

Rector's Letter, March, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters:

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [1 John 1:5-9].

We are at the door of Great Lent, the season of repentance. What does “repentance” mean, though? We often think of it as feeling ashamed or sorry for doing something wrong. But think of a child that has been caught in the act. The child reluctantly says, “Sorry...” And the frustrated parent replies, “Sorry isn’t good enough! You need to make it right.”

Repentance is about being sorry, yes, but then being willing to make things right.

Literally, to repent is to change our minds, to change our direction. The guy who crashes into you and rushes off, saying, “Oops! Sorry!” over his shoulder is not repenting. The Christian who is

determined to follow ways contrary to Christ’s teaching also is not repenting.

This is why the Church makes such a point of Forgiveness Sunday (March 10 this year). Every sin — every way that we fall short of the measure of Jesus Christ in our life — is an offense against our holy God, and also against our brothers and sisters in Christ. There are no “private sins.” Even if we keep them hidden, they darken our hearts and break our fellowship with each other in Christ (1 John 1:6). So, knowing that we have let our fellow Christians down, just as we have let God down, we gather for the Rite of Forgiveness.



It is an opportunity to make a new beginning in repentance. We say sorry: “Forgive me, my brother” — “Forgive me, my sister.” And then we can say together, “God forgives.” For Great Lent to have any meaning, we have to make that first step: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins” (1 John 1:8-9).

And then, having made that beginning, the rest of Great Lent — the rest of our lives — is for

putting repentance into action: changing our minds, changing our direction, asking God's help to "make it right" in our lives. The good news is: God wants to make it right, and make it possible for us to walk with Him in the light all our days.

Yours in Christ,



Around the Parish

Many years to **Evelynn Anastasia Sousa**, who was illumined through Holy Baptism on Feb. 16!

Meatfare Sunday is March 3, and we are preparing to celebrate our customary Meatfare Dinner. His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon was planning to attend but can no longer make the date. Our buffet dinner will be provided by Cafe Ra. Tickets are \$20 for adults, children under 12, no charge. For tickets, please see Donna Leonowich, Jill Zadar or Sarah Massaro.

All are invited to a **parish family hike at Mount Pisgah** in Durham on Saturday, March 9, at 1 PM. For details, please speak with Daniel Veronick (860-349-1575).

The season of Great Lent begins with the **Rite of Forgiveness** on Sunday afternoon, March 10. Each of us has the responsibility to ask and offer forgiveness before Lent starts. Unless we are

homebound, we shouldn't be anywhere but in church that day.

In the first week of **Great Lent**, we will have services most of the week, to enter into the spirit of repentance and spiritual effort which makes the time of fasting fruitful. In addition to the Rite of Forgiveness, we will celebrate the **Canon of St. Andrew and the first Presanctified Liturgy** and Lenten Supper on Wednesday. These services begin at 6 PM, Monday through Thursday of the first week of Lent.



Our parish is honored to host one of the Connecticut Deanery's Lenten Vespers, on the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, April 7, at 4 PM. Please mark the date on your calendar; we will be asking for your support in hosting this event. Please speak with Sarah Massaro (860-828-4781), who is coordinating our hospitality.

Please remember that every member of this parish has a responsibility to participate in **Holy Confession — at least once during Great Lent**. In addition to the regularly scheduled time for Confession following Saturday Vespers, Confessions are also heard every Wednesday, 4:45–5:45 PM. Please do not let the days slip away. If the scheduled times cannot work, then please make an appointment with Fr. Joshua.

One of the traditions of Great Lent is the **remembrance of the departed**. On Fridays March 22 and 29 and April 5, we will commemorate the departed at the conclusion of Friday vespers. **Please bring the names of those you wish to have commemorated at the services.**

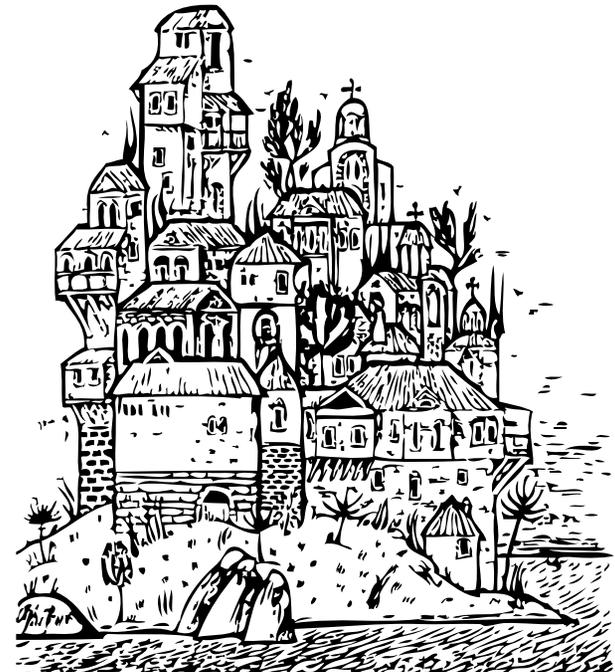
March 25 is the **Annunciation of Our Most-Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary**. The feast commemorates when the Archangel Gabriel proclaimed the good news to the Virgin that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We will celebrate the day with Vespers & Liturgy on Monday, March 25, at 6 PM.



We will also hold a **Theotokos Tea Party** honoring the women of our parish during coffee hour on Sunday, March 24.

Saturday, April 13, is our **parish clean-up** day in preparation for Holy Week and Pascha. We plan to start by 9 AM. All are welcome to help beautify the church inside and out.

We are planning once again to deliver **Easter baskets to ten families in need** in our church neighborhood. Using our Charity Fund, the parish fills each basket with fun and useful items for school children. Please give generously to support the Charity Fund to support this and all our efforts this year.





Beyond our Parish

The following **Lenten services in the Connecticut Deanery** can be added to your calendar, all beginning at 4 PM on Sundays during Great Lent:

- ❖ 2nd Sunday of Great Lent, March 24, Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church, 34 Fair View Ave, Terryville: Lenten Vespers.
- ❖ 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, March 31: FORCC Vespers at Holy Ghost Church, 1540 E Main St, Bridgeport.
- ❖ 4th Sunday of Great Lent, April 7: **our own parish of SS. Peter & Paul hosts Lenten Vespers.**
- ❖ 5th Sunday of Great Lent, April 14, Three Saints, 26 Howard Ave, Ansonia: Annual Unc-tion Service.
- ❖ Palm Sunday, April 21, All Saints, 205 Scarborough Street, Hartford: Bridegroom Matins of Holy Monday.

St. John Chrysostom on Fasting

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works:

- ❖ If you see a poor man, take pity on him.
- ❖ If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.
- ❖ Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.
- ❖ Let the hands fast, by being free from avarice.
- ❖ Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.
- ❖ Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.
- ❖ Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.
- ❖ Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.
- ❖ For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

May he who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us, and save us. Amen!