

MARCH 2016 PRIESTHOOD AND LENT

In a moment not given to many parishes in the Church, we are about to witness a true son of the parish be ordained to the Holy Priesthood. On Sunday morning, March 6, at the hierarchical Divine Liturgy, His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco, will lay his hands on the head of Deacon Stephen Osburn and elevate him to the priesthood. In the Divine Liturgy, the deacon is ordained to the priesthood immediately following the Great Entrance and the transfer of the Holy Gifts from the Table of Oblation to the Holy Altar. As the bishop uncovers the Gifts to make them ready for the transfer, he puts the *aer* (the large vestment covering the bread the wine) on the head of the deacon, covering him. This is the liturgical action that shows the community that the man being ordained is now one of the gifts offered to God in the Church. After his ordination, a portion of the Lamb is taken and placed in the hands of the newly-ordained priest and he is told to guard it.

As he begins his priestly ministry, a man is brought to mind of one thing: his only real task as a priest is to be *crucified*. He does not preach his own mind; he preaches the mind of Christ and the Church. He does not teach his own mind; He teaches the mind of Christ and the Church. He does not serve himself; he serves Christ and the Church. He does not feed himself, He feeds his flock. The word *priest* means the “one who offers.” What does he offer? Of course, he stands at the head of a church community and offers the sacrifice at the liturgy. But more importantly, and even perhaps as a prerequisite for offering the sacrifice at the altar, he must offer *himself* as a sacrifice, just as our Lord Jesus Christ did. But Father Stephen’s priesthood is also a reflection of the priesthood that every baptized Christian shares in.

In his first Epistle, the holy Apostle Peter tells us:

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (*1 Peter 2:9-10*)

Each of us, ordained to the Holy Priesthood of the Church or not, belongs to the royal priesthood of the Church. Each of us is called to offer the sacrifice. What sacrifice? First of all, of course, we are of one mind when the ordained priest offers the Gifts at the Divine Liturgy. But each of us is also called to be crucified just like the ordained priest is called. Our crucifixion, however, is experienced in a different context.

And that is where Priesthood and Lent meet. Figuratively speaking, the Great Lenten effort that each of us makes is our own focused (laser focused, we hope!) ministry to *ourselves*. The ordained priest does not preach his own mind, but the mind of Christ and the Church. So during Lent, we make spiritual effort to put aside our own minds and thoughts, and pick up the thoughts of Christ and the Church. How easy it is to simply embrace all the varied teachings and doctrines preached to us by the world. How difficult it is to lay aside our own thoughts and desires to discover and embrace the teachings and mind of our Lord and His Church. We read something good instead of plopping down in front of TV day after day. We turn off the music and the online barrage of material that bombards us every single day. In that solitude, we will find God.

MARCH 2016

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

<p>GREETERS</p> <p>MAR 6: CAMPBELL/CHONG MAR 13: MCAULEY/MASON MAR 20: OSBURN/STAFFORD MAR 27: WHEELER/DEMKO</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>3</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>HIERARCHICAL LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: EPISTLE: DEACON POST-COMM: ORDINATION OF FR STEPHEN OSBURN</p>	<p>7</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM FIRST LITURGY OF FATHER STEPHEN</p>	<p>8</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p>	<p>9</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>10</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>11</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p>	<p>12</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p> <p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM</p> <p>CHOIR REHEARSAL, 3 PM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHANGE CLOCKS</p>
<p>13</p> <p>MEAT FAST</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: G. BROOKS POST-COMM: FORGIVENESS VESPERS MASLENITZA</p>	<p>14</p> <p>GREAT LENT BEGINS</p> <p>COMPLINE with KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>15</p> <p>COMPLINE with KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>16</p> <p>CONFESSIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRE- SANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 Soup/Bread</p>	<p>17</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT</p> <p>COMPLINE with KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>18</p> <p>LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 8:00 AM</p>	<p>19</p> <p>FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>20</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HUFFMAN EPISTLE: ABRAHAM POST-COMM: WHEELER CHURCH SCHOOL ORTHODOXY VESPERS, 6:00 PM, St. GEORGE'S</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>23</p> <p>CONFESSIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRE- SANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 Soup/Bread</p>	<p>24</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>25</p> <p>VESPERAL LITURGY, 8:00 AM ANNUNCIATION</p>	<p>26</p> <p>PANIKHIDA, 4:30 PM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>27</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DEMKO EPISTLE: TESFAY POST-COMM: PARKER CHURCH SCHOOL LENTEN VESPERS, 6:00 PM St. MICHAEL'S</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>CONFESSIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRE- SANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 Soup/Bread</p>	<p>31</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Apr 1</p> <p>LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 8:00 AM</p>	<p>Apr 2</p> <p>PANIKHIDA, 4:30 PM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

