

Sunday Bulletin  
March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 ~ Sunday of Forgiveness  
Expulsion of Adam from Paradise



Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
1025 N Belle Vista Ave, Youngstown, Ohio 44509



Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian  
Orthodox Church  
Українська Православна  
Церква Святих Петра і Павла  
1025 N. Belle Vista Ave  
Youngstown, OH 44509-1616  
Phone: 330-799-3830  
Email: stspeterpauluoc@gmail.com

Fr. Mykola Zomchak  
*Pastor*

Anna Anderson  
*Choir Director*

Chuck Woloschak  
*President of the Church Council*

**Ministries:**

- Altar Servers
  - Church Choir
  - Church School
  - Adult Education
  - St. Mary's Sisterhood
  - Sts. Peter & Paul Brotherhood
  - Senior UOL Chapter
  - Junior UOL Chapter
  - Youth Ministry
  - Orphanage Mission Ministry
  - Bingo Team
- Fr Mykola Zomchak - Editor

**Website:**

<http://www.stspeterpauluoc.org>



## STS Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

*We invite you to a celebration  
of the Resurrection of Christ*



### Sunday Bulletin

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 - Sunday of Forgiveness  
Expulsion of Adam from Paradise

**In Memory of  
Eleanor K. Laise**

- bull 8

**In Memory of  
Helen Senediak**

- bull 20

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### **Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)**

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world// great mercy.

### **Tone 6 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)**

O Master, Teacher of wisdom, Bestower of virtue,  
Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor, strengthen and enlighten my heart!  
O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:  
“Have mercy on me, a transgressor, // O merciful Lord!”

### **Tone 8 Prokeimenon**

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps. 75:10a)  
V. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)



### **The Reading is from the First Letter of St Paul to Romans 13:11-14:4**

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

### **Alleluia and Verses Tone 6**

V. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. (Ps. 91:1)  
V. To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night. (Ps. 91:2a)  
*Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia*



### **The reading is from the Gospel according to St. Matthew 6:14-21**

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you

are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! (Ps 148:1)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### MEMORY ETERNAL

#### PLEASE PRAY FOR RESTING OF THE SOULS

Eleanor K. Laise, Julian Naumenko, Patricia Huly, David Scharba, John Senediak, Ann & George Klein, Sophia Karpa, Iryna Farion, Charles Demetrios, Nun Antonina, Elaine Cartier, Betty Ewanish, Mary Gula, Mykola Prychodczenko, Oleksander Dmytro. Victims of the war in Ukraine.

### PRAYER LIST

#### PLEASE PRAY FOR HEALING, COMFORT, AND SPIRITUAL PEACE

Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishop Daniel, Tom Drabick, Walter Duzzny, Lori, Christine Kline, Arlene Hawryluk, Jerry Zets, Larry, Darlene Moon, Jeff Smith, Soldier Ivan, Bernard Gnat, Dolly Mehalco, Jeff Ulbrich, Richard Scharba, Brittany, Matt, Stephen Shonn, Thelma Zemko, Artur Bohuslav, Bohdan, Lori Hayda, Shirley Duffy, Michele (Senediak) Caulder, Dobrodiyka

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1 Kathryn Walcowiec	20 Lindsay Anderson
3 Nadiya Lyubuska	20 Kimberly S. Bobersky
7 Marcia Goodge	25 Boris Vuksanovich
7 Samuel Goodge	25 Katherine Zomchak
7 Theresa Semchee	28 Gregory Battisti
10 Luba Medved	28 Alice Mae Gregory
12 Ronald N. Kichton	30 Thomas Lane
12 Michael III Woloschak	30 Laura Zavadil
16 Karen Yuschak	31 Nicholas Inchak

Lilya, Sandy, Marilyn O'Leary, Alice Dobransky, Harold Owens, Dave Zylka, Marianne Carmack, Nicholas Yurchyk, Pauline Witkowsky, Eileen Maluk, Peter Anderson, Albert Auden, Michael Gino Maluk, Boris & Kathleen Vuksanovich, Kathy Zebel. People suffering from any illness. Ukrainian people suffering from war.

