

February 14, 2021
Cheese-fare Sunday, Sunday of Forgiveness



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na Viki!

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone : pg. 141 and Meat-fare Sunday: pp. 218 - 219

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., FEB. 14 **CHEESE-FARE SUNDAY, SUNDAY of FORGIVENESS**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY, Mutual forgiveness**
 + Anna Harvan

MON., FEB. 15 **CLEAN MONDAY, GREAT FAST BEGINS**

(At St. Mary: Wednesday, February 17, 6:00 P.M., Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts)

FRI., FEB. 19 **FIRST FRIDAY OF LENT**
6:00 P.M. **LITURGY of the PRE-SANCTIFIED GIFTS**

SUN., FEB. 21 **FIRST SUNDAY of the GREAT FAST, SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY, Blessing of icons**
 For the parishioners

Rite of Forgiveness Today - Today is in our Liturgical calendar the last Sunday before the beginning of the Great Fast and is called Cheese-fare Sunday. It is also called "Forgiveness Sunday" from the pious Eastern Christian custom of asking each other's forgiveness for discourtesy and disrespect before we begin together our journey through the Great Fast-Lent. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, we will celebrate this Rite of Forgiveness during which we will ask forgiveness of each other with forgiveness prayers.

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

None for the week

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Mary Salamon, John Simunick

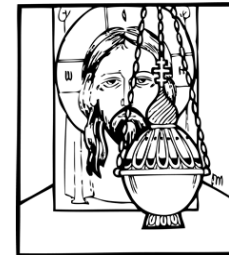
Hunter's Care Home (1916 Main St, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Mary Poiarkoff

Beaver Elder Care (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Josephine Maruhnich

Epistle Readers – Feb. 14: Joanne Futato – Feb. 21: JoAnn Hersh

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Feb. 14: F. Hersh – Feb. 21: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

February 14 - 20, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

Juliana Raychevich

(Health and God's Blessings)

Offered By:

Mom, Marge



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel:

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Love One Another

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
John 15:12 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



X	J	R	Y	D	G	O	V	T	F	E	N	H	Q	W	C	L	B	U	A	S	M	K	P	Z	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

1. 17-7-8-11 _____
2. 3-11-22-20-26-12 _____
3. 2-7-4 _____
4. 10-3-26-11-12-5-21 _____
5. 21-11-3-8-20-12-9 _____
6. 22-20-21-9-11-3 _____
7. 10-20-9-13-11-3 _____
8. 16-7-22-22-20-12-5 _____

MASTER	FRIENDS	COMMAND	LOVE
SERVANT	FATHER	REMAIN	JOY

Church Mice



A Note from Father Geoff

Today is Cheesefare Sunday, the final day before the Great Fast. We have before us the most solemn season of the Church year, a time for ascetical spiritual exercises. It is a time of increased prayer, a time of taking inventory of our spiritual lives - a spiritual "spring cleaning," as it were.



There are a number of ways we can take inventory of our lives during Lent, to identify places where we have not fully given our hearts and minds over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Prayerfully reading the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20.2-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21) or the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12 and Luke 6:20-26) can be very helpful. Praying the Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian each day, as we are enjoined to do, can also provide a point of reflection and self-examination: where in my life have I given into a spirit of "indifference, despair, lust of power and idle chatter"? Where do I need God's grace to give me "integrity, humility, patience, and love"? Have I truly been a subject of Jesus Christ, the "Lord and Master" of my life?

As we engage in acts of penitence, let us be particularly keen to remember that these are not merely "spiritual" or "pious" exercises. But let us call to mind that our relationship to God is intimately bound to our relationships with other people. Servant of God Dorothy Day once said, "I only love God as much as I love the person I love the least."

All of these things are heavy things. As the prayer in the Panakhida says, "there is no one who lives and does not sin." As we return again and again to the Lord during this time of penitence and self-denial, let us not despair. But remember that the Lord is the loving father of the Prodigal, not a somber and joyless executioner. He rejoices at the repentance of his children and "his mercy endures forever." (Psalm 135)

On the other side of this season's "bright sadness" we will welcome with joyful hearts the news of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord. So take heart! Let us begin the Fast with joy!