PO Box 12635
5400 Annie Oakley Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89112-0635
702.898.4800
www.lasvegasorthodox.com

RECTOR

Archpriest John J. Dresko
1747 Crystal Downs Ave
Las Vegas, NV 89123
860.833.4921 (Mobile)
fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

Father Stephen Osburn, Jr.
(702) 521-6988

CHOIR DIRECTORS

Matushka Elizabeth Dresko
Grace Brooks
Jarrod Huffman

PARISH COUNCIL

Virginia Hood, Vice-President
Karen Short, Treasurer
Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

Gregory Brooks
James Brophy
Kevin McAuley
Karen Murphy
Litsa Osburn
Joseph Wheeler

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Tekeste Nuguru

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Dn. Stephen Osburn, Jr.
Amy McAuley
Stephan Tanksley

Fellowship Committee
Charity Committee

The ordained priest does not teach his own mind, but the mind of Christ and the Church. So during Lent, we strive to understand the teachings of Christ and His Church. We read the scriptures and the prayer books of the Church. And then we *witness* those teachings to the world; sometimes by speaking, but mostly by living a sober and Christian life.

The ordained priest does not serve himself, but serves Christ and the Church. So during Lent, each of us is to make the effort to turn away from ourselves and our appetites to focus on Christ and the Church. We do that by first of all, denying ourselves. We fast from food, types and amounts, to place all of it in proper perspective. We don't serve our bodies – we make our bodies serve us and the Lord. We serve the Lord by serving others. Offer some time in volunteering. Offer some money to a beggar. It is in others that we find the Lord, not in ourselves.

The ordained priest does not feed himself, he feeds his flock. So during Lent we feed our own flocks. Who are those flocks? Perhaps its our children. What do we feed them? Do we allow

them to gobble up the junk food of this society and culture, going along with all of the winds and trends of the day, never challenging them to be Christian and holy? Perhaps its our neighbors or our immediate families? Do we feed them indifference and hostility? Perhaps its the flock of our creation? Do we feed creation itself with assaults, misuse and abuse?

You see, brothers and sisters, when we witness the ordination of Father Stephen on March 6, we are witnessing his response to a call he has felt since his childhood. But Great Lent is our own annual challenge to answer the very same call – to become royal priests who offer themselves, the world and all of creation to the Lord. Our prayers, fasting and repentance is the priesthood we **all** have.

May our efforts be worthy of a blessing. Have a fruitful, peaceful and quiet Lenten journey!

Father John

MARK THE DATES

March 5-6: Visit of Archbishop Benjamin

**Ordination of Deacon Stephen to the Holy Priesthood
MEATFARE SUNDAY**

March 7: First Liturgy served by Fr. Stephen, 8:00 AM (40 HOLY MARTYRS)

**March 12: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM
CHOIR REHEARSAL, 3:00 PM (CHANGE CLOCKS TONIGHT)**

March 13: Forgiveness Sunday; Cheesefare; Maslenitza

March 14: GREAT LENT BEGINS (See schedule of services in calendar)

March 22: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

March 25: VESPERAL LITURGY, 8:00 AM; ANNUNCIATION

Send email addresses and corrections to:
fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

FEASTDAYS

During March, we celebrate the following feasts:

FORTY HOLY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE
March 7 (Moved from March 9)
Fr. Stephen's First Liturgy
DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (MON)

ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD
March 25
VESPERAL LITURGY, 8:00 AM (FRI)

In addition, there is a full schedule of Lenten services beginning on Monday, March 14. See calendar and weekly bulletin for full schedule of days and times.

VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN

Please mark your calendars and make plans to be with us for a great parish celebration. His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, will be at St. Paul's on the weekend of March 5-6. At the Divine Liturgy he will ordain Deacon Stephen Osburn to the Holy Priesthood. It is a great blessing to a parish to have one of its sons offer himself in service to the Church. Everyone should be present.

Following the service, there will be a festive luncheon in the church hall to celebrate this occasion. Please plan on staying!

SLAVONIC SERVICE

Father Alexander will be here on the customary second Saturday of the month (March 12). Russian language confessions begin at 9:00 AM. Slavonic Liturgy is scheduled for 10:00 AM.

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

Forgiveness Sunday this year falls on March 13. We will have Forgiveness Vespers after the Divine Liturgy. This is our liturgical entrance into Great Lent. The Rite of Forgiveness is our opportunity to embrace each other, forgive each other, and know God's

love. **Every Orthodox Christian** makes every effort to be present for this most important celebration.

MASLENITZA

Following Forgiveness Vespers on March 13, we will have our annual Maslenitza luncheon. Blini and all the fixin's will be available. If you can sign-up to bring any needed foods or sides, a list is available in the hall.

LENTEN NOTES

Great Lent begins on March 14. We have services everyday during the first week. Everyone is encouraged to make effort to be present at as many of the services as possible, during the whole of Great Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served on Wednesday evening and Friday mornings during the whole of Great Lent to make it possible for those with varying schedules to attend at least one per week – if you can, attend both!

We break the fast after the liturgy on Wednesday evenings with soup and bread. *A sign-up list is available in the church hall for those who can volunteer to bring either or.*

Fasting for the evening liturgies is as follows: a total fast during the day for those who can physically do such. If you cannot keep a day long fast, a total fast at least from the noon-time meal must be kept. Of course, a total fast must be kept for the Friday morning liturgy.

Sunday evening Vespers will be served at 6:00 PM each Sunday during Lent. We rotate the location each week; see the flyer attached or the calendar for locations.

CONFESSIONS

Every Orthodox Christian of confessing age makes the journey to the Sacrament of Confession during Great Lent. Father has scheduled confessions on Wednesday evenings 5:30-

6:20 (before the liturgy) and Saturday evenings after Vespers. Appointments may also be made at other times.

Father does not mind scheduling separate appointments – in many ways, it is easier!

Confessions will only be heard by appointment for good reason after the Eve of Palm Sunday (April 23). Please do not wait until the last moment!

LENTEN RETREAT

Our annual Lenten retreat will be held on Saturday, April 9, at St. John the Baptist Church. The speaker will be Father Irenei Steenberg, who will speak on *Beginning a Life of Prayer*. Cost is \$15 per person and checks may be made to "St. Paul Orthodox Church" and may be given to Father John. Please join us!

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project will be held on March 19. If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

PROJECT MEXICO

St Paul's has teamed up with Amazon to have a small bit of your purchase go towards our Project Mexico Youth Trip. So before you order anything from Amazon online, type in the link and thank you for your support.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/88-0242982>

A reminder that we still have 2016 Orthodox Wall Calendars available in the vestibule for a minimum donation of \$5.00 per calendar. All the proceeds from those sales go to our Project Mexico trip.

ADULT FAITH FORUM

Our Wednesday evening Adult Faith Forum sessions go on hiatus for Great

Lent due to Wednesday services. We will resume after Pascha. We will have Daily Vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by a one hour discussion. This year's topic is *Christ and the Church in the Old Testament*. Please join us!

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. Needs: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken. Thank you!

FLYERS

Attached to this newsletter are two flyers: the first with the schedule of our pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers on Sunday evenings (**please note the schedule has changed since the first flyer went out last month**). The other for the Lenten Retreat scheduled for April 9 at St. John's Church. Please plan ahead and join us in worship and spiritual reflection.

