



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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LENT IS LIBERATION!

Father Alexander Schmemmann once said *“Christianity is equivalent to — and this is forgotten in every generation — equivalent to sobriety, to a certain concentration of mind.”*

Now sobriety means more than not being drunk, as the phrase ‘concentration of mind’ indicates. Our thoughts and motives and perceptions; our whole mind is often scattered by distractions and passions, by a self-centered value system, and worldly cares. We need to collect our scattered mind into a peace ‘not as the world gives peace’ but from the Lord.

This re-collecting of our mind is a constant spiritual discipline; an ascetic effort. Unfortunately, discipline is an unattractive word to the modern ear. It makes people think of restrictions, frustration, punishment, and slavery. And, of course, what people call discipline in this world is often all of that. But true discipline is liberation! Liberation from aimless drifting, from ‘killing time’ (or murdering it), from the complications that come from thoughtless acts, from the drive for instant gratification that leads to eventual frustration.

When a disciplined way of life becomes second nature (and which of us can claim to be all the way there?) it is open, not restricted; fulfilling, not frustrating; a delight, not a punishment; freedom, not slavery. But it is not open to decay and decadence; only to health and wholesome-ness. Not free for corruption; only for righteousness. We're not nearly all the way there yet! But the joy we see in those who are further along, the misery of our own failures, and the flashes of beauty that come from our limited successes, all teach me to place great confidence in the Church's affirmation of discipline.

In Great Lent we find the fullest expression of Christian discipline and sobriety.

DURING LENT WE FAST, putting aside the various forms of distraction and complication that scatter our minds. We put aside parties so that we may achieve in Christ a deeper unity with each other and be able to exchange the Paschal Kiss in joy as brothers and sisters. We reduce or put aside entertainment (junk viewing, junk reading, time killing) so that instead of a fleeting pleasure or just distraction we may have an eternal and deep-seated rejoicing. Food is reduced in frequency, amount, and richness so that no excess undirected energy will keep us fidgeting instead of peaceful and so that we may discover how much we eat by habit, not need, and rediscover also the simple beauty of simple food.

WE PRAY. Services are longer, involve many prostrations, and include more psalms. The music is simpler and slower. Psalms are chanted in a steady rhythm, different from the pace of our worldly life. The psalms and readings from Scripture put us in the midst of a ‘climate of opinion’ very different from the one found in the taverns and the newspapers.

WE KEEP QUIET and think (neither of which counts as very common today).

WE TRY TO LOOK OUTWARD, caring for others, not just (not even primarily) for ourselves.

WE FACE OUR FAILINGS in the sacrament of Reconciliation, looking at where we have missed the mark and restoring our relationships with God and man.

WE UNITE OURSELVES WITH CHRIST by eating and drinking his Body and Blood in the Mystery of Communion, not only as usual on the Lord's Day, but also during the perfect beauty of the Liturgy of the Pre- Sanctified Gifts on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent.

This is real freedom.

Every year as Great Lent approaches I, for one, find myself impatient for Lent, hungry for the Fast, yearning for the quiet, the peace, the beauty, the renewal, and the Divine Communion. I need a refresher course in discipline. I need to be liberated again by Lent.

[This was prepared by Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, N.J.]

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. **LENTEN RETREAT:** “Lord, I Call Upon Thee, Hear Me!” – **SATURDAY APRIL 2** from 9:30 to 4:00 with *Mother Angelina and Sister Helene* of the **Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA.** This Retreat, which will take place at our parish and will be open to men and women, is being sponsored by the *Woman2Woman*’s group. Following supper at 5:00, there will be an informal women-oriented discussion with the nuns beginning at 6:00.

A free-will donation will be asked to benefit the Monastery

2. **SATURDAY APRIL 9-10: VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL and OUR SPONSORING OF THE LENTEN DEANERY VESPERS:** This will also include during the fellowship time of the Vespers a presentation by **Tony Pantazopoulos**, chairman of the Greater Philadelphia committee of IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities). IOCC is one of our parish’s designated Charity recipients and one of the most successful Pan-Orthodox projects.

