

Sunday Bulletin  
March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent  
St. Gregory Palamas  
Jesus Heals the Paralytic in Capernaum



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



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Anna Anderson  
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*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 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent

St. Gregory Palamas

Jesus Heals the Paralytic in Capernaum

- **Liturgical Schedule & Announcem.** - bull 5
- **Join Us for a Hockey Game!** - Mar 29 - bull 7
- **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts** - bull 7
- **On St. Gregory Palamas** - bull 8
- **On the Healing of the Paralytic** - bull 9
- **Reading Bible in 1 Year Plan** - bull 11
- **Orthodox Christianity 101** - bull 12
- **Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine** - bull 15

#### Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,  
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.  
And when from the depths You raised the dead,  
all the powers of heaven cried out://  
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

#### Tone 8 Troparion (St. Gregory Palamas)

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O  
ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O  
wonderworking Gregory,  
glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace,//  
always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

**Tone 4 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)**

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors!

So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:

“Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us,  
O Master of all, // so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!”

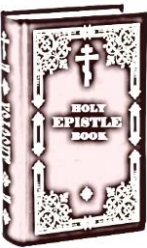
**Tone 5 Prokeimenon**

You, O Lord, shall protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.

*V. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!*



**The Reading is from the Letter of St Paul to Hebrews 1:10-2:3**



Brethren, and: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

**Alleluia and Verses Tone 5**

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.*

*He will say to the Lord: “My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust.”*

*The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.*

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia**

**The reading is from the Gospel according to St. Mark 2:1-12**



And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

**(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following) Hymn to the Theotokos**

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace: the assembly of angels and the race of men.

O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins,

from whom God was incarnate and became a Child – our God before the ages.

He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All

of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace. Glory to you!

**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 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 illnesses. Ukrainian people suffering from war.

**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

*“The divine grace of the Spirit, when it is found in the heart, is the kingdom of heaven. It is light, and from it comes healing of souls and bodies, and every good gift.”*

*“Just as the sun illumines all who have eyes to see, so the divine light of Christ, which brings healing, is present to all who have a heart purified through prayer and repentance.”*

*- St. Gregory Palamas*

# Liturgical Schedule & Feast Days



## SERVICE AND FEAST DAY SCHEDULE

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

- 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 Carpato-Russyn 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 Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church at 305 Struthers-Liberty Rd, Campbell, 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, Fellowship in Memory of Mykola Prychodczenko**
  - 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

- Every Friday during the Great Lent - **Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. Potluck Dinner**
- March Wednesdays – **Bingo for Ukraine** on every Wednesday in March.
- Mar 29 - **Hockey Game.** All are welcome – see more info in bulletin page
- April 6 - **Fellowship in Memory of Mykola Prychodczenko**
- April 6 – **Sisterhood Meeting** following the fellowship
- July 23-27, 2025 - UOL Convention in Florida – SAVE the DATE – July 23-27, 2025.

## Church School Calendar

\* **Church School** - Mar 16      \* **Church School** – Mar 23      \* **Church School** – Mar 30

## 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 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

<b>March</b>		<b>April</b>	
THUR, Mar 13 at 7pm	THUR, Mar 27 at 7pm	WED, Apr 2 at 7pm	WED, Apr 9 at 7pm

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD	On Mar 2	On Mar 9
General:	<b>\$ 1719.00</b>	<b>\$ 1588.00</b>
Renovation:	<b>\$ 115.00</b>	<b>\$ 39.00</b>
Online Donations on Tithe.ly	<b>\$ 20.00</b>	<b>\$ 20.00</b>

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

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

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Volunteer Opportunity / Help Needed for Sisterhood Bingo Kitchen to serve food on 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays. Contact Stephanie – 330-716-2726. Thank you!
- Need Volunteers to help with Bingo (need people to call back & sell the cards).
- DID YOU KNOW section: please submit the facts about your kids before March 30 to Fr. Mykola to be published in the Sunday Bulletin on April 6.

Thank  
you!

- Thank you to St. Mary`s Sisterhood for organizing the Baby Sprinkle! Thank you to all who attended for making the event so beautiful and for all the wonderful gifts for our baby boy on the way!


- Fr & Pani Zomchak


Thank you to our WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS for the help with the Bingo and with Pyrohy for your dedication and the hard work!