ORTHODOX VENDORS

A list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishioners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning
Cedomir Blagojevic
(702) 493-0295

Dolphin Court Salon & Day Spa
7581 W. Lake Mead Blvd.
(702) 946-6000

Kyklos Café (Greek food)
Galleria Mall
Sophocles Frangakis
(702) 450-1515

Makeup and Hair Artist
Natalia Kasimtseva (Baker)
(I travel to client location)
Text or call: (702) 336-8300
View portfolio at:

www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty

Westfield Eye Center
C. Edward Yee, MD
2575 Lindell Road
(702) 362-3937

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:
Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts – time, talent and treasure – which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- Baptisms. A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.
- Matrimony. A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.
- Memorials (Panikhida). Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS FEBRUARY 9, 2016 MEETING

Rector's Report: Reminded council members to serve as good examples for the parish during Lent; Forgiveness Sunday is March 13. There will be a Maslinitza afterwards; Natalya Minkoff will coordinate it.

Reminded council of Archbishop Benjamin's visit on March 5-6 during which Deacon Stephen Osburn will be ordained to the priesthood.

Vice President's Report: Suggested moving the glass display case from the church vestibule to the parish hall to consolidate the bookstore. Pros and cons discussion ensued. Council decided to take measurements in the hall first to see how it would fit, and get Caryn Wheeler's opinion.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed our financials before the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$4,099.86
Rainy Day: \$12,513.15
Icon Fund: \$10,255.08

Income for January was \$29,673.67, with expenses of \$21,105.32 for a surplus of \$8,568.35.

YEAR-TO-DATE

2015 Inc	\$ 29,673.67
2015 Exp	\$ 21,105.32
Inc over Exp	\$ 8,568.35

All parish finances including accounts payable are totally current.

The Chili Cook-off grossed \$411.00; expenses were \$199.02; this social netted \$211.98. Although not a "money-maker" the event was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

GoldStar Trust has not responded yet to requests for an amortization interest schedule. Karen will call them again this week. Discussion ensued among council members about GoldStar Trust's requirements if some

of the bonds were paid off early. This question needs to be clarified by Gold-Star.

COMMITTEES

Building and Grounds: Church and parish hall doors: Kevin will meet with the door company rep and the installer to double check measurements on the doors for the parish hall and church. He will e-mail Karen Short with the final cost estimate. The parish hall doors are the easiest to do and will be completed first. Kevin stated it was unlikely the new church doors could be installed in time for Archbishop Benjamin's visit March 5-6.

Other projects include: **1) Unclogging the women's restroom toilet.** Kevin is planning to rent a roto-rooter snake from Home Depot. If this does not work a professional plumber may be necessary.

2) Installing storage cabinets in the Parish Hall. Responsibility for accomplishing this project has been transferred from Kevin to Bill Murphy, Karen's husband, who is a professional kitchen designer for Home Depot, under the supervision of Litsa Osburn, and Liz Dresko.

3) Pigeon control: After council discussion it was moved and seconded to pay Kimbel Halliday Pigeon Control a fee of \$1000.00 for the work he had done gratis last summer to remove the pigeon infestation from the church building. Passed unanimously. The money will come from the capital fund.

Charity: Feeding the homeless was accomplished January 16th. 160 lunch bags, 130 pairs of socks, and 150 hygiene packs were distributed. Starting balance was \$250; a total of \$155 in monetary donations was received, leaving a balance of \$376.26. The next feeding of the homeless is scheduled for Saturday, March 19.

Charity committee has not met

yet due to the absence of key members, but the first meeting is now scheduled for Sunday, February 21 after liturgy.

Rae Pattison's school bags for Syria project is still planned, beginning later in February or March depending on her work schedule.

IOCC: No report.

Church School/Youth: Deacon Stephen reported on status of Project Mexico: A leadership organization in the Greek Orthodox Church has granted our parish full scholarships for two of our participating youth. The \$1500 down payment due Project Mexico in March has been paid in full. An adult from St. John's is completely paid up as are six of the participating young people for a total of \$7350. A balance of \$4870 is still required to complete the payment for the fourteen kids expected to attend. Two more coffee hour fundraisers are planned for February and March. There may be other fundraisers.

