

# SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 4

April 2011

## March Council Highlights

- ✘ February's Operating Income was \$9,508.10 and Operating Expenses were \$9,216.93, resulting in a positive balance of \$291.17 for the month of February.
- ✘ St. John the Evangelist Mission will host the Lenten Vespers service at SS Peter and Paul on April 3rd.
- ✘ Parking lot landscaping still pending resolution on location of some trees.
- ✘ Envelopes for the Parking Lot Project donations are available in the back of the church. The Parking Lot account balance is \$56,685.25, with \$2,675.00 having been donated in February.



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## Seven Last Words

Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky one who receives it with appreciation.

Preaching from the last words of our Lord, God and Savior on Good Friday is quite common in western churches. In the medieval period preachers emphasized the darkness and desolation. Later they stressed the overwhelming love poured out from Christ's glorious sacrifice. In any case the emotions of all Christians are brought to a climax by the Son of God's sublime act of mercy and forgiveness.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" [Luke 23:34]  
 How could our Lord Jesus utter those words from His Cross at that moment? He taught us to turn the other cheek, but His forgiveness transcends that deed. This is beyond human nature. Only a God can do that. He was enduring suffering and agony, but they showed Him no pity. He instead pleads to His Father not to hold it against them. Indeed, they had no concept of the horror they were bringing on themselves, and yet Jesus was praying for them as He had for Judas. If He could do that, what of us?

"Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" [Luke 23:43]  
 From facing forward, He looks to His right and wins the soul of a common criminal. Not both. One must want what He offers, but despite the past with its sins, conversion is possible from One who is more eager to grant it than the



"Woman, behold your son.....Behold your mother!" [John 19:26-27]  
 Then, looking down on the few who had the courage and compassion to share His grief and anguish, He provides for the welfare of His suffering mother. A little trinity of love binds her with Him and the disciple whom He loved. They would not be alone, and they would come to know that He would be closer to them than when He lived in the same home and ate at the same table. This adoption no state charter could match. From that time on the apostle John took the Mother of God into his own home.

"Eli [Eloi] Lama sabachthani. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" [Matthew 27:46]  
 This time He looks upward and reaches inward where the Father and Holy Spirit are as alive there as they had been eternally in the Kingdom. Why this seemingly confusing prayer? Because it is the start of the Psalm 22 that opens onto the identification with all Adam and Eve's children who have known the feeling of forsakenness. From that moment, none could ever say and mean, "You cannot know, Lord, what I feel." He did and He does. The ultimate abandonment. And the psalm includes a note of faith, joy and triumph: "For He has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; He has not

hidden His face from him but has listened to his cry of help" [v.24].

"I thirst" [John 19-28]  
 Finally He acknowledges His own excruciating suffering. Who of us can imagine the sensation of one crucified who had shed an enormous amount of blood from the beatings and abuse, adding the great perspiration from the baking sun. Many metaphors are lifted: "Thirst for righteousness," "Living water," "they gave me gall to drink..." but the reality is one of intense thirst, as real and horrible as that.

"It is finished" [Tetelesthai] (completed, consummated, accomplished, achieved) [John 19:30]  
 The goal of the Holy Trinity for the salvation of humankind is fulfilled. Now for the glorious ascension and the return to the right hand of the Father, as we celebrate the Ascension feast.

"Father, unto Your hands I commend My spirit" [Luke 23:46]  
 Who would dare attempt to explain the awesome mystery of salvation? What can we mortals add that would dare to interrupt the sublime time for meditation? We can only allude to the awesome entrance with the precious Gifts of the Pre-sanctified Liturgy, since we have no human words to describe this poignant mystery of the Son of God's return to where He had been before the awesome kenosis, choosing to enter time and space, to live as a human from birth to death on the cross. "Let all mortal flesh be silent, for the King of Glory now enters, the mystical sacrifice all accomplished."

Reprinted from the "Thoughts in Christ", March 27, 2011, Bulletin 21, Volume XLVIII, Orthodox Church

# Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the final weeks of Great Lent, we have already to anticipate the celebration of Holy Week and Pascha. Unfortunately, sometime we speed ahead to the end of the season, focusing on the preparations for our celebration of Pascha and all the details of food, clothing, and travel that it might involve without taking the time to fully realize and experience the days of the week we call "Great and Holy."

