

St. George the Trophy Bearer Sunday School Bulletin

FEBRUARY 2023

Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple - February 2nd, 40 days after Christmas.

During Christ's days on earth, it was right to bring your 40-day-old baby, along with a sacrificial offering, to the Temple. The rich would also bring a lamb and a pigeon or turtle dove as a sacrifice and the poor would bring 2 pigeons or 2 turtle doves. Joseph and the Holy Theotokos were not rich so they brought 2 turtle doves on the day that they presented Jesus to the Temple. At the Temple was an elderly priest called Simeon who was a scholar who had prayed that in his lifetime he might see the Messiah. When Jesus arrived at the Temple, He was presented to Simeon. As soon as Simeon saw Jesus, he immediately knew that this tiny baby was the Messiah. St. Simeon sang a song to God as he held Jesus in his arms, and it is known as "St. Simeon's Prayer". Simeon recognized Jesus as the "light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of Israel". Let us be like St. Simeon and be spiritually prepared to meet Christ!

Questions about the Feast:

At what age was Jesus presented to the temple?

Why didn't Joseph and Mary bring a lamb as well as the two turtle doves?

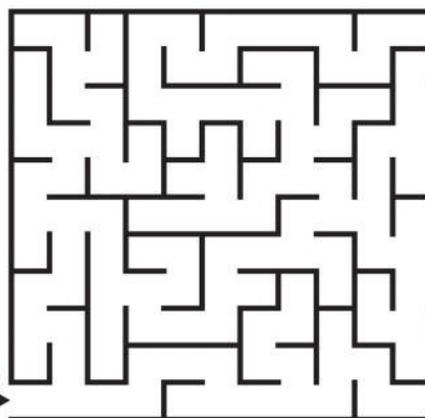
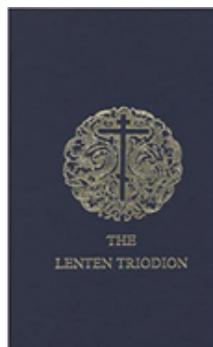
Righteous Simeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess Feb. 3

On this feast day we remember Simeon as the God-receiver. Simeon entered the Temple and there recognized both the Virgin and the young Child by the light that shone around their heads like a halo. Simeon took Christ into his hands and joyfully prayed to God to release him from this life: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation* (Luke 2:29-30). Anna the Prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, was also there; she too recognized the Messiah, and she proclaimed Him to the people. At that time Anna was eighty-four years old. St. Simeon died shortly thereafter. This righteous Elder Simeon is thought to be a protector of young children.

Triodion Period Begins

This month we are entering the season of preparation that will lead us to the feast of Pascha! The first part of the Triodion period is twenty-two days (four Sundays) of early observance which helps us to get ready for the fasting period. Next, there are six weeks or forty days of the Great Fast of Lent. Finally, the last part of our journey takes us through Holy Week. The Triodion is a liturgical book containing the Church services and hymns to be read during the period that precedes Holy Pascha; the word "Triodion" also describes the period of 10 weeks of preparation before Pascha during which the Triodion book is used. The Triodion can also be described as the book of the fast. We begin with four Sundays that announce the coming of Great Lent. Each of the Sundays has a special name and focus: the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, the Sunday of the Last Judgement and the Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise also known as Forgiveness Sunday. The church has given us these Sundays because each one has a Gospel lesson that teaches us about Repentance and so gives us the meaning of Lent.

Start the journey to Pascha with the
Triodion!



SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
<i>TRIODION WEEKS</i>		
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 5th	Publican and the Pharisee Reading: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14	Trust in God, not yourself! Ask for His help before every task this week!
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 12th	The Prodigal Son Returns! Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32	Schedule a Confession. Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 19th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	The Last Judgment Reading: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9: 2 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46	Pray facing east this week. Christ is returning from the east and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 26th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Reading: Romans 13: 11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
<i>GREAT FAST BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i>		
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 5th	SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Reading: Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1: 43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 12th	ST GREGORY PALAMAS Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2: 1-12	Bring a Chotki (prayer rope) to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 19th	VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHAI</i> Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9: 1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bowl
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 26th	ST JOHN of the LADDER Reading: Hebrews: 6:13-20 & Eph 5:9-19 Gospel: Mark 9: 17-31 & MT 4:25-5: 12	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 2nd	ST MARY of EGYPT Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-14 Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
<i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i>		
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! April 9th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Reading: Philippians 4: 4-9 Gospel: John 12: 1-18	Place your palms and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 14th	GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet, & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
<i>BRIGHT WEEK</i>		
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 16th NO FASTING!	HOLY PASCHAI (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Gospel: John 1: 1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and good night!

Publican and Pharisee - Feb 5

The First Sunday of the Triodion teaches us about Repentance through humility. In this parable we see two men offer up their prayers to God, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed saying, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, at a distance, looked down and beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' In this story, one man lost his reward by boasting and the other won God's blessing through his humility.

Questions:

Can you think of another tax collector (publican) that we have heard about in church recently?