*The fast is not only abstinence from food, but also from sins. The hands must be cleansed by giving alms instead of greed. The feet must cease from unnecessary journeys and stand firm in the path of righteousness. The eyes must cease from seeing evil. The tongue must fast from slander and falsehood. The ears must fast from listening to evil gossip. Fasting of the soul is better than fasting of the body*

- St. John Chrysostom

# Liturgical Schedule & Feast Days



## SERVICE AND FEAST DAY SCHEDULE

\* (*HEARING CONFESSIONS ON SUNDAYS BEFORE LITURGY 8:30AM - 9:15AM*)

- Sunday, March 2, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, Sunday of Expulsion from Paradise, Cheesefare Sunday of Forgiveness, Right of Forgiveness between the parishioners.**  
*Fellowship organized by Sisterhood, Baby Sprinkle for Pani Maria*
- Monday, March 3 – **\*\* THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT LENT \*\***
- Tuesday, March 4, 6:00 PM – **Penitential Canon of St Andrew.**
- Thursday, March 6, 6:00 PM – **Penitential Canon of St Andrew.**
- Friday, March 7, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, March 9, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 1st Sunday of Great Lent, of Orthodoxy**
- Sunday March 9, 5:00 PM – **Sunday Lenten Vespers – at Archangel Michael**  
*Greek Orthodox Church. At 401 - 12th Street, Campbell, OH*
- Friday, March 14, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, March 16, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 2nd Sunday of Great Lent, G. Palamas**
- Sunday March 16, 5:00 PM – **Sunday Lenten Vespers – at Saint John the Baptist**  
*Orthodox Church at 2220 Reeves Road Warren, OH*
- Friday, March 21, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, March 23, 9:30 AM – **Divine Liturgy, 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, Adoration of Cross.**
- Sunday, March 23, 5:00 PM – **Sunday Lenten Vespers – at St. Nicholas**  
*Orthodox Church at 2053 North Road, NE, Warren, OH*
- Friday, March 28, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, March 30, 9:30 AM – **Divine Liturgy, 4th Sunday of Great Lent, Venerable John Listvychnyk**
- Sunday, March 30, 5:00 PM – **Sunday Lenten Vespers – at St. Demetrios**  
*Greek Orthodox Church at 429 High St NE, Warren, OH*
- Friday, April 4, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, April 6, 9:30 AM – **Divine Liturgy, 5th Sunday of Great Lent, Venerable Mary of Egypt**
- Sunday, April 6, 5:00 PM – **Sunday Lenten Vespers – at St. Nicholas**  
*Greek Orthodox Church 220 North Walnut Street, Youngstown, OH*
- Friday, April 11, 6:00 PM – **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- Sunday, April 13, 9:30 AM – **Divine Liturgy, 6th Sunday of Great Lent**

**PALM SUNDAY. THE ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM.**

## Upcoming dates & events

- Mar 2 – Sisterhood will organize a fellowship. Baby Shower for pani Maria
- March Wednesdays – Bingo for Ukraine on every Wednesday in March.
- Mar 29 - **Hockey Game**. All are welcome – see more info in bulletin page
- July 23-27, 2025 - UOL Convention in Florida – SAVE the DATE – July 23-27, 2025.