The message that is proclaimed in the services of Holy Week is not only that Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for us, but also that He rose from the dead for us. In the liturgical services of Holy Week we remember the past, what the Lord has done for us. But we also celebrate it in the present, what it means for us here and now, and how it defines our lives. We also profess our belief that one day, sometime in the future, in a time known only by God, we will experience the resurrection definitively in the life of the world to come.



When we gather for the liturgical services of Holy Week we will remember that even on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, the mystery of Christ's Passion and Death is already enveloped by the glorious mystery of His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. It means that just as in Christ's life, neither suffering of any kind nor death has the last word in our life. The message of Holy Week, therefore, is that Christ will rise again, in your life, in my life, in fact Jesus is risen and we will rise to life with Him.

The message of Holy Week and Pascha provides us with the opportunity to express our faith in Christ in a very direct and personal way. And so we respond with Christ's Paschal Mystery by saying, "I believe I shall rise again ... from my mistakes, from my sinfulness, from my failures, from my tomb—and this will happen because of Christ's death and resurrection." As we approach the awe-inspiring days of Holy Week, I invite you to enter into its spirit reverently, prayerfully, reflectively, remembering that our life is not all work, and making only

a living...but it is made up also of life in the spirit ...remembering that whatever we do must be focused on God, the God who reveals himself as suffering and dying in Jesus Christ on the Cross ... and also as suffering with the many sufferers of the world.

Please join in participating in the worship and ceremonies that will be held in our Parish: Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, the Bridegroom Matins, the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, the proclamation of the Twelve Gospels, the Burial Vespers on Good Friday and the Lamentations on Holy Friday evening, the Liturgy of Holy Saturday morning, the Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy and, finally the Vespers of Pascha on Sunday afternoon. This is the most Holy Week of the entire year, because we remember how dearly God has loved us, by dying and rising for us.

I look forward to celebrating with you the Lord's Victory over sin and death – the Victory He has won for us.

With love in the Lord,

Father David

## Christ the Conqueror of Hell



Father Alexander Schmemmann has written that Holy Saturday is often ignored or misunderstood. It's as if there is a day of sorrow (Holy Friday) that is quickly replaced by a day of joy (Pascha.) But, Fr. Schmemmann says, the services of Holy Saturday connect the two days. They commemorate an event in which "sorrow is not simply replaced by joy, but is itself TRANSFORMED into joy."

The event Father Schmemmann refers to is Christ's descent into hell, where He overcomes the final power of death and brings forth the people it held captive. Holy Saturday's services are essential to understand this, and to take part in it. During these services the liturgical colors are changed from dark to Paschal white, and we triumphantly sing, "Let God Arise!"

A recent book by Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev, "Christ the Conqueror of Hell," is an excellent resource for those who want a deeper understanding of Holy Saturday. The book's first section traces Scriptural and apocryphal refer-

ences to Christ's victory over death and His destruction of hell's power. The next part examines patristic literature and liturgical texts. Finally, Abp. Hilarion offers an epilogue on the theological significance of Christ's saving act. The Old Testament (Septuagint translation) promises that God "will deliver them out of the power of Hades" (Hosea 13:14) and I Peter 3:19-20 tells us that Christ fulfilled the promise by preaching "to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah..." The Orthodox Church teaches that Christ's descent was thus a "second chance" for those who perished in the Flood described in Genesis, who had no chance to encounter Christ and the Gospel. The book contains imagery used by the Fathers, such as Death quivering and becoming agitated as Jesus appears, while the dead perceive light shining in the darkness, raise their heads from bondage, and behold the brightness of Christ. It also offers examples of liturgical poetry, as when Christ addresses Hades: "Not only will you give back those whom you have taken and whom I have resur-

rected and now take with me as I leave here, but also those who will be sent to you in the future will arise..."

The recurring message of the book is that Christ's descent into hell gave every person a chance to know Him and rise with Him. The book ends with that message:

We do not know if everyone followed Christ when he rose from hell, nor do we know if everyone will follow him to the eschatological heavenly kingdom when he will become "all in all." We do know that, since Christ's descent...the gates of paradise have been opened for all who wish to enter through them. This is the faith of the early church, inherited from the first generation of Christians and cherished by Orthodox tradition. This is the never-extinguished hope of all those who believe in Christ, who once and for all conquered death, destroyed hell, and granted resurrection to the entire human race.

