

GREAT LENTEN NEWSLETTER

Pastoral Message

Христос посеред нас! Christ is amongst us!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you all with the in this Holy and Great Lenten Season! When I sit down to prepare the newsletter, my first and foremost intention is to share a message that I hope reaches you all and is relevant. Though I do at times offer a personal pastoral message, I will often use the newsletter as an opportunity to share the voice (or rather words) of someone else as you hear mine every Sunday.

This issue in particular, I was 2/3 through my pastoral article on fasting when I came across this beautifully written message by Fr. Stravros. It says everything I intended to say and more! Please take the time to reflect on this guidance and how you can make this Great Lenten season truly a fruitful one!

I pray this Great Lenten Season is one that is fruitful for each and every one of you! May God grant us the strength, health, and the faith needed to see ourselves to the end of Great Lent so that we may fully celebrate and appreciate the Resurrection of our Lord on Pascha!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Peter Haugen

And When You Fast

by Father Stavros N. Akrotirianakis -

Jesus said, '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.'

Matthew 6: 16-18 (Gospel of Cheesefare Sunday)



The Great Lenten
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Nettie Ostapiw

Thank you for your
generosity!

When people think of the word "Lent," the word "fasting" is one of the first things that comes to mind. The cornerstone of Lent is not fasting, but repentance and growing in our faith. Fasting is a tool that is used to assist in spiritual growth. Fasting is also mischaracterized as a form of deprivation, rather than a spiritual discipline. Because fasting is so misunderstood, it is many times done incorrectly.

In the Orthodox world, we use the word "passions" to describe tendencies that each person has that lead us to sin. Each of us has a "passion" for anger, lust, power, greed, ego, etc. We do not get through life without wrestling with each of these, sometimes on a daily basis. The most basic "passion" is hunger. While we can go a day without a lustful thought or an angry thought, we can't go more than a few hours without a hungry thought. So, if we can tame our passion for eating, we can hopefully tame our other passions. If we can discipline ourselves to go without certain kinds of food, we can hopefully discipline ourselves so that we can go without certain kinds of behavior that are spiritually destructive. Thus, fasting is not about giving up something only to get it back. Fasting is about getting control of our passions, maintaining control over them, and ultimately giving control of ourselves to God.

It is the Orthodox Tradition to fast from food products that contain blood. So, we fast from meat, fish, dairy products, oil, and wine. (Oil and wine, up until the last couple of centuries, were stored in skins of animals. This is why we can eat grapes and olives, we cannot have wine or olive oil. If the fasting "rules" were ever to be reviewed and updated, the prohibition on oil and wine would have to be examined.) We can eat shellfish because they do not contain blood. Christ shed His blood for us, so we do not consume any "blood" or "animal" products. It is the Tradition of the church to fast for the entirety of Great Lent and Holy Week. The week after the Publican and the Pharisee is fast free, as is the week after Pascha and Pentecost (and Christmas). The week before Great Lent, we are only required to fast from meat, not dairy products. Outside of Lent, it is Tradition to fast every Wednesday (in honor of the betrayal of Christ) and Friday (in honor of His Crucifixion). There is a forty day fast that precedes the Feast of the Nativity (November 15-December 24), a fourteen day fast that precedes the Feast of the Dormition (August 1-14), and the Holy Apostles Fast (which begins the day after All Saints Day and lasts through June 28).

If you've never fasted before, I would not recommend doing a strict fast. Try fasting from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent (and then throughout the year), then next year try fasting Wednesdays and Fridays plus all of the first week of Lent and all of Holy Week. Then work up from that.

Below is a guide of some levels of fasting:

- *Level one -- Fast from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week*
- *Level two -- Fast from meat and fish on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week*
- *Level three -- Fast from meat the entirety of Lent and Holy Week*
- *Level four -- Fast from meat and fish the entirety of Lent and Holy Week*
- *Level five -- Level four and eliminate dairy products during Holy Week*

- *Level six -- Level four and eliminate dairy products on Wednesday and Fridays and during Holy Week.*
- *Level seven -- Level four plus eliminate dairy products during all of Lent and Holy Week*
- *Level eight -- Level seven plus eliminate oil and wine during Holy Week*
- *Level nine -- The strict fast - no meat, fish, dairy products, wine or oil during the entirety of Great Lent*

***Fish is allowed on March 25 (Annunciation) and Palm Sunday; oil and wine are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, except for Holy Saturday.*

After a few years at one level, challenge yourself to go up a level.