A possible three slots for Project Mexico are still available, since three of the young people had to withdraw and their designated replacements were not able to participate either. It is possible that two of those who backed out may still attend. There are several individuals still needing passports.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: Informed council there have been no further problems with the condition of the church and hall to this date. A reception will be held in our facilities next week. Father and Liz Dresko will evaluate the condition the property is left in afterwards.

Fellowship: Commented the Chili Cook-off was good fun. Eleven cooks competed.

Fellowship committee has decided to sponsor an International Dinner to be held in May, date to be

determined. It was decided that a Saturday evening after Vespers would be better attended than a Sunday. This is expected to be more of a fundraiser than a social.

Outreach/website: Need to add some of the pictures from feeding the homeless to the website. Also add a "Go Fund Me" link for Project Mexico donations.

Russian: Father Alexander will be at St. Paul's this Saturday for the Slavonic Liturgy.

Stewardship: Commented that this year has been the worst for number of financial pledges from parishioners. So far 32 pledges from 50 adults for an annual total of \$160,526 representing an average annual contribution of \$5,016 have been received. There are 7 pledges greater than 5K.

OLD BUSINESS

Iconography: Nothing new; status quo. Father will attempt to contact the iconographer again but has still received no response to phone calls and e-mails. Vladimir Krassovsky, the iconographer, was supposed to be here in July 2015 to install the icons but nothing has been done for the past 6 months. Father will attempt to contact him again when he is attending the Diocesan Council in San Francisco this week.

Security Concern: Greg informed council he has developed security guidelines to deal expressly with the recent Koosha threat and has e-mailed it to Father John. He had researched other churches and found they have 20 page documents dealing with multiple threats, but for St. Paul's he decided to focus on the current threat with a two page document, emphasizing proactive defense of the church and the active role of everyone involved in a crisis situation. Father will

forward it to the council members for their review.

Greeters Training: Father John is still planning to conduct training for ushers. Date TBA.

NEW BUSINESS

Bishop Visitation: A luncheon, co-ordinated by Litsa Osburn, is being planned for Deacon Stephen's ordination March 6 (also Meatfare Sunday). It is anticipated this will include deli cold cuts, chicken, beef hot dishes, etc.

Next Council Meeting:
Tuesday, March 22, 2016.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF MARCH

Nicholas Janise
March 1, 1992

Gaetana Korich
March 4, 1992

Letebrhn Dintsu
March 5, 2000

Stephen Christos
March 6, 1989

Maria Kovac
March 9, 1997

Constantina Vlamis
March 10, 2000

Richard Adam Kozal
March 11, 2009

Miles Vasilyev
March 12, 2006

Kyriakos Kalfas
March 16, 1992

Ogba Ghrime
March 19, 2003

Anthony Keratzedes
March 26, 1990

Barbara Ann Metropoulos
March 26, 1993

Georgina Abdoulah
March 29, 2007

Linda Ellen Katelnikoff
March 30, 1996

Amhare Habtemichael
March 31, 1998

FATHER STEPHEN'S CORNER WHY CHOOSE THE PRIESTHOOD?

A few weeks ago, after our weekly Adult Faith Forum, I was approached by a parishioner, who asked me, "So why exactly, did you choose the priesthood?"

I have been asked this question multiple times over the course of my life. I usually respond with, "I didn't choose, God did."

This time was no different. Yet, I find myself constantly wrestling with this answer.

The Orthodox Church is perfectly clear that no one has a right to ordination and no one chooses this life. It is God's will that does the deciding. It is His Choice. However, there is much more to discerning the priesthood that goes beyond choice.

The priesthood is not a glamorous profession, as many would believe. Priests have a unique set of difficul-

ties that they endure in their career. They work long hours that often lead to missing dinner with their wife and kids. They are often too busy with counseling, visits, baptisms, funerals, maintaining the parish, and tedious administrative work to get proper rest, relaxation, and retreat. Priests often worry about being too conservative, too liberal, too concerned about money, not caring enough, dealing with the judgment of others, and regardless of everything else, the possibility of failing to bring and grow Christ in people's lives. There is a heavy burden to be a super human, but ignoring the fact that they are also just human.