*This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.*

# Processions and Emotions

Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky its temporary victory—temporary at least for us.

**"The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed, shouted: 'Hosanna to the Son of David'" (John 12:12)**

**"Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb" (Matthew 27:59)**

**"I know you are looking for Jesus. He is not here. He has risen, just as He said...go quickly and tell His disciples" (Matthew 28:5)**

We hold palms and pussy willows, celebrating the Palm Sunday procession from Bethany hill across the Kedron valley through the eastern gates of Jerusalem; we reenact the joy of our Lord's followers on that glorious proclamation of His claim to leadership as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. We are full of joy, even if, unlike the disciples on that day, we realize full well the rollercoaster of emotions that follow and the events of that traumatic week which changed history forever.

Joy turns to grief as we play the role of pall bearers at the funeral of Life. Five days later, we emulate the servants of the wealthy Sanhedrin members, Joseph the nobleman and Nicodemus, the disciple who wanted to keep his belief in Christ secret. The Church wants us to realize the incredible and muse on what is more than a contradiction -- we mere humans, who were given life through the Word of God, are taking the Source of life to the grave. We reenact the procession from Nain (Luke 7:11) of a weeping widow in the entourage from that village approached by the Lord Jesus and His disciples. There Life personified raised the boy and cheered the lad's mother. This time it is Jesus on the bier, and we are here taking His corpse to the tomb. The disciples were in hiding for fear of their own lives. Here is where we part company with many who refuse to believe there is more to the story. What else but faith alone can transcend the logic of life ending in death? Here's where we separate from Jews, Muslims, humanists and all other unbelievers. Death has



Two more glorious processions follow. The Myrrhbearers, who had been following the procession of the Lord's burial from a distance, could hardly wait for the Sabbath to end. They

would then do a proper job of anointing the Lord's body according to their custom. Those who have lost one they loved dearly—a parent, spouse or child—will recall the therapy of the burial ritual. Helpless, overwhelmed with grief, unwilling to accept the raw fact of death, a "survivor," as they are called, accepts the task of a proper burial. It's the only therapy available to assuage the awful feelings of despair. But those wonderful women who loved Jesus with

such intensity were surprised with a wonderful joy. The stone had been rolled aside, the tomb was empty but for an angel who told them what had happened and ordered them to rush back and tell St. Peter and the others what they had learned. Can it be termed a procession, the lifting of their long dresses, stumbling, breathing heavily, running as best as their sandals would allow, to appear breathless before the men, with such an incredible tale? Or the response by Sts. Peter and the young John, hustling to find out for themselves what part of this story might be true?

That's where our annual procession finds us, imitating the race of the two apostles. How different is our run to the tomb. Ours is regal, solemn yet hopeful, because we know what we shall discover. Not with the limber legs of John do we sprint ahead of the elder Peter, but rather we all follow the Cross of our Lord, because the Cross itself offers us the worst and best, the end and the beginning, the final word of life as we know it, and the first word of the Word of Life: "Christ is Risen!"

Reprinted from the "Thoughts in Christ", April 12, 2009, Bulletin 214, Volume XLVIII, Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-thoughts-article.asp?SID=6&ID=446>

## CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Albanian: Khrishti unjal! Vertet unjal!

Aleut: Khristus anahgrecum! Alhecum anahgrecum!

Amharic - Kristos Tenestwal! Bergit Tenestwal!

Armenian: Kristos haryav ee merelotz! Orhnial eh harootyunuh kristosee!

Bulgarian: Hristos voskrese! Vo istina voskrese!

Byelorussian: Khristos Uvoskros! Zaprowdu Uvoskros!

Chinese: Helisituosi fuhuole! Qeshi fuhuole!

Coptic: Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!

Czech: Kristus vstal a mrtvych! Opravdi vstoupil!

Danish: Kristus er opstanden! I sandhed Han er Opstanden!

Dutch: Christus is opgestaan! Ja, hij is waarlijk opgestaan!

Eritrean (Tigre): Christos Ten-si-OU! Ba -Ha-ke Ten-si-OU!

Greek: Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

Hawaiian: Ua ala hou `o Kristo! Ua ala `i `o no `oia!

Portuguese: Cristo ressuscitou! Verdadeira-mente ressuscitou!

Romanian: Cristos a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!

