

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we head into Great Lent and consider the things we will give up (usually meat, dairy, and some of the other things mentioned in the page opposite this one), we might find ourselves despairing over the coming deprivation! But, while a true fast is impossible without "giving things up," Lent can never be reduced to "things I can't eat." Great Lent, rather, is a time for me--in and with the community of the Church--to take up a divine challenge to grow spiritually. The key ingredient in this effort is my "free acceptance" of this call. Only if I freely take it up will this Lenten journey be God-pleasing and transformative.

Part of our "free acceptance" of Lent goes beyond food to include:

- taking up more intense prayer
- coming to church more often (Vigils, Presanctified Liturgies, Daily Services)
- giving more alms and serving others more intentionally
- denying ourselves certain entertainments
- making deeper and more frequent self-examination and Confession
- taking time to reflect and retreat, even in small ways

I believe one of the most pressing spiritual challenges this Lent for our people is this: to set aside small portions of time to really reflect and retreat. Going to a monastery for a weekend or going on a Friday-Saturday quiet hike in the woods with a spiritual goal in mind are two ways we might "retreat." Some other ways might consider retreating could be the following:

- Clean Week is like a "revival" for us Orthodox. Is it possible for me to commit to attend each night (or alternate with my spouse)? There are profoundly spiritual readings (the St. Andrew Canon), there are times for Confession, there are special times for receiving Holy Communion.
- Each Friday, this year in our parish, is set up like a mini-retreat. Matins at 7am, followed by Confession. The lamps will be kept on all morning in the church through the Presanctified Liturgy. Consider spending the morning quietly in church, making Confession, bringing spiritual reading, preparing for Communion, and even journaling right here in the church.
- Special Retreat on March 15 with Fr. Steven Kostoff
- The 5th Thursday is dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt and features a long Matins service with the complete reading of St. Mary's Life and the chanting of St. Andrew's Canon. It is a fantastic "retreat morning" to be with God and hear God-pleasing words.
- Finally, Holy Week itself is the ultimate "retreat," a time to journey with the Lord through the awesome dispensation of his Passion.

There is no reason for us to avoid retreat and reflection in this season. But we have to give God the time. May he help us to plan ahead and give him a place, not only on our lenten table, but in our busy schedules.

Fr. Justin

### **Holy Wednesday, April 16 - 6:30pm    Bridegroom Matins with Anointing**

*On Holy Wednesday evening, the theme of Bridegroom Matins shifts dramatically to the person of Judas at the Last Supper, who is sharing the Lord's Table and, yet, is preparing to betray Him. Afterwards, the priest will anoint all present with blessed oil reserved from the Vigil of Palm Sunday. (Service lasts 1 & 1/2 hours.)*

### **Holy Thursday, April 17 - 3pm    Vespertal Liturgy of Mystical Supper**

*On Holy Thursday, we celebrate a Vespertal Liturgy that is sometimes call the Liturgy of the Mystical Supper. At this time, we commemorate the Last Supper and enter into the eternal mystery of it, which is the Eucharist. (Service lasts about 2 hours.) After the Liturgy, we will share a Lenten Common Meal. We will then move into the nave for the Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels.*

### **Holy Thursday, April 17 - 6:30pm    Matins with 12 Passion Gospels**

*On the evening of Holy thursday, w enter into Great and Holy Friday and encounter Christ Crucified. This is one of the most powerful services in all of Orthodox Holy week. (Service lasts 3 hours.)*

### **Holy Friday, April 18 - 9am    Royal Hours for Great and Holy Friday**

*On the morning of Great and Holy Friday, we revisit the Cross. We hear the hymns of the previous evening and find Jesus hanging on the Cross for our salvation. If you cannot be at the 12 Passion Gospels, know that this service of the Royal Hours covers much of the same content. Royal Hours offer a powerful meditation on the Cross and its meaning. (Royal Hours lasts about 1 & 1/2 hours.)*