## 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



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 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

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

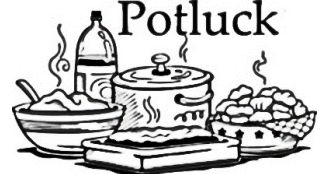
Is a beautiful and solemn service that sustains us spiritually as we journey through this season of repentance. Unlike a full Divine Liturgy, it does not consecrate the Eucharist but offers the faithful the already sanctified Body and Blood of Christ from a previous service.

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)!

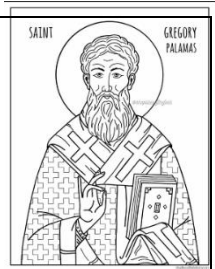
**Please Join us for Potluck Dinner  
Every Friday after  
the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts**

**Church  
Potluck**



# St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) is one of the greatest theologians of the Orthodox Church, known for his defense of Hesychasm and his teaching on the uncreated energies of God. His life and writings emphasize the experience of God's presence through prayer, ascetism, and divine grace.



## God's Light and Our Transformation

One of St. Gregory's most profound teachings is his explanation of the uncreated light, which was revealed at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. He taught that this light was not a mere symbol or a created phenomenon, but rather a true manifestation of God's divine energy. This means that God, though unknowable in His essence, makes Himself known to us through His energies—His grace, His love, and His presence in our lives. This challenges us to ask: Are we seeking the light of God in our lives? The world offers many distractions—fame, success, entertainment—but these things do not bring true illumination. St. Gregory reminds us that through prayer and purification of the heart, we can experience the real presence of God.

## Prayer as a Path to Union with God

St. Gregory was a defender of Hesychasm, a tradition of deep, contemplative prayer practiced by monastics on Mount Athos. The Hesychasts taught that through stillness (hesychia), inner silence, and the repetition of the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"), one can open the heart to God's grace. Though we may not be monks, this teaching applies to all of us. Do we make time for silence in our daily lives? In a world filled with constant noise and distractions, we are often afraid of stillness. But it is in the quiet that we hear God's voice. When was the last time we sat in silence before God, simply listening?

## The Body and Soul in Harmony

St. Gregory emphasized that spiritual life is not just about the soul but also involves the body. He taught that our entire being—body and soul—can participate in God's grace. This is why Orthodox Christians fast, bow, and make the sign of the cross in prayer. Our whole existence is meant to be transformed by God's light. This challenges us to ask: How do we involve our whole selves in our spiritual lives? Do we see fasting, prayer, and worship as a means of drawing closer to God, or do we treat them as mere obligations? St. Gregory tells us to see them as pathways to divine communion.

## Defending the Truth with Humility

St. Gregory faced great opposition in his time. His teachings were challenged by the philosopher Barlaam, who claimed that God could only be known through reason, not through mystical experience. Gregory responded not with pride, but with deep theological wisdom, showing that God's presence is not limited to intellectual knowledge but is encountered through direct experience in prayer. His life reminds us that defending the faith requires both truth and humility. When faced with challenges, do we respond with wisdom and patience, or with anger and arrogance? True knowledge of God is not about winning arguments but about becoming transformed by His grace. St. Gregory Palamas calls us to seek God's uncreated light, to enter into deep prayer, to honor both body and soul, and to defend the truth with humility. His teachings are not just for monks but for every Christian who desires a closer relationship with God.

As we reflect on his life, let us ask ourselves: Do we seek God's presence in prayer and silence? Do we open our hearts to His grace through humility and repentance? Are we living in a way that allows God's light to shine through us?

May St. Gregory's prayers guide us as we journey toward the uncreated light of Christ, who is the true source of life and salvation.



# On the Healing of the Paralytic

The story of the paralytic in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26) is a powerful testimony to faith, perseverance, and the authority of Christ. It challenges us to reflect on our spiritual paralysis, the importance of community in our journey toward healing, and Jesus' power to forgive sins.

## Faith That Overcomes Obstacles

The paralytic's friends embody the determination and faith that God calls us to have. When they encountered a barrier—the crowded house where Jesus was preaching—they did not give up. Instead, they made an opening in the roof and lowered their friend to Jesus. Their actions show that true faith does not passively wait for things to change but actively seeks Christ, even when obstacles arise.