Serbian: Cristos vaskres! Vaistinu vaskres!

Slavonic: Christos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!

Slovak: Kristus vstal zmrtvych! Skutočne vstal!

Spanish: Cristo ha resucitado! En verdad, ha resucitado!

Swedish: Christus ar uppstanden! Han ar verkligan uppstanden!

Syriac: M'shee ho dkom! Ha koo qam!

Tlingit: Xristos Kuxwoo-digoot! Xegaa-kux Kuxwoo-digoot!

Turkish: Hristos diril-di! Hakikaten diril-di!

Ugandan: Kristo ajukkide! Kweli ajukkide!

Ukrainian: Khristos voskres! Voistinu voskres!

# Rising Victorious

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Jesus is standing on the broken doors of hell. The massive portals lie crossed under his feet, a reminder of the Cross that won this triumph.

He stands braced and striding, like a superhero, using his mighty outstretched arms to lift a great weight. That weight is Adam and Eve themselves, our father and mother in the fallen flesh. Jesus grasps Adam's wrist with his right hand and Eve's with his left, as he pulls them forcibly up, out of the carved marble boxes that are their graves. Eve is shocked and appears almost to recoil in shame, long gray hair streaming. Adam gazes at Christ with a look of stunned awe, face lined with weary age, his long tangled beard awry. Their limp hands lie in Jesus' powerful grip as he hauls them up into the light.

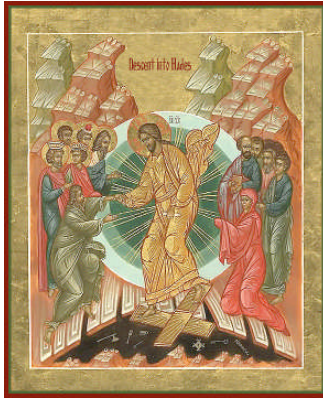
Behind Christ, King David, King Solomon, the prophet Isaiah, and the prophet Jeremiah stand in gorgeous robes, clustered tightly like a standing-room-only crowd to see this marvelous event. There is an air of joy, even conviviality, among them. St. John the Baptist is in the throng, still clothed in camel skin, now in full repossession of his head. Behind them are ranks and ranks of the righteous dead who are dead no more, for Christ has set them free.

Beneath Christ's feet, there is a black receding pit with floating silver shards of metal, chains, locks, and ominous instruments of pain. These instruments are broken and shattered, and the locks are unhinged, except for one set, still intact and in use. These locks bind the body of that vicious old Satan, who grimaces in his captivity, bound hand and foot and cast into his own darkness.

When you think of images of the Resurrection, what do you think of? Probably not this traditional image used in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the West, our first image is usually a graceful one: women who had been trudging toward the tomb on a misty Sunday dawn stand stock-still in astonishment. An angel is sitting on a round stone with one hand raised in the air.

The image conveys a sense of silence and the

stillness of caught breath as the moment on which the whole world turns is revealed. Colors are muted. The dew wets the hem of the women's dresses, and, for a moment, all is still. This garden-tomb image answers the question at the end of the three days, "Who rolled away the stone?" But there is another question, "Where did he go?"



"Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus might ask us once again. In Orthodoxy, we believe that the central meaning of the Resurrection is victory. Thus our traditional image is more vibrant and noisy, and it rings with a victorious shout.

The Resurrection is a victory over sin, death, and the devil, and a victory over the dark forces that enslave us, despise us, and wish to destroy us. Thus we cry hundreds of times between Pascha (Easter) and Pentecost, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tomb bestowing life!"

For long millennia, the righteous were trapped in the lair of Satan. "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40). Even those who were not righteous heard the ringing voice of Christ in the grave: "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah" (1 Peter 3:18-20). It was to the spirits in prison that Jesus went and defeated that cruel jailer and set them free.

When we turn to the biblical story of the Resurrection we find that, in Matthew at least, it's not as silent as our imaginations suggest. As the women arrive at the tomb there is "a great earthquake" caused by the descent of an angel. "His appearance was like lightning," an image that succeeds in astonishing because we cannot visualize what it means. He is dressed in robes white as snow, whiter than any fabric could be in that era.

