



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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MAY, 2016

Ten Things As We Begin Holy Week

by Fr. Theophan Whitfield

- 1) Go to as many services as you can.** Most parishes offer a large number—usually at least two each day. And if you can't go to every service, set aside time to read prayerfully through those you cannot attend. It is through worship that we return and unite ourselves to Christ. The services of Holy Week are not just memory exercises. Holy Week is a single, unbroken Liturgy that over 10 days invites us to participate in the saving love of Jesus Christ, not just to remember some events from long ago. The love which Jesus shows is real, it is now, and we are invited through worship to receive it.

Does it seem unreasonable to attend Church so much in a single week? Of course it does! But Christ's love for us is extreme and intense. And so we return that love during Holy Week in a way that is beyond reason!

- (2) Intensify your fasting.** Each person is called to fast as he or she is able. Some are able to fast more, some less. During Holy Week, each of us should increase the intensity of the fast. Think about how you have followed the fast up to this point. During Holy Week, continue what you do, and then do a little bit more. Do you fast just a few days a week? Increase the number of your fasting days. Are you fasting from meat only? Consider fasting from dairy as well. Consider eating smaller meals each time. For some, it may be possible to eat only two small meals a day rather than three. Holy Week is a time in which we should increase our hunger for Christ, and physical hunger is one way to do so. Physical hunger reminds us that we need what God offers, and fasting helps us to focus on the love of Christ. Fasting is hard, but remember the good gift which waits for us at the Paschal Liturgy of the Resurrection — the good gift of Christ Himself!

- (3) Create silence.** Disconnect entirely from your cell phone, e-mail, internet usage and especially social media. (If any of this is needed for work or school, designate a window of usage of no more than a few hours.) Do not watch TV, or listen to the radio. Cancel all lessons, sports, and social activities. It's only for one week. The world will still be there after Pascha. When we create silence in this way, we give ourselves the space and opportunity to be drawn by Christ more deeply into His words and actions during Holy Week. We remove some of the man-made barriers that separate us from "drinking from his cup" (Mark 10:38). And if we do not create silence, then the noise of this

world will easily overwhelm the “still small voice” through which the Holy Spirit speaks (1 Kings 19:12). To hear the voice of Christ, we have to silence the relentless cascade of screed and distraction we otherwise allow the world to pump full force into our hearts and minds.

(4) Create prayer. Turn on some church music. In particular, listen to the hymns of Holy Week. And learn something about each hymn you hear. On what day do we sing this hymn? During which service? What is the place and purpose of this hymn? The hymns of Holy Week create holy echoes that help to connect our worship with the rest of daily life. Singing “Behold the Bridegroom” at the services which begin Holy Week is good, but hearing and singing the same hymn while driving, walking, or cleaning the house is even better. Doing so, we allow the prayer of the Church to become the prayer of everyday life.

(5) Be still. Set aside time each day to sit quietly in front of an icon of Christ, about 20-30 minutes. Light a candle, say a short prayer, and then simply wait in silence for the Lord to speak a word, or to bestow a deeper sense of His presence. Being silent is a way of saying to God, “I am here. And I wait on no other than You. Visit me in my smallness.” Stillness during Holy Week is a good practice for the experience of Great and Holy Friday and Saturday. The most eloquent word ever spoken is the silence of our dead Savior while hanging on the Cross and while lying in the tomb. His silence says everything. The stillness of His death is the great action that redeems and sanctifies all the world. His silence on the Cross shouts down hell. His stillness in the tomb explodes the realm of the dead and bestows life on all. When we practice stillness and silence during Holy Week, we are preparing to unite our silence to Christ’s. We are preparing to die with our Savior... so that we too might be raised to new life!

(6) Always be with Christ. Occupy your mind as often as you can with a short prayer. If you do not already have the habit of praying the Jesus Prayer, Holy Week is a great time to begin: “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” This prayer increases our awareness of the nearness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It reminds us that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. Christ is always with us, and through continual prayer, we work to do the same — to always be with our Lord Who loves and strengthens us.