More important, however, than fasting from food, is fasting from the behaviours that are spiritually destructive. We need to fast from things that get us in trouble - perhaps the television, alcohol, inappropriate materials on the computer and in movies, foul language, etc. Fasting also does not mean "looking" deprived, complaining about what you can't eat, or making a show of your fasting. In fact, if you are fasting and you are invited to someone's home for dinner and they serve meat, eat the meat, don't make a big deal out of your fasting. Also, do not pass judgment on others who are not fasting to the degree you are. Saint Paul reminds us in Romans 14:3-4: "Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own Master that he stands or falls." As Christ tells us, our fasting is seen by our "Father who is in secret," and He will reward us for our efforts.

Again, Lent is not a season of deprivation, nor should we "give up" something only to get it back once Lent is over. Lent is about repentance, and making small and permanent changes to bring us closer to the Lord, changes that will last long after Lent is over. This is the purpose of the Lenten journey. Fasting is an aid to help us in this.

*The time has come - the start of our spiritual contests, the victory over demons,
the full armor of self-control the angels' dignity, the confidence before God.
Thereby did Moses become conversant with the Creator, and heard the invisible voice.
Lord, through fasting make us worthy to worship Your Passion and Holy Resurrection,
as You love humanity. (Doxastikon of Orthros, Cheesefare Sunday, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)*

Give some thought to your fasting plan for Lent today!





Beloved in the Lord: clergy, brothers and sisters in the Lord!

Once again, we are entering into the Sacred Season of the Holy and Great Lent.

In the First Gospel, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ calls Matthew with a simple expression “*Follow me.*” Upon hearing the call, the tax collector “*got up and followed him.*” The Greek translation of “got up” is *anastas*, the word used also to describe the Resurrection (*anastasis*) of our Lord from the dead. Choosing to follow Him is also a kind of resurrection from the dead, since it involves the rising up from a “lower” path of life to a “higher” one, from a preoccupation with the temporal world to an ultimate immersion in the Divinity of God.

The call of Christ Jesus addresses the mind, but it is meant to move through the mind into the body, and through the body into the whole of one’s life, into action and decision. “Follow me” has the sense of “walk as I walk, think as I think and choose as I choose.” Discipleship – being a follower – requires an entire reworking of the self, according to the example set by our Savior.

Follow me... Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel!

The Lenten season is an invitation to a sincere review of our life in the Light of the Gospel. Any illusion of self-sufficiency we may have held should have been dispelled by these past 12 months in which we have faced a global medical crisis, economic hardship, social unrest, and partisan divisiveness. Perhaps, when we emerge on the far side of COVID-19 pandemic, we would have learned to be a bit more humble — that, despite all our vast technology, we are not the masters of our destinies as we sometimes tend to believe.

The events of the past year have caused much suffering for many people and suffering does not usually exalt us. It can and does embitter us, and we can be and are tempted to self-pity, becoming completely self-centered. A faithful observance of the Holy and Great Lent can help us grow in humility - which is not “thinking less of ourselves” (as some erroneously believe) but rather, “thinking of ourselves less”. Great Lent, therefore, is a summons to reach out to others in their need so that we, having experienced mercy from God, might learn how to be ourselves merciful.

And, certainly, this past year has been very disruptive of our lives. We yearn for “normality” -whatever the “new” normal might be. And so, while we face the future with humility, we must also embrace the present with a strong dose of patience. Patience is the spiritual vaccine we all need during these days of

pandemic, economic stress, social unrest, and political divisiveness and, therefore, a great virtue for us to work on this Great and Holy Lent of 2021. St. Peter says: *"Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eye of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'"* (1 Peter 3:8-12)

If you are patient, you do not answer that angry email with an angrier one. You wait and perhaps you will not say or write something you cannot take back. Patience helps you de-escalate tense situations. Patience gives birth to humility and brings us closer to holiness. Holy and Great Lent calls us to recommit ourselves to the search for holiness, which is what "life in Christ" means for all Orthodox Christians.

Through prayer, repentance, fasting and simple daily kindness, we lead ourselves and our loved ones to a renewed faith in the power of God's Love for us, a Love that is stronger than sin, death, and the devil. Through repentance in the Holy Mystery of Confession, we seek to overcome the influence of sin which has wounded our capacity to live in fellowship with others and union with God. In the Fourth Prayer – of St. Simeon the Translator – before receiving the Holy Eucharist – Communion, we pray: *"The multitude of Your Loving-Kindness is immeasurable and the mercy of Your Goodness and Forbearance beyond description and there is no sin, which overcomes Your Love for all mankind."* Thus, we see that there is great hope always that we can be victorious over sin – turning away from sin and toward a Loving God, always ready to embrace us in His LOVE.

Let us all journey through this Sacred Season with a sense of repentance, with a renewed desire to love, to serve, to be present for one other; so that we can all proclaim to the world around us – **WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF LOVE! WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE GOSPEL! WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF PASCHA!**

Blessed Lenten Journey to all!