This raises a question for us: Do we persist in seeking Jesus, even when difficulties block our way? Sometimes, we encounter spiritual “crowds” that prevent us from coming closer to Him—our doubts, fears, sins, or even the opinions of others. Like the paralytic's friends, we must find creative and courageous ways to break through these barriers.

## Healing Begins with Forgiveness

Surprisingly, Jesus does not begin by healing the man's physical ailment but instead tells him, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” This reveals a deeper truth: our greatest need is not always physical healing but spiritual restoration. The paralysis of sin is more dangerous than any bodily ailment because it separates us from God.

Many people today seek healing for their struggles—emotional pain, broken relationships, and suffering—but Jesus reminds us that healing begins in the soul. Have we sought His forgiveness first? Do we recognize that sin, like paralysis, keeps us from moving toward God?

## The Role of Community in Healing

The paralytic could not reach Jesus on his own; he needed friends to carry him. This highlights the importance of community in our spiritual lives. We need others to help us in our moments of weakness, just as we must carry others in their time of need. The Church, our family, and our friends play a vital role in bringing us closer to Christ. Who are the people in our lives that need our faith to carry them to Jesus? Are we willing to be like the four friends, going beyond what is easy to help someone encounter Christ?



## Jesus' Authority and Our Response

The Pharisees questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sins, but He proved His divine power by healing the paralytic. This miracle was not just about physical restoration; it was a sign that Jesus is truly God, capable of redeeming us from sin. The healed man's response is simple but profound—he rises, picks up his mat, and walks out in front of everyone. This symbolizes what happens when Christ heals us spiritually: we are no longer stuck in our old ways but are called to move forward, living out our faith as a testimony to others.

The story of the paralytic in Capernaum reminds us that faith is active, healing begins with forgiveness, community plays a crucial role in our spiritual journey, and Jesus has ultimate authority over both body and soul.

As we reflect on this passage, let us ask ourselves:

- Do we have the perseverance to seek Christ, even when obstacles arise?

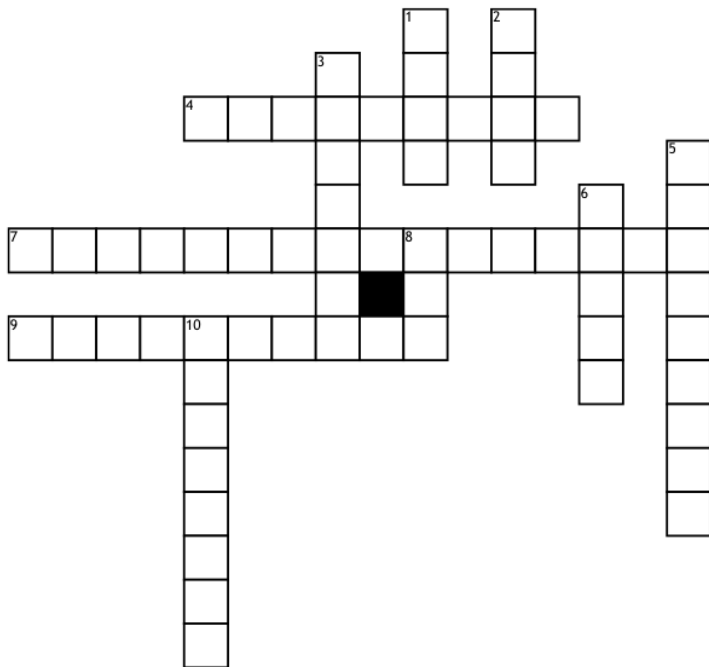
- Are we prioritizing spiritual healing over temporary concerns?

- Are we supporting others in their journey toward Christ?

- How do we respond after encountering Jesus—do we “pick up our mat” and live transformed lives?

May we have the faith of the paralytic's friends, the humility to receive Christ's healing, and the courage to walk forward in new life.

## The Cure of the Paralytic



### Across

4. Where was Jesus when he cured the paralytic?
7. In which nature miracle was faith rewarded?
9. What did the people who witnesses the miracle do afterwards?

### Down

1. What did Jesus forgive the man when he healed him?
2. How many friends brought the paralytic to Jesus?

3. What type of miracle is 'The Cure of the Paralytic'?
5. What sin is it to falsely claim to be the son of God?
6. What was Jesus rewarding when he healed the paralytic?
8. The crowd watching thought only who had the authority to forgive sins?
10. This miracle demonstrated Jesus' status as who?