## Church School Calendar

\* Church School - Mar 2      \* Church School – Mar 9      \* Church School – Mar 16

## Sr. UOL Calendar

- Saturday, March 15 – UOL Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat (OHIO / WESTERN PA) Sat, Mar 15

## Pyrohy Schedule

ORDER BY DATE:	WORK DAY	WORK DAY	PICK-UP DAY
March 10	March 11	March 13	March 14
March 24	March 25	March 27	March 28
April 7	April 8	April 10	April 11
May 12	May 13	May 15	May 16

## Choir Rehearsal Schedule

### March

Wed, Mar 5 at 7pm

Thur, Mar 27 at 7pm

Wed, Mar 19 at 7pm

### April

Wed, Apr 9 at 7pm

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD	On Feb 16	On Feb 23
General:	<b>\$ 1265.00</b>	<b>\$ 2261.50</b>
Renovation:	<b>\$ 55.00</b>	<b>\$ 32.00</b>
Online Donations on Tithe.ly	<b>\$ 45 .00</b>	<b>\$ 35 .00</b>

## Bulletin Dedication *(in memory or in honor)*

<u>Sun Mar 2</u>	<u>Sun Mar 9</u>	<u>Sun Mar 16</u>	<u>Sun Mar 23</u>	<u>Sun Mar 30</u>
<b>1. Dedicated</b>	1. Available	1. Available	1. Available	1. Available
<b>2. Dedicated</b>	2. Available	2. Available	2. Available	2. Available
<u>Sun Apr 6</u>	<u>Sun Apr 13</u>	<u>Sun Apr 20</u>	<u>Sun Apr 27</u>	
<b>1. Dedicated</b>	1. Available	1. Available	1. Available	
2. Available	2. Available	2. Available	2. Available	

For bulletin dedication please call – 330-799-3830 Fr Mykola

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Need volunteers to help change the church coverings on Tuesday at 4pm.

Thank you!

# Forgive

EPHESIANS 4:32

## Forgiveness Sunday – Mar 2, 2025

Forgiveness Sunday, the final day before Great Lent, is a profound reminder that our journey to Pascha begins with reconciliation.

*“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

(Matthew 6:14-15)

This Sunday is not just about asking for forgiveness as a tradition but about truly cleansing our hearts. We are called to let go of grudges, bitterness, and pride, which burden our souls. Without forgiveness, our fasting and prayers are empty.

The mutual forgiveness reminds us that Lent is not only about personal repentance but about restoring broken relationships. We humble ourselves before one another, just as Adam, through pride, was cast out of Paradise.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or excusing wrongdoing, but choosing love over resentment. When we forgive, we make room for God’s grace to heal us.

**“Where there is no forgiveness, there is no salvation.”**

May we enter Great Lent with clean hearts, ready to grow in love, humility, and repentance.

## Announcement about the “Right of Forgiveness”:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
on Sunday, March 2, following the Divine Liturgy, we will have the Right of Forgiveness. During this time, we will approach one another, saying, “Forgive me,” and the response will be, “God forgives and I forgive.” We will then embrace each other as we seek reconciliation and prepare our hearts for the season of Great Lent.

Let us come together in love, humility, and prayer, embracing the spirit of forgiveness and renewal.

I look forward to sharing this sacred moment with you all.

In Christ’s love,  
Fr Mykola, pastor



IN MEMORY OF



**ELEANOR K.  
LAISE**

+ JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

**ON THE 40<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF HER  
PASSING AWAY**



**“BLESSED ARE THOSE  
WHOM YOU HAVE CHOSEN  
AND RECEIVED, O LORD”**

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY  
KEN, MARY LOU, & SHARLENE SENEDIAK

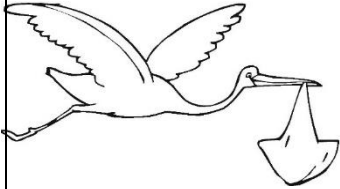




# Baby Sprinkle for Pani Maria

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are excited to share that a little baby boy is on the way for Pani Maria & Fr Mykola! Please join the Sisterhood for a **Baby Sprinkle** on Sunday, March 2 after the Divine Liturgy.



The event will take place at the fellowship in the hall, and we invite all to come celebrate this joyful occasion.

Let's shower Pani Maria with love and blessings as she prepares for the arrival of her little one.


We look forward to seeing you there! In Christ's love, St Mary's Sisterhood


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## Join Us for a Hockey Game!