(7) Read a Gospel. Set aside time each day to read several chapters from either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. (We save John for after Pascha!) And remember that in the Gospels, we do not find words about Christ, we find words from Christ. Each verse of Holy Scripture is a word spoken directly to you by the raised and glorified Lord. Each word is a word for now, each word is a new word that you have never received before. Enjoy the gift! Jesus wants to give it to you!

(8) Seek forgiveness and healing. Chances are, each of us has at least a small handful of relationships in need of healing. During Holy Week, work for that healing. Admit your mistakes, and forgive the mistakes made by others. Offer yourself in love to at least one other person from whom you are estranged. Make a phone call, send a letter or e-mail — you have a blessing to use e-mail in this one case! — or schedule a coffee date. Remember how much you love this person, and remember that we were created to live in peace and joy with one another. Christ’s love for us is ENORMOUS compare to the pettiness we so often hold on to. And if you have been deeply harmed by another person, seek help! Reach out to someone — your spouse, another family member or friend, your priest — and ask for guidance. Search through prayer, fasting, and honest

communication for a way forward. As they say, holding onto anger (or hatred, or resentment, or vengefulness) is like swallowing poison and expecting someone else to die. Seek release from what possesses. Enjoy the lightness of a relationship that has been healed and restored.

(9) Call someone who is sick or lonely. Visit them if you can. Share yourself with someone who needs you. Our parishes, and our neighborhoods are filled with people who are dying of loneliness and isolation. Extend yourself and give them the gift of human presence. One of the great themes of Holy Week is abandonment — how our Lord was abandoned by just about everyone, including it seems by His own Father. As we seek to unite ourselves to Christ through prayer and worship during Holy Week, may we not at the same time abandon those who need us. To be united to Christ, we must at the same time strengthen our solidarity with all those around us. We are part of the mystical body of Christ, and we are called to a life of unity and communion with one another.

(10) Think about Bright Week and beyond! With Pascha comes the true light that enlightens the whole world and each person in it. As we unite ourselves to Christ, the radiance of the Resurrection changes everything. The week after Pascha is truly a Bright Week — the Resurrection colors all with brilliance and beauty. Nothing should ever be the same. Let this Holy Week be a launching pad into the rest of life. Having united ourselves to Christ in both death and resurrection — having lived out our baptism through the celebration of Holy Week — we should get ready to proclaim the good news in all that we do. May we remember that every Sunday is a “little Pascha” and that each time we gather to celebrate the Liturgy we proclaim Christ’s death and we confess His Resurrection. And if every Sunday is a little Pascha, then every week is a little Holy Week. Each day of the year is a day on which we give thanks for the Holy Mysteries we last received and look forward to being received by Christ once again at the life-giving chalice. Holy Week and Pascha occur once a year, but they are the rule, not the exception. Holy Week and Pascha are the models for every week of the year. Jesus Christ touches all of time through the Cross, and all of time collapses into the eternal now of His divine love. May we live all of life in the light of the Resurrection!

[Fr. Theophan Whitfield is Rector of Saint Nicholas Church, Salem, MA.]

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON**: Saturday, May 7 at 9 AM.
- **SPAGHETTI DINNER**: Saturday, May 14, beginning at 5 PM. [Great Vespers will begin at 4 PM]
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**: Monday, May 16 at 7 PM.
- **FANTASY AUCTION**: Saturday, May 21 from 5:00-8:00 [Great Vespers will begin at 4 PM]
- **FINAL DAY OF CHURCH SCHOOL**: Sunday, May 29.
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING**: Sunday, May 29, following the Divine Liturgy.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES: Andrew Abdallah (Masters, *Rider University*), Sarah Hamaty (Bachelor, *Pace University*), Michael Shimchick (MBA, *New York University*), and Nicholas Zanghi (Bachelor, *Rutgers University*).

FROM THE KUZMENCHUK FAMILY: Nellie and the entire family are grateful for everyone’s prayers, visits, and well wishes for Harry. He remains at Care One, Evesham.

SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER, SATURDAY MAY 14 at 5 PM: [Note that Great Vespers will begin at 4 PM]. Meal includes: salad, bread, spaghetti and meatballs, and dessert. Cost: \$10.00 – adults/ \$6.00 – children.

Parishioners can get tickets from **Diana Pasca** or from other **Inreach Committee members**. The goal is to raise funds for either a new sound system for both the church and fellowship hall or a new parish sign.