The angel rolls away the stone and, in a closing gesture of command, sits upon it. That settles that. The terror-stricken guards, whose training had not covered this situation, are so frozen with fear that they "became as dead men." The women are not much less terrified, but they listen as the angel tells them not to be afraid. He gives them instructions: Go tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

As they depart, "with fear and great joy," they meet the Lord himself, fresh from his triumph over

Death. As the women fall at his feet, he repeats the angel's message: "Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee."

This version of the story differs from that in the Gospel of Mark, and that perplexing version is even more intriguing. As Mark has it, the women go to anoint Jesus' body, but instead find in the tomb "a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a long white robe." He tells them that Jesus is risen and instructs them to tell the disciples, as above. But here we are told that they are terrified and flee the tomb. "And said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." The earliest versions of this, the earliest Gospel, end abruptly at this point.

It's an odd gap between that small vignette of fear and retreat, and all that came next: the Apostles' relentless courage unto death, not ascribable to mere fond memories of a really nice dead guy; the preaching of the gospel across the Mediterranean bowl, the persecutions and martyrdom, the establishment and rise of the church, and finally, the disintegration of Christendom in these times, perhaps a prelude to full-circle persecution and martyrdom.

But at one mesmerizing moment, the news of Christ's resurrection was held by a handful of women who were too scared to tell anyone. But tell they did, and the story went on unreeling, till half a world away and two thousand years later it rings out with loud joy. Hundreds of times in the season of Pascha we will sing: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!"

*Reprinted from the Feast of Feasts website, <http://www.feastoffeasts.org/node/34>. FeastofFeasts.org is a joint project between The Antiochan Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and The Orthodox Church in America. ✝*

# Preparing for Pascha

Very Rev. John Breck

Orthodox Christianity calls us to live on two different but intimately related levels. One is the level of daily experience: life in family and on the job, paying bills and doing the shopping, cutting the grass and getting the kids to their various activities. It is also life marked by anxiety in a world of war and political upheaval, of poverty and violence. It is a life that for many people has been aptly described as "nasty, brutish and short."

Yet there is another level, another reality that can radically transform our daily routine and even the tenor of the world around us. It is the level of our faith, where celebration of the Paschal mystery turns every Sunday and feast day into the First and Eighth Day of the New Creation, enabling us to participate already here and now in the coming glory of the Kingdom of God.

This second level, this other realm or dimension of our life, is one of prayer and silent meditation, of life-giving communion, of joyous celebration, and of healing, reconciling love.

A major reason for the Lenten journey is to equip us for the spiritual warfare necessary to hold these two levels together. As problems and tensions mount in our personal and collective life, we are constantly tempted to focus on one level or the other. Either we give in to the secularizing pressures of the society we live in and pay mere lip-service to the faith, power and authority of Orthodox Christianity; or we reject the reality of this world by seeking solace in the esthetically beautiful worship of a comfortable church of our own making. Either of these choices merely deepens the compartmentalization of our life and activity. And we wonder why the experience of Sunday morning seems to have so little to do with the realities and urgencies of Monday.

As we move further through the Lenten fast - in a world of conflict, brutality and injustice - it is important to remember what Scripture and the entire Tradition tell us about this world. Although the fact is hardly reflected in the morning's headlines, the world was created, and is constantly being recreated, by the God of love and mercy, whose deepest desire is to lead everyone, including ourselves, to the perfection and joy of eternal communion in the life of the

Holy Trinity. This is a world where people of faith can behold the hand of God in everyday miracles of forgiveness and reconciliation; and in more astounding miracles of unexpected healings, weeping icons, and self-sacrifice.

This is God's world, and we are part of it. As such, our primary calling is to announce and to live out the Paschal message of salvation and eternal life, offered through the victory of Christ over the powers of sin and death.

To do so, however - to facilitate the transformation of the fallen world into a world of faith and love - requires that we devote our time and our energy to the arduous work of inner transformation and spiritual awakening. The Lenten period invites us to do this by increasing our prayer, by fasting, by giving more attention to the poor and needy around us, and by nourishing ourselves with frequent readings from Scripture and the Holy Fathers. I'd like to conclude with a word about these readings.

Of the many appropriate passages from patristic sources that can provide Lenten nourishment, one of the most powerful and beautiful concludes the Paschal homily by Melito of Sardis, composed toward the end of the second century. Quiet and repeated meditation on its vision of Christ offers one way to "unite the two levels," to lift our broken and weary world to the very heights of heaven.

