



THE MESSENGER

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2018

ST. SIMEON, THE ENCOUNTER, AND LENT

*Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.”*
(St. Simeon's Prayer, Luke 2:29-32 NKJV)

This year we have a unique chance to reflect on a wondrous event in conjunction with our movement into Great Lent. Pascha falls early this year, which means we are already in the preparatory Sundays before Lent. We also have the Great and Holy Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, which falls forty days after the Nativity of the Lord, and commemorates His parents bringing Him to the temple in accordance with Jewish law. Every male child was presented to the Lord on the fortieth day after birth.

The feast not only recalls that presentation, but revolves around the mystical image of Simeon, who was “just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit had told him that he would not die until he saw the Lord's Christ. The Spirit then led him into the temple when Joseph and Mary brought Jesus. He held the Infant and uttered his prayer, knowing that the Messiah had been revealed and he could die in peace.

There are three elements to this event that we must look at to fully understand our celebration of this moment.

• **The Promise.** It seems from the Scripture that

Simeon was old. Indeed, the Church commemorates him as “Simeon the Elder.” His long life was lived in faith and anticipation of the Messiah, as any good Israelite was supposed to live. God had seen his faith and anticipation and promised him, through the Holy Spirit, that he would be preserved in this world until his prayer and anticipation were answered.

• **The Encounter.** This answer came in his encounter with the Infant Christ, brought innocently to the temple by His parents. After years and years of faithfully waiting, he finally not only saw the Messiah, but held Him in his very arms. His recognition was instant. He then prayed his prayer, which were words that iconically revealed everything that God had done not only for him, but the world. He then blessed Joseph and Mary, and prophesied His crucifixion and the pain His parents would have to endure by that crucifixion. Anna the Prophetess, an 84-year old widow who essentially lived in the temple and “served God with fastings and prayers night and day”, also recognized the Infant in this encounter. She would go on to speak of Him to “all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

• **His Preparation to Die.** In fulfillment of His promise, Simeon was now ready to die, for He had seen what he had hoped for his whole life to see. He had not only hoped to see the Messiah, but knew that the Messiah would bring resurrection to all who believed in Him. He had no fear of death, but was ready and willing to surrender his soul to the same One who had made the Promise.

This remarkable encounter between Simeon and the new-born Christ is worthy of reflection as we

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FEBRUARY 2018

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH • LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

<p>GREETERS</p> <p>FEB 4: CHONG/HAYDEN FEB 11: OSBURN/GERALT FEB 18: CAMPBELL/MURPHY FEB 25: MCAULEY/MOROZOVA</p>				<p>FAST FREE 1</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS WITH LITIYA, 6:30 PM BLESSING OF CANDLES</p>	<p>FAST FREE 2</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY 8:00 AM MEETING OF OUR LORD BLESSING OF CANDLES</p>	<p>FAST FREE 3</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: YOUTH EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: YOUTH CHURCH SCHOOL PRODIGAL SON</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING, ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, SYOSSET, NY FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, FEBRUARY 5-9</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>		<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	
<p>11</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: BITSKO POST-COMM: W. DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL MEATFARE SUNDAY</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 12</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 13</p> <p>PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 14</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 15</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 16</p>	<p>MEAT FAST 17</p> <p>BAPTISM, 10:00 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL</p>	
<p>18</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: KAUFMAN EPISTLE: HALLIDAY POST-COMM: FORGIVENESS VESPERS</p>	<p>19</p> <p>GREAT LENT BEGINS</p> <p>COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>		<p>20</p> <p>COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>21</p> <p>CONFESIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>22</p> <p>COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>23</p> <p>LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 8:00 AM</p>	<p>24</p> <p>BAPTISM, 10:00 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>25</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BROOKS EPISTLE: JARLSON POST-COMM: H. DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL ORTHODOXY VESPERS 5:00 PM, ST. PAUL'S</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>FAST FREE 27</p>	<p>FAST FREE 28</p> <p>CONFESIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>MAR 1</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>MAR 2</p> <p>LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 8:00 AM</p>	<p>MAR 3</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	

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Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
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Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Amy McAuley

Fellowship Committee
Charity Committee

get ready to enter into the rigors of Great Lent. The very same three elements of that event are the elements that we must embrace as we make the Lenten journey.