FANTASY AUCTION UPDATE – May 21th 5:00 – 8:00 pm

Thanks to all for your generous support! But the most important things to do to help make this event a huge success is to **COME, BRING 2 PEOPLE with you, and HAVE A GREAT TIME!** Postcard size orange flyer “invitations” are available to hand out. Vespers will be served at 4 pm. The Auction begins at 5 pm to give everyone a chance to preview all the Live Auction, Silent Auction, and Draw Ticket Raffle items. The Live Auction will begin at 6 pm. We will also be selling 50/50 tickets throughout the evening. Come ready to have some FUN and fantastic refreshments! Advance tickets, still only \$10, are available for sale every Sunday during coffee hour – see Val Olesnovich or Leslie Lane or Vera DiPietro or Ann Plescia. There will be a drawing for a special door prize for advance ticket holders.

REMINDERS:

1) Please bring all Live & Silent Auction items by Sunday, May 15th and fill out a donation form. This info is needed to complete the Program Booklet and to receive tax credit for your donation.

3) Please bring all items to the tables near the library marked “Auction donations”. Please do not place Auction items in any Sunday School classroom.

SIGN-UP SHEETS for refreshments are located on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Jessica Siragusa and Carol Ann Curry will be coordinating the refreshments.

Thank you very much for your donations of items, time, and talents. We greatly appreciate your help and support! **Any questions, please call Leslie Lane at (609) 790-3470 or Val Olesnovich at 856-381-9771.**

MAY COLLECTION FOR COVENANT HOUSE GRADUATION PARTY:

Covenant House of Camden is throwing a Graduation Party at *Red Lobster* for 15 teenagers and young adults (11 girls and 4 boys) who have overcome many obstacles, worked extremely hard and achieved great goals.

We are collecting *Red Lobster* gift cards and TD Bank gift cards to cover the \$350 cost of the luncheon. We are also collecting gifts for the graduates: 15 ear buds, 15 plastic tumblers with lids & straws, and 15 throw blankets (couch blankets). Additional donated TD Bank gift cards will be used to purchase 15 requested gift cards, tablecloths, centerpieces, balloons and extra gifts.

PLEASE BRING IN DONATED ITEMS AND GIFT CARDS TO THE BOX IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL BY YOUTH SUNDAY MAY 22nd.

MONTHLY CHARITY DONATIONS: The monthly envelopes are designated to benefit local parish, community and Diocesan needs, national Orthodox organizations, and those which provide international support. Last year we collected \$2250.00 and the funds went to the *Medford EMS, Burlington Community Services, St. Innocent Orthodox Mission in Oneonta, NY, Zoe for Life* (a national group based in Cleveland Heights, Ohio that provides support for those desiring to maintain their pregnancies), *Orthodox Christian Missions*, and *International Orthodox Christian Charities*.

During the recent Deanery Lenten Vespers Service, we welcomed **Tony Pantazopoulos**, chairman of the Greater Philadelphia committee of IOCC and presented him with a check for \$500.00. We hope to have members of our community as IOCC ambassadors to participate in their ongoing yearly programs.

DBD (Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors): We presented Archbishop Michael with a donation of **\$1150.00** for the DDB. This Fund supplements our Diocesan budget in support of seminarians, missions, and struggling parishes. Thanks for your generosity.

SUMMARY OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS: **Monday March 28, 2016**, prepared by Diana Pasca, Secretary.

Treasurer Dan Dowiak presented the financial report. The account balances for March are as follows: **General Fund** \$33,183.36, **Memorial Fund** \$45,276.81, **Capital Improvement Fund** \$36,417.81, **Food Coupon Fund** \$2994.00, **Choir Fund** \$2956.53

2016 FINANCIAL PICTURE:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
March	\$18,301.00	\$16,385.11	\$1,915.89	\$47,391.00

The Mortgage Balance as of 3/1/16 was \$262,723.67

Parish Committee Updates: (1) *Stewardship Committee* – Mark Skuby reports that 30 pledge cards have been received for 2016. Pledge cards for 2016 are available in the vestibule. Please remember that a new pledge card must be filled out each year even if you are an established pledge participant. (2) *Inreach Outreach* - Members of the committee have been visiting homebound parishioners and preparing meals for those who are ill. 2nd Healthy Options Session will be 4/17. (3) *Youth Activities* – The Youth collaborated with Community Luncheon Program in March preparing 50 brown bag lunches. They received a warm, “Thank You” letter from the program in Mt. Holly. 10 youth participated in the confession preparation with Fr. John on March 26th (4) *Choir* – The choir is preparing for the visitation of Archbishop Michael on Saturday, April 9th and Sunday April 10th, and the Deanery Lenten Vespers on Sunday evening April 10th.