"I am your freedom," Christ declares.  
 "I am the Passover of salvation,  
 I am the Lamb slaughtered for you,  
 I am your ransom,  
 I am your life,  
 I am your light,  
 I am your salvation,  
 I am your resurrection,  
 I am your King.  
 I shall raise you up by my right hand,  
 I will lead you to the heights of heaven,  
 There shall I show you the everlasting Father."

He it is who made the heaven and the earth,  
 And formed humanity in the beginning,  
 Who was proclaimed through the law and the prophets,  
 Who took flesh from a virgin,  
 Who was hung on a tree,  
 Who was buried in the earth,

Who was raised from the dead,  
 And ascended to heaven,  
 Who sits at the right hand of the Father,  
 Who has the power to save all things,  
 Through whom the Father acted from the beginning and forever.

This is the alpha and omega,  
 This is the beginning and the end,  
 The ineffable beginning and the incomprehensible end.  
 This is the Christ,  
 This is the King,  
 This is Jesus,  
 This is the commander,  
 This is the Lord,  
 This is He who rose from the dead,  
 This is He who sits at the right hand of the Father,  
 He bears the Father and is borne by him.  
 To Him be the glory and the might for ever!  
 Amen

Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*. Tr. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (New York: SVS Press, 2001), pp. 65-67 (translation slightly modified).

Reprinted from the "Life in Christ", April 2003, Article #2, Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-life-article.asp?SID=6&ID=32&MONTH=April&YEAR=2003>

## VENERATION OF THE CROSS



# To Be Angry or To Be Faithful

On April 8th we read Genesis 22: 1-18, the story of God's command to Abraham to take his only son Isaac and to "offer him as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

We know how the story turns out, and that in the end Isaac was not sacrificed. But this event angers some people. They ask how it is possible to say that God cares for us if He would make this terrible demand of a person like Abraham, who did His will and followed His commands. Their anger prompts them to believe that having faith in God is foolish. Some of them say that Abraham also should have been angry, and should have refused to do as God commanded.

Yet what Abraham himself refuses is to be angry. When Isaac innocently asks him where the lamb is for the sacrifice, Abraham answers with what seems to be a calm statement, neither angry nor agitated. He simply says, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." Abraham is faithful, trusting God even in this extreme moment.



There is a wonderful story of another follower of God who refused to be angry: Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk. His cellmate, Ivan Yefimov, wrote many reminiscences of the saint. Among them is a description of Tikhon's treatment by an arrogant nobleman.

It was reported to Bishop Tikhon that this nobleman, a member of his diocese, was beating his serfs. The bishop went to the man to ask him to be kinder, and to remember that every person, including the poorest and simplest, is a child of God.

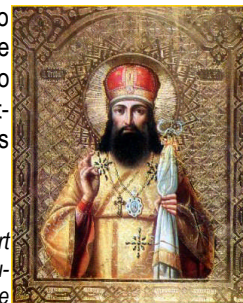
The nobleman was not at all ready to have anyone tell him what to do, even his bishop. He was a hot-tempered person, very much used to having his own way. He became incensed at the bishop for daring to suggest he change his behavior. His anger built to such a point that he slapped Tikhon across the face.

For many people, receiving such humiliating treatment would have been a cause for anger. At the very least, we might expect that Bishop Tikhon urged the nobleman to remember that

he was a Christian, and to act like one. But the bishop did neither.

On his way home from the nobleman's house, the bishop decided to return. But rather than reproach the nobleman or tell him he'd been wrong, he threw himself at the man's feet and begged forgiveness for having led him into temptation to sin. The nobleman was so struck by this humility and refusal to be angry that he fell to his knees and begged Bishop Tikhon to forgive him. From that day, his serfs did not suffer abuse.

On this same day we read from Proverbs 16:32: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit [is better] than he who takes a city."



This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

## Around SS Peter & Paul

### APRIL BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Eugenio Golowatsch  
April 1  
Lisa Formica  
April 8  
Mary Maul  
Michelle Golowatsch  
April 14  
Pauline Vinay  
April 15  
Julian Melendrez  
April 18  
Zachary Delsante  
April 21  
Matushka Elizabeth Kachur  
April 27  
John Blischak  
April 28  
Sarah Gala  
Valentina Sedor  
April 29

*Mnogaya Leta! Many Years!*

### BAPTISMS

Congratulations and Many Years to the newly-illuminized Child of God Sofya, daughter of Ryan and Olga Cullinan, who was Baptized and Chrismated on March 26th.

