

## The Journey Through Great Lent



## Exploring the Lenten Triodion

During Lent, church services take on a distinctive aura, marked by unique chants and texts that immerse us in a reflective, penitential state while also motivating us towards both physical and spiritual discipline. This transformation is largely attributed to the Lenten Triodion, the cornerstone liturgical book of this sacred season. Attentive participation in services guided by the Triodion reveals that Lenten endeavors should not lead to despondency; instead, they are meant to uplift and invigorate our spirits. The Triodion portrays Lent as a period of luminosity and mirth, where genuine repentance is intertwined with joy.

But what makes the Triodion a pivotal guide for repentance? What spiritual treasures does this book conceal? And why is engaging with it privately during Lent, particularly when weekday services are out of reach, so enriching? This article aims to shed light on these inquiries.

The term “Triodion” originates from the Greek Τριώδιον, meaning “three songs.” This liturgical text encompasses prayers (notably, unique three-song canons) and paremias (scriptural readings from Genesis, Exodus, Proverbs, and Job) for Great Lent, Holy Week, and the three weeks leading up to Lent. Its counterpart, the Paschal Triodion, or Joyful Pentecostarion, serves the liturgical needs of the Paschal season.

Over time, the Triodion has evolved, with additions and modifications enriching its content. The book’s chants, some dating from the 5th to the 14th centuries, were penned by approximately 20 authors, including revered saints such as Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, and Cosmas of Maiuma. These chants have their roots in the refrains early Christians used to accompany the singing of biblical psalms.

*(continued, see LENTEN TRIODION, following page)*

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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS
April 7	Souper Sunday*	M. Fedkin & K. Bazilevskaya	H. Torbic & M. Stickle
April 14	H. Torbic, A.T. Pelikan, K. Oleyunik	J. Torbic & N. Quinting	K. Cattell & M. Fiori
April 21	Russian Ladies Group B (Elena G.)	J. Houser & A. Stickle	G. Cattell & B. Haupt
April 28	Palm Sunday *Potluck*	M. & T. Chambers	M. Fiori & H. Torbic
May 5	Great and Holy Pascha	All hands on deck!	M. Fedkin & M. Stickle

## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# Lenten Triodion

The significance of the Triodion's texts was a concern for Alexei Dmitrievsky, a prominent Russian liturgist of the early 20th century, who lamented the growing disconnect between Christians and the true essence of Lent. He attributed this disconnect to a lack of familiarity with the Triodion's texts—a problem that persists today. Without regular attendance at weekday Lenten services or personal reading of the Triodion, many laypeople miss out on the profound beauty and depth of Lent's primary liturgical resource.

The Lenten Triodion intricately weaves penitential themes with the anticipation of Paschal joy, echoing Christ's teachings on fasting (Matthew 6:16-17). It presents fasting not as a mere ritual obligation but as a spiritual celebration, inviting Christians to experience Lent as a period of inner renewal and joyous preparation for the Resurrection.

### *Discovering the Lenten Triodion: Four Transformative Insights*

Exploring the Lenten Triodion is beneficial for deepening one's spiritual life, especially during Lent. Here are a couple of reasons to start engaging with its teachings, even if only minimally.

1. *Combatting Spiritual Apathy:* Addressing "spiritual anemia" is crucial. Often, particularly outside Lent, there's a tendency to become lax, not fully engaging with prayer or scripture, skimming without true understanding or heartfelt connection. This leads to a deprivation of the spiritual nourishment these sacred texts offer, drawing our focus away from our inevitable encounter with Christ and towards temporal distractions. St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain suggests dedicating a little time each day to spiritual reading, prayer, and psalmody, likening them to daily vitamins for the soul's well-being.

Incorporating the Lenten Triodion into daily readings, even just a few lines, connects us with the Church's liturgical season, potentially igniting a positive transformation within. The Triodion teaches us to fast not just bodily but spiritually, loosening bonds of iniquity and engaging in acts of charity, thus receiving Christ's great mercy.

"While fasting with the body, brethren, let us also fast in spirit. Let us loose every bond of iniquity; let us undo the knots of every contract made by violence; let us tear up all unjust agreements; let us give bread to the hungry and welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them, that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God" (Sticheron at Vespers on Wednesday of the 1st week).

2. *Confronting – and Changing – Ourselves:* The Lenten Triodion serves as a guidebook for repentance, pointing out our spiritual flaws and the correct perspective on life. Early in Cheese Week, it warns against a superficial approach to Lent focused merely on food abstinence:

"In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, but are not purified from passions! If you have no desire for improvement, you will be despised as a lie in the eyes of God! You will be likened to evil demons, who never eat! If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast: Therefore, remain in constant warfare, That you may stand before the crucified Savior, Or rather that you may be crucified with him who died for your sake: Remember me, Lord, when you come in your kingdom!"