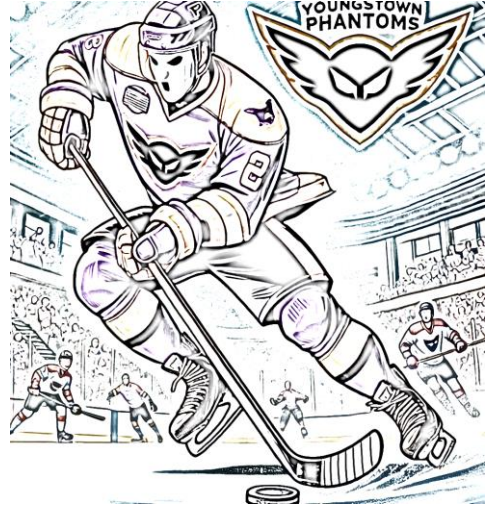
Dear Parish Family,

We invite you—both adults and children—to join us for an exciting hockey game: Youngstown Phantoms vs Fargo Force !

 Date: Saturday, March 29, 2025

 Time: 6:05 PM

 Location: Covelli Centre, Youngstown, OH



Adults - \$12

The Parish will pay for the children under 18 y.o. !

This is a great opportunity for fellowship and fun as we come together as a parish community. Let's cheer on our local team and enjoy a wonderful evening together!

If you're interested in attending, please let us know by signing up in the back of the church or by email to [stspeterpauluoc@gmail.com](mailto:stspeterpauluoc@gmail.com) so we can organize tickets and seating arrangements.

We look forward to seeing you there!

# The Great Canon of St. Andrew

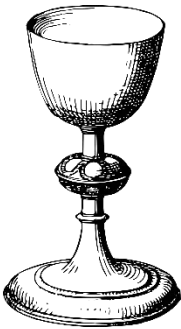
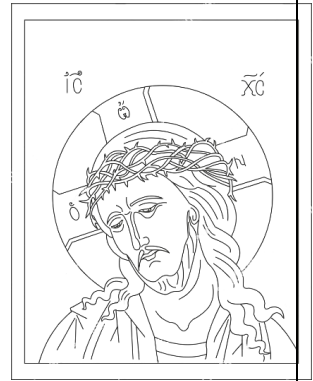
(Tue, Mar 4 & Thur, Mar 6)

The Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is a deeply penitential hymn of the Orthodox Church, filled with heartfelt repentance and biblical reflections. It is traditionally prayed during Great Lent, especially during the first and fifth weeks, to help us turn our hearts fully toward God.

This beautiful and soul-stirring canon invites us to examine our lives, compare ourselves to the righteous and sinners of Scripture, and seek God's boundless mercy. It is a call to humility, self-examination, and renewal. Though it is long and filled with sorrow for sin, it is also filled with hope—reminding us that God's love is always greater than our failings.

As you participate in the services on Tuesday, March 4, and Thursday, March 6, take this as a sacred opportunity to soften your heart, humble yourself before God, and experience His life-giving grace. No sin is too great for His forgiveness, and every soul that turns to Him in repentance is embraced with love.

May this Canon strengthen your Lenten journey, leading you closer to Christ and the joy of His Resurrection!



## The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

It will be celebrated every Friday at 6 PM during Great Lent.

Is a beautiful and solemn service that sustains us spiritually as we journey through this season of repentance. Unlike a full Divine Liturgy, it does not consecrate the Eucharist but offers the faithful the already sanctified Body and Blood of Christ from a previous service.

This Liturgy reminds us of our need for God's grace and nourishment, even as we fast and repent. It is a service of deep reverence, marked by prayer, prostrations, and the longing for communion with Christ.

As we gather each Friday, let us come with humility and gratitude, seeking renewal and strength for the spiritual struggle of Great Lent. May this service help us draw nearer to Christ, preparing our hearts for the joy of Pascha (Easter)!

