

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

March 17, 2019

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

**THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF
SAINT BASIL THE GREAT**

A Parish of the Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma

1400 Suther Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28213

Website:
stbasil.weebly.com

Telephone:
980-785-2764

Email:
stbasilcharlotte@gmail.com

Services:

Saturdays
5:00 PM – Vespers

Other Feast Days
(As Announced)

Confessions

Sundays
11:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

6:00 PM – Vespers
7:00 PM – Divine Liturgy

Sundays
Before Divine Liturgy
Until 10:40 AM

Mission Communities:

HOLY CROSS

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Transfiguration Catholic Church
306 N. Pines Road, Blythewood, SC 29016

Website:
colabyzcatholic.weebly.com

2nd Sunday of the Month
5:00 PM – Divine Liturgy
Confessions Until 4:40 PM

4th Sunday of the Month
5:00 PM – Vespers & Catechism

DORMITION

**OF THE
MOTHER OF GOD**

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Church
1215 SC-14, Greer, SC 29650

Website:
dormition.weebly.com

Sunday, March 31
5:00 PM – Divine Liturgy
Confessions Until 4:40 PM

ADMINISTRATOR



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DEACON



**Deacon
Matthew Hanes**

FEASTS & READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

This Sunday

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
Tone 2

Saint Gregory Palamas
Venerable Father Alexius, Man of God
St. Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland

Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Mark 2:1-12

MONDAY

Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem

Isaiah 8:13-9:7
Genesis 6:9-22; Proverbs 8:1-21

TUESDAY

Holy Martyrs Crysanthus & Daria

Isaiah 9:9-10:4
Genesis 7:1-5; Proverbs 8:32-9:11

WEDNESDAY

Venerable Fathers Martyred by the Saracens
at the Monastery of Saint Sabbas

Isaiah 10:12-20
Genesis 7:6-9; Proverbs 9:12-18

THURSDAY

Venerable Father & Confessor James,
Bishop of Catania

Isaiah 11:10-12:2
Genesis 7:11-8:3; Proverbs 10:1-22

FRIDAY

Holy Priest-Martyr Basil of Ancyra

Isaiah 13:2-13
Genesis 8:4-21; Proverbs 10:31-11:12

SATURDAY

All Souls Saturday
Holy Venerable-Martyr Nikon & His Disciples

Hebrews 10:32-38; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
Mark 2:14-17; John 5:24-30

Next Sunday

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
Tone 3

Fore-Feast of the Annunciation
to the Most Holy Theotokos

Hebrews 4:14-5:6
Mark 8:34-9:1

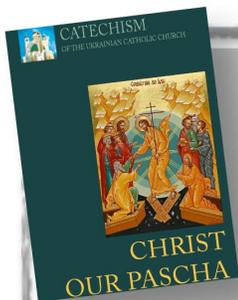
Second Sunday of the Great Fast

Commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas

The Holy Church calls the second Sunday of Great Lent the Sunday of the light creating fasts. In its Divine services, in line with the destruction of the sinful condition of man, it is descriptively and touchingly represented in the church hymns, which explains the Gospel parable about the Prodigal son, and praises the fast as a means to the beneficial inner light, and posits in this glorification a new impulse for the ascetic effort of the fast. The Orthodox teaching about fasting as a means for the beneficial inner light is opened with special power in the commemoration on this Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica and Wonderworker. St. Gregory is known as the one who exposed the heresy of Barlaam, the Calabrian monk, who rejected the Orthodox teaching about the blessed light, which illuminates the internal person



sometimes openly visible (as for example on Tabor and Sinai), and who did not admit the possibility to achieve this inner light through both prayer and fasting and other individual efforts). At the Council in Constantinople called in 1341 concerning this heresy Barlaam, his disciple Akindynos, and their other accomplices were condemned for this false teaching. And during the subsequent time of his life St. Gregory zealously struggled for Orthodoxy, "not once", but "many times many" through his inspired speeches and writings denying the teachings and compositions of the evil followers of Akindynos and Barlaam. For this ascetic effort for the benefit of the Holy Church, and also for the confession and witness for the faith and Christ's flock, for the sanctity of the strict ascetic life and the deep edification for all ascetics through his works, St. Gregory is also glorified in the service on this day by the Holy Church.