It challenges us to confront our perceived righteousness, urging a deeper introspection and genuine repentance:

"In life's course, O Savior, there has been no sin, no deed, no wicked thing, that I did not commit. I have sinned as no one has ever before, in mind, word and intent, in purpose, deed and thought." (from Ode 4 of the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete).

3. *Embracing Lent's Joyful Heart.* Understanding the true joyful essence of Lent involves reevaluating common perceptions that view this period as merely a time of "inconvenience" or a means to earn "merit" for divine favor. The Lenten Triodion, however, reveals a starkly different perspective, portraying Lent as a season filled with joy, light, purity, and the anticipation of eternal life with Christ.

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## ■ NEWS & NOTES

### Matthew 25: Project Mexico

Our Lenten charitable drive beneficiary for 2024 is Project Mexico, an Orthodox Christian charitable organization that operates in the vicinity of Tijuana, Mexico. It is our hope to raise at least \$6000 this year to support Project Mexico, please give with generosity!

### 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](http://holytrinity-oca.org) or the sign-up sheet which will soon be available in the narthex.

### Workday & Cleanup for Pascha

Please come join us at 9am on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> for an indoor/outdoor work day and clean up for Pascha. For those who prefer to 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!

### Special Parish Meeting – April 7

All voting members of the parish should plan on attending our very important special meeting which will occur on Sunday, April 7th immediately after the Divine Liturgy. In it, we will vote to transfer legal possession of the Beavertown church property to our daughter parish, the Church of the Holy Spirit. May their ministry be forever blessed and remembered before the throne of the Lord of Glory!

### Defibrillator Training

An unused prayer rope is just a piece of string. An unused home Bible is a paperweight. And an AED that we don't know how to operate is just a strange-looking wall decoration. Earlier this year our parish purchased an AED, and now we are looking for six to eight individuals who are willing to be professionally trained on its operation. The training will take place at Centre LifeLink (125 Puddintown Rd) and will be paid for by the parish. In order to sign up or request more information, please contact Kyra Quinn ([kyraquinn1@gmail.com](mailto:kyraquinn1@gmail.com); 814-404-8218) or Fr. Ignatius.

### Adult Education: Prayer in the Home

Please join us on Thursday, April 18th at 6 pm for a small portion of the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, followed by a 6:30 talk on what personal and family prayer ought to look like in the home context. Our speaker for this event will be Fr. Ed Hughes, so it's "Adult Ed with Fr. Ed!" Come and learn with us!

### 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 at (814) 235-2985. If you dye eggs, please make sure the dye is completely dry before Pascha morning.

### Hierarchical Visit For Palm Sunday

By God's grace, His Eminence Melchisedek is planning on being in our midst from the final Friday of Great Lent through the morning service of Holy Monday, and will be our celebrant on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. What a joy it is to welcome our archpastor on this most somber, beautiful, and august weekend!

### The Mystery of Holy Unction

In obedience to His Eminence Melchisedek's instructions, some years ago our parish ceased celebrating an abbreviated Rite of Holy Unction on the Wednesday of Holy Week. This year, we will be bringing general Unction (anointing for the health of soul and body) back to parish life on Friday, April 19th at 6 pm. As a sacrament, Unction is reserved for Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through fasting, recent confession, and recent participation in the Mystery of Holy Communion. Let us prepare ourselves, brethren, and be anointed in this season for the purification of both body and soul.

### Parking Reminder

During 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 9:30am-1:30pm. At all other times, only the gravel spaces and the paved spaces directly across from them are open. Students rent parking spaces from the parish and it is crucial that we allow them to park in the spaces they are renting. Thank you.

## ■ CATECHESIS

# What Can I Say to Someone Who is Lonely?

That is not an easy question, as loneliness is different for everyone. Our feelings of loneliness are often the strongest when we part with someone who matters to us, when we lose our loved ones, or after many years of looking unsuccessfully for a kindred spirit or a spouse. We might feel lonely when we look for understanding, but realize that nobody is listening. We experience loneliness differently, and general or universal advice can often be irrelevant or useless.

"Unhappy? Pull yourselves together," we are told. "Lonely? Spend time in the company of others. Find yourself an occupation that you will enjoy and that will distract you. Keep yourself busy with work," we hear. Does it work? Not always. Even the best party will end at some point, friends will leave, and no one can work without rest. Inevitably, there will come a moment when we are alone. During these moments of solitude, the pain comes back, rendering us sleepless, tearful and unhappy.

