



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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MARCH, 2019

Preparing for Great Lent, our Lenten Retreat, and Archbishop Michael's Visit

by Fr. John

[Note: We'll have many wonderful spiritual opportunities coming up during Great Lent — liturgical, educational, and social — in the sense of gathering together in various ways, especially during the visit of Archbishop Michael.

In particular, we'll be having a Retreat with Dr. Peter Bouteneff on the topic of his book, "***How to Be A Sinner: Finding Yourself in the Language of Repentance.***" More specifics about the Retreat can be found later in this issue and copies of the book are now available for \$15.00 (regularly \$20.00). But here are some thoughts from Dr. Bouteneff about the theme of his book and about himself.]

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How to be a sinner" isn't advice on how to sin better. It's a series of compassionate reflections on what it actually means to identify myself as a sinner, and to do so in a healthy way. Because how I identify myself is important, and the "sinner identity" can potentially be a problem: Is "wrong" at the core of my very being? What does it do to me, to be seen constantly as falling short? Isn't there a good kind of self-love and self-care?

The claim of so much scripture and prayer is perhaps counter-intuitive: owning the "sinner identity" is a key component of a healthy life; it's part of self-care; it's part of my salvation. "How to be a sinner" aims to steer towards a healthy self-regard, and towards surrender to the endless love and mercy of God, who saves us precisely through and within our brokenness. "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

About me: I've been teaching theology, spirituality, and the arts for around twenty years. With my wife Patricia we have two flourishing children in their twenties. A life-long musician, I'm a jazz bassist and I play out at least once a week. I conduct the church choir at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Yonkers, New York.

I also lead the Arvo Pärt Project (<https://arvopartproject.com>).

I've been trying to work out this "sinner" thing, reflecting, writing, and speaking about it for several years now. Every time I've given a retreat on this theme, the reaction is uncommonly powerful. So I wrote a book, called "*How to Be a Sinner*," available now from SVS Press (Note: see the book's website: <https://www.howtobeasinner.com/>).

I point out in my book *How to Be a Sinner* that "the public square" — as testified in social media and OpEd pages — is liable to surprise us with what we might find there, when it comes to the themes we're talking about here. Over the past five years we can find an increasing number of articles, opinion pieces, and reflections on subjects like humility, shame, and awareness of sin/fault, and what's even more remarkable is that these are getting *good* press. We are being invited to consider the benefits, to ourselves and to society, of recognizing our fallenness.

In a *New York Times* essay called "*What's So Good about Original Sin*" the philosophy professor Crispin Sartwell points out how, perhaps counter-intuitively, an awareness of our own sinfulness can produce a heightened compassion and a liberating humility.

My first thought is, I have to send this guy my book, because we're thinking along some very similar lines. There are of course differences too. One of these is that "original sin" is a sticky wicket; there are different ways to conceive that concept, and some of them are wrong and even harmful. The idea that we are born guilty of sin, for example, or totally depraved, is quite incorrect and misleading—not that Sartwell subscribes to these. In fact, he is promoting a "secularized" concept of original sin. And there I would say, I'll happily affirm whatever it takes to bring people to the next step, realizing our brokenness, our need for forgiveness and for forgiving each other, and perhaps down the line, realizing the mercy of the loving God. But one step at a time.

What's So Good About Original Sin?

by Crispin Sartwell

Mr. Sartwell is a professor of philosophy.

May 21, 2018

New York Times

The doctrine of original sin has often been held to be intolerably dark, a counsel of despair. It says we are by nature morally flawed, that we are born in error and live in it irremediably, that each of us deserves punishment and will receive it, unless redeemed by God's arbitrary grace. It insists that we cannot cure ourselves by our own efforts, and it has led some people to make extraordinarily disturbing claims, such as that children who die in infancy could burn in eternal hellfire.

It's hard to argue with the fact that inherent depravity is a profoundly pessimistic idea, and one with potentially bad effects. A rejection of the idea of original sin might argue that if we believe we can be good and do good by our own efforts, we are likelier to strive to do so. If we believe we are intrinsically evil, it follows, we will cease trying to make ourselves or the world better. Why not, then, think more positively about ourselves and believe in the possibility of human goodness and our potential for improvement right here in this world?

It would take a book or a shelf of them to examine original sin as a theological doctrine, going back to Augustine's interpretation of Adam and Eve. Even so, it is not clear that the preachers of original sin have managed to explain why a benevolent God would create such profoundly flawed creatures as they believe us to be. And if you don't believe in God at all, or not in that sort of God, the whole line of argument is moot.