But then there is the joy that accompanies the priesthood. It is a joy of standing at the altar and drawing in different people together to praise, worship, and glorify God. The priest is given a powerful gift, a special blessing, if you will, to serve, share, preach, sing, offer the sacraments, and bring hope and encouragement for God's people as they work out their salvation in Jesus Christ. For these reasons alone, there is no other choice for a priest but to be a priest.

So the answer doesn't lie in choice, but instead in *desire*. It is unexplainable why the desire is there, but it is part of every man called to the priesthood. It is like falling in love. You know what it is when it seems right. You imagine yourself as a priest and it just fits. You may even find that your love for Christ and the Church are growing. You may even find that you simply like serving others. But yet, those are things all Christians should seek after and priesthood doesn't change that. However, it is the nagging feeling that you should or could be a priest that the inner desire must be discerned. If not cultivated properly through proper prayer, desire can

actually be lost if the person doesn't take the calling seriously enough.

Still, this desire to serve God to this level and capacity, which is a real martyrdom, from the difficulties to the joy, is why I am able to answer, "I didn't choose, God did." God cultivates the desire in every priest. For me, it is the desire that grew from a young age to now. First it was the priest who baptized me as a baby telling my mother I would be a priest one day. Followed by moving to Las Vegas and going through a period where I wasn't active in the Church until high school which was when we came to St. Paul's. It was here where I became active in the Choir, Church School, and Youth Groups. It was here where I sat in Fr. John's office saying I wanted to go to seminary so I could serve the Church. It is then where I went to seminary with no promise of ordination to returning and first being ordained a deacon and now, to be ordained a priest. God has put the desire in my heart, the way he has with many other priests to lead people to Christ because He believes in them. He sees in them someone who desires to make Jesus Christ present in the lives of everyone he meets and the willingness to sacrifice everything to make that happen.

Ultimately, it is here where God has made the choice and by using my desire to serve Him, I am blessed to become a priest. Pray for me.



ON FASTING

Fasting takes into account both the quantity and the quality of food. The idea is to eat a smaller amount of food during a fasting day; to abstain from fats and oils, as these tend to fatten the body and thereby to arouse lust and make one physically and spiritually lazy; to abstain from meat, fish, and products of animal origin, as these tend to excite carnal desire; and also to abstain from mere delicacies, as the consumption of these is a form of self-indulgence. St. John Climacus (c. 525–605) says: "Satiety of food is a begetter of unchastity." He also says, "Let us cut down fatty and greasy foods that inflame carnal desire, and foods that sweeten and tickle the larynx" (The Ladder, Migne PG 88, 864, 865).

The practice of fasting is not regarded as an end in itself, as something having intrinsic value, but only as a means, as a necessary condition for the spiritual life. It belongs to the category of what the Eastern, Byzantine Fathers call "bodily virtues," among which are prostrations, standing, and vigils. Referring to these, St. John Damascene (c. 676–c. 754) says that they "are rather instruments for the virtues; they are necessary, in one practices them with humility and spiritual knowledge. For without them neither do the virtues of the soul come into being, but in themselves they are of no benefit, any more than plants without fruit" (Philokalia, 2, 17). And St. Gregory the Sinaite (1289–1360), speaking specifically of fasting, observes: "Constant fasting withers lust and gives birth to self-restraint" (Philokalia, 2, 272); while Callistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos remark: "Fasting and self-restraint are the first virtue, the mother, root, source and foundation of all good" (Philokalia, 2, 370).

Dr. Constantine Cavarnos, *Anchored in God*

"When we fast, we search the earth and sea up and down: the earth in order to collect seeds, produce, fruit, spices, and every other kind of growing edible; the sea to find shellfish, mollusks, snails, sea-urchins, and anything edible therein. We prepare dry foods, salted foods, pickled foods, and sweet foods, and from these ingredients we concoct many and motley dishes, seasoned with oil, wine, sweeteners, and spices. Then we fill the table even more than when we are eating meat. Moreover, since these foods stimulate the appetite, we eat and drink beyond moderation. And after that we imagine that we are fasting....