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Geoff

PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter.

(Prostration)

Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love.

(Prostration)

Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever.

Amen.

(Prostration)

As we begin our journey of the Great Fast...

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Every year in our parishes during this Holy Season of the Great Fast we are faced with the same dilemma... "What is the good of keeping a Fast for forty days without considering the meaning of it?" The answer is that there is no good in it at all. It is better not to keep the Fast than to do it thoughtlessly!



And what is the meaning of the Fast? It is to nurture the good that is in us and put to death that which is not, to increase in ourselves the likeness to God. "I aspire," writes St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "to be purified as gold in the fire." If that is our desire, then we must begin somewhere and there is no better place than with forgiveness. Do we wish to be purified? First we must lay aside all malice towards others. The connection in today's Gospel reading (Mt 6:14-21) between forgiveness and fasting is clear. Remember what we read today? The movement between the admonition to forgive so that we might be forgiven and the words, "When you fast..." is seamless and intentional. Immediately after the Lord teaches His disciples to pray, He teaches them how to fast. If we are going to pray we must be ready also to fast. That is why the Church calls us all on this eve of the Great Fast to be part of the Ritual of Forgiveness that centers not only on petitions about repentance and forgiveness, but on an action in which we can all take part. "Faith without works is dead," writes the holy apostle James. Forgiveness without action is not forgiveness.

On this Forgiveness Sunday as we stand before the journey of the Great Fast we are to remind ourselves that we have all sinned against one another whether by what we have done and even more by what we have left undone. The life of our parish family depends upon our willingness to obey the Lord and to lay down our lives for one another. So, we are invited to embrace forgiveness by giving and receiving it as we embark together on a great journey to the Cross and the Empty Tomb. This cannot be done in the privacy of our homes.

If it is to be real, then we must embrace one another as brothers and sisters. We must look one another in the face and say, "Forgive me."

Who is St. Valentine?

The ancient martyrology of the Church of Rome marks February 14th as the remembrance of "the martyr Valentine, presbyter of Rome" (Valentinus mean "vigorous" in Latin). St. Valentine lived in Rome in the third century and was a priest who helped the martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Claudius II the Goth. The great virtue and catechetical activities of the saint had become familiar. For this, he was arrested and brought before the imperial court.



"Why, Valentine, do you want to be a friend of our enemies and reject our friendship?" asked the emperor. Then the saint replied "My lord, if you knew the gift of God, you would be happy together with your empire and would reject the worship of idols and worship the true God and His Son Jesus Christ."

The emperor, however, continued his questions with curiosity, and found a welcome opportunity to finally learn what the faith of these Christians was. Valentine then found the courage to urge him to repent for the blood of the Christians that was shed. "Believe in Jesus Christ, be baptized and you will be saved, and from this time forward the glory of your empire will be ensured as well as the triumph of your armory." Claudius became convinced, and said to those who were present: "What a beautiful teaching this man preaches." But the mayor of Rome, dissatisfied, began to shout: "See how this Christian misleads our Prince."

Then Claudius brought the saint to another judge. He was called Asterios, and he had a little girl who was blind for two years. Listening about Jesus Christ, that "He is the Light of the World", he asked Valentine if he could give that light to his child. St. Valentine put his hand on her eyes and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ, true Light, illuminate this blind child." The child saw! So the judge with all his family confessed Christ. Having fasted for three days, he destroyed the idols that were in the house and finally received holy baptism.

When the emperor heard about all these events, he initially thought not to punish them, but thought that in the eyes of citizens he will look weak, which forced him to betray his sense of justice. So St. Valentine along with other Christians, after they were tortured, were beheaded on February 14th in the year 268.



"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

John 13:34

Regulations for the Season of the Great Fast

Traditional:

In the Great Fast, abstinence from meat, fish, dairy products, alcohol, and foods cooked in oil was prescribed for ALL days except days of mitigation. All Saturdays and Sundays, February 24, March 9, Wednesday to Friday of the Fifth Week, and the Prefestive Day and Otdaniye (Post Feast) of the Annunciation were all mitigations for wine and oil. The Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and Palm Sunday were general mitigations.