Despite all of that, I would like to entertain the notion that a secularized conception of original sin is plausible, and that believing it might have good effects. In short, perhaps it's time for a new Puritanism, though with fewer witch trials this time around.

When I look within, I see certain extreme failings. I have not been able to get rid of most of them, and I have accumulated others as I've gone along. Perhaps you've done better, but most of us certainly come up short of our own ideals, ones I hope most people, religious or not, generally share — to be generous, peaceful, energetic in helping others and hesitant to help ourselves at their expense; to take care of the world we inhabit; to not only not kill one another (or even think about it), but to love one another. Even by our own mortal standards, we are profoundly flawed.

To complicate matters further, action undertaken for apparently good motives can often yield unintended harmful consequences, outweighing any possible good effects. We can intend, at best, only a tiny proportion of the effects of any of our actions. In trying to make the world an excellent place for human beings to live by developing and applying ingenious technologies, for example, we may wind up rendering it uninhabitable. Or in trying to keep ourselves safe and secure by stockpiling defensive weaponry, we may annihilate life on earth. There's really no need for God's punishment when you're making your own hellfire. As Paul told the Romans (according to David Bentley Hart's excellent recent translation of the New Testament), "I do not know what it is that I accomplish" and "what I wish, this I do not do; instead, what I hate, this I do."

Even the sheer fact that we are finite in our knowledge and in our power leads us to make terrible moral mistakes. But many of us commit those sort of transgressions knowingly, because we have malicious or violent impulses and motivations. We may even justify or defend them.

There is some level of self-scrutiny too merciless for most of us, some inner corridor too dark. We are mystified, or purport to be, by mass shooters, for example. What could possibly motivate a person to want to kill — everyone? What could turn them so against their own species? I suggest that to answer a question like that we must look within ourselves — at our own violent fantasies, the ways we hate or negate the world, our moments of imagined annihilation of people we fancy to be our enemies, our feeling at times that we are being arbitrarily persecuted or misunderstood. Perhaps, if we were witheringly honest, we might see a school shooter within us, or a bully or abuser of the sort that helped create people like that.

This insight is not the exclusive province of Christian theology. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "I have within me the capacity for every crime." Not long after, the American feminist Voltairine de Cleyre amplified this sentiment. Few readers of Emerson, she wrote, believed that he truly meant those words, but rather they took it as an attempt by Emerson to "say something large and leveling." She went on: But I think he meant exactly what he said. I think with all his purity Emerson had within him the turbid stream of passion and desire; for all his hard-cut granite features he knew the instincts of the weakling and the slave; and for all his sweetness, he had the tiger and the jackal in his soul. I think that within every bit of human flesh and spirit that has ever crossed the enigma bridge of life, from the prehistoric racial morning

until now, all crime and all virtue were germinal.

We may regard a shooter — or a racist, a sexual predator, an addict or someone who commits suicide (as de Cleyre herself tried to do at least once) — as alien. This reinforces, to ourselves and others, our sense of our own sanity and goodness; it is a way to keep us safe not only from those who would commit such crimes, but from the parts of ourselves who are like them, or who could have gone down that road.

But what if we put aside such defenses? What if, by connecting with the criminal, with the deranged or patently evil — and I believe this is what Emerson was striving to do — we gain some deeper understanding?

The doctrine of original sin — in religious or secular versions — is an expression of humility, an expression of a resolution to face our own imperfections. In undertaking any such act there is risk. To allow the self-scrutiny required in this act to turn to self-loathing would be debilitating. But a secularized doctrine of original sin, a chastened self-regard, doesn't entail consigning ourselves to the flames. There is much to affirm in our damaged selves and in our damaged lives, even a sort of dignity and beauty we share in our imperfect awareness of our own imperfection, and our halting attempts to face it, and ourselves.

[Crispin Sartwell teaches philosophy at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa. His most recent book is [“Entanglements: A System of Philosophy.”](#)]

On the Way to Emmaus Icon Project



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **SATURDAY, MARCH 2 — 9 AM: ANNUAL MEMORIAL LITURGY**
- **SUNDAY, MARCH 3 — PRE-LENTEN LUNCH.**
- **THURSDAY, MARCH 7: FINAL CLASS, “THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS” — 7:30**
- **SUNDAY, MARCH 10 — FORGIVENESS VESPERS, beginning of Great Lent.**
- **MONDAY – FRIDAY MARCH 11 – 16: FIRST WEEK OF LENT DAILY SERVICES**
- **FRIDAY – SATURDAY MARCH 16-17: PIROHI SESSIONS**
- **THURSDAY, MARCH 21: PARISH COUNCIL MEETING at 7 PM**