Someone wise said that if we cannot change our situation, we might work with our perceptions of it. - As Christians, we see our life events not as accidents, but as signs of God's providence for us.

God's plan is not to punish us, God punishes no one. And it is not to cause us pain just to make us suffer. He loves us. His purpose is to lead us towards light and purity, to help us value the right things and know their worth. A break-up of a friendship may bring us to give more value to human relationships. As we experience pain, we might learn to be more compassionate towards others. The demise of our life values and ideals often leads us to find and rethink and find new goals in life. But how can we trust that our pains can be for our benefit? That they could be an expression of God's love for us? Let me use an example from my own life to explain. I use a dirt road to drive to my home. One day, it had rained heavily, and a huge puddle formed in the middle of the road. I stopped in front of it wondering if I should drive on, and if so, how I should pass it. I turned left, and my car stuck in deep mud. I could not get out. I was late home. I had to get a tractor to pull me out and take my car to a garage afterwards. But as I was trying

to get out, I left a deep pair of tracks. The road dried up, they became visible. I had blazed a trail for the other drivers, and they began to use it. I got stuck, I had waited for hours in the mud, and my car needed repair, but I made way for other people. Something similar may happen to us in our lives. We may suffer pain and sorrows, but give others an example of resilience and faith, and inspire them. We would show thousands of others the way to go. That way, our experiences would become very meaningful and salvific. Here is another example, this time from a recent film. Its hero had just lost his beloved wife. He was grieving so much that life lost all meaning to him. He saw no end to his suffering and decides to take his life. Yet he cannot act on his resolve. A family of Iranian refugees settled next to him, and every time he was about to make an attempt, someone would always be around. The family has many children and is in great difficulty. He begins to help the family and eventually overcomes his loneliness and returns to life. Both examples teach us that loneliness - just like all our other sorrows - is always meaningful, and God will eventually reveal its meaning to us. When this happens, we meet God, know His will and obtain relief. The way to resolve our difficulties is to look for such a meeting. With God, we can stand firm against any sorrow.

How can we remember this when we are most vulnerable and weak? The Lord is merciful and wise. In the world that He created, the day always succeeds night, and bright and sunny days always come after a spell of rain and gloomy weather. There will always be spring after a grey and cold winter. We may be lonely today, but we can always look forward to a fresh spring, a new sunny day and a clear sky. With His sacrifice, the Lord affirmed the sanctity of man, achieved in the fullness of his life in God. Loneliness can be a step towards our sanctity if we see it as our God-given opportunity to turn to Him in prayer and to restore our unity with Him.

*Fr. Sergius Nezhbort is an iconographer at St. Elisabeth Convent in Belorussia.*

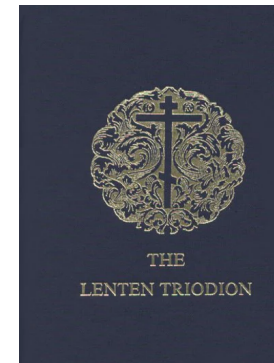
## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# Lenten Triodion

The Lenten verses emphasize the celebratory and hopeful nature of this time. St. Theodore, for instance, describes fasting as "a time of joyful light purity, sheer love, and radiant prayer," highlighting the transformative and uplifting aspects of Lent rather than viewing it as a burdensome obligation.

Kallistos Ware of Diokleia notes that early Christians saw Lent as a tithe to God—a joyous offering of time, which, although seemingly ours, is a daily gift from the Lord. This perspective mirrors the joy found in tithing by the Israelites, suggesting that fasting, too, can be embraced with joy as we give back to God our "tithe" of time. "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 the canon of Matins on Monday of the First Week).

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann further illuminates this joy, associating it with a return to the original state of grace that humanity experienced before the fall. He posits that if Adam had maintained his fast, the sorrow of exile from Eden could have been avoided. This return to "normal" life, to the prelapsarian state, is where the true gladness of fasting lies.



"With great gladness, let us receive the proclamation of the Fast: for if Adam, our forefather had fasted, we would not have suffered banishment from Eden" (Sticheron at Matins on Friday of the 1st week).

4. *Exploring Old Testament Wisdom through Lenten Eyes.* The Lenten Triodion also delves deep into the Old

Testament, offering rich interpretations of its narratives. It draws parallels between the stories and the spiritual journey of Lent, showing that the fathers of the Church found profound significance in all biblical texts.

For example, St. Andrew of Crete's Canon interprets Jacob's two wives as symbols of action and contemplation—both essential for salvation: "By the two wives, understand action and knowledge in contemplation. Leah is action, for she had many children; and Rachel is knowledge, for she endured great toil. For without toil, O my soul, neither action nor contemplation will succeed" (cf. Gen. 30: 11; 31).