Minimum Requirements:

Abstinence: The law of simple abstinence forbids the use of meat, permitting the use of eggs and dairy products. ALL the faithful of the Archeparchy who receive the Eucharist are bound to abstain. Abstinence is OBLIGATORY on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

Strict Abstinence: The law of strict abstinence (fast) forbids the use of meat, eggs and dairy products. While they are permitted, facsimiles, substitutes, and synthetic derivatives violate the intention and spirit of the law of strict abstinence.

All the faithful of the Archeparchy who receive the Eucharist are bound to observe strict abstinence. Strict abstinence (fast) is to be observed on Pure Monday, February 15, (the first day of the Great Fast) and on Great and Holy Friday, April 2, 2021.

Next Sunday: 1st Sunday of the Great Fast

The First Sunday of the Great Fast is also called the Sunday of Orthodoxy in commemoration of the victory of orthodoxy-true faith in controversy over Holy Icons in the year 843. As part of this commemoration, the blessing of Icons will take place at the end of the Divine Liturgy. **If you have any Icons, Crosses, and religious items you would like to have blessed, there will be a table in front of the church to place them for a blessing.**



In Forgiving we become like God

Nothing makes us so like God as our readiness to forgive the wicked and wrongdoer. ... Christ is seeking in every way possible to hinder our conflicts with one another. For since love is the root of all that is good, by removing from all quarters whatever mars it He brings us together and cements us to one another. For there is not one, not a single one, whether father or mother or friend, who loves us as much as the God who created us.

(St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on Matthew)

Great Lent

The first day of the Great Fast “Pure Monday” begins tomorrow (February 15). It is extremely important to get off to a good start. Let us ask the Lord to fill us with his love as we enhance our spiritual growth through commitment to prayer, reading Scripture, Reconciliation, receiving the Eucharist and trying to stay close to the Lord in our everyday lives. Here are a few things that will help make it a truly Holy and beautiful Lenten season.

Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

During the Great Fast, attend the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts every Friday at 6:00 P.M. (*Other Pre-Sanctified Liturgies will be at St. Mary in Ambridge every Wednesday at 6:00 P.M.*). **The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts takes precedence over all other Lenten devotions.**

Church Library

Be prepared to have some quiet time without the TV, radio or computer and get some good books to read. Our Church Library is open every Sunday and on Saturday mornings. **We have books for you to borrow and free Lenten resources to take from our Church Library.** If you never have, stop in and see.

Church Store

There are many Lenten and Pascha items available in our Church store located in the Church Center. You can shop following any Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Living with Christ, Great Lent at Home

A daily program made for families or individuals providing concepts and activities for each day of the Great Fast. These packets are available for you take home today.

Lent is a gift of the Church to us for renewal. We can't reduce it to fasting and personal benefits. Lent is an opportunity to build the Church up, and a stronger parish will result in stronger parishioners and stronger families.

Reflection on Fasting

By Our Holy Father St. John Chrysostom

Fasting is a medicine. But medicine, as beneficial as it is, becomes useless because of the inexperience of the user. He has to know the appropriate time that the medicine should be taken and the right amount of medicine and the condition of the body which is to take it, the weather conditions and the season of the year and the appropriate diet of the sick and many other things. If any of these things are overlooked, the medicine will do more harm than good. So, if one who is going to heal the body needs so much accuracy, when we care for the soul and are concerned about healing it from bad thoughts, it is necessary to examine and observe everything with every possible detail.

Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins. Therefore, whoever limits the fast to the deprivation of food, he is the one who, in reality, abhors and ridicules the fast. Are you fasting? Show me your fast with your works. Which works? If you see someone who is poor, show him mercy. If you see an enemy, reconcile with him. If you see a friend who is becoming successful, do not be jealous of him! If you see a beautiful woman on the street, pass her by.

In other words, not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well. Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness. Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others. You are not eating meat, are you? You should not eat debauchery with your eyes as well. Let your hearing also fast. The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations.

Let the mouth fast from disgraceful and abusive words, because, what gain is there when, on the one hand we avoid eating chicken and fish and, on the other, we chew-up and consume our brothers? He who condemns and blasphemes is as if he has eaten brotherly meat, as if he has bitten into the flesh of his fellow man. It is because of this that Paul frightened us, saying: "If you chew up and consume one another be careful that you do not annihilate yourselves."