## 52 Week Bible Reading Plan

	Epistles	The Law	History	Psalms	Poetry	Prophecy	Gospels
Week	(Sunday)	(Monday)	(Tuesday)	(Wednesday)	(Thursday)	(Friday)	(Saturday)
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 1-2
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 4-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 3-4
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 8-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 5-7
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 12-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 8-10
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 12-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 23-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 11-13
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 20-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 29-33	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 14-16
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 24-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 18-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 34-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 17-19
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 28-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 21-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 40-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 20-22
9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 32-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 24-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 45-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 23-25
10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 36-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 19-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 51-55	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 26-28
11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 40-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 30-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 21-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 56-61	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1-2
12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 44-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 33-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 62-66	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 3-4
13	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 36-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 5-6
14	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 39-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 7-8
15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 42-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9-10
16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 26-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 45-47	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 31-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 11-12
17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 33-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 22-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 13-14
18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 51-53	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 35-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 27-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 15-16
19	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 54-56	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 37-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 32-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 1-2
20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 57-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 39-40	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 37-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 3-4
21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 60-62	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 41-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 42-46	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 5-6
22	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 63-65	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 47-52	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 7-8
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 37-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 66-68	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lamentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 9-10
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 69-71	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 11-12
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 14-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 72-74	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 13-14
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 19-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 75-77	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15-16
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 78-80	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 8-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17-18
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 81-83	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 25-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 19-20
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 16-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 84-86	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 31-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 21-22
30	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 87-89	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23-24
31	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 90-92	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 43-48	<input type="checkbox"/> John 1-2
32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Thes	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 25-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 93-95	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> John 3-4
33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 96-98	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> John 5-6
34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 99-101	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> John 7-9
35	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 102-104	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> John 10-12
36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 105-107	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Joel	<input type="checkbox"/> John 13-15
37	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 25-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 108-110	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> John 16-18
38	<input type="checkbox"/> Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 111-113	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> John 19-21
39	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 114-116	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 26-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Obadiah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1-2
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41	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 119	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Micah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5-6
42	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 120-121	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Nahum	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7-8
43	<input type="checkbox"/> James 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 122-124	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Habakkuk	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9-10
44	<input type="checkbox"/> James 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 125-127	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Zephaniah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 11-12
45	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 128-130	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Haggai	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13-14
46	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 131-133	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15-16
47	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 134-136	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17-18
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49	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 23-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 140-142	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 21-22
50	<input type="checkbox"/> 2John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 26-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 143-145	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 23-24
51	<input type="checkbox"/> 3John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 29-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 146-148	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 25-26
52	<input type="checkbox"/> Jude	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 32-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 149-150	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 27-28

# Orthodox Christianity 101

## SOUL AND BODY

All ancient religious tradition maintain that humans are composed of both material and spiritual elements; but the correlation between the two has been understood in different ways. The dualistic religions view matter as originally evil and hostile towards humanity: the Manichaeans even believed that Satan was the maker of the material world. Classical philosophy regards the body as a prison in which the soul is kept captive or incarcerated. Indeed Plato deduces the word *soma* (body) from *sema* (tombstone, tomb): 'Many people believe that the body is like a tombstone concealing the soul buried beneath it in this life... The soul endures punishment... while the flesh does duty as its fortress so that it can be healed, while located in the body as in a torture chamber'.

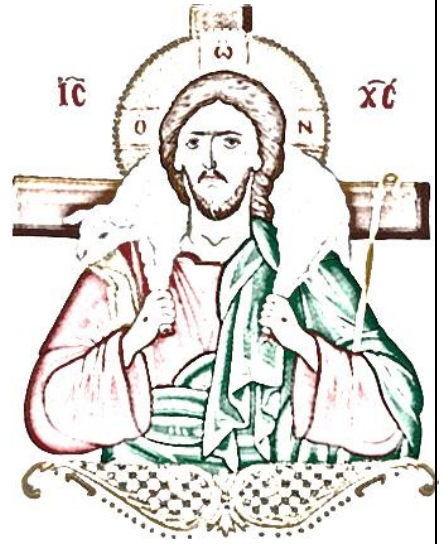
The ancient Indian philosophies speak of the transmigration of souls from one body to another, even from a human being to an animal (and *vice versa*). The doctrine of *metempsychosis* (reincarnation) was rejected by early church tradition as incompatible with divine revelation. It was proclaimed senseless and erroneous on the basis of the assertion that a human being, who possesses reason and free will, cannot be transformed into an unintelligible animal, since all intelligible being is immortal and cannot disappear. Moreover, what is the point of someone's being punished for sins committed in an earlier life if he does not know why he has to endure it (after all, it is impossible to recollect one's previous 'existence')?

