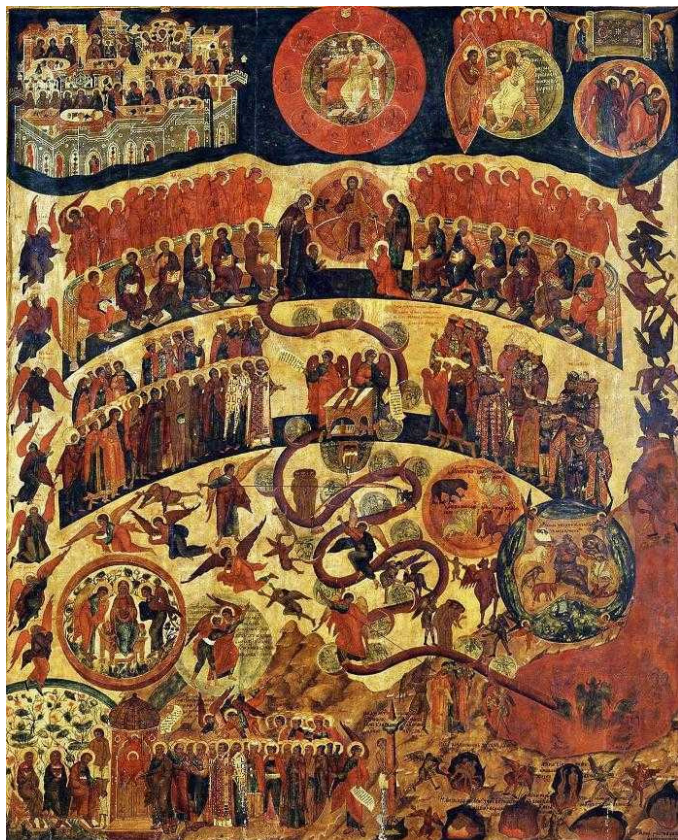


February 19, 2017: The Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13, 9:1-2:

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46:



“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ “Then He will also

say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I

was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Eschatology has always been one of those mysteries human mind tried to penetrate and understand. Throughout history, individuals or groups of people pretended to have unlocked this mystery and predicted the exact time and day for Christ's second coming. To their disappointment, and that of their followers, the indicated day came and went without anything unusual happening. This is what happens when people forget what Christ said about this subject: *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority"* (Acts 1:7).

The belief in the second coming of Christ is one of the tenets of Christianity, which has biblical foundation: *"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).

Every time we recite the Nicene Creed we re-affirm our belief in the second coming of Christ: *"And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end."*

The Gospel reading of this Sunday gives us a glimpse into the end of the world (Parousia or the second coming of Christ), although the exact time continues to be veiled in mystery. This comes in the context of the universal commemoration of the dead, observed in the Orthodox Church the day before, on the Saturday of the souls.

Our Lord and Savior is telling us that it is important for us to prepare for the day of His coming again, the day of universal judgement. The criteria by which this judgement will be done are the deeds of Christian love, compassion and mercy, manifested toward our fellow human beings: *"for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."*

As we draw closer and closer to Great Lent (our spiritual journey to Pascha), let us spend the time wisely, not being concerned with the date of the Lord's coming again but doing everything possible to acquire the good deeds which will render us worthy of hearing the divine invitation: *"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Fellowship

In the context of the universal commemoration of the departed ones, which is observed this Saturday, Feb. 18, (the Saturday of the souls), there will be a general participation for this Sunday's fellowship.

Thank you all very much!

Altar boys for this Sunday:

**Alexander Ștefănescu
Alexandru Mustea**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2017, after the Divine Liturgy.

On the Agenda:

- Financial and other committee reports.**
- Election of a new Church Board.**

Members in good standing will be able to vote.

All are invited to attend.

PLEASE, PLAN TO ATTEND!

**ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF EDMONTON
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, February 19, 2017

AGENDA

- 1. Call the meeting to order and opening prayer.**
- 2. Confirmation of “Notice of Meeting” and quorum.**
- 3. Approval of the Agenda.**
- 4. Presentation and adoption of the Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting.**
- 5. Business arising from 2016 Annual General Meeting Minutes.**
- 6. Financial Statements, Membership and Casino Reports by Mrs. Corina Sasu, Treasurer**
- 7. Church Report, by Fr. George Bazgan.**
Committee Reports:
- 8. Property and Maintenance, by Mr. Nicolae Chiosa, Hall Manager.**
- 9. Social, by Mr. Viorel Ciocan.**
- 10. Communications / Public relations report by Ștefan Mocanu.**
- 11. Ladies Auxiliary, by Psa. Maria Bazgan, LA President.**
- 12. President’s report, by Mr. Ion Mieila, Board President.**
- 13. New Business.**
- 14. Adjournment.**

The Teachings of the Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church throughout the ages has maintained a continuity of faith and love with the apostolic community founded by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Orthodoxy believes that, from the time of the Apostles, she has preserved and taught the historic Christian Faith free from error and distortion. She also believes that there is nothing in the body of her teachings which is contrary to the truth or which inhibits the real union with God. The air of antiquity and timelessness that often characterizes Eastern Christianity is an expression of her desire to remain loyal to the authentic Christian Faith.

Orthodoxy believes that the Christian Faith and the Church are inseparable. It is impossible to know Christ, to share in the life of the Holy Trinity, or to be considered a Christian apart from the Church. It is in the Church that the Christian Faith is proclaimed and maintained. It is through the Church that an individual is nurtured in the Faith.

THE REVELATION

According to the Orthodox Church, God is the source of faith. Orthodoxy believes that God has revealed Himself to us, most especially in the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom we know as the Son of God. This Revelation of God, His love, and His purpose, are constantly made manifest and contemporary in the life of the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Orthodox Faith does not begin with man's religious speculations, or with the so-called "proofs" for the existence of God, or with a human quest for the Divine. The origin of the Orthodox Christian Faith is the Self-revelation of God. Each day the Church's Morning Prayer affirms and reminds us of this by declaring: "*God is the Lord and He has revealed Himself to us.*" While the inner Being of God always remains unknown and unapproachable, God has manifested Himself to us; and the Church has experienced Him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is central to the Orthodox Faith, is not the result of pious speculation, but the overwhelming experience of God. This doctrine affirms that there is only One God in whom there are three distinct Persons. In other words, when we encounter either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, we are truly experiencing contact with God. While the Holy Trinity is a mystery that cannot be fully comprehended, Orthodoxy believes that we can truly participate in the Trinity through the life of the Church, especially through our celebration of the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, as well as the non-sacramental services.