• **The Promise.** Simeon was chosen as a prophet to help reveal to the world that the Messiah had come. The Lord makes a similar promise to us, only we don't have to wait. Our Lenten efforts must begin by knowing the promise that God has made to each and every one of us. Anyone who is waiting for salvation anticipates His coming into our lives. He comes, not as a new-born Child, but as the Resurrected Messiah. We do battle with the demons of this world and our own selfishness and self-will in our ascetic efforts to purify ourselves and make a space for Him, trusting in His promise of salvation and eternal life.

• **The Encounter.** The new-born Child cradled in his arms was the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Simeon. But he had to have the "eyes to see" and recognize just Who was in his arms. We have lifelong encounters with our Lord in our day to day lives, in the Church, in His Word, in each other. Lent is a time when we readjust our "vision" in order to truly see these encounters and recognize the Lord. Repentance is the action that admits we have not walked the path we have been given, our desire to return to that path, and our conviction that he have encountered Christ and wish that encounter to continue for all eternity.

• **Preparation to Die.** Trusting in the promise that He will not abandon us, that He is ever present in our lives, and that He has come

to have a profound encounter of love with each of us consummated in His self-emptying Death and Resurrection — giving that same resurrection to anyone who follows Him in repentance. Given that great gift of love, how can anyone who claims to be a Christian not be prepared to die? We experience a "little death" in our Lenten efforts, returning to our first death — baptism. But baptism is not just death; it is also resurrection.

My eyes *have* seen His salvation. He can let me depart in peace. May our Lenten efforts be the catalyst for a deeper Christian life of prayer, fasting, repentance, and almsgiving — utilizing the great tools of spirituality to become one with Him.

Father John

FEASTDAYS

The following feastsdays for February will be served:

MEETING OF OUR LORD

FEBRUARY 2

VESPERS/BLESSING CANDLES, 6:30 PM
(THUR)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (FRI)
BLESSING CANDLES

GREAT LENTEN SERVICES AS NOTED IN THE CALENDAR

FAST FREE

This year, the Lenten Triodion begins on January 28 with the Publican and Pharisee, which makes Jan 29-Feb 3 *fast-free* also.

MEETINGS

Father John will be out of town February 5-9, attending the Spring Session of the Metropolitan Coun-

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

cil of the OCA, then the annual meeting of the Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OC-CIF). He will leave on Monday morning, February 5 and return on Saturday morning, February 10.

If you have an emergency or pastoral need during this time, please contact Father Stephen.

SLAVONIC LITURGY

Father Alexander Shkalov **will be here** as usual on Saturday, February 10. Russian language confessions start at 9:00 AM, followed by the Slavonic Liturgy and fellowship.

FORGIVENESS VESPERS

Forgiveness Vespers, the liturgical entrance into Great Lent, will be served following liturgy on February 18. We end, of course, with the moving Rite of Forgiveness. All of our parishioners are asked to make every effort to be present with us that day.

Maslenitza, the traditional of blini and goodies on Cheesefare Sunday, will also be enjoyed that day before we begin the whole Fast.

GREAT LENT/FASTING

Great Lent begins fairly early this year. Fast dates are as follows: Meatfare Sunday is February 11 — no meat after this date until Pascha (dairy allowed until the first day of Lent). Forgiveness Sunday is February 18. The Great Lenten Fast begins on Monday, February 19.

Fasting for the evening Liturgy of the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays is nothing by mouth (water excepted) for the whole day if you are physically capable. If not, then a complete fast should be kept from the noontime meal (no later than 1:00 PM). Friday morning liturgies, of course, are a complete fast from midnight the night before.

Soup and bread are offered in the parish hall following the

Wednesday evening service. A sign-up list is available in the hall for those who can volunteer to bring either for one of the Wednesdays. Please help.