DISTINGUISHED DIOCESAN BENEFACTORS/DDB COLLECTION: With Archbishop Michael’s visit in April we wanted to start to anticipate support for the DDB. This Fund supplements the Diocesan Budget in the areas of missions, seminarian financial support, and struggling parishes. Archbishop Michael does not ask for or accept personal gifts for his pastoral visits, but encourages all generosity to be directed to the DDB. We will collect through his visit on April 9-10.

CONFESSIONS WILL BE HEARD before the Presanctified Liturgies (between 6:00-7:00), following Great Vespers, and on Sunday mornings (after Archbishop Michael's visit).

EGG-DECORATING SESSION—SATURDAY APRIL 24, following the **Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy**, *Rosie Moore* will be leading a session in decorating our eggs, using onion skins. It is hoped that this process will allow the eggs to maintain their color and not transfer on to our hands. The eggs will be distributed at the end of the Paschal Liturgy.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR YELLOW ONION SKINS AND LEAVE THEM IN THE PLASTIC CONTAINER IN THE BASEMENT.

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**.

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*.

FANTASY AUCTION – Save the date - Saturday, May 21st, 5-8 pm

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our spring FUNdraiser! Please consider supporting the Auction by donating your time, talent, and/or items. Look for sign-up sheets for basket donations and gift card donations in the Fellowship Hall. Our goal is to have 60 Live Auction, 10 Silent Auction items, and 15 bottles of wine for the grab bag. We gladly accept cash/check donations and will create a basket for you. We especially could use help soliciting donations from local businesses. Donation request letters on church letterhead are available. This year we are also selling "ads" in our program booklet.

Beginning March 27th, we will sell admittance tickets in advance for \$10, which will enable pre-registration of guests and streamline check-in at the door. The admittance ticket entitles you to refreshments, one sheet of 25 Draw Ticket Raffle tickets, and a bidder's program book. Tickets will also be sold at the door the night of the Auction for \$12. See Leslie Lane, Valerie Olesnovich, & Vera DiPietro for tickets. Please invite your friends & family to attend this FUNdraiser. We ask that each adult member bring 2 people to the Auction. The more bidders we have, the more competition, and the more money we will make. Remember last year's exciting bidding war over the WAWA Gift Cards?

We will collect donations beginning on May 7th and ending on May 15th – on the labeled tables by the Library only – not in any Sunday School classroom. Please help us to keep the Fellowship Hall tidy!

Please contact event co-chairs Leslie Lane at 609-790-3470 or glane5@verizon.net or Val Olesnovich at

voles09@gmail.com or 856-381-9771 with any questions or to volunteer. Thanks in advance for your support!

SUMMARY OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: February 29, 2016, prepared by Diana Pasca.

Treasurer Dan Dowiak was unable to attend and therefore there was no financial report.

Parish Photo Directory – This project is completed and directories are being distributed.

Emergency Phone Notification – The phone tree has been established through an automated system called Call Multiplier and is working well.

Parish Committee Updates – (1) Stewardship Committee – Mark Skuby reports that 23 pledge cards have been received for 2016. Over the past 3 years, 42 family units have participated in the pledge program. 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 - Many events have been scheduled:(Healthy Options Series 3/20 and 4/17), (Spaghetti Dinner 5/14) and others are in the planning stages for 2016, as well as ongoing visitations to homebound parishioners (3) Youth Activities – The Youth will be involved in the Community Luncheon Program on March 5th, and confession preparation with Fr. John on March 25th. (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, improving our signage, and reviewing Parish Survey results.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 21st, 2016 at 7:00 PM. *[Please note that this Meeting needed to rescheduled to March 28.]*

PHILLIES BASEBALL

We're planning to go to the PHILLIES VS. MILWAUKEE BREWERS on **FRIDAY JUNE 3 AT 7:05.** **TICKETS ARE \$34.00** (make checks payable to the "Phillies."