Excerpt from *Christ Our Pascha*

The Visible and Invisible World

The Symbol of the Faith points to two different dimensions of the world created by God, the visible and the invisible. St. Maximus the Confessor teaches about the union of everything visible and invisible in creation. Basing himself on the words of St. Paul that *everything* was created by Christ and for Christ (see *Col 1:16-17*), Maximus understands the word *everything* to mean the earthly visible and the heavenly invisible, the human visible and the angelic invisible. Having become incarnate, Christ has inseparably united himself with creation in the "body and blood" of his human nature. All creation, visible and invisible, exists not by virtue of its own nature, but by virtue of the action of God's Son. (#113)

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Wednesday, 7:00 PM

Confessions Available Beforehand



Because the Divine Liturgy is by its very nature a festive, triumphant celebration, the "Banquet of Christ," the ancient discipline of the Church came to regard it as being out of harmony with the penitential climate of the Great Fast. Yet, in order to provide the faithful with the Holy Eucharist, the "food of immortality", which sustains our Lenten efforts, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts came to be used from very early times.

We officially hear about it in the canons of the seventh century, which obviously indicates its development at a much earlier date. It traditionally considered to be the work of the sixth-century pope, Saint Gregory the Great of Rome. The present service, however, is obviously the inspired liturgical creation of Christian Byzantium.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn Lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. There is no consecration of the Eucharistic gifts at the Presanctified Liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the Eucharistic Gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy (unless, of course, the feast of the Annunciation should intervene); hence its name of "Presanctified."

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is traditionally served on Wednesday and Friday evenings of the Great Fast, although some churches may celebrate it only on one of these days. It traditionally comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and abstinence.

During the psalms of Vespers, the Presanctified Gifts are prepared for Holy Communion. They are transferred from the Holy Table where they have been reserved since the Divine Liturgy, and are placed on the Prothesis Table. After the evening hymn, the Old Testament scriptures of Genesis and Proverbs are read, between which the celebrant blesses the kneeling congregation with a lighted candle, indicating that Christ gives all wisdom in His Church through the Scriptures and Sacraments.

After the readings, Psalm 140 is solemnly sung once again with the offering of incense. Then, after the litanies of intercession, the Presanctified Eucharistic Gifts are brought to the altar in a solemn, silent procession. The song of the entrance calls the faithful to Holy Communion.

After the litany and prayers, the Our Father is sung and the faithful receive Holy Communion to the chanting of the verse from Psalm 33: "Taste and see how good is the Lord."

The post-communion hymns are sung and the faithful depart with a prayer to God who "has brought us to these all-holy days for the cleansing of carnal passions," that he will bless us "to fight the good fight, to accomplish the course of the fast, and to attain unto and to adore the holy resurrection" of Christ.



Last June, clergy and lay delegates of the Eparchy of St. Josaphat gathered for a convention entitled *Planting Crosses: Evangelization and Mission in the USA*. The conference focused on parish renewal and how to establish new missions in regions of the Eparchy where our Church has not yet been established.

There is a desire in our Eparchy to continue our growth. However, in order to grow, our parishes need to learn how to move from “maintenance” to “mission” - by nurturing a culture that is missionary, by forming the faithful, and by welcoming others to join us.

During the Convention, delegates developed specific proposals and directives for evangelization and mission activities in the life of our parishes and Eparchy. Now, during this Great Fast, the bishop has called for our parishes to meet and discuss these proposals and directives.