CONFESSIONS

Every Orthodox Christian makes the effort to keep the fast to the best of one's physical ability, increase prayer during Lent, read the Scriptures, and attend as many services as possible.

Part of the Lenten effort is to make the journey to the Sacrament of Confession. Confessions are available on Wednesdays during Lent from 5:30-6:20 PM (before liturgy), Saturdays during and after Vespers, and by appointment. Father John does not mind making appointments! **There will be no confessions scheduled after the eve of Palm Sunday (March 31), except for extraordinary circumstances.**

CHOIR REHEARSAL

The choir will be rehearsing following Vespers on February 17. This is the last rehearsal before the beginning of Great Lent. *All choir members are asked to make every effort to be present.*

ORTHODOXY VESPERS

Our parish will be hosting the first of the pan-Orthodox Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers. Orthodoxy Vespers with procession of icons will be held on February 25, at 5:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to help with the repast following Vespers. A sign-up list is available in the hall.

PAN-ORTHODOX SCHEDULE

The schedule of Sunday evening pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers (all services at 5:00 PM):

Feb 25: St. Paul the Apostle

Mar 4: St. John the Baptist

Mar 11: Ss. George & Dimitri

Mar 18: St. Michael

Mar 25: St. Simeon

LENTEEN RETREATS

Looking ahead, please note the following:

2018 Lenten Retreat, hosted by our parish. March 10 — *Three Ways to Know the Body of Christ as Revealed in Holy Scripture*. Retreatmaster: Fr. Chad Hatfield, President of St. Vladimir Seminary. Cost is \$15 per person, payable at the door.

2018 Youth Lenten Retreat, hosted by St. John Church. An overnight retreat, March 16-17, beginning at 6:00 pm on Friday evening. *Taking a Leap of Faith in an Augmented Reality*. No charge.

HELP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Two of our young people, *Ivy Tesfay* and *Lidya Abraham*, have been accepted as summer interns at the Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage Home Building Program. We are very proud of them for taking on this *volunteer* effort.

They need help with their travel and living expenses - hoping to raise \$500 each. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to our parish for this purpose. Note their names in the memo line of your check. We will also schedule a special collection as the due date of May 20 draws near.

- Tiffani Gonzalez has created *Saturday Morning Personal Assistant* to earn funds for schooling and internship programs. She is available on Saturdays for babysitting, dog walking, housekeeping, and office work. Hours are from 7:00 AM-1:00 PM; in hourly increments. This is a pay what you can afford service (per/hour)! She is pursuing a Masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and has plenty of experience with kids, loves animals, and can assist you in anything you need. (646) 761-4603

PLEDGE FORMS

Every parishioner is asked to prayerfully consider and then make a generous financial commitment to the parish. Please return your signed pledge form to Father John or Karen Short. As always, be assured that the form remains completely confidential.

HOOD FUND

We continue to ask for your help in a charitable outreach to the Hood family. We ask you to consider a donation by check, card, or online, earmarking it for the Hood Collection.

OurYouCaring Page:

<https://www.youcaring.com/viginiginnyhood-899443>

OUTREACH

Daron (Basil) Clanton, son of Maria Clanton, is incarcerated in prison in Indian Springs, NV. If anyone would like to correspond or send a card to cheer him up it would be greatly appreciated. His address is:
Daron L. Clanton, #1185388
HSDP
PO Box 650
Indian Springs, NV 89070

ADULT CLASS

Our Adult Class, taking a serious look at the Miracles of Christ, will go on hiatus for Lent after the February 7 class. We will resume in April after Pascha. Please join us and learn your faith!

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project will be held on a date to be determined. We meet at 10:30 AM then construct the lunches and bag all of the items, which we then distribute downtown and are usually done by 1:00 PM. Please join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated. See Cathy Wilkalis for more information.