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES — THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2019 by Phyllis Pritchard:

- I. **Pastor's Report** – Fr. John will go over the By-law report at our Annual Meeting. Fr John mentioned there was a discussion at the Deanery Meeting about the need for each parish to acknowledge and to have a plan for implementing the PSPs (“*Policies, Standards, and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct*”). This also requires background checks for anyone working with children and for all parish employees. Fr John acknowledged with gratitude those who would be stepping down from the Council: Mark Skuby, Wally Loza, Marie Clifton, and Joseph Pritchard. He also mentioned that Archbishop Michael will be serving in a simpler way during his upcoming visit. It is hoped that Banks Sapnar will play during a reception following the Saturday Great Vespers during the visit.
- II. **Treasurer's Report**- Michelle presented to the Council the new Financial Report that will be given out each month. Council was in favor. Mark mentioned the General Fund account reflected last week's collection. He also stated that the Capital Improvement account is down due to the amount of work done last year and because some of its funds are in the Pioneer Investment Account.
- A) The account balances for **November** are as follows: **General Fund** \$23,607.87, **Memorial Fund** \$18,232.21, **Capital Improvement Fund** \$4,927.85, **Food Coupon Fund** \$8,528.83, **Choir Fund** \$4,044.26, **Father's Supplemental Checking** \$469.84, **Fund Raising Account** \$1,583.94
 - B) The **Mortgage Balance** as of 2/20/2019 was \$65,500.72
 - C) **Pioneer Investment accounts:** Capital Improvement Fund \$30,000 and Memorial Fund \$20,000. Mark mentioned that the decline in the stock market has resulted in a decrease in our earnings (which had been between \$300-400). However, there was no loss in the amount of the principal investments.
 - D) **January Collection down**-Ed asked if there should be any concerns about the low amount of collections received in January. This will be followed to determine if it represents a pattern.
- III. **Open Action Items:Old Business**
- A) **Electrical work with Thor (\$1480.00)**-Mark has agreed to follow through on this project and also find out what other work will be added.
 - B) **HVAC Contract**- Council has agreed to 2x per year for maintenance, more if needed. Mark will follow through with finalizing this project.
 - C) **Refreshing our front sign**-Gary-Spring time.
 - D) **New tables for Hall**-Mark-After speaking with Andrea Burns, it seems that she can get a better deal than what he originally quoted. TBD
 - E) **Speaker in Vestibule**-Greg Gotowchikov will install wireless speaker in the vestibule.
 - F) **Fencing for retention area**-Gene presented four quotes for this job. Gary will talk with Joe our landscaper to see if he could also do the job and how much. It is hoped to have this completed before Pascha.
 - G) **Office computer updates**- Michelle presented a proposal to update our office computer and internet security. This will be further discussed.
 - H) **Painting railing and sign**- Fr. John mentioned that Dan Dowiak's son-in-law does painting and might be interested in doing this job. Gary mentioned cleaning the sign first to determine if it needs painting. TBD.

IV. New Business

- A) **In-reach/outreach-na**
- B) **St. Helena's Guild**-Reported they need to replace two refrigerator/freezers. Also, helpers (youth as well) are welcome for all the activities!
- C) **Youth Activities**-The youth group will meet Feb 22 and will be making care packages for our seniors. Jessica reported that 6 teens will attend the Diocesan Teen Retreat. Jessica and possibly Joe Brad will be chaperoning this event.
- D) **Stewardship Pledges**- Mark Skuby will give all the updates to Michelle.
- E) **Choir**- Mark Skuby-Choir is preparing for the our Lenten Season.
- F) **Calendar**-See calendar in Social Hall and Upcoming Events below.

The next Council meeting - Thursday, March 21st, 2019

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WOMAN2WOMAN ACTIVITIES:

- Monday, March 4, 7-9 p.m., W2W regular meeting at home of Diana Bisinger; please RSVP with Diana at dbisinger1@verizon.net or 609 471 0052.
- Thursday, March 21, 12 noon, Ladies' Luncheon at Franco's Restaurant, Rt. 70 in Marlton. Please RSVP with Genie at 856 802 1664.

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Favorite Pet/Animal Photo Contest: Holy Cross Youth 7th Through 12th grade

**Submissions due March 31.
Contest winners announced April 7**

The categories for Favorite Pet/Animal Photo Contest are:

1. Pet or Animals in nature;
2. Most humorous pet or animal; and
3. Photo tells a story of the pet or animal.

Contestants can pick only one category and submit one photo only.