The goal is to revitalize all of our parish communities through evangelization and outreach initiatives. We are called to awaken among the faithful the experience of hearing and responding to the *Kerygma* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to inspire them to serve and discern their gifts and charisms, and to support mission activities in the local parishes, so that we may go forth and spread the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ST. BASIL THE GREAT PARISH, CHARLOTTE WILL MEET ON SUNDAY, APRIL 7

The session will be divided into two parts:

- “Count Your Blessings”

How do we already fulfill our mission of evangelization as individuals and as a parish community?

- “Dare to Dream”

Imagine what might be possible to better fulfill our mission as the Church in the area of evangelization & mission activities?

*Priestly Ordination
Of Deacon Kevin Bezner*

This past week, it was announced that His Excellency, Bishop Bohdan will ordain Deacon Kevin Bezner to the Priesthood at our parish. Please keep him and Diaconissa Ann in prayer.

***Date:* Sunday, June 16, 2019**

***Time:* 2:00 PM**



Patriarch's Appeal to Youth & Young Adults (Ages 16-29)

Patriarch Sviatoslav is asking you for your thoughts and comments on these issues:

- How do you see your membership and participation in the life of our Church?
- What good do you see in her?
- Why do you want to be a part of her?
- What do you expect from her?

The survey is available at the following link (available only until March 31):

<https://goo.gl/forms/2EF3oyW2ZiVxBB362>

UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT FAST

The Great Fast, or Lent, is the seven week period of preparation before the celebration of Pascha. **IT IS A TURNING BACK TO GOD WHOM WE REALIZE IS THE VERY SOURCE AND GOAL OF OUR LIFE.** He is our life. By repentance we realize we aren't where we should be; we are far from our Father. Our happiness, our wholeness, our sense of identity, well-being and joy flow from being close to God as the very center of our lives.

SO LENT, THE TIME FOR REPENTANCE, IS THE TIME TO REDISCOVER THIS TRUTH, TO BE CONVINCED OF IT AND MAKE IT MORE OF A CONSCIOUS REALITY IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. Far from being a time of morose introspection it is, as the liturgy says, the Lenten Springtime. It is liberation from the gloominess of our sins and a rediscovery of the new life given us in Holy Baptism. In the mystery of Pascha, Christ gives us a chance to be "born again" as children of God: as complete men and women possessing the life, grace and joy of God which completes and heals our nature as human beings.

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver. For my soul goes early to the temple of your holiness, driving on the temple of my body wholly polluted. But because you are compassionate, purify me by the tenderness of your mercy, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. For I have profaned my soul with shameful sins and consumed my whole life in laziness but by thine intercessions purify me from all immorality.

Post-Gospel Hymn of Lent

WHERE DID LENT COME FROM?

The early Christians kept vigil during the last few days of Holy Week. As time went on, the vigil was extended to approximately forty days. It was a period in which the catechumens (candidates to become Christians) were given a last, intensive preparation for baptism, chrismation and the Eucharist.

It was also the time when the penitents, those who had lapsed in the faith, did penance, relearning the basic and beautiful lesson of the mystery and dignity of being a Christian and our way of life in the Lord. They were reconciled with the rest of the faithful at the end of Lent.

Since the season was a type of "boot-camp in Christianity" for the catechumens and penitents, all the faithful entered into preparation with them. **LENT BECAME A TYPE OF RENEWAL AND "REFRESHER COURSE" FOR ALL BELIEVERS INTENT ON LIVING OF THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST GIVEN TO US AT PASCHA.**

WHY 40 DAYS?

The number forty calls up memories from our past as a people of God, of the forty years Israel wandered in the desert. As they were led by God to the Promised Land, they were tested, their faith was strengthened and they learned to know the Lord as the very center of their lives. In the same way, during Lent we are tested, our faith is deepened and we move toward the fulness of the heavenly Kingdom which is our inheritance.

It also speaks to us of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert after His baptism, when He resisted temptation, giving Himself to close communion with His Father, the source of His life. As He embraced His mission as His Father's servant and our redeemer during that time, so we try to take our own mission as Christians more seriously during the season of Great Lent.

