

## *March 8, 2020: The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent (The Sunday of Orthodoxy)*

### **Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26; 32-40:**

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

### **Gospel: John 1:43-51:**



*The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”*

According to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, the first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy or the Triumph of Orthodoxy over the iconoclastic heresy. To better understand, we must go back in the history of the Church (the 8th century), when certain Emperors of the Byzantine empire, out of excessive zeal or just being misguided, launched a devastating persecution against the holy icons, claiming that the veneration of the icons was worshipping idols, which contravened the first two of the Ten Commandments. Although the controversy had been resolved at the 7th. Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (787), the iconoclasts continued their campaign for another half century, mainly in 843, when a local Synod was called in Constantinople, which re-affirmed the decision of the Nicaean Council: the icons are not worshipped, but venerated and the honor is not given to the material of the icon but to the person depicted in the icon, the prototype.

On March 11, 843, during the reign of Empress Theodora and her son Michael III, Patriarch Methodios, and monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly with a special service on the first Sunday of Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy."

As we continue to observe this tradition as Orthodox believers, we are reminded that the icons that adorn our churches and homes are a source of inspiration in our daily effort to follow in the footsteps of the saints and become ourselves living icons to the world.

**Fr. George Bazgan**

## **Synodikon of Orthodoxy**

**"As the Prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the Teachers have dogmatized, as universe has agreed, as grace has shown forth, as the truth has revealed, as falsehood has been dissolved, as wisdom has presented, as Christ awarded: Thus we declare, thus we assert, thus we preach Christ our true God, honoring his Saints in words, in writings, in thoughts, in offerings, in churches, in holy icons. On one hand, worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord; and on the other hand, honoring the saints as true servants of the same Lord of all and, accordingly, offering them due veneration.**

**This is the faith of the Apostles!**

**This is the faith of the Fathers!**

**This is the faith of the Orthodox!**

**This is the faith which has established the universe!"**

**Altar boys for this Sunday:**

**Manic Dumitru  
Ștefănescu Alexander**

**Sunday Fellowship**

**The following families are scheduled to look after  
this Sunday's fellowship:**

**Știrbăț Marius & Alina  
Hrițcu Cătălin & Geanina  
Crăciunescu Zenovia  
Botez Florin & Ramona**

**The Church Board recommends that the fellowship meal be kept  
simple (muffins, donuts, small sandwiches, etc.) in order  
to encourage more families to participate.**

**Thank you all very much!**

**SPECIAL SERVICES DURING GREAT LENT:**

**Thursday at 7:00 PM: BIBLE STUDY**

**Friday at 7:00 PM: AKATHIST TO THE HOLY VIRGIN.**

**Saturday at 5:00 PM: VESPERS.**

**CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD AFTER EACH OF THESE SERVICES.**

## **The new Fellowship Roster**

### **The new Fellowship Roster begins on March 29, 2020**

Those who want to drop out or those who would like to participate, are asked to contact Fr. George by March 15.

The Church Board recommends that the fellowship meal be kept simple (muffins, donuts, small sandwiches, etc.) in order to encourage more families to participate

**Thank you!**

## **Iconography project**

The Annual General Meeting, held on March 1, 2020, approved the continuation of painting the Church interior (the 2 side walls). Ideally, the project would be finalized by May 2021, followed by the rededication of the Church. It depends on the availability of funds (\$80,000-\$100,000) and the possibilities of the iconographer Florin Vlad if we can meet this target. The project is to be done by private donations. We already have a family who committed \$10,000.

Those who want to participate, please contact Fr. George (780-473-0029), who will make the list of donors by Easter and the funds to be given to the Treasurer by June the 1<sup>st</sup>. If we are unable to secure the necessary funds, the project will be extended.

**Thank you all very much!**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

**The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership until Easter.**

**This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

### *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.