

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR ...

The health and salvation of—

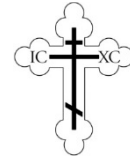
Metropolitan Onufriy + Ukrainian Orthodox Church	William Vivian
Metropolitan Isaiah Archbishop Benjamin	Valerie Deanna
Bishop Neofitos of Eldoret	Thomas
Archpriests Matthew & George	James
Hieroschemamonk Ambrose	Matthew
Subdeacon James	Keith
Reader Aleksei	Michael
Matushka Naomi	Rose
Jonathan • Phoebe • Anne	Abi
Iraida • Longinus • Nina	Gregory
Amal • Nicula • Maximus	John
Dmitry • Natalia	Keith • Diane
Danil • Anna • Kenneth	Robert
Venetia	Skyler
Catechumens Rebecca, Isaac, Anna, Adalie, Everett, Ivey, Emily, David, Gregory, Christian, Michael, Lucy, Corey, Bryan, Damon, Samuel	Crystal Michael

The repose and salvation of—

Archbishop Anastasios (1/25)
Laura Christine (1/18)

Please let Father know if there are any names you would like added to the list.

*A mission parish under the omophorion of His Eminence Benjamin,
Archbishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West,
Orthodox Church in America*



ST TIKHON ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Sunday, February 23, 2025

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare)

Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna



Sundays at 9:05 AM – Hours + Divine Liturgy

Next Sunday, March 2, 12:30 PM – Vespers + Rite of Forgiveness

Mon-Thur, March 3-6, 6:00 PM – Great Compline + Great Canon

Friday, March 7, 5:50 PM – Typika + Presanctified Liturgy

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Christ Everywhere

Today we are celebrating the Sunday of the Last Judgment—the nearing of Great Lent, a time of ascetic labors, special prayers, and special gifts of grace that await every Christian who labors ascetically in the Church with self denial. We recall the event that the world either doesn't know about or tries very hard to forget. And the devil does everything he can to make sure that people either don't think about it, or don't know about it, or don't know what it will be like. This is an inescapable event in human history, and it will come for everyone—not only Orthodox Christians but to every person born on earth, all the descendants of Adam and Eve. It is the Dread Judgment of Christ. People know very little about it, and even most Orthodox Christians know only vaguely about it. This Judgment will be unlike any other judgment that we have ever had to participate in or hear about; it will differ from those by its absolute justice. It will be the most just, correct, and righteous judgment. In the book of Job are these words: Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment (Job 34:12). This will not be a perverted judgment but true judgment, and justice will finally triumph at it in the life of every person; the soul of every person will receive exactly what it deserves, and nothing will be able to save it, nothing can help it to deceive that Judge.

What will this be like? The Lord Jesus Christ will come in His glory. He has already come, but He came as the Son of Man, as one of us. He humbled Himself so that human nature might have communion with God. But then, when He comes He will come in glory—this is also called the Second Coming of the Lord. And it will also be judgment. He will shine in glory with the archangels and angels, with the righteous, and He will judge this world. All peoples will appear at this judgment and will be divided into two parts—some at the right, and others at the left. As it says in the Gospel, it will be as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Thus, on the right side will be the faithful sheep of Christ's flock—people who are worthy of eternal life. On the left side will be those who will go to hell, to fiery Gehenna, eternal torment. And just hear what an important text was read today. People will be vouchsafed God's mercy for having shown mercy in this life; and to do this they have to have had a certain ability that very few have—to see Christ in their neighbor. The Lord says that you will be worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven because you clothed Me; you fed Me when I was hungry; you visited Me when I was in prison; I was sick and you came to me. And the righteous will even be perplexed—how was that? We don't remember, we don't understand what you are talking about! And the Lord will say to them, "What you have done for your neighbor you have done for Me. But those on the left side will have a completely different fate—they to the contrary did none of that. And they will also be amazed and shocked; they will say: O Lord, we would have done that for You, we wanted to, we also fear You, we love You! But He will say to them, no, since you didn't do this for any of these little ones, you are not worthy of eternal life.

It is very important for all of us to see this. And right now is a very blessed time for this. The goal of Great Lent for each of us is so that we would come to our senses and see Christ all around us—not only in the icons, frescos, magnificent churches, not only in the priests, but to see Christ everywhere. He is all around us, He is

everywhere, and He asks us to help Him, to feed Him, to clothe Him, warm Him, accept Him, and comfort Him. But we do not see this. Therefore the most important prayer this Lent could be the prayer with which the blind men in Gospel called out to Christ: O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us! (cf. Matt. 20:30). I want to see! First of all I want to see You in my neighbor, so that at the Dread Judgment I will not find myself on Your left, not end up with the goats, but be with the faithful sheep in Christ's flock. That is the strength of mercy. The Lord talks about mercy precisely because it brings man close to God. The Epistle reading says today: But meat commendeth us not to God (1 Cor. 8:8). Truly, whether we eat or don't eat it basically makes no difference. Yes, the passions will quiet down in us, yes, this is a very necessary and right ascetical path worked out by the Church and its ascetics in order to be freed from the passions. But it is not the most important thing. This is not the main thing that brings us closer to God. Mercy and the ability to see our Lord Christ Himself in our neighbor bring us closer to God. O Lord, give us strength, give us attention and effort, and enlighten our eyes, deliver us from blindness, let us see You, and kindle mercy in our hearts, and be vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven.

A homily on Meatfare Sunday, the Last Judgment, by Hieromonk Ignaty (Shestakov)

Troparion – Tone 2 (Resurrection)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, /
Thou didst slay hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead! /
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, /
All the powers of heaven cried out: ///
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Kontakion – Tone 1 (Triodion)

When Thou, O God, shalt come to *earth* with glory, /
All things shall tremble, /
And the river of fire shall flow *before* Thy judgment seat; /
The books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed; /
Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, ///
And make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O Righteous Judge!

Epistle: I Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Sunday)

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46 (Sunday)

Also this week: First & Second Finding of the head of St. John the Baptist (February 24); St Tarasius, Abp of Constantinople (February 25); St Porphyrius, Bp of Gaza (February 26); **Rest of St. Raphael, Bp of Brooklyn** (February 27); Ven. Kyras of Syria (February 28); Martyr Eudoxia of Heliopolis (March 1).

fast from meat only all week