ICONOGRAPHY

The next phase of our iconography project will be to complete the east walls of the church (to the left and right of the sanctuary). Renderings are available in the church hall and you are urged to take a look. This is a MAJOR project which will require substantial funding. The two renderings posted in the hall will cost \$36,000 each, a total of \$72,000. We are once again accepting donations to the Icon Fund. Please consider making an offering above and beyond your normal support of the parish!

CHARITY

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

ORTHODOX VENDORS (NEW!)

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

Edward Yee
Doctor of Ophthalmology
2980 S. Jones Blvd., Suite A
(702) 362-3937

Jon Failla, NP
Axis Health Care Clinic
www.axishccvegas.com
(702) 331-1800
Focus Mental Health Solutions
www.focusmentalhealth.com
(702) 790-2701

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

Maximos Horton
Tesla Solar Inc.
www.teslasolarinc.com
(435) 922-9771

Saturday Morning Personal
Assistant
Tiffani Gonzalez
(646) 761-4603

Taffer Computers
Website Design, Marketing,
& Computer Repair
Fr. Stephen Osburn
(702) 521-6988

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 ad-

vance. If possible, the service should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS JANUARY 16, 2018 MEETING

Rector's Report: Fr John 1) Welcomed new parish council members and thanked current council members for serving. Reminded council that this is his tenth parish council.

2) Reminded council that we need to exercise our Christian life and be a good example for people we know.

3) Reminded council that he will be attending Diocesan Council in San Francisco, CA January 17-18, and Chancellors'/Treasurers' meeting in Syosset, NY January 22-25, visiting his family for one day on the trip.

4) Informed that he will be attending Metropolitan Council meeting in NY on February 3-8; and the annual meeting of the Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF) February 9 in Sacramento, CA, returning on February 10.

Associate Priest's Report: Fr Stephen will also be attending the OCCIF meeting in Sacramento. Reported that he is in the process of house blessings. Informed council that he will be away from our parish the last weekend of February. He will be visiting a parish in Colorado.

Vice President's Report: Kevin mentioned that he often will be participating in meetings remotely due to the travel demands of his job.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short was ill and unable to attend; she distributed our financials before the meeting. Restricted funds were not updated at the meeting (figures are from last month).

Capital Fund: \$28,813.55
Rainy Day: \$76,798.99

Icon Fund: \$6,032.29

Income for December was \$18,146.56, with expenses of \$20,500.68 for a **deficit of \$2,354.12.**

2017 YEAR END FINANCIALS

2017 Inc	\$ 255,170.98
2017 Exp	\$ 259,701.70
Exp over Inc	\$ 4,530.72

This is the first time in a number of years that the operating budget is in deficit. Accounts Payable is current, but the parish is staying solvent only because money has been transferred from savings.

COMMITTEES

Buildings and Grounds: HVAC: The new system has been installed in the parish office and is working well. It needs a cage. Kevin McAuley and Kimbel Halliday will be looking at it. Old unit needs to be removed from the property.

Doors: All doors have been painted for as a donation from Steve Ouimette. Hardware was installed, and new brass plated. The doors were adjusted.

Courtyard: 1) The architect has submitted a topographical design map for the courtyard project. Drawings will be submitted for parish approval before final decision.

2) The tree removal was included in the capital fund as a part of the capital improvement.

3) Property clean-up: On January 13, 2018, the property was cleaned up with help of our parish. Republic Service will be sending a service charge for the dumpster. Ahern (heavy equipment) will be sending a bill as well.

4) Will be looking to replace the broken chandelier before Pascha.

Charity: Reported that the city requested organizations/individual churches to coordinate "feeding homeless" projects to be more

organized and efficient. Fr John advised that we are going to investigate as to how to accomplish this request.

IOCC: Frances Vanderploeg has volunteered for the position as IOCC coordinator and will probably start during Lent. Father will meet with her to coordinate.

Church School/Youth: Fr. Stephen reported that on March 16 and 17 St. Paul and St. John parishes will be holding a youth retreat with the theme of being a Christian in a social media age.

