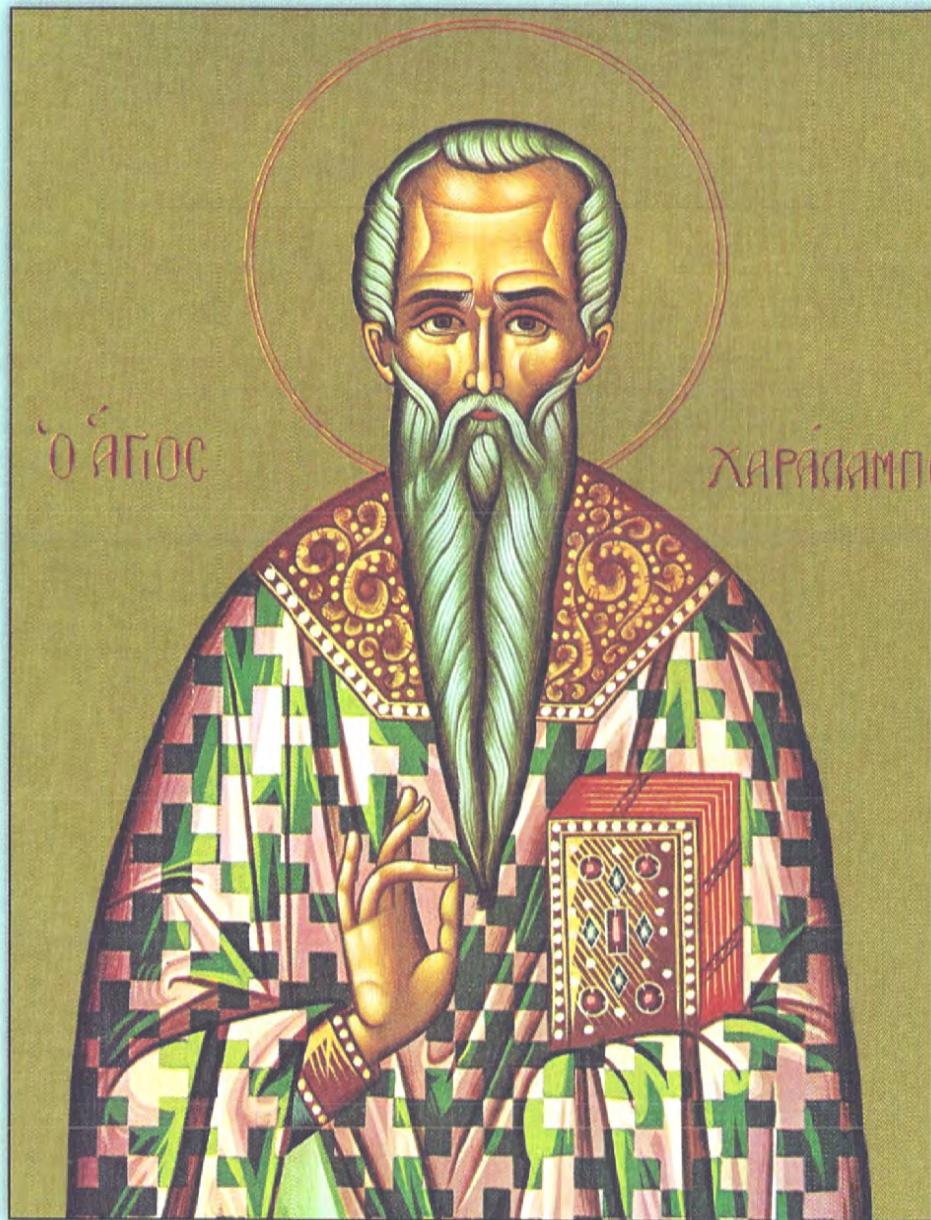


SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE



Icon of the Holy Martyr Charalampas -- February 10th

February 10, 2013

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY – SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS

THE HOLY MARTYR CHARALAMPIUS, BISHOP OF MAGNESIA IN THESSALY, AND HIS COMPANIONS

TONE 4

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11 – FEBRUARY 17

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST - DAY STRICT FAST (OBLIGATORY)

THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR BLAISE, BISHOP OF SEBASTE

6:30 PM – First Part of the Great Canon of St. Andrew

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12 – OUR HOLY FATHER MELETIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH

6:30 PM – Second Part of the Great Canon of St. Andrew

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER MARTINIAN, THE HERMIT OF CAESAREA IN PALESTINE

9:30 AM – Third Part of the Great Canon of St. Andrew

6:30 PM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER AUXENTIUS; THE PASSING OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER CYRIL, TEACHER OF THE SLAVS; OUR VENERABLE FATHER MARON, HERMIT AND WONDERWORKER

9:30 AM – Fourth Part of the Great Canon of St. Andrew

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – THE HOLY APOSTLE ONESIMUS, THE SLAVE OF PHILEMON

9:30 AM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17 – 1ST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY; THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR THEODORE THE RECRUIT

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Lenten Services at

Holy Angels Byzantine Church

During the Great Fast, Holy Angels celebrates a Morning Service with Communion each Wednesday at 10:00 AM. On Fridays, the Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated at 7:00 PM. Holy Angels is located at 2235 Galahad Road San Diego, CA 92123-3931

Catechetical Video Series

Next Sunday, after the Divine Liturgy we resume showing a series of catechetical videos. The first series to be shown will be “Catholicism” by Fr. Robert Barrons.

Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!

Sunday offering for February 3

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$28.00	1 (loose)
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	4
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$160.00	1
\$400.00	1
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\$1268.00	18 Parishioners

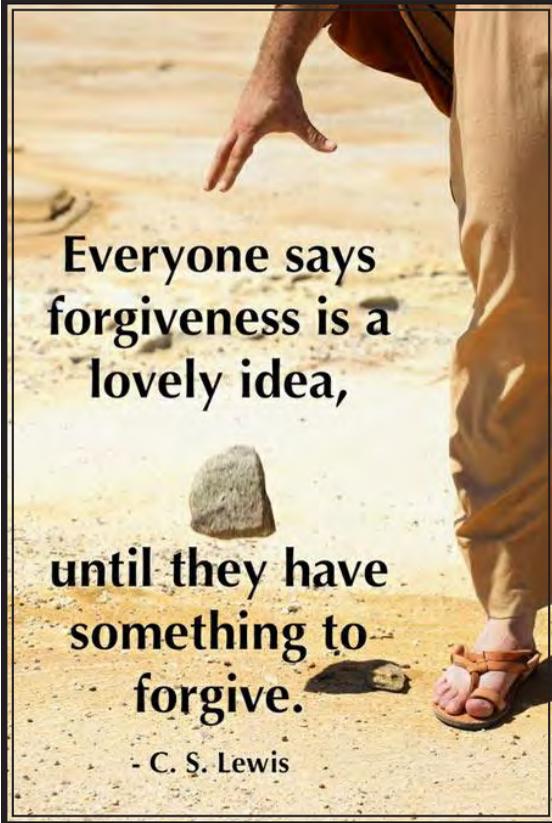
Parishioner Total: \$1268.00

Average / parish household (40): \$30.93

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **(\$857.00)**

*Jesus Christ is Lord of all
or He is not Lord at all!*



God's Extended Hand

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

A Lenten Reflection: What to Give up...

- Give up complaining – focus on gratitude.
- Give up pessimism – become an optimist.
- Give up sin – turn to virtue.
- Give up worry – trust Divine Providence.
- Give up discouragement – be full of hope.
- Give up bitterness – turn to forgiveness.
- Give up hatred – return good for evil.
- Give up negativism – be positive.
- Give up anger – be more patient.
- Give up pettiness – become mature.
- Give up gloom – enjoy the beauty that is all around you.
- Give up jealousy – pray for trust.
- Give up gossiping – control your tongue.
- Give up harsh judgments – think kindly thoughts.
- Give up giving up – hang in there!



EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LENT BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK:

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The Great Fast or Lent – there are three others on the Byzantine calendar: before Christmas, before the Dormition (August 15) and before Ss. Peter and Paul (June 29) – is the seven week period of preparation before the celebration of Pascha (Easter). It is like a retreat held by the whole Church: a time of spiritual renewal, a time of repentance.

ISN'T LENT KIND OF MORBID AND NEGATIVE?