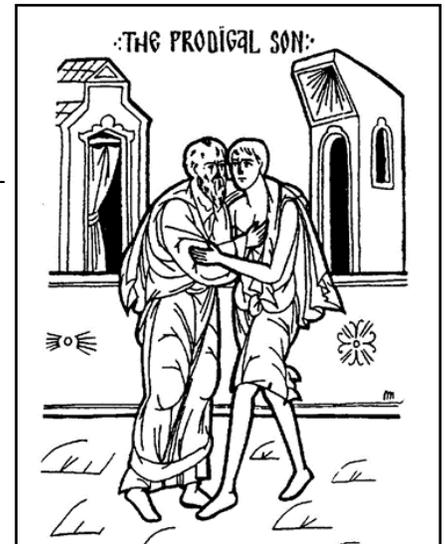
What was the tax collector's prayer?

What is a pharisee? What was the pharisee's prayer?

Which prayer was heard by God?

Prodigal Son - Feb. 12

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is read on the second Sunday of the Triodion period. In this parable, the son goes through repentance. He finds himself separated from his father, far from home, hungry, and surrounded by strangers. He realizes that he needs to go back to his father and he says "I will rise up and go" and he acts and returns from exile to his true home. The son repents and his father in limitless patience and love receives him back with open arms. We are in the preparatory stage before Great Lent and this parable shows us that repentance is the door through which we enter Lent.



Sunday of the Last Judgement - Feb 19

In this third week of the Triodion period we have the Sunday of the Last Judgement. In this parable, we learn about the powerful truth that no one is so patient and merciful as our Father in Heaven, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. The king in the parable separates the people and puts some on his right and some on his left. What did the people on his right do to receive the kingdom? Read the parable in Matthew 25: 31-46 and make a list.

Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise - Feb. 26

In the last week before Great Lent begins, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no real repentance, and no reunion with God, unless we are at the same time reunited with one another. The day before Great Lent begins we have the opportunity to ask forgiveness of one another and to give forgiveness to each other. If we forgive each other our Father will forgive us. We do not travel the road of Lent alone. We travel together as a family and our prayers and fasting should not separate us from one another, but should link us together with even stronger bonds.

What does the word 'fast' mean?

Fasting is both an inward and an outward practice. The outward part of fasting involves not eating meat or dairy. We have to be careful that the rules about eating and drinking don't become the main point of the fast, but that we keep the inward purpose as our goal. We try our best to inwardly fix our focus on God and to remember that we are dependent upon God for everything. As Christ tells us, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We will start the six weeks of Great Lent on Monday February 27th (also called clean Monday).

Family Activity Ideas for the Journey to Pascha

There are many different ways to be involved and attentive during the period of Great Lent. Here are a few ideas:

Here is an idea from the Antiochian Archdiocese: One idea that leads and guides our family during the Lenten season is the use of our Lenten coin box. Around the start of the Great Fast, we make Lenten coin boxes. Throughout the season, we are to give alms to the poor and needy by putting coins into the box. After celebrating the Feast of Pascha, we return our filled coin boxes to church, who then distributes the money to those in need. In order to involve everyone, we customized a special chart and calendar to be used throughout the Lenten season. See the website www1.antiochian.org/content/family-activities-lenten-journey for details.

Last year, we made Lady Sarakosti cookies that helped to visually track each week of Great Lent. See this website for the recipe: <http://orthodoxeducation.blogspot.com/2011/02/lady-sarakosti-poem-colouring.html?m=1>

During Great Lent say the **Prayer of St. Ephraim** and do prostrations as part of your daily routine.

Spiritual books to read during Lent: *Lent! Wonderful Lent!*, *The Story of Mary, the Mother of God*, *Pascha at the Duckpond*, *Tending the Garden of Our Hearts*, *Shepherding Sam*, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, *The Hidden Garden*, *Glorious Pascha*, *The Miracle of the Red Egg*, *Catherine's Pascha*, *Heaven Meets Earth: Celebrating Pascha and the Twelve Feasts*.

Attend as many services with your family as you can.

Take a look at this poster that shows the journey to Pascha: <https://simplyorthodox.tumblr.com/post/141846075489>

Some of the other Saints commemorated this month:

St. Perpetua and Felicity- Feb 1st

St. Abigail of Ireland- Feb 11th

St. Nicholas of Japan- Feb 16th

St. Raphael Bishop of Brooklyn - Feb. 27

Here is a Lebanese recipe that can inspire you to learn about St. Raphael as he was born in Beirut, Lebanon. St. Raphael said "The Holy Orthodox Church has never perceptibly changed from Apostolic times, ... she is 'the same yesterday, and today and forever' (Hebrews 8:8) ...the mother and safe deposit of 'the truth as it is in Jesus'."

Lebanese Green Beans

Ingredients

- 2 pounds green beans- washed, trimmed on both ends and cut into 2 inch pieces
- 3 ripe tomatoes, diced
- 10 garlic cloves. (1 leave 5 as whole, and slice 5 into round shaped pieces)
- 1 large onion, sliced into wedges
- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce or a small tomato sauce can
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt or to taste
- 1 cup water- divided

Instructions

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium high heat and sauté onion and salt until soft but not browned (about 7-10 minutes), stirring frequently.
2. Add garlic, mix and cook for additional 2 minutes.
3. Stir in green beans, and 1/2 cup of water, cover the pot and sauté for 20 minutes.
4. Add diced tomatoes and tomato paste (dissolved in another half a cup of water)- stir well, cover the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 20-30 minutes stirring occasionally until beans are fully cooked.
5. Remove from heat and set aside to cool down.
6. Serve with pita bread, hot or cold- It tastes even better the next day too!