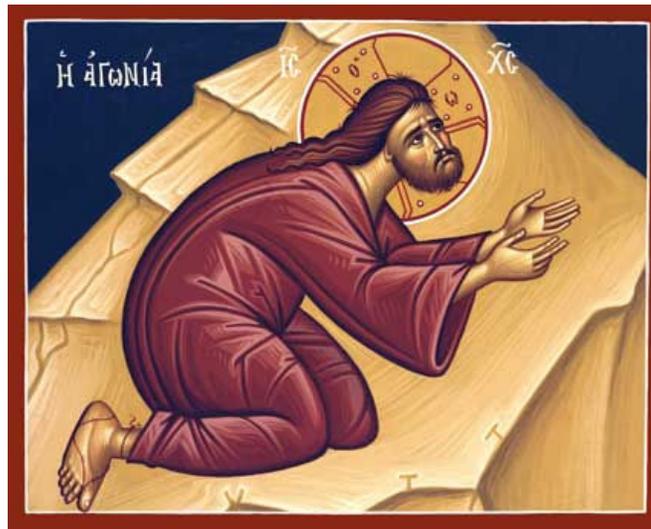
"And whoever taught those who fast in this way that such a variety and such quantities of food constitute a fast? Where did they read or hear that anyone who simply avoids meats or fish is fasting, even if he eats a great amount and different kinds of food? Fasting is one thing, great variety in food another; fasting is one thing, eating great amounts of food another." [Fasting and Science, 18–19]

Nicephorus Theotokis

The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association
Invites All Adults to Join Us for

A Lenten Retreat

Beginning a Life of Prayer



Saturday, April 9, 2016

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

Fr. Irenei Steenberg, Retreat Speaker

Patristics Scholar - Doctorate from Oxford University, England
Abbot of St. Silouan Orthodox Monastery in Sonora, California
Archimandrite of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia



RETREAT SCHEDULE

9:00 am Divine Liturgy
10:00 am Refreshments & Registration
10:30 am Retreat Begins
12:00 pm Lenten Lunch
3:30 pm Retreat Concludes

- \$15 per Person, Including Lunch
- Register by Friday, April 1, 2016
- Make Check Payable to:
"St. Paul Orthodox Church"
Memo: "Lenten Retreat"

**The Orthodox Clergy of Clark County Deanery
Wish All The Believers A Blessed Lent
Great & Holy Lent Begins This Year On
Monday, March 14, 2016**



Holy Pascha This Year Is On Sunday, May 1, 2016

On This Occasion

**The Reverend Clergy Of The Orthodox Churches In Clark County
Would Like To Assure You Of Their Sincere Prayers And Inform You
That As One United Body In Christ The Lord We Will Gather
In The Different Locations Of The Orthodox Churches
To Worship And To Serve Vespers According To The Following Dates**

Sunday, March 20, 2016 1st Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy	Sts. George & Dimitri Romanian Orthodox Church 1350 Red Rock Street, Las Vegas <i>Fellowship Hour to follow</i>	6:00 pm
Sunday, March 27, 2016 2nd Sunday of Lent St. Gregory Palamas	St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church 6336 W. Post Road, Las Vegas (New Address) Tel : 452-1299 - Fellowship Hour to follow	6:00 pm
Sunday, April 3, 2016 3rd Sunday of Lent Sunday of the Cross	St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 5300 South El Camino Road, Las Vegas Tel: 702-221-8245 - Fellowship Hour to Follow	6:00 pm
Sunday, April 10, 2016 4th Sunday of Lent St. John Climacus	St. Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church 3950 South Jones Blvd., Las Vegas Tel : 367-7783 - Fellowship Hour to follow	6:00 pm
Sunday, April 17, 2016 5th Sunday of Lent St. Mary of Egypt	St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church 5400 Annie Oakley Dr., Las Vegas Tel: 702-898-4800 - Fellowship Hour to Follow	6:00 pm

All Believers Are Strongly Encouraged To Attend These Up Lifting Lenten Services