**Please Join us for Potluck Dinner  
Every Friday after  
the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts**





# 2025 Annual WPA/Ohio Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat

## *The Language of Orthodoxy*

*Experience Great Lent through the Prophets and Saints  
Embracing Christ's Call by using the Language of Orthodoxy*

9:30 AM to 3:30 PM  
Saturday, March 15, 2025

River Valley Complex  
320 Shenango Street  
Pulaski, PA 16143

To register for the retreat:  
e-mail [s98carmack@gmail.com](mailto:s98carmack@gmail.com)  
or text 412-565-9441

Visit Website <https://www.uolofusa.org> starting 2/3/2025

It will be a day of prayer, reflection and transformation

*Includes: Breakfast, Morning Prayers, Speakers, Group Discussion,  
Lunch, Snacks, Confession, Vespers*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without  
him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light  
of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*



Ukrainian Orthodox League of the USA  
Dedicate to our Church. . . Devoted to its Youth

*John 1:1-5*

# Praying our Way Together

Sponsored by UOL Education Commission



Looking for something to heighten your spiritual journey to prepare for Pascha?

During Great Lent, we will be reading the Psalms.

If you would like to journey with us, please email your name, phone number, parish name, and parish address to Oleh Bilynsky at

[nsufler@aol.com](mailto:nsufler@aol.com).



More information will be sent to you. Please sign up by March 3, 2025.

## Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA



### 1. Ukrainian Orthodox Word

Link - [www.uocofusa.org/uow](http://www.uocofusa.org/uow)

#### Ukrainian Orthodox Word (UOW)

is the official publication of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, and is published every month!

It contains very interesting information about the Orthodox Faith and the Life of our Church !

### 2. UOC Youth Interactive Magazine

Link - <https://fliphtml5.com/bookcase/zuxrm/red>

#### UOC Youth Interactive Magazine

Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry of our Church publishes this interactive magazine quarterly for youth and teenagers. It is very interesting for adults as well!

A lot to learn about the Orthodox Faith through the wonderful online magazines with videos in them!

or Scan the QR-code →



# Bingo for UKRAINE

All Profit will go towards the Humanitarian Aid for the Suffering People of Ukraine

BEST BINGO IN TOWN  
1025 N Belle Vista Ave

ALL ARE WELCOME

✓ Every Wednesday in March

📅 Doors - 4:15 PM

🕒 Start - 6:45 PM

## On Forgiveness Sunday

Forgiveness Sunday, also known as Cheesefare Sunday, marks the final day before Great Lent begins. It is deeply connected to the theme of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise, reminding us of both the consequences of sin and the path to reconciliation with God.

In the Gospel reading for this day (Matthew 6:14-21), Christ commands us:

“If you forgive others their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”



This connects directly to the story of Adam and Eve. Their disobedience led to their exile from Eden, but their true fall was not just in eating the forbidden fruit—it was in their refusal to take responsibility and repent. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, and neither sought God's mercy. Their hearts became hardened, leading to separation from God.

On Forgiveness Sunday, we are given a chance to reverse the hardness of heart that sin creates. Just as Adam and Eve were cast out due to pride and self-justification, we too find ourselves exiled from spiritual joy when we hold on to resentment and refuse to forgive. But Christ offers us the way back: humility, repentance, and love.

The act of asking forgiveness—“Forgive me, a sinner”—is not just about human relationships; it is a return to the state of humility that Adam and Eve lost. When we forgive, we imitate Christ, who forgave even from the Cross, and we prepare our hearts for the journey of Lent—a journey back to the true Paradise of communion with God.

May we enter Great Lent with hearts purified by forgiveness, leaving behind the burden of resentment and walking in the light of God's mercy!

