

February Notes: on Friday, February 1 at 6:30 PM there will be a **Great Vespers with Litya** for the **Meeting of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ**, followed by **Divine Liturgy** and the **Blessing of Candles** at 9:30 AM the next morning ... on Tuesday the 5th **Andrew Zhang** celebrates his birthday ... on Thursday the 7th at 6:30 PM there will be a **choir practice** ... on Saturday the 9th there will be **Great Vespers & Confession** at 5:30 PM ... after the Liturgy on Sunday the 17th there will be **Parish Council** ... on Saturday the 23rd at 4:30 PM we will serve the second anniversary **pannikhida** for our dear **Jacque Kemper**, followed by **Great Vespers & Confession** at 5:30 PM ... on Wednesday the 27th, **David & Susan Evans** celebrate their wedding anniversary ... Thursday the 28th is the name day for both **Kyra Harrison** and **Kyra Newsome (St Kyra of Syria)** ... as well as **Marie Shipper's** birthday!

O Lord and Savior, preserve the Orthodox Church throughout this entire world in unity and right-belief, granting her peace, tranquility, love, and harmony. Look down upon the Holy Orthodox Church with compassion and mercy, and preserve her from division and schism, from enmity and disorder, grant that her unity be not diminished nor shaken, but that Thy Thrice-holy name be ever-glorified within her. With Thy mercies make glad the hearts of them that govern us, and strengthen them by Thy might. Rise up to our help and set to naught the evil counsels purposed against us by the evil ones. For Thou art the Help and Victory and Salvation of them that put their hope in Thee unto ages of ages. Amen.



FEBRUARY 2019

The Historical Development of the Great Fast, Part 1

Lent, as it exists today in the Orthodox Church, is the result of a long historical development, of which no more than a brief summary can be offered here. The portion of the Church's Year covered by the Lenten Triodion falls into three periods:

- (1) *The Pre-Lenten Period:* three preparatory Sundays (the Publican and the Pharisee; the Prodigal Son; the Last Judgment), followed by a preliminary week of partial fasting, ending with the Sunday of Forgiveness.
- (2) *The Forty Days of the Great Fast,* beginning on Monday in the first week (or, more exactly, at Sunday Vespers on the evening before), and ending with the Ninth Hour on Friday in the sixth week.
- (3) *Holy and Great Week,* preceded by the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday.

The third of these three periods, the Paschal fast of Holy Week, is the most ancient, for it was already in existence during the second and third centuries. The fast of forty days is mentioned in sources from the first half of the fourth century onwards. The pre-Lenten period developed latest of all: the earliest references to a preliminary week of partial fasting are in the sixth or seventh century, but the observance of the other three preparatory Sundays did not become universal in the Greek East until the tenth or eleventh century.

(1) *The Paschal Fast in the second and third centuries.* In the second century it was the custom for Christians in both East and West to observe, immediately before Easter Sunday, a short fast of one or two days, either on Saturday only or on Friday and Saturday together. This was specifically a Paschal fast in preparation for the service of Easter night. It was a fast of sorrow at the absence of the Bridegroom, in fulfillment of Christ's own words: 'But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days' (Mark 2: 20). The fast, whether of one or two days, was in principle a total one, without any food or drink being taken at all.

By the middle of the third century, this Paschal fast had in many places been extended to embrace the entire week from Monday to Saturday. There was, however, no uniformity of practice, and some Christians fasted for less than the full six days. Only a few can have managed to keep a total fast throughout the whole period. In some places it was the practice to eat bread and salt, with water, at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) on the four days from Monday until Thursday, and then to keep, if possible, a total fast on Friday and Saturday but not all the faithful were as strict as this. In this six-day Paschal fast may be seen the distant origins of Holy Week; but the developed ritual to which we are accustomed, with

special commemorations on each day of the week, is not found until the late fourth century. During the pre-Nicene period, there seems to have been a unitary mystery, at the Paschal vigil lasting from Saturday evening until Easter Sunday morning. Friday was kept as a fast in preparation for this vigil, but it had not as yet become a distinct and specific commemoration of the Crucifixion; the Cross and the Resurrection were celebrated together during Easter night.

(2) *The Fast of Forty Days.* There is no evidence of a forty-day fast in the pre-Nicene period. The first explicit reference to such a fast is in Canon 5 of the Council of Nicaea, where it is treated as something familiar and established, not as an innovation on the part of the Council. By the end of the fourth century the observance of a forty-day fast seems to have been the standard practice in most parts of Christendom, but in some places - possibly including Rome - a shorter fast may have been kept.