### CHICAGO REUNION



Father Alexis, Marilyn & Tony Bezkorovainy, and Stephanie Homyak welcome the Richardson family from Chicago on their recent visit.

### PRAYER LIST

*"I was sick and you visited me."  
Matt 25:36*

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Nancy Tarasevich  
Lydia Osolinsky and daughter Marina  
Pauline & Dan Vinay  
Rose and Bill Koval  
Beatrice Washington

*If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Father David.*

# Bits and Pieces

## FLOWERS

Please make your donation for Pascha flowers as soon as possible so that the appropriate budget can be determined. Remember, the beautification of the Lord's Tomb on Holy Friday and the Church on Holy Pascha will be dependent upon your generosity.



Father David blesses the plachanitzas, adorned with flowers, on Holy Friday.

## PASCHAL LUNCHEON CELEBRATION

Plan to celebrate Pascha with a luncheon on Sunday, April 4th after the Agape service and Easter Egg Hunt. Your guests are invited to be with us. Each family will be asked to bring a dish to share. For information call Pat Starkey, 623.512.2021.

nating staples for coffee hour, or help clean up! Let's all pitch in and help!

## WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to take a look at our bookstore.

Katrina can help you find whatever you need!

## CHEESE FARE

The Cheese Fare hosted by the Myrrh Bearers had

## PRESANCTIFIED LITURGIES

In the period of the Great Fast, the Holy Orthodox Church supports and strengthens its members with the weekly celebration of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. As is our custom, our Wednesday evening (6:00 p.m.) Presanctified Liturgies will be followed by a Lenten meal and a short presentation or discussion.



Everyone pitched in to help the MBAS with the Cheesefare luncheon.

## LENTEEN SUNDAY VESPERS

Throughout the season of the Great Fast, the Orthodox communities in the Valley of the Sun gather on Sunday evenings for prayer and fellowship. The Sunday evening Vespers are held at 6:00 p.m. and are generally followed by a reception offered by the host parish. This year, St John the Evangelist Mission will host Vespers in our church on Sunday, April 3. Please mark your calendars and plan on joining with our Orthodox brothers and sisters in our common journey through Lent to Pascha.

chel, Pat Starkey, Barbara Harp, Marie Lobb, Marty Gala, Linda Walters, and Pete Radjenovich. Tables set-up: Dorothy Yost, Elena Kerr, Betsy Begian, Jane Evans and Barbara Peterson. Cookies donated by:

## COFFEE HOUR

Thus far the coffee hour has been successful. We have had good participation from our congregation in volunteering to host the coffee hour on Sundays. Thanks to all who hosted coffee hour in March. We still need volunteers to help out during April and May. Whoever wants to help, please contact Tania Booriakin either in church or by phone (480.585.9560). Unable to host Coffee Hour? Why not consider making a cash donation to cover supplies, do-



The Schultz's get ready to eat the tasty blini (aka blintzes)-a heavenly delight!

Peterson, and Patty Kusnir. Fruit donated by: Jane Evans and Rita Mudrenko. All expenses were incurred by the Myrrh Bearers. Gross Income

106 in attendance. Appreciation and Thanks to all those who pulled together and made it a success.

Blini Workers: Elizabeth Mi-



Friends and family relax and enjoy time for fellowship.

Vicky Mendez, Marilyn Bezkorovainy, Rose Kurovski, Barbara

of \$778 donated to the church. Thank you to all who supported the luncheon.

## ANNUAL PASCHAL LUNCHEON

Make plans to join us for our annual Paschal Luncheon following the Agape service on April 24th. Pat Starkey will be organizing the luncheon and taking reservations.

## BOOKSTORE

Yes, we are more than half way to Pascha, but it is never too late to enhance the journey there with spiritual reading. There are several titles dedicated to Great Lent from easy daily devotionals to more deep reflections. Stop by and take a look.

Service books for Holy Week and Pascha are available at the bookstore, prices ranging from \$4-\$7.

Supplies are very limited.

Katrina Delsante

## PARISH LIBRARY

Our parish library has many resources to assist you in your spiritual journey throughout the Lenten season. Stop by after services and pick a book to read as part of your spiritual exercises. There are hundreds of titles for you to choose from.

