

# ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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## Pursuing Humility

By Fr. Theophan

In the Saying of the Desert Fathers, Abba Anthony is recorded as saying, "I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, "What can get through from such snares?" Then I heard a voice saying to me, "Humility."

It is hard to live a life completely attuned to the spiritual world surrounding us. The average family is struggling to make ends meet and try to procure some sense of normalcy and stability in a rapidly changing world. We have enough to worry about in the visible world without also having to deal with a reality we cannot see. It is easy to forget that there is a spiritual drama working behind the scenes and that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12).

Abba Anthony was allowed to see the spiritual reality which we are all faced with as followers of Christ. The snares of the enemy are spread out like an unavoidable web. The devil and his minions, out of envy, do what they can behind the scenes to trip us up and entrap us in sins. The devil is a great human psychologist and knows the subtle art of manipulating us so that we move towards becoming a sicker and more broken version of ourselves. He does this primarily by sending us thoughts and suggestions which we often voluntarily grab onto and enact.

The voice told Abba Anthony that humility would get him through the snares of the enemy. The Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church describes the virtue of humility as, "truthfulness, neither exaggerating nor denigrating the truth of what one is." Fr. Thomas Hopko in *The Orthodox Faith* explains further that:

Humility does not mean degradation or remorse. It does not mean effecting some sort of demeaning external behavior. It does not mean considering oneself as the most vile and loathsome of creatures. Christ Himself was humble and He did not do this. God Himself, according to the spiritual tradition of the Church, has perfect humility, and He certainly does not act in this way. Genuine humility means to see reality as it actually is in God. It means to know oneself and others as known by God—a power, according to Saint Isaac, greater than that of raising the dead! The humble lay aside all vanity and conceit in the service of the least of God's creatures, and to consider no good act as beneath one's dignity and honor. Humility is to know oneself, without the grace of God, as dust, sinful and dead.

As followers of Christ, the core of all of our spiritual pursuits is rooted in humbly knowing and accepting ourselves as we are while the Holy Spirit guides us closer and closer to our Lord. Knowing and accepting ourselves does not imply self-justification or any encouragement for us to stay in our sins, rather it is simply a non-judgmental acknowledgment of truth.

The Church has given us the season of Great Lent to dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of cultivating humility. All the spiritual disciplines that we voluntarily take on have the goal of humbling our persons. We eat less and we eat less satisfying food so that we can feel empty.

We are challenged to empty our pockets for those who need more than us by giving alms. We are also challenged to remove ourselves from the intoxication of ever-present entertainment so that we have more time to do the hard work of cultivating silence and prayer. We are also challenged during Lent examine ourselves in order that we may come to know the truth and tell the full truth about ourselves in the Mystery of Confession.

We are assured that if we try to make spiritual efforts during Lent that we are engaging in war with the spirit of this world, our own flesh (sinful tendencies), and the devil. The paradox is that although our effort is encouraged there is no way for us to win this war by ourselves. Although we are asked to do spiritual work, our work never saves us or defeats the enemy. Our ascetic efforts, if done with the goal of emptying ourselves, attract the grace of God. Our ascetic efforts meant to make us more dependent on God and less dependent on ourselves. The battle is won by Christ. Again, this is humility.

As we head into the fruitful desert of Great Lent may our Lord Jesus Christ bless us to see the spiritual reality that is in us and surrounds us. As a community let's do our best to empty ourselves by voluntarily taking on the disciplines of the Church. May God bless us to find humility which draws us close to Christ who is the conqueror of our enemies.

## News and Announcements

- We now serve Matins every Sunday from 8:45-10am.
- The Nuns from St. Elizabeth Convent in Belarus will be visiting us on Thursday, March 7th at 7pm to give a presentation on their monastery.
- Family Church School is scheduled for Saturday, March 9th @ 4pm.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday, March 21st at 7pm.
- On Sunday, March 17th we will have a general blessing of icons along with a Icon procession. Please bring any icons you would like blessed.
- Please see Calendar below for service schedule.

### FR. SERAPHIM ALDEA

On Saturday, March 16th Priestmonk Seraphim will be visiting us to give a presentation on his work establishing the Mull Monastery, the first Orthodox Monastery in the Celtic Isles of Scotland in a thousand years.