Ongoing Council Activities – Council is also working on other projects which include reviewing and updating the Parish By-Laws, looking into a sound system, updating and posting the Church Calendar, coordination of our Fall Festival, updating our website, improving our signage, and reviewing Parish Survey results.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for **Monday, April 18th**, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Parish Council Meeting: Monday April 18, 2016.

Treasurer Dan Dowiak presented the financial report. The account balances for March are as follows: **General Fund** \$30,014.75, **Memorial Fund** \$45,288.28, **Capital Improvement Fund** \$36,427.06, **Food Coupon Fund** \$4,114.65, **Choir Fund** \$2,956.52

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Ongoing Council Activities – Council is also working on other projects which include reviewing and updating the Parish By-Laws, looking into a sound system and hoping for a demonstration in May, updating and posting the Church Calendar in the Social Hall, coordination of our Fall Festival, updating our website, improving our signage, and reviewing Parish Survey results with the parish in the next few weeks, planning an off-site Parish Picnic, and planning activities for the remainder of the year.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 16th, 2016** at 7:00 PM.

OUR PARISH CALENDAR is maintained by Fr. John and events are posted towards the end of each *Crossroads* as they are identified. It would be helpful if each parish organization would assign someone to check with him first in advance about the availability of days and then to acknowledge that, ideally, in an email, for which they will receive a confirmation.

Every attempt is made, when possible, to prepare and distribute *Crossroads* by the last Sunday before the upcoming month. Therefore, any dates or information **MUST** be received by the **SUNDAY BEFORE**.

COFFEE HOUR LIST FOR MAY:

- May 1 Pascha
- May 8 Mother's Day - Hosted by the Men of Holy Cross
- May 15 Andrea Burns
- May 22 Natalka Weismantel
- May 29 Liz Gibbons & Alexander Lilly
- June 1 Irene Liston & Tine Horner

New on-line Orthodox resource encourages autism awareness, ministry

SYOSSET, NY [OCA]

The Orthodox Church in America's Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid [CSHA] has joined US and international advocates in recognizing April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month.

"Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD] is a lifelong developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges," said Donna Karabin, CSHA Chair. "Each year, there are increasing numbers of children diagnosed with an ASD. Recent studies show one in 68 children has an Autism Disorder, with boys four times more likely than girls.

"If our Orthodox parishes do not already have autistic children, adolescents or adults in their communities, it is highly likely they will in the future," Mrs. Karabin continued. "It is vitally important for clergy, Church School educators and fellow parishioners to learn about Autism – what it is and what it is not."

To this end, a new educational resource—the [Autism and Your Parish Video Series](#)—was recently developed by Maura Oprisko, a wife and mother of three children, one of whom is her seven-year-old autistic son, William. Maura and her family attend Saint Stephen Church [OCA], Crawfordsville, IN, where their pastor, Priest Joel Weir, is grateful for the steps Maura has taken to help the parish better understand their shared challenges.

"Maura is doing great work to raise awareness and equip parishes to better serve persons on the autism spectrum," Father Joel said. "I know as a priest I've benefited greatly from her willingness to educate me and our parishioners on autism so we can better minister to her son and support her and her family."

Maura designed the free, downloadable video program to help parishes incorporate Autism Awareness Month into their educational programs. She suggests workshop formats and offers printable worksheets, available on her web site blog, [The Least of These](#).

The themes of the 10–15 minute videos include an introduction titled [What is Autism?](#) [Two additional videos](#)—the Function of Autistic Behaviors: What Looks Strange has a Purpose and Meltdowns: Why They Happen and What to Do—are also available.