Photo can be any size up to 8 1/2 x 11 and mounted on 8 1/2 x 11 black or white construction paper. Construction paper will be provided and contestants can ask a Sunday school teacher for it.

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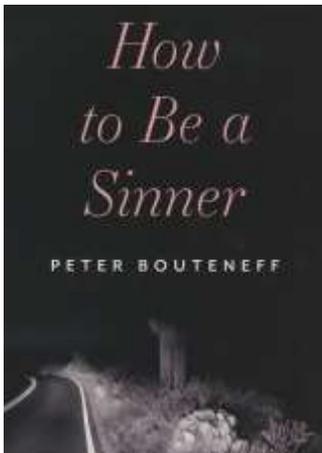
**LENTEN RETREAT:
Saturday, April 6, 2019**

Speaker: **Dr. Peter Bouteneff**

How to Be A Sinner: Finding Yourself in the Language of Repentance

[Copies of the book are now available for \$15.00 / regular price is \$20.00. Sign up on the bulletin board.]

Schedule:



Registration: 9:30 am – 10:00 am
 First Session: 10:00am -12:00 pm
 Lunch: 12:00-1:00
 Second Session: 1:00 pm -3:00 pm
 Great Vespers will follow

Everyone will receive the *Daily Lenten Reader* – beginning on Monday March 11 which will be based on passages from Dr. Bouteneff’s book.

A free will offering will be taken at the Retreat.
 To register: holycrossmedford@gmail.com

MARCH, 2019 COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS

If you are unable to host the coffee hour on the scheduled date, it is your responsibility to contact someone else on the list and arrange to switch your date with that person. Please mark the switch on the list so we can keep the list current. **VOLUNTEERS ARE ALSO WELCOMED FOR OTHER SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR — MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THAT WILL BE FORTHCOMING.** Veteran coffee hour hostesses will help you. **Contact A Member of St. Helena’s Guild.**

RESPONSIBILITIES:

On your Sunday, you are host/hostess for the day. You will be responsible for setting up the coffee hour, making the coffee & hot water for tea, and cleaning up (sweeping the floor, wiping down the tables, cleaning the coffee pot, and **taking out the trash**) afterward. A suggested coffee hour could include 3-4 dozen

bagels, cream cheese, butter/margarine, fruit (such as sliced apples or oranges, grapes, fruit salad, etc.) and cookies or cut-up cake. Please bring 1 pound of coffee (to replace what was used that morning), creamer, and juice (2-64oz. bottles of juice). Please take home all items that are not consumed. **KEEP IN MIND THAT COFFEE HOURS SHOULD BE SIMPLE AND SERVE AS A SNACK AFTER CHURCH AND NOT A MEAL.** Also, if anyone plans on bringing a cake or anything additional to celebrate an occasion during coffee hour, please contact that week's host and inform them of your plans. This will avoid duplication of refreshments.

March 3: Pre-Lenten Luncheon

10: Leslie Lane

17: Debbie Chong

24: Mary Stosuy / 31: Liz Gibbons & Alexandra Lilly

CHURCH CALENDAR MARCH – JUNE

MARCH

Saturday March 2:	9:00 am Memorial Liturgy / 5:00 pm Great Vespers
Sunday March 3:	Meatfare Sunday / Pre-Lenten Luncheon
Monday March 4:	7:00 pm – W2W meeting
Thursday March 7:	7:30 pm — <i>Final Bible Study with Ed Siecienksi</i>
Saturday March 9	
Sunday March 10:	Cheesefare Sunday: Forgiveness Sunday / Beginning of Great Lent
Monday-March 11	7:00 pm Canon of St. Andrew
Tuesday March 12	7:00 pm Canon of St. Andrew
Wednesday March 13	7:00 pm Canon of St. Andrew
Thursday March 14	7:00 pm Canon of St. Andrew
Friday March 15	Pirohi Session – 9 AM Confessions: 6:00-7:00 7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Saturday March 16	Pirohi Session — 9 AM / St. Helena's Guild Meeting
Sunday March 17:	First Sunday: of Great Lent: Orthodoxy 4:00 – Deanery Service: SS Peter and Paul, Jersey City, NJ
Thursday March 21:	7:00 pm —Parish Council Meeting,
Friday March 22	6:00 – Confessions 7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Saturday March 23	St. Helena's Spring Bazaar (11:00-3:00)
Sunday March 24:	2 nd Sunday: St Gregory Palamas 5:00 – Deanery Service: Annunciation Church, Brick, NJ
Friday March 29	6:00-7:00 – Confessions 7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Saturday March 30	4:00 – Children's Preparation and Coming to Confession
Sunday March 31:	3 rd Sunday: The Cross 4:00 – Deanery Vespers: SS Peter and Paul, South River, NJ