Moreover, the Triodion employs Old Testament imagery to convey spiritual truths, such as Moses' slaying of the Egyptian as a metaphor for overcoming sin. St. Andrew uses this story to encourage the soul to "kill the Egyptian" within, symbolizing the triumph over sinful impulses to hear God's voice more clearly: "O miserable soul, thou hast not struck and killed the Egyptian mind, as did Moses the great. Tell me, then, how wilt thou go to dwell through repentance in the wilderness empty of passions?" By immersing ourselves into these themes, we can begin to align ourselves more closely with the Church's season of repentance, reflection, and ultimately, spiritual renewal.

Throughout Lent, the Church underscores that our spiritual efforts are directed towards the ultimate joy of Pascha in the Kingdom of Heaven, encouraging us to keep the anticipation of this Paschal joy at the forefront of our Lenten journey. This reminder enriches our understanding and appreciation of the Lenten Triodion, a treasure trove of spiritual wisdom that offers a path to renewal and deeper engagement with the essence of Orthodoxy and the "Paschal" way of life.

As we've only begun to explore the vastness of the Lenten Triodion, we hope this encourages further exploration of its profound beauty and spiritual depth, echoing Fr Alexander Schmemmann's sentiment that rediscovering the Triodion can revive the spirit of Lent and the very heart of Orthodoxy. ♦


*Written by Anastasia Parkhomchik, for St. Elisabeth's Convent, Minsk*

*Copies of the Lenten Triodion can be obtained through our parish bookstore. Please contact Anna Stickles (annastickles4@gmail.com) for information or to request a copy.*

# 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](http://holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube)

SUNDAY		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY						
 <b>St. Gregory Palamas</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) "Souper Sunday" Charity Luncheon, noon	31	✠	April 1	✠	2	✠	3	✠	4	✠	5	 6	
					Confessions, 4pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten potluck, 7:30pm				Confessions, 5pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm		Choir rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following		
 <b>Sunday of the Cross</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Parish Special Assembly, noon	7	✠	8	✠	9	✠	10	✠	11	✠	12	 13	
			Parish Council Meeting, 6pm		Confessions, 4pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten potluck, 7:30pm				Confessions, 5pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm		Altar Servers Retreat, 9:30am  Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Sunday School Teacher Mtg, 5pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following		
 <b>St. John Climacus</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	14	✠	15	✠	16	✠	17	 Presanctified Liturgy, 8am	18	✠	19	 20	
			AED Training, 6pm (125 Puddintown Rd.)		Confessions, 4pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten potluck, 7:30pm		Great Canon of St. Andrew, 6pm Adult Ed – "Prayer in the Home," 6:30pm		Confessions, 5pm Office of Holy Unction, 6pm Akathist to the Theotokos, 7:30pm		Parish Workday, 9am  Choir rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following		
 <b>St. Mary of Egypt</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	21	✠	22	✠	23	✠	24	✠	25	✠	26	 27	
					Confessions, 4pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm Lenten potluck, 7:30pm				Confessions, 5pm Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm		<b>Lazarus Saturday</b> Divine Liturgy, 9am  Youth Pascha Workshop, 4pm Vigil of Palm Sunday, 6pm		
 <b>Palm Sunday</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Myrrhophores Practice, noon Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, 7:30pm	28	✠	29	✠	30	✠	May 1	✠	2	✠	3	✠	4
		<b>Great and Holy Monday</b> Presanctified Liturgy, 9am  Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, 7:30pm	<b>Great and Holy Tuesday</b> Presanctified Liturgy, 9am  Bridegroom Matins, 6pm Confessions, 7:30pm	<b>Great and Holy Wednesday</b> Presanctified Liturgy, 9am  Matins of Holy Thursday, 6pm Confessions, 7:30pm	<b>Great and Holy Thursday</b> Vespers of St. Basil the Great, 9am  Matins of Holy Friday (Passion Gospels), 6pm	<b>Great and Holy Friday</b> Royal Hours of Holy Friday, 9am  Vespers of Holy Friday, 4pm Matins of Holy Saturday (Lamentations), 7pm	<b>Great and Holy Saturday</b> Vespers of St. Basil, 9am  Nocturns, 11:30pm						
<b>Great and Holy Pascha</b> Paschal Matins, Hours, and Divine Liturgy, 12 midnight Blessing of the Baskets, 2am  Agape Vespers, 4pm	5	<b>Bright Monday</b> Paschal Divine Liturgy, 9am											
											Men's BBQ, (131 Woodpecker Ln., Port Matilda, PA), 5:30pm	Great Vespers, 6pm	

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