“ *And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us.* ”

- Matthew 6:12

# Orthodox Christianity 101

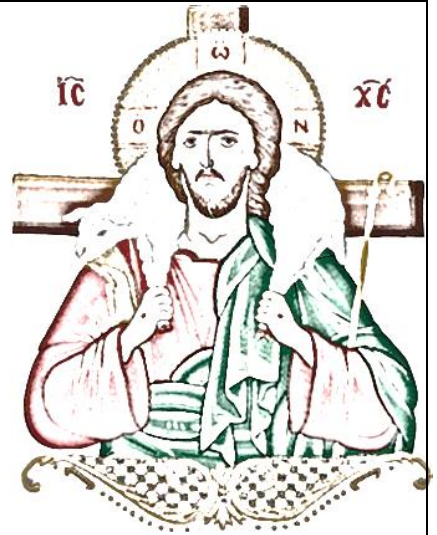
## THE UNIVERSE

According to the Old Testament, the visible world was created in six days. It is difficult to imagine that reference is being made to a conventional six-day period. The biblical six days of creation are not six ordinary days but rather six consecutive stages which unfold gradually to form the epic picture of the great Artist.

The biblical account of creation opens with the words, 'In the beginning' (Gen.1:1), a phrase also used by St John the Theologian to describe the eternal existence of the Word of God (John 1:1). This 'beginning' therefore refers to what had existed before time began. It is not yet finite time: it is infinite eternity, from which time is to be born. The 'beginning' is that first reality which links time with eternity, since from the moment when time is set into motion the universe must subject itself to its laws. According to the laws of time, the past is already over, the future is yet to come, and the present exists as an elusive and forever fleeting second which ends once it has hardly begun. And although time appears simultaneously with the universe, that timeless 'beginning' when the universe was poised to begin but not yet began, is a pledge of the fact that creation has been allied with eternity and that upon the completion of its history will once again become part of eternity.

Eternity is the absence of time; outside of time there is no temporal being, but an eternal being, a supra-being. The universe, which has been called out of non-being into temporal being through the creative word of God, will not disappear at the end of time, it will not slide away into non-being, but will become part of the supra-being; it will become eternal. Biblical revelation, however, puts the universe in the perspective of both time and eternity, so that even when time disintegrated the universe will remain. Time is an icon of eternity and time will be sublimated into eternity, while the universe will be transformed into the kingdom of the age to come.

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters' (Gen.1:1-2). Other ancient translations of the Old Testament present the earth as 'empty and nothing' (Theodotion), or 'idle and indistinguishable' (Simmachus); that is, as a formless pre-matter out of which the world was to be created. The 'earth' of the first day is, to use St Philaret of Moscow's expression, an 'astonishing emptiness', a chaotic primary substance containing the pledge of future beauty and cosmic harmony. The 'darkness' and the 'deep' underscore the disorganization and formlessness of matter, while the water denotes its plasticity. It is said that the Holy Spirit was 'moving', fluttering over the water. Elsewhere in the Bible this same verb is used to signify the hovering of birds over the nest of their young: 'The eagle stirs up its nest and flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, and bearing them on its pinions' (Deut.32:11). The Holy Spirit, as a loving mother, protects and animates the material world, 'fluttering' over it and breathing into it the 'spirit of life'.



## **THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION**

'And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good' (Gen.1:3-4). The light of the first day is neither sunlight nor moonlight (these appeared on the fourth day), but is the light of the Godhead reflected in created being. The words 'said' and 'saw' are anthropomorphisms and both have profound meaning. The term 'said' points to the operation of the Word of God, while 'saw that it was good' indicates the state of perfection to which material creation is brought by the Holy Spirit. These biblical expressions point to the consciousness and the expediency of God's creative activity, to the Artist's satisfaction that the Cosmos which He has created is truly beautiful.

On the second day God created the 'firmament', an expanse possessing firmness and stability. On the third day He formed the dry land and the sea, separating one from the other. On the fourth day He made the sun, the moon and the other lights: it was from this moment that the mechanism of the day was put into motion, the rhythmic changing cycle of day and night. On the fifth day, at God's command, the waters brought forth fish and creeping things, while the air became the habitation of the birds. Finally, on the sixth day appeared the animals and humanity.