Finally, the forty days call to mind Moses and Elijah, who spent that amount of time preparing for important encounters with God. We too will encounter Him in His paschal mysteries where He reveals to us who He is, how He loves us, who we are and the real meaning of life.

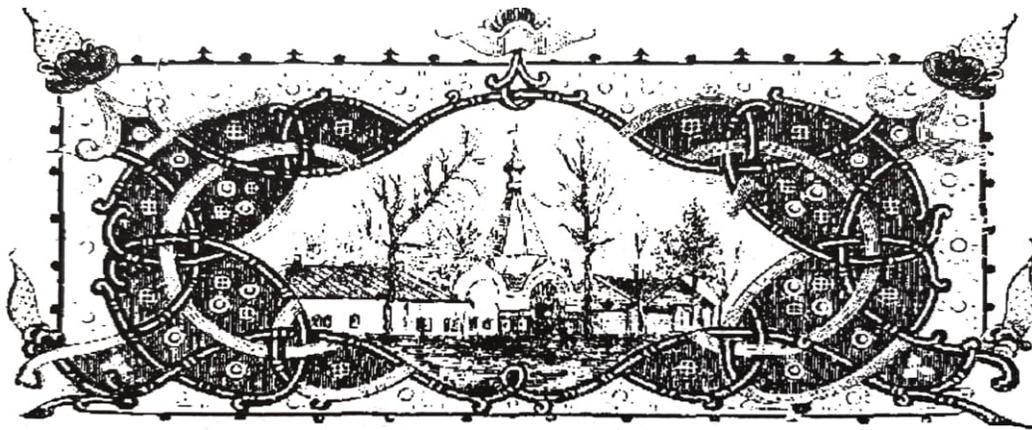
**Through greed we were once stripped naked,
overcome by the bitter taste of the forbidden fruit, and we were exiled from God.
Let us turn back in repentance, fasting from the food that gives us pleasure.
Let us purify our senses on which our Enemy makes war.
Let us strengthen our hearts with the hope of grace,
and not with foods which brought no benefits
to those who trusted in them.
Our food shall be the Lamb of God
on the holy and radiant night of His Rising.
He is the Victim offered for us,
given in communion to the Apostles on the evening of the Mysteries,
who scatters the darkness of ignorance by the Light of His Resurrection!**

From Vespers of Meatfare Sunday

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2019

Adapted from Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 10th	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> Publican and the Pharisee Reading: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14	Trust in God, not yourself! Ask for His help before every task this week!
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 17th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32	Schedule a Confession. Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 24th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgment Reading: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9: 2 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare MARCH 3rd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Reading: Romans 13: 11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 10th	 <i>GREAT FAST BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Reading: Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1: 43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 17th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2: 1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 24th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9: 1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 31st	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Reading: Hebrews: 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9: 17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 7th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-14 Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 14th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Reading: Philippians 4: 4-9 Gospel: John 12: 1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 19th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet, & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 21st NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1: 1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



Introduction to the Liturgy of Vespers

It was a great blessing to follow the commentaries regarding the Divine Liturgy these last few years. We became more familiar with what our people affectionately call the “Sluzhba Bozha – Divine Worship Service”. This is the common term for the Divine or Eucharistic Liturgy. But what about those services of our UGCC that are not specifically a Divine Liturgy? They are communal prayers and yet they are not the Divine Liturgy.

Surely, we have accepted and wish to heed our Lord’s teaching in Matthew’s Gospel. There He says that there is a right time and place for both communal prayers and for personal prayers. He also says that each of us is called to a lifestyle that includes both of these.

Perhaps we have heard about the holy David saying that “Evening and morning and at noon, I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice.” - Psalm 54:18 (55:17), RSVCE

This is a reference to what we today call “Evening Prayer, or Vespers”, “Morning Prayer, or Matins with Lauds and First Hour” and “Noon Prayer, also known as the Sixth Hour.”