With Archpastoral blessings,

+ **YURIJ** – Metropolitan
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ **ANTONY** – Metropolitan
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America and Diaspora

+ **JEREMIAH** – Archbishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America













+ **DANIEL** – Archbishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+ **ILARION** – Bishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ **ANDRIY** – Bishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2021

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 21st		TRIODION WEEKS 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 FEBRUARY 28th		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 7th 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 14th 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 21st		GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS 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 28th		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 4th		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 11th		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 18th		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 25th GREAT WEEK BEGINS		GREAT AND HOLY WEEK 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 APRIL 30th		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 2nd NO FASTING!		BRIGHT WEEK 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!

Great Lent Enrichment

Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out the survey, it was very helpful in deciding how to proceed. We will be starting the session on an aspect of our Bible Studies with a discussion on the Passover, its biblical importance, and how it relates to Orthodox Christians today. Following, we will be doing a reflection on Great Lent itself and understanding the meaning and purpose of the Sunday's within this season. Meeting links to Zoom will be sent out each week prior to the session, if you cannot make the live presentation, a recording will be posted on Youtube the following day.

Based on the survey, the dates for the Great Lent Enrichment gatherings are:

- Monday, March 22nd @ 7:00pm
- Monday, April 5th @ 7:00pm
- Monday, April 12th @ 7:00pm
- Monday, April 19th @ 7:00pm

Fr. Peter is continuing in his pastoral care of our parishioners to the best of my abilities in the following ways:

- Phone calls
- Online Pastoral sessions
- In person sessions within the St. Elias Parish
- In person sessions within a restaurant keeping social distance (when permitted)
- Text message support of our Parishioners

I will continue to make myself available when there is a need, but as always, ***please reach out to me*** if you yourself are in need of a pastoral visit, or know someone that may benefit from one, and I will do my best to reach out in an appropriate and safe manner.

Phone Number: 587-252-2715
Email: pmthaugen@hotmail.com

Schedule of Services for Great Lent 2021 *Subject to change

Sunday, April 25th - Palm Sunday & Blessing - Bonnyville, 10 AM, (hosted by Sandy Rapids)

Holy Week

Monday, April 26th - Lenten Hours - All Saints, St. Paul, 6:30 PM

Thursday, April 29th - Holy Thursday 12 Gospels - St. Elias, Bonnyville, 6:30 PM

Friday, April 30th - Holy Friday Shroud Vespers - St. Elias Bonnyville, 5:00 PM

Holy Friday Shroud Vespers - All Saints, St. Paul, 7:00 PM

Paschal Services

Saturday, May 1st - Paschal Matins/Basket Blessing - St. Elias, Bonnyville, 9:00 PM

SUNDAY, May 2nd - PASCHAL MATINS/DIVINE LITURGY - All Saints, St. Paul, 7:30AM



Bonnyville & District Ukrainian Orthodox Parish Council Society - ALTERNATE COVID Schedule - 2021

Note: This is an accurate schedule as of December 2020, but please consider this a living document and subject to change. We will continue to monitor the announcements of the Provincial Health Authorities and make changes as necessary. The Sunday Collection each Sunday will be for the Volunteering Parish on the rotation listed below. Any questions or concerns should be raised with your Parish President or Fr. Peter.

MARCH				
Date	Day	Time	Location	Volunteer Parish/Description
7	Sunday	10:00 AM	St. Paul	Glendon/Meatfare Sunday
14	Sunday	10:00 AM	Bonnyville	Nowa Bukowina/Cheesefare Sunday
15	Monday	BEGINNING OF GREAT LENTEN FAST		
21	Sunday	10:00 AM	St. Paul	St. Paul/Sunday of Orthodoxy
28	Sunday	10:00 AM	Bonnyville	Sandy Rapids/Second Sunday of Great Lent

APRIL				
Date	Day	Time	Location	Volunteer Parish/Description
4	Sunday	10:00 AM	St. Paul	Glendon/Adoration of the Cross
7	Wednesday	6:00 PM	St. Paul	Presanctified Liturgy
11	Sunday	10:00 AM	Bonnyville	Bonnyville/ Fourth Sunday of Great Lent
14	Wednesday	6:00 PM	Bonnyville	Presanctified Liturgy
18	Sunday	10:00 AM	St. Paul	Nowa Bukowina/Fifth Sunday of Sunday
25	Sunday	10:00 AM	Bonnyville	Sandy Rapids *Entrance into the Temple/Palm Sunday*
26	Monday	HOLY WEEK		
26	Monday	6:30 PM	St. Paul	Passion Monday - Lenten Hours
29	Thursday	6:30 PM	Bonnyville	Holy Thursday - Twelve Gospels
30	Friday	5:00 PM	Bonnyville	Holy Friday - Shroud Vespers
		7:00 PM	St. Paul	Holy Friday - Shroud Vespers