

March 21, 2021: The 1st 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

We are live streaming the Liturgy

As we continue to operate under these restrictions, we are live streaming the Divine Liturgy on You Tube.

To access the Sunday Services, [click here](#).

Holy Liturgy on Saturdays

The Divine Liturgy will also be celebrated every Saturday until Easter. This, so that we don't exceed the allowable number of people in Church on Sundays. We ask those who have memorial services to limit the amount of food offered in memory of the departed and make donations to various charities: Hope Mission, Mustard Seed, etc.

Thank You!

Sunday School resumes via Zoom

The parents who did not have children enrolled in the program in the 2019-2020 Sunday School year, and would like to enroll them, are kindly asked to contact us at:
scoala-parohiala@bisericaedmonton.org
for details and to register.

Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, and the recent measures imposed by the provincial authorities, the maximum number of people attending Church services is 20.

In order to give more people a chance to attend, we ask those who attended last Sunday, to skip this upcoming Sunday, establishing some sort of a rotation system. Also, only one person from the same family, please!

We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.

Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: wearing a mask, washing hands, social distancing, etc.

Thank you all and may God keep us safe!

SPECIAL SERVICES DURING GREAT LENT:

Friday at 6:00 PM: AKATHIST TO THE HOLY VIRGIN.

Saturday at 5:00 PM: VESPERS.

CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD AFTER EACH OF THESE SERVICES.

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!”

Prayer at the time of pandemic

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teach us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glorify: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

REAL FASTING

I speak not of such a fast as most persons keep, but of real fasting; not merely abstinence from most 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 fruits 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

THE PROOF OF FASTING

Do you fast?

Give me proof of it by your works.

If you see a poor man, take pity on him.

If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye, and the ear, and the feet, and the hands, and all the members of your bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful...

Let the ear fast... by not listening to evil talk and gossip...

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good it is if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

MEMBERSHIP

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