many ways in which the Orthodox temple is the complete and fulfilled icon of the Old Testament worship. For it is in the rites of the Orthodox Church that the heavens are truly opened, and the Lord gives himself to his people under the various sacraments of the Church. Instead, we close with this Psalm that describes the joy of being in the temple of God. One thing only have I asked of God, it alone shall I seek: to live in the Temple of God, all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of God, and to frequent his palace (Psalm 27:4) ■


Taken from Essentials of Orthodox Christian Belief, pp. 17-18. NB: In the Ezekiel symbolism St. Germanus applies to the gospel booksI, Matthew is a man, Mark an ox, Luke a lion, and John an eagle.

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024		
Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)		
SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 25th	<div>TRIDION WEEKS</div> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week MARCH 3rd	The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare MARCH 10th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare MARCH 17th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 24th	<div>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</div> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 31st	ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10:2-3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent APRIL 7th	VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 14th	ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 21st	ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 28th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	<div>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</div> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY MAY 3rd	GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 5th NO FASTING!	<div>BRIGHT WEEK</div> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

Holy Trinity Calendar

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.

All services at Holy Trinity are currently being live-streamed. To watch them online, please visit [holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube](https://www.holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube)

F E B R U A R Y 2024	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	28 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	29	30	31 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm	February 1 Confessions, 4pm Vigil for Meeting of the Lord, 6pm	 2 Meeting of Our Lord Divine Liturgy, 8am	3 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	4 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	5	6	7 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	8	9	10 Choir rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm
	11 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	12	13	14 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	15	16	17 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	18 Zacchaeus Sunday Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Sunday School Pool Party, 5pm, Ramada Inn, 1450 S. Atherton	19	20	21 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	22	23	24 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	25 Publican and Pharisee Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Ed Miranda's Retirement Celebration, noon	26	27	28 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Adult Ed, "Sacramental Rigorism," 7pm	29	March 1	2 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	3 Prodigal Son Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	4	5	6 Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	7	8	9 Sunday School Teacher Mtg, 5pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following