You did not thrust your teeth into the flesh of your neighbor, but you thrust bad talk in his soul; you wounded it by spreading disame, causing inestimable damage both to yourself, to him, and to many others.

If you cannot go without eating all day because of an ailment of the body, beloved one, no logical man will be able to criticize you for that. Besides, we have a Lord who is meek and loving, who does not ask for anything beyond our power. Because he neither requires the abstinence from foods, neither that the fast take place for the simple sake of fasting, neither is its aim that we remain with empty stomachs, but that we fast to offer our entire selves to the dedication of spiritual things, having distanced ourselves from secular things. If we regulated our life with a sober mind and directed all of our interest toward spiritual things, and if we ate as much as we needed to satisfy our necessary needs and offered our entire lives to good works, we would not have any need of the help rendered by the fast. But because human nature is indifferent and gives itself over mostly to comforts and gratifications, for this reason the philanthropic Lord, like a loving and caring father, devised the therapy of the fast for us, so that our gratifications would be completely stopped and that our worldly

cares be transferred to spiritual works. So, if there are some who have gathered here and who are hindered by somatic ailments and cannot remain without food, I advise them to nullify the somatic ailment and not to deprive themselves from this spiritual teaching, but to care for it even more.

For there exist, there really exist, ways which are even more important than abstinence from food which can open the gates which lead to God with boldness. He, therefore, who eats and cannot fast, let him display richer almsgiving, let him pray more, let him have a more intense desire to hear divine words. In this, our somatic illness is not a hindrance. Let him become reconciled with his enemies, let him distance from his soul every resentment. If he wants to accomplish these things, then he has done the true fast, which is what the Lord asks of us more than anything else. It is for this reason that he asks us to abstain from food, in order to place the flesh in subjection to the fulfillment of his commandments, whereby curbing its impetuousness. But if we are not about to offer to ourselves the help rendered by the fast because of bodily illness and at the same time display greater indifference, we will see ourselves in an unusual exaggerated way. For if the fast does not help us when all the aforementioned accomplishments are missing so much is the case when we display greater indifference because we cannot even use the medicine of fasting. Since you have learned these things from us, I pardon you, those who can, fast and you yourselves increase your acuteness and praiseworthy desire as much as possible.

To the brothers, though, who cannot fast because of bodily illness, encourage them not to abandon this spiritual word, teaching them and passing on to them all the things we say here, showing them that he who eats and drinks with moderation is not unworthy to hear these things but he who is indifferent and slack. You should tell them the bold and daring saying that "he who eats for the glory of the Lord eats and he who does not eat for the glory of the Lord does not eat and pleases God." For he who fasts pleases God because he has the strength to endure the fatigue of the fast and he that eats also pleases God because nothing of this sort can harm the salvation of his soul, as long as he does not want it to. Because our philanthropic God showed us so many ways by which we can, if we desire, take part in God's power that it is impossible to mention them all.

We have said enough about those who are missing, being that we want to eliminate them from the excuse of shame. For they should not be ashamed because food does not bring on shame but the act of some wrongdoing. Sin is a great shame. If we commit it not only should we feel ashamed but we should cover ourselves exactly the same way those who are wounded do. Even then we should not forsake ourselves but rush to confession and thanksgiving. We have such a Lord who asks nothing of us but to confess our sins, after the commitment of a sin which was due to our indifference, and to stop at that point and not to fall into the same one again. If we eat with moderation we should never be ashamed, because the Creator gave us such a body which cannot be supported in any other way except by receiving food. Let us only stop excessive food because that attributes a great deal to the health and well-being of the body.

Let us therefore in every way cast off every destructive madness so that we may gain the goods which have been promised to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Abridged from St. John Chrysostom's homily "On Fasting"

“Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.”

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Louisa Hersh**

**E.C.F. coordinator: Jo Ann Hersh
Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff**

- Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
- Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
- Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
- Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
- Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
- St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate



St. Anthony the Great reminds us:

“Do not neglect the Fast; it constitutes an imitation of Christ’s way of life.”