## PARISH PASCHA CARD

Instead of sending individual Pascha greetings, why not list your name(s) on a beautifully designed Orthodox Pascha card and support SS Peter and Paul at the same time? If you would like to participate, please fill out a form

and return to Stephanie Homyak by April 10. Forms are available at the back of the church. The suggested minimum donation is \$10. Proceeds will benefit the parking lot project.

## FOCA





The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) held their annual meeting on March 20. The new officers are John Blischak, president, Pat Starkey, Vice President, John Hecht and Hadya Shawky, secretary and Peter Radjenovich, treasurer. A piroghi workshop in May, a bowling day in June and a spaghetti dinner are planned.



After serving in the altar, Mike Wagner has a chance to relax and enjoy the fellowship.

More information to come.

# April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p><b>Pascha Celebration</b>  <b>April 24, 2011</b>            Following Paschal Vespers and            Easter Egg Hunt</p>			<p><b>Mark Your Calendar . . .</b>  <b>Pan-Orthodox Lenten Seminar with</b>  <b>Khouria Frederica Mathewes-Green</b>  <b>Saturday, April 9, 2011</b>  <b>9:00 am to 2:30 pm</b></p>			<p><b>2 Memorial Saturday</b></p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p><b>3 St. John Climacus</b>            8:30am Hours            9:00am Divine Liturgy            Church School</p> <p>6:00 Lenten Vespers  <i>SS Peter and Paul Orthodox Church</i></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Join us for a light lenten meal and discussion following Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Please contact Barbara Peterson to sign -up to bring soup, fruit, or bread.</b></p>		<p><b>6</b></p> <p>6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts            Lenten Meal</p>	<p><b>7 Repose St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow</b></p> <p>6:00pm Canon of St. Andrew of Crete</p>	<p><b>8 Spanish Icon</b></p>	<p><b>9 Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos</b>            9:00am-2:30pm            Pan-Orthodox Lenten Seminar  <b>The Jesus Prayer</b>            Holy Trinity Cathedral</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p><b>10 St. Mary of Egypt</b>            8:30am Hours            9:00am Divine Liturgy            Church School            MBAS Meeting</p> <p>6:00 Lenten Vespers  <i>St. John Romanian Orthodox Church</i></p>	<p><b>11 Pochaev Footprint Icon</b></p>	<p><b>12 Murom Icon</b>            6:00pm Council Mtg Meeting</p>	<p><b>We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</b></p>			<p><b>16 Lazarus Saturday</b>  <i>Il'insko-Chernigov Icon</i></p> <p>9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers            Blessings of Palms and Pussy Willows</p>
<p><b>17 Palm Sunday</b>            8:30am Hours            9:00am Divine Liturgy            Church School</p>  <p>6:00pm Bridgroom Matins</p>	<p><b>18 Great and Holy Monday</b>            6:00pm Bridgroom Matins</p>	<p><b>19 Great and Holy Tuesday</b>            6:00pm Bridgroom Matins</p>	<p><b>20 Great and Holy Wednesday</b>            9:00am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts</p>	<p><b>21 Great and Holy Thursday</b>            9:00am Vespersal            Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:00pm Matins and Passion Gospels</p>	<p><b>22 Great and Holy Friday</b>            3:00pm Vespers and Burial Service</p> <p>6:00pm Matins and Lamentations at the Tomb</p>	<p><b>23 Great and Holy Saturday</b>            9:00am Vespersal            Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:30pm Nocturnes            12:00am Pascal Matins &amp; Divine Liturgy</p>
<p><b>24 HOLY PASCHA</b>            12:00am Paschal Matins &amp; Divine Liturgy            12:00pm Vespers</p> <p><i>Easter Egg Hunt</i>  <i>Pot Luck Luncheon</i></p> <p><b>CHRIST IS RISEN!            INDEED HE IS RISEN!</b></p>	<p><b>25 Bright Monday</b>            Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark</p> 	<p><b>26 Bright Tuesday</b>            Iveron Icon</p>	 <p><b>Easter Egg Hunt</b>            Sunday, April 24th following Paschal</p>			<p><b>30 Holy Apostle James, Brother of St John</b></p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p><b>BRIGHT WEEK—FAST FREE</b></p>						