Repentance is not “giving up”: it is a turning back to God whom we realize is the very source and goal of our life. He is our life. By repentance we realize we aren't where we should be; we are far from our Father. Our happiness, our wholeness, our sense of identity, wellbeing and joy flow from being close to God as the very center of our lives. So Lent, the time for repentance, is the time to rediscover this truth, to be convinced of it and make it more of a conscious reality in our everyday lives. In Pascha, the Easter mystery, Christ gives us a chance to be “born again” as children of God: as complete men and women possessing the life, grace and joy of God which completes and heals our nature as human beings.

WHERE DID LENT COME FROM?

The early Christians kept vigil during the last few days of Holy Week. As time went on, the vigil was extended to approximately forty days. It was a period in which the catechumens (candidates to become Christians) were given a last, intensive preparation for baptism, chrismation and the Eucharist. It was also the time when the penitents (“big time” sinners, such as lapsed Christians) did penance, relearning the basic and beautiful lesson of the mystery and dignity of being a Christian and our way of life in the Lord. They were reconciled with the rest of the faithful at the end of Lent.

Since the season was a type of “boot-camp in Christianity” for the catechumens and penitents, all the faithful entered into preparation with them. Lent became a type of renewal and “refresher course” for all believers intent on living of the new life in Christ given to us at Pascha.

BUT WHY THE BIG INTEREST IN 40 DAYS?

The number calls up memories from our past as a people of God. It reminds us of the forty years Israel wandered in the desert. As they were led by God to the Promised Land, they were tested, their faith was

strengthened and they learned to know the Lord as the very center of their lives. In the same way during Lent we are tested, our faith is deepened and we move toward the fullness of the heavenly Kingdom which is our inheritance.

The number also speaks to us of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert after His baptism, when He resisted temptation, giving Himself to a close communion with His Father, the source of His life. As He embraced His mission as His Father's servant and our redeemer during that time, so we try to take our own mission as Christians more seriously during Lent.

Finally, the forty days call to mind Moses and Elijah, who spent that amount of time preparing for important encounters with God. We too will encounter Him in His paschal mysteries where He reveals to us who He is, how He loves us, who we are and the real meaning of life.

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING LENT?

Don't “do”: rather “be” a lenten Christian. Live a lenten style of life. Remember the basics: you are trying to turn more fully to God (repentance) and taste more fully the beauty and dignity that are yours as a child of God. You must think about that – which means eliminating some distractions – and seriously turn to Him. The Church has three traditional helps for this: fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

WHY THIS THREE (FASTING, PRAYER AND ALMSGIVING)?

They are recommended by the Scriptures and Tradition. They get to the very root of repentance, which is turning back to God. They help strip away the glitter of a false self, a false view of the world and others (secularism) and aid in discovering our true identity, our relation to God, others, the world and ourselves. Fasting helps us discover our true hunger for God at the root of our being and our total dependence on Him as the source of our life and strength. Serious prayer puts us in communion with Him. Almsgiving helps us share God, His gifts and ourselves with others, establishing a true communion with them in the Lord.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT FASTING?

The reason for giving up something is that something better may take its place: especially the things of

God. We fast so that we may “lay aside all earthly cares, that we may receive the King of all”. Does your life depend on food? You must eat to live, but no matter how much you eat, you are going to die. Life depends, not on food, but on God, the Giver of life. We fast to experience that on a deep level. Fasting has been prescribed by Christ Himself (“And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” Matthew 6:16.) The Church can and should remove from the realm of obligation this or that exercise of fasting, but the Church cannot dispense us from Christ’s command to fast. We must each comply with that command as best we can. And, of course, the abstaining from food should lead to an abstaining from sin and evil intentions.

THEN WHAT DOES FASTING MEAN IN PRACTICE?

In practice, fasting is expressed through abstaining from certain foods for certain times. To follow our full Eastern program of fasting would mean:

Abstaining from all food and drink from midnight until noon on all weekdays; and Not eating any meat or dairy products during the whole time of Lent.

The minimum asked by our Church for Lent is that we keep this fast on at least the following days: the first day of Great Lent and Great and Holy Friday (abstinence from meat applies to all Fridays of the year). As an intermediate step, some people are accustomed to observe the entire first week, the whole of Great Week and every Wednesday and Friday.

Each family or individual should understand why we fast (the spiritual purpose), pray over it, speak to their pastor or spiritual father, and then decide what is to be done in this regard during the holy season.

AND THE ALMSGIVING?