"While initially designed for use as a three-part workshop during Lent, the program is valuable any time of the year," Mrs. Karabin adds. "As Maura says, 'I want to talk about raising an autistic child in the Church. I want to discuss things we can do to improve our experience and lighten our burden by being part of our Church community. I want to find out and discuss the wisdom of Holy Scripture and the saints when it comes to parenting special kids. I want, above all, to point my kids in the direction of the Kingdom of God. So let's figure this out, together.'"

Please join us for our Fourth Annual

FANTASY AUCTION

Great variety of Gift Baskets & Gift Cards
Includes Live, Draw, and Silent Auctions

Saturday, May 21, 2016

Doors open at 5:00 pm for preview
Live Auction held from 6 - 8 pm

Ticket prices are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door

Admission includes:

- Auction Program listing the items you can bid on LIVE
- 25 Draw Raffle Tickets (additional tickets for sale)
- Door prize ticket
- Light refreshments

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
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Located .3 mile north of Junction Rt 70 &⁸ Rt 541 (Medford-Mt Holly Rd)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY



WHAT IS HAPPENING?

COVENANT HOUSE of Camden, NJ would like to throw a Graduation Party at Red Lobster for 15 teenagers and young adults (11 girls & 4 boys) who have overcome many obstacles, worked extremely hard and achieved great goals.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Support the
COVENANT HOUSE GRADUATION PARTY!

Need: \$350 to cover the cost of the Graduation luncheon party at Red Lobster

Please donate:

- ☛ Red Lobster gift cards of any amount (available at locations wherever gift cards are sold such as CVS, Walmart, etc.)
- ☛ TD Bank gift cards of any amount

Need: Gifts for the 15 graduates (11 girls & 4 boys)

Please donate:

- ☛ 15 ear buds
- ☛ 15 plastic tumblers with lids and straws
- ☛ 15 throw blankets (couch blankets)
- ☛ 15 large gift bags with festive colored tissue paper



Would like: extra fun stuff for the party

Please donate:

- ☛ Additional TD Bank gift cards of any amount will be used towards purchasing 15 requested gift cards, tablecloths, centerpieces and balloons.

**PLEASE BRING IN DONATED ITEMS AND GIFT CARDS
TO THE BOX IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
BY YOUTH SUNDAY MAY 22**

Since 1989, Covenant House New Jersey has been providing food, shelter, immediate crisis care, and an array of other important services to homeless, runaway and at-risk youth.





CROSSWALKS

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross Youth Activities Newsletter
May 2016

ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL AND OUR YOUTH

The Youth Choir beautifully sang 3 hymns for Archbishop Michael during his visit on April 10th. Our Youth also presented Archbishop Michael with a framed collage of photos including images of youth participating in a variety of aspects of worship, images of youth in several service projects, youth having fun during fellowship events, and images of our youth with Archbishop Michael during his visit in Oct.



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Please bring in donated items and gift cards to the box in the Fellowship Hall by Youth Sunday May 22nd.

UPCOMING EVENTS:



**May 1: Holy Pascha: Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!**



**May 22: Last day of Church School / Youth Sunday
Youth Choir sings during Divine Liturgy**

June 9: Feast Day of Ascension



**June 12th or July 10th: Parish Picnic!!
Details are being finalized!
It's going to be the most awesome
Parish Picnic ever!**

June 19: Feast Day of Pentecost

June 26: Youth Sunday

WAITING TO GREET ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL



Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – MAY, 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 PASCHA <i>Vespers—Noon</i>	2 <i>Bright Monday</i> <i>Liturgy—9 AM</i>	3	4	5	6	7 <i>Community Luncheon—</i> 9 AM <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
8 <i>DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00</i>	9	10	11 <i>Burlington Nursing Home</i> <i>10:30</i>	12	13	14 <i>Great Vespers: 4</i> <i>Spaghetti Dinner-5:00</i>
15 <i>DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>Great Vespers: 4:00</i> <i>Fantasy Auction 5:00-8:00</i>
22 <i>DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00</i>	23 Parish Council Meeting: 7 PM	24	25	26	27	28 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
29 <i>DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00</i> <i>Youth Sunday Inreach/Outreach Meeting</i>	30	31	1 JUNE	2	3	4 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>