April

Monday April 1
Wednesday April 3
Saturday April 6:
Sunday April 7:
Wednesday April 10
Friday April 12
Saturday April 13
Sunday April 14
Friday April 19
Saturday April 20
Sunday April 21:
Sunday April 28:

7:00 pm W2W meeting
6:00-7:00 – Confessions
7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
7:00 Lenten Retreat: Dr Peter Bouteneff: “*How to Be A Sinner*”
4th Sunday: St. John Climacus / St. Helena’s Guild Meeting
4:00 – Deanery Vespers: St. Spyridon Church, Perth Amboy, NJ
6:00-7:00 – Confessions
7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Youth Group
Visit of Archbishop Michael
5th Sunday: St. Mary of Egypt
Visit of Archbishop Michael
4:00 – Deanery Vespers with Archbishop Michael (4:00)
6:00-7:00 – Confessions
7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
9:00 am Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy
Palm Sunday
PASCHA

MAY

Sunday May 5
Monday May 6
Sunday May 12:
Sunday May 19:
Sunday May 26

Sunday of St. Thomas
7:00 pm. – W2W meeting
End of Church School / Mother’s Day
Church School Celebration

JUNE

Saturday June 1
Sunday June 2:
Monday June 3
Wednesday June 5:
Saturday June 8
Sunday June 9
Sunday June 16:
Sunday June 23:
Friday June 28:
Sunday June 30

Wedding of Julia Mosser and Keith Schauder (2:00)
Summer Time Change (9:00 AM) / Healthy Choices Program
7:00 p.m. – W2W meeting
Vesperal Liturgy for the Ascension
Auction
Healthy Choices Program
Pentecost / Father’s Day
Health Choices Program
7:00 p.m. Vesperal Liturgy for the Feast of SS Peter and Paul
Calendar Planning for the Rest of the Year



CROSSWALKS

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross Youth Ministry Newsletter
March 2019



This February, in our Youth Group everyone brought something to contribute to baskets we put together as gifts for our seniors or anyone we thought needed a little extra care during the winter season.

Each child made their own personal pizza from scratch. Rolling out the dough and adding their favorite toppings. They looked and tasted delicious!

We had a group discussion about racism, diversity and acceptance. The kids all ate jellybeans and then told us why they liked certain colors or flavors, and how the jelly beans are like people. All different colors, shapes, sizes and how God loves them all. How to be a good friend, how to pick good friends and how to reach out to someone who could use a friend.

The baskets were distributed after Liturgy on Feb 24.

Friday - Sunday, March 22 - 24 -- **Annual OCA Lenten Teen Retreat** Jessica has sent a flyer and information about this great opportunity. See Sign Up Genius or contact Jessica for details. Kids must be registered by March 8

Saturday, March 30 -- **Children's Confession** at 4:00 pm

Community Service Opportunities

Monthly Community Luncheon with Diana Pasca to help prepare food for a shelter in Mt. Holly, NJ. They are usually about 2 hours on a Saturday morning. All dates are listed in Crossroads on the church calendar. (eligible for community service hours)



Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – MARCH, 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 March	2 <i>Memorial Liturgy — 9 AM</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
3 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—10:00</i> <i>St. Helena’s Guild Meeting</i>	4 <i>Woman2Woman Meeting at the Skuby’s — 7-9</i>	5	6	7 LAST Bible Class with Ed Siecienski: “The Last Three Days” – 7:30	8	9 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
10 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—10:00</i> <i>Cheesfare Sunday Forgiveness Vespers</i>	11 Beginning of Great Lent <i>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 7 PM</i>	12 <i>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 7 PM</i>	13 <i>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 7 PM</i>	14 <i>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 7 PM</i>	15 <i>Pirohi Session 9 AM</i> <i>Confessions 6:00-7:00</i> <i>Presanctified Liturgy — 7 PM</i>	16 <i>Pirohi Session 9 AM</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
17 <i>DIVINE LITURGY 10:00</i>	18	19	20 <i>Woman2Woman Luncheon — at Norma’s, Cherry Hill</i>	21 <i>Parish Council Meeting 7 PM</i>	22 <i>Confessions 6:00-7:00</i> <i>Presanctified Liturgy — 7 PM</i>	23 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i> <i>Confessions</i>
24 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—10:00</i> 31 <i>DIVINE LITURGY –10:00</i>	25	26	27	28	29 <i>Confessions 6:00-7:00</i> <i>Presanctified Liturgy — 7 PM</i>	30 <i>Children’s Confessions 4:00</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>