Material gifts were given us by God as gifts over which we are to be responsible stewards. You are to use those gifts – and the gifts that you are – sacramentally. All things are potentially sacramental, since they are intended for communion with God and with each other. When we share the goods of the earth in love, we are “in communion”, in fellowship in and with the Lord.

How are you handling your material possessions? They are not ends in themselves, but they are to produce that communion. Are they? Look around

you, and the Lord will show you how to give alms, and exactly what you should share. One idea is to save the money gained by fasting and use it for charitable purposes.

THAT SOUNDS GREAT· WHEN DO WE START?

We already have started: you have been thinking about it for quite a while. And the Church too has a time of preparation for Lent, when it “primes the pump”, giving us ideas, motivation and direction for Lent. For four Sundays before Lent starts we think about our need for God, about repentance and fasting, God’s judgement and our need to forgive one another. Lent actually begins on Clean Monday, the day after the last of these pre-Lenten Sundays, Cheese-Fare Sunday. And since the Church day always begins at sunset, our first lenten service is on Sunday evening. We have the beautiful Forgiveness Vespers, at which we are reconciled with each other before beginning the lenten journey and usually have the opportunity for the sacrament of penance.

WHAT ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY?

We don’t have Ash Wednesday. The Western Church begins the holy season on Wednesday with their proper services. The Eastern Churches start two days earlier because we use a different counting system to arrive as the traditional forty days.

The Western lent consists of forty days excluding Sundays – leading up to Easter Sunday. The Eastern Churches keep forty days without interruption leading up to Lazarus Saturday, the first day of Holy Week. This accounts for the different starting dates.

Through greed we were once stripped naked, overcome by the bitter tasting of the forbidden fruit, and we were exiled from God. Let us turn back in repentance, fasting from the food that gives us pleasure. Let us purify our senses on which our Enemy makes war. Let us strengthen our hearts with the hope of grace, and not with foods which brought no benefits to those who trusted in them. Our food shall be the Lamb of God on the holy and radiant night of His Rising. He is the Victim offered for us, given in communion to the Apostles on the evening of the Mysteries, who scatters the darkness of ignorance by the Light of His Resurrection! (Vespers, Meatfare Sunday)

FOOD FOR THE GODS

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SAY GOOD-BYE TO MEAT. In the fasting practice common to all Byzantine Churches Meatfare Sunday is the last day on which meat would be eaten until Pascha. This is the first step towards the fuller discipline of the Great Fast when dairy products would not be eaten as well. This is why next Sunday is called Cheesefare Sunday (good-bye to dairy products).

Why is meat targeted in the Fast? Certainly in most places meat is a special festive dish. We think of the fatted calf which the father ordered slain to welcome his prodigal son back home. In some disciplines other festive items like wine and oil are avoided as well. As Christ said when pressed by the Pharisees about His disciples' behavior, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matthew 9:15).

In many cultures to this very day meat is a luxury. Numerous people regularly get their protein from beans or pulses, not meat. It's too expensive. One of the reasons why American fast food has become so popular throughout the world is that it makes meat affordable to more people than ever before.

There is another reason why we avoid meat on fast days. During the Lenten season we seek to focus on restoring the likeness to God within us, to stress the quality bestowed on us at the beginning and lost at the fall. During the Fast we seek to return to the Garden of Eden, as it were, to return to Paradise, and no one ate meat in the Garden.

According to the Book of Genesis, "God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food'; and it was so" (Genesis 1:29-30). We were all vegetarians in Eden. By avoiding meat we are symbolizing our desire to return to Eden, to recover our nature as God meant it to be.

The Book of Genesis paints a picture of human history in a downward spiral to the time of Noah and the flood. According to Genesis, after that

catastrophe, God began restoring humanity on the earth. Part of that restoration included the addition of meat to our diet. God said to Noah, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as [I gave] the green herbs" (Genesis 9:15). Our fasting from meat, then, is not to avoid something bad but to express our desire for something better.

As the Jewish people developed, the meat of certain animals, fish and other sea creatures came to be considered as "unclean," unfit for God's Chosen People. This served in part to stress their particular relationship to God and distinguish them from others. In the New Testament we see that this distinction is abolished; there would be no separation between Jews and Gentiles and no unclean foods. This is expressed in the Acts of the Apostles which records St. Peter's vision of a sheet lowered from the heavens containing all kinds of animals. Peter was told to eat but he refuses on the ground that these animals were unclean. Then a voice from heaven told him, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Genesis 10:15). Gentiles and all foods were acceptable to the Creator and were to be received by the followers of Christ.

FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS

One of the issues facing the early Church was the question of food offered to idols, as described in the Epistles of St Paul. As the Church moved into Europe it encountered groups that observed religious meals in which food offered to deities, or even the spirits of the dead, was consumed.

Some believers were scandalized to see other Christians sharing in these meals. Paul begins his response to this question by saying, "Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge" (1 Corinthians 8:1). By this he meant that we know that this means nothing because idols are nothing: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one" (v.4). In essence, then, eating this food didn't matter because all the idols in the world couldn't make food anything other than God's creation.

There was another side to the question which Paul finds even more important. Some new believers didn't understand this principle and so were shocked

to see other – presumably more mature – Christians eating or thought that the idol must be real after all. So Paul recasts the question: it’s not about eating food but about the effect on new believers. “Knowledge puffs up,” he writes, “but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. . . . for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled” (v. 1-2,7). So don’t eat, not because of the idols, but because harming the faith of the weak is more unchristian than eating this food.

We hear this teaching today to remind us that our fasting is not about right and wrong food so much as it is about supporting the faith of our fellow believers. The Church’s fasting days and seasons are shared experiences, actions that we are meant to do together. There are times when a person may fast privately and this fasting should be done in secret. Fasting seasons, however, are common activities and if I denigrate them or excuse myself from them I am weakening the resolve of others. In addition I am missing out on an experience that will heighten the joy of Pascha, when the Bridegroom is with us again.



Have you filled out your pledge card?

I give an offering on a regular basis. Why is it important that I pledge?

Answer: All offerings are appreciated; however, pledges are important to permit our parish to budget each year. We are planning a balanced budget, and we will use pledges for estimating revenue.

Does our parish receive financial support from the Eparchy?

Answer: No. The Eparchy provides certain non-financial resources but no financial support. Our parish is assessed a yearly sum (*Cathedraticum*) to support the operation of the Eparchy.

How much should I pledge? Is there a specific required or recommended percentage of income?

Answer: We ask members and other supporters to be generous with their pledges, taking into account the value of our parish and the importance of its mission. There is no required percentage of income; however, for this coming year, we are asking you to consider a goal of eventually pledging 5-10% of income.

If I want to pledge, how do I do it?

Answer: You can place your pledge card in the offering basket, or mail in your pledge card.

Can others see my pledge amounts, or is it confidential?

Answer: The amount of your pledge is confidential and is viewed only by the pastor and the financial committee. As part of their follow up efforts, the members of the Stewardship Committee will know who has pledged or not (but not the amount)

Is my pledge an enforceable contract? What if I am uncertain about the future and am reluctant to pledge?

Answer: Your pledge is not an enforceable contract. Although we ask that all pledges be a reflection of a real intent to give, if you have a change in circumstance, you can change your pledge at any time during the year by submitting a revised pledge card.

Does the amount of my pledge or offering affect my standing in the parish?

Answer: No. Neither membership nor opportunities to serve are conditioned upon your pledging a certain amount or at all.

When the offering basket is passed around, I notice that some don’t put anything in. Why?

Answer: There are many ways to pledge and give. Some of our parishioners are pledging and donating electronically, so there is no need to place a check or money in the offering basket. Others may give an offering only periodically.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Prove Your Faith by Your Trust

“Look at the birds of the air,” says Jesus. (Lk 12:24) What a splendid example for our faith to follow! If God’s providence bestows an un-failing supply of food on the birds of the air who neither sow nor reap, we ought to realize that the reason for people’s supply running short is human greed.

The fruits of the earth were given to feed all without distinction and nobody can claim any particular rights. Instead, we have lost the sense of the communion of goods, rushing to turn these goods into private property.

The birds do not know famine because they do not claim anything specially for themselves and neither do they have any envy of others.

“Consider the lilies of the field; not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass which is alive today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe one of you!” Listen to these stupendous and uplifting words. With this parable of flowers and grass the Lord urges us to hope that God will also be merciful to us.

Nothing is more persuasive than a glance at unthinkable creatures who have received such beautiful dress from Providence. Surely we should be all the more ready to believe that human beings, if they entrust themselves completely to God and free themselves of all their worries, will not lack anything.

St. Ambrose of Milan