### **Holy Friday, April 18 - 3pm    Entombment Vespers**

*During this service, we remember the taking down of the Lord's body from the Cross and His entombment by the Nobel Joseph. (Service lasts about 1 hour.)*

### **Holy Friday, April 18 - 6:30pm    Holy Saturday Matins with Praises**

*Sometimes called the "Service of Lamentation," this Matins for Holy Saturday shows us that our lamentation of Christ's death will soon blossom forth into tremendous rejoicing! During the service, our lamentations around the tomb of Christ begin to morph into praises to Him who is about to rise from the dead! (Service lasts 2 & 1/2 hours.) The all-night reading of the Psalter follows until the morning Liturgy. There will be a sign-up sheet for this round-the-clock vigil.*

### **Holy Saturday, April 19 - 9am    Holy Saturday Vespertal Liturgy**

*The Vespertal Liturgy on Holy Saturday ushers in the first strains of the joyous feast! This service is the Vespers of Pascha itself and announces what is to come. The vestments and paraments are dramatically changed from black to white, and we hear "Let God arise and His enemies be scattered." (Service lasts 2 & 1/2 hours.) After the Liturgy, we will bless loaves of bread and wine (and juice for the children) and will partake of these things to sustain us through the day. The servers will be responsible for preparing the holy things for Pascha and then many of our faithful will prepare flowers and will beautify the church for the feast. The book of Acts will be read continuously from 7pm until the Paschal Nocturnes at 11:30pm. A sign-up sheet for the reading rotation will be posted in the parish hall.*

## The Holy Pascha

### **Saturday, April 19 - 11:30pm Paschal Nocturnes**

*On Holy Saturday, we fast and make preparations all day after the morning Liturgy (including preparation of sumptuous paschal foods.) "Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight," we sang at Bridegroom Matins earlier in the week. Now we gather again before midnight to be ready to meet the Risen Lord. But before we make our triumphal Paschal procession, we first gather in the church for Nocturnes at 11:30pm. Quietly, the Lord's body is taken from the "Tomb" and placed in victory on the Holy Table in the altar. All the lights in the church are put out and we wait patiently for the first strains of the Paschal song: "Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior..." The paschal light is lit, the priest begins quietly to chant the hymn, the servers join in, and finally, the choir and all the people add their voices to the priest's and servers' voices. The light is passed from person to person and we exit the church and make our Paschal procession.*

### **Paschal Sunday, April 20 - ~ 12am Procession & Paschal Matins ~1:15am Paschal Divine Liturgy ~3am The Blessing of Foods & Paschal Meal**

*We have now entered completely into the joy of Pascha. Christ bursts the gates of death and the gates of Paradise are opened. Coming back into the church, we celebrate the Paschal Matins, hear the Paschal Sermon of St. John Chrysostom, and then go right into the Paschal Liturgy. After the Liturgy, the priest immediately blesses the Artos and the Paschal baskets in the fellowship hall. All are invited to stay for the parish meal.*

### **Paschal Sunday, April 20 - 2pm Paschal Agape Vespers 2:30pm Paschal Parish Picnic**

*Agape Vespers and the Paschal Picnic immediately following are both scheduled for Highbridge Park in Wilmore.*

<b>Bright Monday, April 21</b>	<b>- 9am</b>	<b>Paschal Liturgy</b>
<b>Bright Tuesday, April 22</b>	<b>- 6:30pm</b>	<b>Paschal Vespers</b>
<b>Bright Wednesday, April 23</b>	<b>- 8am</b>	<b>Paschal Liturgy</b>
	<b>- 6:30pm</b>	<b>Paschal Vespers</b>
<b>Bright Friday, April 25</b>	<b>- 7am</b>	<b>Paschal Liturgy</b>
<b>Bright Saturday, April 26</b>	<b>- 6:20pm</b>	<b>Artos Blessing</b>
	<b>- 6:30pm</b>	<b>Vigil</b>

Christ is Risen! Христос воскрес! Хριστός ἀνέστη!  
Hristos a inwiat! Christus resurrexit!

## **2014 Service Schedule for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha**



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