Fellowship: 1) The Christmas Bake Sale on Sunday, December 17 did very well; \$918 was collected minus \$30 expense.

2) The parish Chili Cook-off is planned for January 27. Sign-up list is still available. The event was advertised via Facebook and posters. Tickets are for sale on our webpage.

Outreach/website: no problems.

Russian: Father Alexander cancelled the Russian Liturgy in January (third month in a row). Not sure about the liturgy scheduled for Feb 10, 2018.

Stewardship: Pledge Analysis: to date, 40 pledges have been received compared to 44 last year. Some pledges from council members are still due. The total received from pledges to date is ~\$115,000; compared to the annual budget of \$180,000. People have made an effort to increase their pledges; the average amount is ~\$3400.

OLD BUSINESS

Sunshine Group: no report

Bookstore: Debra Sancer is doing a great job. Debra and Fr Stephen are planning to enable the bookstore on the parish website.

Unfortunately, there has been limited interest in purchasing our

calendars. The profit is much less than foreseen. We ordered 75 calendars (down from 200 when we gave them out freely) and still have about 20 left.

NEW BUSINESS

Special Meeting: A special parish meeting will be convened to nominate and elect a lay delegate to the All-American Council in St. Louis, MO, July 23-27. Subdeacon Bill Demko would like to attend as our delegate. Gregory Brooks offered to serve as alternate.

Meeting Time: Parish council meetings time schedule will remain the same.

Misconduct Review: Policies and procedures on sexual misconduct require an annual review and affirmation by parish council members, senior servers, and teachers in January.

Next Council Meeting:
Tuesday, February 13, 6:00 PM

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.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY

Antonina Stark
February 2, 1994

Amelia Zalo
February 8, 2008

Peter Lazadoff
February 10, 1993

Samuel Berhe Tella
February 13, 1991

Gurii Mirosnicenco
February 13, 2010

Edward Grudzina
February 14, 2010

Mary Maviglia
February 18, 1998

Raicevich Harrison
February 18, 1999

Milica Primaky
February 25, 1995

Fred Leo Bell
February 25, 1996

Christina Hollis
February 26, 1998

Bekure Hailu Fesehaye
February 28, 1992

James Mezilson
February 28, 1998

Maria Jamieson
February 28, 2002

Irene Wadhams
February 28, 2002

Melvin Stokich
February 28, 2003

Fernand Marie Bica
February 28, 2016

Archpriest James Bertolini
February 29, 2016

FATHER STEPHEN'S CORNER LIFE AFTER DEATH

As we draw closer to Great Lent this year, I'm going to take a slight break from my series on our faith in today's culture to speak about a topic that was brought up with my catechumen, Karen. In one of our sessions, she asked what happens to us when we die?

Specifically, what happens after we die? Do we go up to the clouds? Do we go to this happy place where its an eternal Disneyland of our choosing, if we are good and a fiery, darkness filled with lava and suffering, if we are

bad?

This is a type of secular perspective on heaven and hell, but the Orthodox have a much more thorough (and better) answer. So what exactly happens after we die? It is important to begin by saying that with death comes this idea of the separation of the soul from our bodies.

The body clearly decomposes as it is laid to rest, but the body is also not lost. The time will come when our bodies will be resurrected, made incorruptible, and part of the new Creation that happens as a result of the just judgment of the Second Coming (Side note: which is one of the reasons we don't cremate the body).

In the meantime, we believe and the Church teaches that our souls will live in this kind of middle place. Not purgatory, which other churches teach; rather it is better to see it as you are remaining in the judgment you set yourself up with how you lived your life where you either have a foretaste of paradise or one of hell.

You are in the presence and glory of God, but you will, like the Fathers say, be radiant in the Light or be burned by the same Light. Further, as St. Paul tells us: "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Corinthians 5:10) because immediately after death, our souls are judged individually and we will remain as such until the second coming.