We shall not compare the biblical story of creation with modern scientific theories of the origin of the universe. The protracted dialogue between science and theology has not yet come to any definitive conclusions about the connections between biblical revelation and scientific developments. It is, however, very clear that the Bible does not aim to present a scientific account of the origin of the universe, and it is rather naive to polemicize on the biblical narrative understood in its literal sense. Sacred Scripture regards all of history from the perspective of an interrelationship between the human and the divine. The authors of biblical stories often use metaphorical and symbolic language and they often rely on the scientific knowledge of their own time. This, however, does not diminish the significance of the Bible as a book through which God speaks to humanity and reveals God in all His creative power.

The universe as created by God is a book which reveals the Creator to those who can read it. Those of no faith, when observing the material world, cannot see in it the reflection of a higher non-material Beauty; for them the world contains nothing miraculous, everything is natural and conventional. But for the believers, the beauty and harmony of the universe is a most powerful testimony to the existence of God, the Creator of all. St Anthony, the fourth-century Egyptian hermit, was once visited by a famous philosopher and was asked: 'Father, how can you endure to live here, deprived as you are of all consolation from books?' Anthony answered: 'My book, O philosopher, is the nature of created things, and whenever I wish I can read in it the works of God'.

## **THE HUMAN PERSON**

Human beings constitute the crown of creation, the peak of the creative process of the Divine Trinity. Before creating Adam, the three Persons took counsel together: 'Let Us make man in Our own image, after Our likeness' (Gen.1:26). The 'Pre-eternal Counsel' of the Three was necessary first because humans were a higher creature with reason, will, and dominion over the visible world, and second, because, being free and independent, humanity would break the commandment and fall away from the bliss of Paradise. The Son's sacrifice on the Cross would then be required to show humans the way back to God. In creating human beings God knew their subsequent destiny, for nothing is hidden from the gaze of God Who sees the future as much as He sees the present.



God formed Adam 'of dust from the ground', that is, from matter. Thus he was flesh of the flesh of the earth from which he was moulded by the hands of God. Yet God also 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being' (Gen.2:7). Being material or earthly, Adam received a Divine principle, a pledge of his communion with the Divine being. 'The breath of life' can be taken to mean the Holy Spirit. The human person partakes of the divine nature by the very act of creation and is thereby utterly different from other living beings: he does not simply assume a higher position in the hierarchy of animals but is a 'semi-god' set over the animal kingdom. The church Fathers call the human being a 'mediator' between the visible and invisible worlds, a 'mixture' of both worlds.

As the heart of the created world, combining within himself both the spiritual and the corporeal, the human being in a certain sense surpasses the angels. It was not the angel but the human being who was created by God in His own image. And it was not angelic, but human nature that was assumed by God in the Incarnation.

## IMAGE AND LIKENESS

'So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them' (Gen.1:27). Because a solitary egocentric monad is incapable of love, God created not a unit but a couple with the intention that love should reign among people. And because the love of the couple is not yet the perfection of love and being, God commands: 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Gen.1:28). From two human beings the third, their child, must be born: the perfect family — husband, wife and child, is the reflection of divine love in three Hypostases. Indeed one cannot but notice the affinity of the interchange between the singular and plural when the Bible speaks of God ('Let *Us* make man in *Our* image' — 'God created man in *His* own image') and the singular and plural when it speaks of humans ('created him' — 'created them'). This interchange emphasizes the unity of the nature of the human race even when there is a distinction between the hypostases of each individual person.

The theme of image and likeness is central to Christian anthropology: to a greater or lesser extent it was addressed by nearly all early church writers. The Fathers of the Church usually equated 'the image of God' to the rational and spiritual nature of the human person. 'What is *after the image* if not our intellect?' asks St John of Damascus. 'We are created in the image of the Maker, we possess reason and the faculty of speech, which comprise the perfection of our nature', writes St Basil the Great.

'The image of God' has been understood by some Fathers as our free will and self-determination. 'When God in His supernal goodness creates each soul in His own image, He brings it into being endowed with self-determination', says St Maximus the Confessor. God created the person absolutely free: in His love He wishes to force him neither into good nor evil. In return, He does not expect from us blind obedience but love. It is only in our being free that we can be assimilated to God through love for Him.