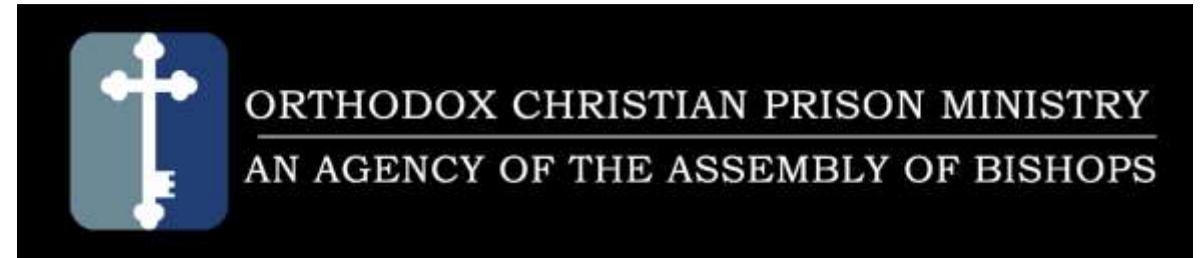
This forty-day fast, found in evidence from the fourth century onwards, differs somewhat in scope and character from the one-week fast of the pre-Nicene period, and the precise relationship between the two is not easy to determine. It has been suggested that the forty-day fast was originally connected with Epiphany rather than Easter; but the evidence for this seems inconclusive. It is, however, clear that whereas the pre-Nicene fast was specifically a Paschal observance in preparation for Easter, the forty-day fast was connected more particularly with the final preparation of the catechumens for the sacrament of Baptism or 'illumination'. In the weeks before their baptismal initiation, the candidates underwent a period of intensive training, with daily instruction, special services and fasting. The existing members of the church community were encouraged to share with the catechumens in this prayer and abstinence, thus renewing year by year their baptismal dedication to Christ. So the forty-day fast came to involve the whole body of the faithful, and not just those preparing for Baptism.

Lent, as we know it, is thus the result of a convergence between these two elements - between the six-day pre-Nicene fast, which was directly in Preparation for Easter, and the forty-day post-Nicene fast, which originally formed part of the training of candidates for Baptism. It was natural that these two elements should become fused into a single observance, for they both have the same end-point the night of Holy Saturday. The Paschal vigil on this night, in celebration of the death, burial and rising of Christ, was for obvious reasons chosen as the occasion for administering Baptism; for this sacrament is precisely an initiation into the Lord's Cross and His Resurrection (*see Rom. 6: 3-4*).

Today in most parts of the Church there is no organized catechumenate, and it is customary to administer Baptism on many other occasions besides the night of Holy Saturday; yet the baptismal significance of Lent has still a living importance. For every member of the Christian community, Lent is a time of spiritual training and renewed illumination. It is a time to realize afresh that, by virtue of our baptismal initiation, we are crucified, buried and risen with Christ; it is a time to reapply to ourselves the words of St. Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20). It is a time for us to listen more closely to the voice of the Spirit in whom we were sealed at our Chrismation, immediately after our 'burial' in the baptismal waters.

excerpted from The Lenten Triodion, translated from the original Greek by Mother Mary and Archimandrite (now Metropolitan) Kallistos Ware, published by Faber and Faber (1984).

Charity of the Month



OCPM is the official prison ministry of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. It works with all canonical jurisdictions to reach out to the men and women in prison across this country with the love and light of Christ. It ministers to prisoners and their families by mobilizing the Church to work in this important vineyard of the Kingdom of Heaven:

- Linking prisoners to Orthodox priests to provide them with a sacramental life
- Providing Orthodox publications, Study Bibles, prayer books, icon prayer cards, and catechism courses to those in prison and to prison chapel libraries
- Providing spiritual guidance and publications to families of people in prison
- Educating clergy and future clergy at our seminaries
- Training clergy and laity for prison ministry and correspondence ministry
- Linking people coming out of prison with Orthodox churches
- Providing guidance to clergy and laity for churches receiving people from prison

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(*unaudited*)

	Dec. Actual	Dec. Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	6,478.71	4,245.00	70,081.17	52,740.00
Total Expense	6,583.34	5,025.73	57,277.53	50,724.94
Cash Flow	(104.63)	(780.73)	12,803.64	2,015.06
Building Fund (Net of Rent Reserves)			23,397.51	