The church Fathers, basing themselves on Scripture, teach that the soul and the body are not foreign elements united temporarily in the individual, but are bestowed simultaneously and for all time in the very act of creation: the soul is 'betrothed' to the body and is inseparable from it. Only the totality of soul and body together comprises a complete personality, a hypostasis. St Gregory of Nyssa calls the unbreakable link between soul and body an 'inclination of affection', 'commixture', 'community', 'attraction' and 'acquaintance', which are preserved even after death. Such a concept is far removed from Platonic and Eastern dualism.

Christianity is quite falsely accused of preaching that the flesh should be despised and the body be treated with contempt. A contempt for the flesh was held by a number of heretics (the Gnostics, Montanists, Manichaeans), as well as by some Greek philosophers, the views of whom were subjected to rigorous criticism by church Fathers.

In Christian ascetical literature, whenever we encounter questions of enmity between flesh and spirit — beginning with St Paul: 'For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh' (Gal.5:17) — they concern *sinful* flesh as the totality of passions and vices and not the body in general. Also, when we read in monastic sources of the 'mortification of the flesh', this is about the putting to death of sinful proclivities and 'lusts of the flesh', not contempt for the body as such. The Christian ideal is not to debase the flesh, but to purify it and transfigure it, to liberate it from the consequences of the Fall, to return it to its primordial purity and make it worthy of assimilation to God.

Christian tradition has always held an exceptionally elevated view of the human person. What is a human being from the point of view of an atheist? An ape, only with more developed abilities. What is a human being as perceived by a Buddhist? One of the reincarnations of the soul, which before its abode in a human body could have existed in a dog or a pig, and which following bodily death could again find itself within an



animal. Buddhist teaching denies the very concept of personal existence: the human being is regarded not as the totality of body and soul, but as a type of transient stage in the wandering of the soul from body to body.

Christianity alone presents an exalted image of the human being. In Christianity each of us is regarded as a personality, a person created in the image of God, an icon of the Creator.

When God created human nature, He created it not only for us but also for Himself, since He knew that one day He would Himself become a human being. Thus, He fashioned something adequate to Himself, something possessing an infinite potential. St Gregory Nazianzen calls the human person a 'created god'. The human person is called to become god. In his potential man is a *god-man*.

### **PRIMORDIAL HUMANITY BEFORE THE FALL**

Materialists claim that in the early developmental stages of the human race people were like animals and led a bestial way of life: they neither knew God nor did they possess concepts of morality. Opposed to this are the Christian beliefs in the bliss of the first humans in Paradise, their subsequent fall and their eventual expulsion from Eden.

According to the Book of Genesis, God creates Adam and brings him into Paradise, where he lives in harmony with nature: he understands the language of the animals, and they obey him; all of the elements are subject to him as if to a king.

God brings to Adam all of the animals 'to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name' (Gen.2:19). Adam gives a name to every animal and bird a name: by doing so he demonstrates his ability to know the meaning, the hidden *logos* (reason) of every living creature. By giving Adam the right to name to the whole of creation, God brings him into the very heart of His creative process and calls him to co-creativity, to co-operation.

God brings the primordial man into existence to be a priest of the entire visible creation. He alone of all living creatures is capable of praising God verbally and blessing Him. The entire universe is entrusted to him as a gift, for which he is to bring a 'sacrifice of praise' and which he is to offer back to God as 'Thine own of Thine own'. In this unceasing eucharistic offering lies the meaning and justification of human existence. The heavens, the earth, the sea, the fields and mountains, the birds and the animals, indeed the whole of creation assign humans to this high priestly ministry in order that God may be praised through their lips.

God allows Adam and Eve to taste of all the trees of Paradise, including the tree of life which grants immortality. However, He forbids them to taste of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because 'to know evil' is to become party to it and to fall away from bliss and immortality. Adam is given the right to choose between good and evil, even though God makes him aware of the correct choice and warns him of the consequences of falling from grace. In choosing evil, Adam falls away from life and 'dies a death'; in choosing good, he ascends to perfection and attains the highest goal of his existence.