Deadline for payment is Sunday April 24 and should be given or sent to **Judy Clyde**

1403 Delancey Way, Marlton, NJ 08053

COFFEE HOUR LIST FOR APRIL:

April 3: Diana Pasca and Marianne Lynch
10: Archbishop Michael's visit – sign up sheet will be posted
17: Diane Vozdovic
24: Plachuta
May 1: Pascha



CROSSWALKS

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

**“For I was hungry and you gave Me food,
I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;”**

YOUTH SERVICE OPPORTUNITY UPDATE:

On March 5th, our parish youth were busy preparing 50 brown bag lunches for the Community Luncheon program in Mt. Holly. The lunches included sandwiches, popcorn, granola bars, apples, cookies and bottles of water. The bags were decorated with drawings and stickers, then packed for delivery to the food pantry.



YOUTH CHOIR UPDATE:

In preparation for Archbishop Michael's visit on April 10th, the Youth Choir is learning 2 new hymns: "The Jesus Prayer" and "Hymn of Greeting for a Bishop". To encourage additional practice, a mp3 file has been emailed to all families, making it easy to play on a smart phone and to listen to at breakfast, in the car or before bed.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 3: 3rd Sunday of Lent: Veneration of the Holy Cross:
The midpoint of Great Lent; the Gospel Reading Mark 8:34-38 tells us to take up our cross and follow Christ



April 10: Archbishop Michael Visits
4th Sunday of Lent: St. John of the Ladder: The Gospel Reading is Mark 9:17-31, the casting out of evil spirits

April 17: 5th Sunday of Lent: St. Mary of Egypt
Disciples James and John request to sit "one at the right and one at your left" in the Gospel Reading: Mark 10:32-45

April 23: Lazarus Saturday: John 11:1-46; We celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead



April 24: Youth Sunday/Palm Sunday: marks the entry of Christ into Jerusalem "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."



HOLY WEEK April 25-April 30

Great Monday and Tuesday: Remember Jesus teaching in the temple

Great Wednesday: We remember a woman anointing Jesus with oil.

Great and Holy Thursday: We remember the Last Supper –

The start of Holy Communion.

The reading of the 12 Gospels reminds us how Jesus was betrayed and arrested

Great and Holy Friday: Jesus is crucified and dies

Great and Holy Saturday: Jesus' body rests in the tomb while His spirit frees the righteous dead



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

May 22: Last day of Church School / Youth Sunday



Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – APRIL, 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30 <i>Confessions 6 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 7:00 / meal following</i>	31	1 NO SERVICE	2 <i>Retreat with Mother Angelina and Sister Helene 9:30-4:00 Great Vespers: 4</i>
3 DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00 Lenten Vespers: St. Spyridon Church, Perth Amboy – 5:00	4	5	6 <i>Confessions 6:00 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 7:00 / meal following</i>	7	8 NO SERVICE	9 ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL will be present for Great Vespers: 5
10 HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 VESPERS 4:00	11	12	13 <i>Burlington Nursing Home 10:30</i>	14	15 Confessions 6 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts: 7 PM meal following	16 Confessions 4:00 Great Vespers: 5:00 Confessions
17 DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00 Healthy Choices Dr. John Hamaty Lenten Vespers: Manville – 4 PM	18 Parish Council Meeting: 7 PM	19	20	21	22 <i>Confessions 6 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts: 7 PM meal following</i>	23 <i>Lazarus Saturday Liturgy 9:00 Egg Decorating Confessions: 4 Great Vespers: 5</i>
24 <i>Palm Sunday DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00 Youth Sunday</i>	25 <i>Bridegroom Matins 7 PM</i>	26 <i>Bridegroom Matins 7 PM</i>	27 <i>Bridegroom Matins & Healing Service with Anointing- 7 PM</i>	28 <i>Vesperal Liturgy 4:00 Matins of Holy Friday – 7 PM</i>	29 HOLY FRIDAY Vespers – 3 PM Matins of Holy Saturday – 7 PM	30 <i>Vesperal Liturgy 10 AM PASCHAL SERVICES: 11:30 PM</i>