- *Saturday, March 16 @ 3:30 PM followed by Great Vespers*
- *There will be a free will offering*

### LENTEN RETREAT

With the Sisters from  
Saints Mary and Martha Monastery

- *Topic: Monasticism in the Orthodox Tradition*
- *Saturday, March 23 @ 3:30 PM followed by Great Vespers*
- *Sunday, March 24 @ 12:15 PM Coffee hour presentation & discussion*
- *Free will offering*



# Sunday of Orthodoxy

March 17, 2019 6:00pm Vespers

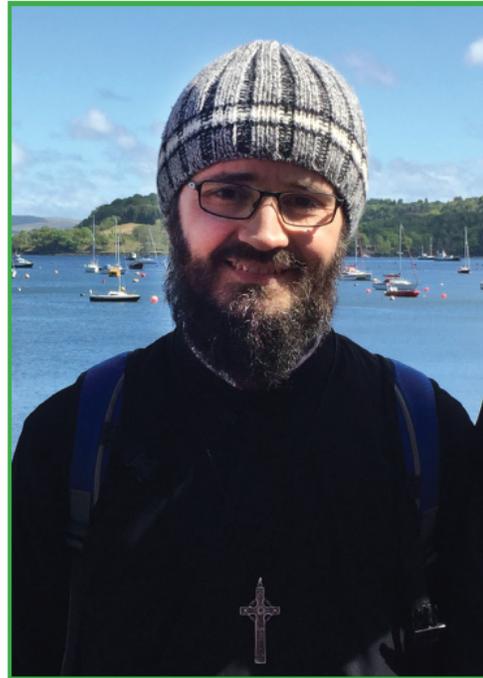
*Great Vespers will be presided by  
His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela*

Reception to Follow

**Annunciation Cathedral**  
Atlanta, Georgia

Guest Speaker: **Fr. Seraphim Aldea**  
**“Humanity and Creation:  
Icons of the Kingdom of God”**

**Fr. Seraphim** was tonsured as a monk in 2005 at Rasca monastery in Bucovine, North Moldavia. He received a Ph.D. in Modern Theology from the University of Durham (UK) for a thesis on Archimandrite Sophrony Skharov’s Ecclesiology. He is currently a Post-doctoral Research Fellow in the School of Theology at Oxford University. He is working towards founding the first Orthodox Monastery in the Hebrides, Scotland in over a thousand years! [Mullmonastery.com](http://Mullmonastery.com)



## The Sacrament of Confession

One of the most important aspects of our Lenten journey is the Sacrament of Penance. This is the season of repentance and therefore every Orthodox Christian should prepare to make a good confession during these days. Fr. Theophan will hear confessions before or after the weekday Lenten services or at any other time by appointment. On Sunday mornings between 9:20-9:40am during the Matins Canon. Please plan on making your confession before Holy Week. If you do not know your sins and would like help make an appointment and Fr. Theophan will help you discover your sins.

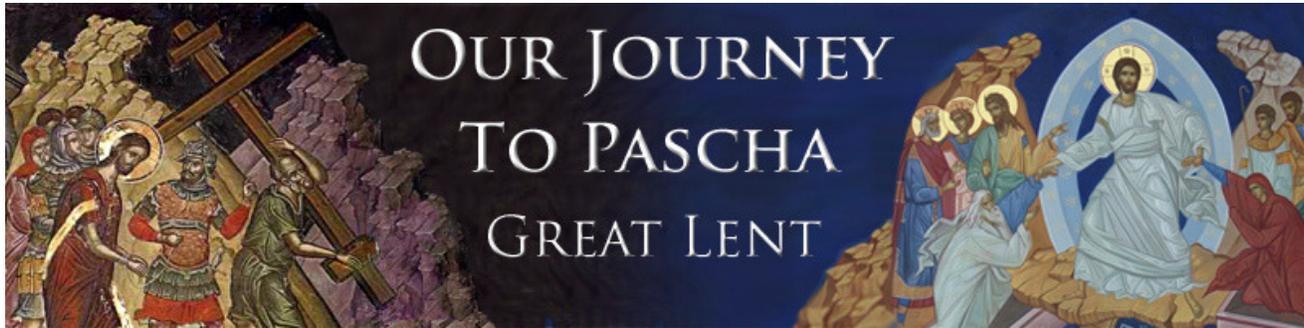
## Many Years!

Birthdays in March

- 1 Molly Croft
- 2 Danny Bush
- 2 Paul Guest
- 5 Mark Dorogy
- 10 David Bush
- 11 Hannah Magnusson
- 12 David Marble
- 13 Anne Gordy
- 14 Lana Hough
- 15 Mark Olsen
- 19 Thomas Kehayes
- 22 Eliza Buck

Anniversaries

- 19 Gary & Dora Cox



## Church Services during Great Lent

### Forgiveness Vespers

The last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses..." (Mark 6:14-15) Then after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: "Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy. Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

### Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

On Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday of the first week of Great Lent we serve Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete. The canon is a dialog between St. Andrew and his soul. The ongoing theme is an urgent exhortation to change one's life. St Andrew always mentions his own sinfulness placed in juxtaposition to God's mercy, and uses literally hundreds of references to good and bad examples from the OT and NT to "convince himself" to repent.