### **THE FALL**

The biblical story of the Fall prefigures the entire tragic history of the human race. It shows us who we were and what we have become. It reveals that evil entered the world not by the will of God but by fault of humans who preferred diabolical deceit to divine commandment. From generation to generation the human race repeats Adam's mistake in being beguiled by false values and forgetting the true ones — faith in God and verity to Him.

Sin was not ingrained in human nature. Yet the possibility to sin was rooted in the free will given to humans. It was indeed freedom that rendered the human being as an image of the Maker; but it was also freedom that from the very beginning contained within itself the possibility to fall away from God. Out of His love

for humans God did not want to interfere in their freedom and forcibly avert sin. But neither could the devil force them to do evil. The sole responsibility for the Fall is borne by humans themselves, for they misused the freedom given to them.

What constituted the sin of the first people? St Augustine believes it to be disobedience. On the other hand, the majority of early church writers say that Adam fell as a result of pride. Pride is the wall that separates humans from God. The root of pride is egocentricity, the state of being turned in on oneself, self-love, lust for oneself. Before the Fall, God was the only object of the humans' love; but then there appeared a value outside of God: the tree was suddenly seen to be 'good for food', 'a delight to the eyes', and something 'to be desired' (Gen.3:6). Thus the entire hierarchy of values collapsed: my own 'I' occupied the first place while the second was taken by the object of 'my' lust. No place has remained for God: He has been forgotten, driven from my life.

The forbidden fruit failed to bring happiness to the first people. On the contrary, they began to sense their own nakedness: they were ashamed and tried to hide from God. This awareness of one's nakedness denotes the privation of the divine light-bearing garment that cloaked humans and defended them from the 'knowledge of evil'. Adam's first reaction after committing sin was burning sensation of shame. The second reaction was his desire to hide from the Creator. This shows that he had lost all notion of God's omnipresence and would search for any place where God was 'absent'.

However, this was not a total rupture with God. The Fall was not a complete abandonment: humans could repent and regain their former dignity. God goes out to find the fallen Adam; between the trees of Paradise He seeks him out asking 'Where are you?' (Gen.3:9). This humble wandering of God through Paradise prefigures Christ's humility as revealed to us in the New Testament, the humility with which the Shepherd seeks the lost sheep. God has no need to go forth and look for Adam: He can call down from the heavens with a voice of thunder or shake the foundations of the earth. Yet He does not wish to be Adam's judge, or his prosecutor. He still wants to count him as an equal and puts His hope in Adam's repentance. But instead of repenting, Adam utters words of self-justification, laying the blame for everything on his wife: 'The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate' (Gen.3:12). In other words, 'It was You who gave me a wife; it is You who is to blame'. In turn, Eve lays the blame for everything on the serpent.

The consequences of the Fall for the first humans were catastrophic. They were not only deprived of the bliss and sweetness of Paradise, but their whole nature was changed and disfigured. In sinning they fell away from their natural condition and entered an unnatural state of being. All elements of their spiritual and corporeal make-up were damaged: their spirit, instead of striving for God, became engrossed in the passions; their soul entered the sphere of bodily instincts; while their body lost its original lightness and was transformed into heavy sinful flesh. After the Fall the human person 'became deaf, blind, naked, insensitive to the good things from which he had fallen away, and above all became mortal, corruptible and without sense of purpose' (St Symeon the New Theologian). Disease, suffering and pain entered human life. Humans became mortal for they had lost the opportunity of tasting from the tree of life.

Not only humanity but also the entire world changed as a result of the Fall. The original harmony between people and nature had been broken; the elements had become hostile; storms, earthquakes and floods could destroy life. The earth would no longer provide everything of its own accord; it would have to be tilled 'in the sweat of your face', and would produce 'thorns and thistles'. Even the animals would become the human being's enemy: the serpent would 'bruise his heel' and other predators would attack him (Gen.3:14-19). All of creation would be subject to the 'bondage of decay'. Together with humans it would now 'wait for freedom' from this bondage, since it did not submit to vanity voluntarily but through the fault of humanity (Rom.8:19-21).

# The Warmth of Light in the Cold Darkness: the Church's Humanitarian Mission Amidst War

## Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine – March 5, 2025



As the bitter winds of late winter give way to the hesitant warmth of spring, Ukraine remains engulfed in the brutal realities of war. While nature hints at renewal, explosions and the destruction of innocent lives darken the land. The suffering of Ukraine's people intensifies, yet amidst the devastation, a steadfast light shines—the unwavering humanitarian efforts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (UOC of the USA) in cooperation with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU).