The full Liturgy of the Hours is comprised of seven services: Vespers, Compline, Midnight, Matins with Lauds and First Hour, Third Hour, Sixth Hour and Ninth Hour. If by “Sluzhba Bozha”, we mean public communal services where the People of God serve the Lord and the Lord serves them, then really the Liturgy of the Hours is no less a “Sluzhba Bozha” than is the Divine Liturgy. Truly, it is as the holy prophet David proclaimed so long ago: “Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.” - Psalm 118 (119):164)

We can even go a step further, for, among the Church Fathers of the East, there was general agreement that prayer (communal, as well as personal) was not simply an aid to salvation, but a means to it. So, my service to God and God’s service to me – “Sluzhba Bozha” in its fullest sense – is not simply just a matter of investing my time and effort into some one good thing among other good things, either of which might be helpful or beneficial, but actually and really it is investing my time and efforts into something that is essential, integral, irrevocable, unavoidable. Without prayer I cannot be saved!

If prayer, communal and not just personal, is indeed a means to salvation then this helps me to understand and receive that the norm of the Church is that all the Faithful should ideally participate not only in the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy, but in all the Divine Services of the Resurrection. On Sundays and Major Feast Days, at the very least, in addition to the Divine Liturgy, one should attend either Vespers or Matins.

The Vatican's Congregation for the Oriental Churches considered Vespers and Matins to be solif-giving and important that in 1996 they issued an "Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches", indicating in § 64 that one may attend Vespers or Matins in order to fulfill one's obligation to gather for a Sunday or Feast-day. They also said in § 98 that "Calling upon the time when the Divine Praises were upheld with special care in the East, not only by the monastic communities, but also by the parishes, the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches reminds us of the obligation - often easily forgotten or abandoned - to celebrate them in the cathedrals, parishes, rectorial churches, religious communities and seminaries. It is necessary to observe the prescriptions of the liturgical books (canon 309), but a superficial observance is not sufficient: those responsible must do their best for the faithful to understand the meaning and value of this prayer, love it, take part and find spiritual nourishment in it. They ought to thus be formed through a true mystagogical program, which allows them to attain nourishment for their own spiritual life from the celebration of the various moments of the liturgical year".

So, it follows that we need to familiarize ourselves with these services as well. For, how can we find the motivation to attend and then freely offer the sacrifice of participating in praising God - in this particular way instead of another, - if we do not understand why one would choose to do such a thing?

In the First Book of Moses (Genesis 1:5) we read that after God created the light: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day".

And so ever since then, the liturgical day of prayer begins with Evening Prayer or Vespers. So also, Great Vespers (Velyka Vechirnia) on Saturday evening is the 1st service of the Lord's Day. The 2nd Service of Sunday is Matins with Lauds and the First Hour (Utrenia). The Divine Liturgy is actually the 3rd service of Sunday.

We should also not be surprised therefore to read that many commentators on the Liturgy of the Hours would say that the main purpose of celebrating Vespers is that we participate in a sort of mini history lesson which doesn't allow us to leave out of the picture our own response. Do I want to be a part of this, or not? What is my desire or thought or feeling as a result of meeting or encountering Christ in this particular way of liturgical prayer?

At Vespers, I was created by God, I fell into sin, the Light of Christ (His saving self as well as His acts and His teachings) enters my darkness with a desire to change me forever, and then finally, the Big Question. Do I choose to give myself permission to engage my life with His life, to submit to His rescue mission? Am I willing to allow my lifestyle to include and embrace His new reality of freedom from darkness to the fullest? If so, then it is at Vespers that I am reassured over and over again that I can look forward to the fulfillment of some amazing promises which our Lord has made to those who choose to return His love.

We will continue reflecting upon the meaning of Vespers in the next few installments, but in the meantime if your parish has already restored the Divine Worship Service of Vespers, then the Church encourages you to attend. You can also learn how to pray it at home. It is a beautiful, peaceful service that will help you to be a better Christian and prepare you, so that your experience of the Sunday or Feast-day Divine Liturgy will be more holy and rewarding.