Other Fathers identified as 'the image of God' the human person's immortality, his dominant position in the world and his striving towards good.

Our ability to create, as the reflection of the creative ability of the Maker Himself, is also regarded as being 'in God's image'. God is the 'worker': 'My Father is working still, and I am working', says Christ (John 5:17). The human person was also commanded to 'till' the garden of Eden (Gen.2:15), that is, to labour in it and to work the land. While the human person is unable to create *ex nihilo* ('out of nothing'),

he can create from material given to him by God, and this material is the entire earth, over which he is lord and master. The world has no need to be improved by people; rather, humans themselves need to apply their creative abilities in order to be assimilated to God.

Some church Fathers distinguish 'image' from 'likeness' by identifying the image as that which had been originally fixed by the Creator in the human person, and the likeness as that which is to be attained through a life of virtue: 'The expression *according to the image* indicates that which is reasonable and endowed with free will, while the expression *according to the likeness* denotes assimilation through virtue, in as far as this is possible' (St John of Damascus). The human person is called upon to realize all of his creative abilities in 'tilling' the world, in creativity, in virtue, in love, so that he can be assimilated to God. For, as St Gregory of Nyssa says, 'the limit of a life of virtues is the assimilation of God'.

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## ARCHPASTORAL LETTER

### of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora *for the Beginning of the Great and Holy Lent*

To the beloved clergy, monastics, and faithful children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

As we stand at the threshold of the Great and Holy Lent, we embark together on a sacred journey - a journey that leads us through the desert of repentance and spiritual struggle to the radiant dawn of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is not merely an individual endeavor but a collective pilgrimage of the entire Mystical Body of Christ - the Holy Church, through which we are called to renewal, purification, and transfiguration in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Lent is a time of return - a return to God, to our true selves, and to the divine purpose for which we were created. The Church Fathers, including the great ascetics St. John Climacus, St. Clement of Alexandria, and St. Mary of Egypt, teach us that spiritual perfection is not attained in a single moment but is the fruit of daily striving, step by step, uprooting sin and planting virtue, cleansing the soul and cultivating holiness.

The Lenten struggle is a call for each of us to examine our hearts, recognizing our shortcomings and sins, and to embrace the transforming grace of repentance. Yet, this journey is not undertaken in isolation. As members of one Body in Christ, our personal renewal must also extend to our parishes, our communities, and the entire Church. Just as we as individuals seek purification, so too must our parish communities undergo a renewal of faith and love, casting aside complacency, divisions, and distractions that hinder our collective growth in Christ.

Brothers and sisters, this holy season is given to us as a time to reconfigure our lives, personally and communally. The Church herself must examine how we fulfill our mission in the world, how we live out the Gospel, how we serve one another and those in need. Just as Christ calls each of us to spiritual victory, He also calls His Church to renewed strength and vigor for the glory of His Name.

And so, beloved children in the Lord, let us enter this Holy Lent with hearts open to surrendering ourselves to the presence of God. When we surrender - when we allow Him to enter and transform our lives - then, step by step, we begin anew. Our burdens are lifted, our wounds are healed, and we are led through Gethsemane and Golgotha into the light of the Resurrection.

May this sacred season be for all of us a time of deep repentance, renewal, and transfiguration, so that when we stand before the empty tomb on Pascha night, we may proclaim with pure hearts and radiant souls: "Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!"

With archpastoral love in Christ,

+Metropolitan Antony  
*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora*

+Archbishop Jeremiah  
*Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America*

+Archbishop Daniel  
*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora*



IN MEMORY OF



**HELEN  
SENEDEAK**

**MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup> - BIRTHDAY**

**ON HER 99<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**



**“MAY THE LORD REST HER SOUL  
IN HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM”**

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY  
HER DAUGHTER, MARY ANN