### Presanctified Liturgy

Because Great Lent is a season of repentance, fasting, and intensified prayer, the Orthodox Church regards more frequent reception of communion as especially desirable at that time. However, the Divine Liturgy has a festal character not in keeping with the season. Thus, the Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated instead; the Divine Liturgy is only performed on Saturdays and Sundays. At St. Innocent we generally celebrate this service each Wednesday during Great Lent. The service consists of Daily Vespers combined with additional prayers and communion. The Faithful are asked to fast in preparation for Holy Communion. Generally this fast consists in not eating or drinking anything after the morning meal until they break the fast with Holy Communion at this evening service.

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2019

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

## SUNDAYS

## THEMES / GOSPEL READING

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Fast - Free Week  
**FEBRUARY 17th**



*TRIODION WEEKS*  
**Publican and the Pharisee**  
Reading: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15  
Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14

Trust in God, not yourself!  
Ask for His help before every task this week!

Normal Fast Week  
**FEBRUARY 24th**



**The Prodigal Son Returns!**  
Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20  
Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32

Schedule a Confession.  
Use up/freeze meats this week.

Meatfare  
**MARCH 3rd**  
FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY



**The Last Judgment**  
Reading: 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 10th**  
FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY



**Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!**  
*FORGIVENESS SUNDAY*  
Reading: 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 17th**



*GREAT FAST BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS*  
**SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY**  
Reading: 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 24th**



**ST GREGORY PALAMAS**  
Reading: 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  
**MARCH 31st**



**VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**  
*HALF WAY TO PASCHA!*  
Reading: 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 7th**



**ST JOHN of the LADDER**  
Reading: 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 14th**



**ST MARY of EGYPT**  
Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-14 & Heb 2:11-18  
Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45 & LK 1:24-38

Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.

FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY!  
**APRIL 21st**  
GREAT WEEK BEGINS



*GREAT AND HOLY WEEK*  
**ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**  
Reading: 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 26th**



**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!  
**APRIL 28th**  
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!

## March 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 Sunday of Last Judgment / Meatfare 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Greeters Class	4	5 9am Morning Prayers	6 6pm Daily Vespers	7 9am Morning Prayers 7pm St. Elizabeth Convent Visit	8 6pm Memorial Saturday Vespers	9 4pm Family Church School 6pm Great Vespers 7pm Fellowship
10 Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Forgiveness Vespers	11 Great Lent Begins 6:30pm Great Compline with the Great Canon	12 9am Morning Prayers 6:30pm Great Compline with the Great Canon	13 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	14 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6:30pm Great Compline with the Great Canon	15 6:30pm Small Compline	16 3:30pm Fr. Seraphim Aldea 6pm Great Vespers
17 Sunday of Orthodoxy 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy Icon procession & blessing 12pm Agape	18	19 9am Morning Prayers	20 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	21 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	22	23 Lenten Retreat 3:30-5:30pm Great Vespers
24 St. Gregory Palamas 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:30 Lenten Retreat	25 6:30pm Vesperal Liturgy for the Annunciation of the Theotokos	26 9am Morning Prayers	27 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	28 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	29	30 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
31 Precious Cross 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape						

## *Tentative April 2019*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7 St. John Clinacus 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	8	9 9am Morning Prayers	10 6:30pm Great Canon of St. Andrew	11 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	12	13 4pm Family Church School 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
14 St. Mary of Egypt 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	15	16 9am Morning Prayers	17 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	18 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	19 6:30pm Lazarus Saturday	20 10am Lazarus Saturday Liturgy 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
21 Palm Sunday 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	22 6:30pm Bridegroom Matins	23 6:30pm Bridegroom Matins	24 6:30pm The Mystery of Holy Unction	25 10am Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil 6:30pm Matins with 12 Passion Gospel Readings	26 10am Royal Hours 12pm Decorate the tomb 3pm Vespers with the placing of the shroud 6:30pm Matins with the Lamentations	27 10am Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil 11:30 pm Paschal Nocturns 12am Great and Holy Paschal
28 Great and Holy Paschal 1pm Agape Vespers followed by Pascha Party	29	30 9am Morning Prayers				