At the final judgment, everyone of us will be judged by the level in which they lived their faith and how they worked. Christ will, as He says in the Parable of the Last Judgement, separate us as either just or sinners. Those who were content in their sin will go away into eternal punishment while those who lived a life dedicated

to loving Christ and imitating Him will experience eternal life. There will be no changes after the final judgment. The righteous will be grounded by this and will always live eternally with God and the unrighteous will be bound in their sin. They will live but it will be hell. They will not be able to vanish and make it go away.

All of this seems really scary and frankly speaking, it is. No one wants to be in this state but if we really understand how sin works in our lives, we start to realize that it all boils down to choice. In our sinfulness we allow ourselves to choose that status because sin turns us away from God. It separates us from being with Him. It is a conscious choice to turn our backs to God.

Naturally, none of us want to be condemned. We want to be with God in eternal life. Yet, we still continue to sin. This is why we pray and why we must keep our vigilance up in our lives. Be good to others, learn to love your enemies, seek to serve others first above yourselves, learn to pray by actually doing it, and forgive and repent.

At the moment of death, we will enter that undiscovered country. The Church is giving us all we need to prepare and we know that at the moment we die, we will face what our sins really were. We will be faced with who we were as individuals. We know that we will see Christ on His throne looking right at us and that is either going to be glorious or it will be our worst

nightmare.

The good news is that if we truly commit to the Christian life, we should have a good defense before Him. If we choose to live a life that sees God secondary, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. While this may not 100% answer the question, it should hopefully give some perspective on what happens and why we care so much about these moments in time with our lives. Prepare now as if eternity begins today. Our souls will face a great trial at our deathbeds and the greater our resolve in our faith and more importantly, our trust in our loving God who came to save man, not condemn, we will experience life eternal.

ON FASTING

When the fast makes its appearance, like a kind of spiritual summer, let us as soldiers burnish our weapons, and as harvesters sharpen our sickles, and as sailors order our thoughts against the waves of extravagant desires, and as travellers set out on the journey towards heaven, and as wrestlers strip for the contest. For the believer is at once a harvester and a sailor and a soldier, a wrestler and a traveller...

Sharpen your sword and your sickle which has been blunted by gluttony - sharpen it by fasting. Lay hold of the pathway which leads towards heaven, rugged and narrow as it is. Lay hold of it, and journey on.

I speak not of such a fast as most persons keep, but of real fasting; not merely abstinence from meats, but from sins as well. For the nature of a fast is such that it does not suffice to deliver those who practice it unless it is done according to a suitable law. So that when we have gone through the labor of fasting we do not lose the crown of fasting, we must understand how and in what manner it is necessary to conduct the business since the Pharisee also fasted, but afterward went away empty and destitute of the fruit of fasting. The publican did not fast, and yet he was accepted in preference to him who had fasted in order that you may learn that fasting is unprofitable unless all other duties accompany it.

Fasting is a medicine. But like all medicines, though it be very profitable to the person who knows how to use it, it frequently becomes useless (and even harmful) in the hands of him who is unskillful in its use.

I have said these things not that we may disparage fasting, but that we may honor fasting. For the honor of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from sinful practices, since he who limits his fasting only to abstinence from meats is one who especially disparages fasting.

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. By what kind of works? If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see an enemy, be reconciled with him. If you see a friend gaining honor, do not be jealous of him. If you see a beautiful woman, pass her by. And let not only the mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all members of your bodies.

St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning the Statues, homily 3*
as quoted in *the Lenten Spring*, Fr. Thomas Hopko
St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983

The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association presents

2018 LENTEN RETREAT

Saturday, March 10, 2018

St. Paul Orthodox Church • 5400 Annie Oakley Drive

*Three Ways to Know the Body of Christ
as Revealed in Holy Scripture*



Father Chad Hatfield

President, St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary

SCHEDULE

Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM

Continental Breakfast

FIRST SESSION, 10:30 AM

Lunch, 12:00 PM

SECOND SESSION, 1:00 PM

Break

THIRD SESSION/Q&A

GREAT VESPERS, 4:00 PM

COST: \$15.00 per person

Checks payable to St. Paul Orthodox Church