With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, the collaborative leadership of His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphaniy of Kyiv and All Ukraine, and the dedicated work of Archbishop Daniel, President of the Consistory of the UOC of the USA, the Church continues its life-saving humanitarian mission. Despite freezing temperatures and the looming dangers of war, aid reaches the most remote villages and towns - places where civilians, especially the elderly and vulnerable, remain trapped without access to food, medicine, or warmth. Thanks to the tireless work of Very Rev. Fr.

Konstantine Kuznetsov and his wife, Natalia, along with selfless volunteers, vital nutritional aid, medical supplies, and logistical support are being delivered to towns such as Dobropillia, Kostiantynivka, Pokrovsk, and others. The faithful understand that while many cannot travel due to icy roads and active conflict, the Church must go to them - bringing not only physical sustenance but also spiritual comfort and hope.

Archbishop Daniel, reflecting on the suffering of Ukraine, often reminds the faithful: "Life is fragile, yet in its fragility, we are called to protect, cherish, and

nourish it. Every act of kindness, every loaf of bread shared, every tear wiped away is a testament to God's mercy in the world."

Great and Holy Lent is the holiest season of spiritual renewal in the Orthodox calendar - a 40-day pilgrimage of repentance, fasting, prayer, and charity leading to the joy of Pascha (Easter). In normal times, Lent calls the faithful to "open our hearts to the presence of God" and allow Him to transform our lives, lifting our burdens and healing our wounds. During war, this call takes on even deeper meaning. Fasting is no longer merely an exercise in personal discipline; it becomes an act of solidarity with those who have little to eat. Almsgiving (acts of charity) is no longer optional piety; it is the lifeline for neighbors in desperate need. The Prophet Isaiah taught that the fast God desires is one that looses the bonds of injustice and feeds the hungry: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the



naked, to cover him...?" (Isaiah 58:7). This ancient mandate shines clearly today as Ukrainian Orthodox faithful deny themselves so that they can share more with others.



Lent is thus not only about personal repentance but also about mercy in action. In the midst of wartime deprivation, every act of mercy becomes a candle of hope. The Church reminds the faithful that prayer and fasting divorced from love for others are empty. True repentance flowers in compassion. In the Lenten appeal, the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA urges, "during this prayerful and introspective time of Great Lent, please donate generously... for by showing concern, aiding, and caring for these suffering individuals, you are showing your love for Christ Himself, and working out your own salvation".



This reflects Christ's own words that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for Him (Matthew 25:40). Indeed, to embody Christ's love in times of suffering is the highest Lenten calling. The faithful are moved to become living icons of the Good Samaritan - binding wounds, pouring the oil of compassion, and carrying the fallen on their own beasts (Luke 10:29-37). In war-torn Ukraine, Great Lent becomes not a retreat from reality, but a march into the very heart of suffering with Christ-like mercy. Each package of food given, each stranger sheltered, each tear comforted is a holy offering, aligning with what St. James calls "pure and undefiled religion" - to care for orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). By fasting from selfishness and fear, and feasting on generosity and courage, believers live the true meaning of Lent amidst the ashes of war.

The UOC of the USA expresses deep gratitude to all who continue to support these humanitarian efforts. Every donation, every prayer, and every act of goodwill strengthens the Church's ability to bring food to the hungry, medicine to the sick, and hope to the brokenhearted. We call upon all people of faith and goodwill to continue their support in this great time of trial. While missiles may fall, and the cold may bite, the warmth of Christ's love, made manifest through the hands of the faithful, can never be extinguished.

As we continue through this holy season of Lent, let us remember that love is stronger than hatred, faith is stronger than fear, and light will always overcome darkness. May the Lord bless all those who work tirelessly to save lives, and may He grant Ukraine peace, justice, and renewal. Let us go forth with courage, remembering that even in the coldest winter, the hope of resurrection is near.

May God bless Ukraine!

- The Consistory of the UOC of USA



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS OF OUR UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UKRAINE – PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE - [https://uocofusa.org/news\\_220504\\_2](https://uocofusa.org/news_220504_2)**

*"For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."*

*Matthew 25:35*