



CHURCH BULLETIN FOR MARCH 1, 2020

Worship: Sunday (March 1, 2020) – Vespers at 6 pm (Service for Forgiveness)
Monday – Thursday (March 2-5, 2020)–The Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete at 7 pm
Saturday (March 7, 2020)- Divine Liturgy at 10 am (St. Theodore Saturday)
Sunday (March 8, 2020) – Divine Liturgy at 10am (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

THE INSTITUTE OF LENT

There are institutes and symbols adopted by nations, churches or groups of men which represent certain ideals accumulated in the past. These institutes, that is precepts recognized as authoritative, and symbols represent the thoughts and feelings of those who created or adopted them and put in them all the experience of the past, often through struggle and sacrifice. A few feet of ribbon for instance, red, blue and white in color, have little value as is. But if one puts them in a certain pattern of stripes and stars, they become the flag of the United States and represent the ideals and unity of the people of America. The flag reminds us of the people's struggle for liberty. It represents the national unity which attained for them their rights as a people. The same could be said for the institutes of a nation, army or any group of people. These institutes are created by the people and are used by them in certain ways for certain aims. Some of these institutes are the means for achieving certain values and ideals. In the life of the Church of Christ there are many institutes created and maintained to meet the needs of the people - the Ecclesia. Among these is the Great Lent which falls within the year-cycle of the life of the Church before Pascha-Easter. Lent is the period of time for self-examination by the believer; of putting on the spiritual armor of the Militant Church; of applying the riches of prayers and almsgiving; of adopting deeply the meaning of repentance; of atonement and reconciliation with God Almighty.

This great period of Lent before Easter is called by the Orthodox Church, Tessaracoste (Quadragesimal), which comes from the word forty (the 40 days of "fasting"). This Institute of the 40 days of Lent precedes the Resurrection of Christ. The celebration of the Resurrection of Christ does not fall on the same date each year, but according to the determination of the position of the moon and spring equinox, which is based on the original setting during the last Events of the life of Christ on earth. This 40-day period of Lent is a period of "abstinence" from foods, but primarily from personal iniquities. Abstinence from foods (fasting) alone is a means of attaining virtue; it is not an end in itself. During the period of fasting one makes a special attempt to evaluate his calling as a Christian; to listen to the voice of the Gospel and heed its commandments; to accept the constant invitation to enter Christ's Kingdom. It is an open invitation to everyone willing to enter; who believes in Christ and repents his iniquities; who makes an "about face" directly to Christ. To accomplish this - Which is a year-round concern - the Christian Church, dating back many years, out of experience and according to the nature of man instituted certain days of prayer and fasting as steps in a ladder to help those who need guidance to reach this spiritual plateau. All of these steps must have genuine personal meaning to avoid becoming merely a habit and routine. Fasting encompasses the entire pious life of the Christian, as Christ proclaimed, that symbolizes a deep acceptance of His admonition to "repent". This can be achieved not so much in terms of time, but in deeds in love of God and one's fellow man.

During the period of the Great Lent the awakening of the spirit of man comes about through inspiration from the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It is a time of self-examination and preparation, and of taking an inventory of one's inner life. He and Christ know his exact condition. At this time one sees himself in the mirror of the Gospel - how he looks. One finds the means and ways to correct and improve himself. Lent is a period of time when one delves into himself with the light of the Holy Spirit in order to rid himself of the impediments which hold him back. It is a period when one strengthens his faith by more prayer and devotional life.

Let us then examine the meaning of fasting, which became an Institute of the Church. Fasting means the total abstinence from foods, as the original Greek word in the Bible, nesteia, literally means. The word fasting today is used for selection of foods and a limiting of their quantity. Fasting also can mean eating once a day bread, salt and water, after sunset. Although the period of Lent appeals to the function of man as a whole in repentance, self-examination, almsgiving, relationship with people with whom one is at odds, attitudes toward life, the abstinence from foods plays a vital role in the life of the Christian. The quantity and kinds of foods selected for this period of Lent help control carnal desires and develop discipline and a pious life. Fasting from foods is not a virtuous activity in itself, but a means for its achievement. But it has a distinct place in the life of the Christian, especially during the Great Lent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1. Schedule of Services for March:** Services for the month of March can be found on the table at the entrance of the Church.
- 2. Religion Classes for adults and teenagers:** Announcement of religious education classes will be made in 2020.
- 3.** On Friday's at 6.30pm we will hold the Akathist to the Holy Mother of God, and after Akathist we will hold spiritual conversations for adults in both languages. From 8pm we will continue with classes for religious education for children with folklore group kids and all others interested until 9pm. During this time we will continue to learn sing the new songs with Dragan Negovanovic as well as to form our own little orchestra. See you on Friday
- 4. Church Choir:** Do you like to sing? Please join us! Email: holly@haliluja.com
- 5. Sunday Lunch:** Served every week after Divine Liturgy. To sponsor lunch with all proceeds benefiting our church, please contact the president of our Church Board, Father Nemanja or any member of our KSS. A list of the current sponsors for Sunday lunches for the month of March and the Sundays that are still available for sponsorship can be found on the announcement board at the entrance of the Church. We also kindly ask that you consider bringing pastries for our Sunday lunches. **Lunch sponsor for this Sunday is the Family Radunovic for the health of their family**
- 6. If you have any questions about bulletin, or you have some announcements that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Father Nemanja by Wednesday prior to the Sunday the bulletin will be circulated in order that we have enough time to prepare the bulletin for printing.**
- 7. Volunteers:** Also, we are looking for volunteers for cleaning the church and church hall once a week, making candles and with other duties. If you have one day in month free to help us, please let us know. We very much appreciate any kind of help that you can provide. Thank you very much!!!

Our Church is open every day from 9am to 6pm. During this time, you are welcome to light candles, and pray for yourself and your loved ones. For all information you can reach the priest or you can call one of the displayed contact numbers.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU!

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