

The Forerunner

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HE MUST INCREASE.....AND I MUST DECREASE. (JOHN 3:30)

THE GREAT CANON OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE

By: Archpriest Victor Potapov

The first week of Great Lent has been known since times of old as the “dawn of abstinence,” or “clean week.” During that week, the Church persuades her children to come out of that sinful state into which all of mankind fell because our forefathers did not abstain, because they lost the blessings of heaven, the state of sin which each of us increases by his personal sins. It coaxes them into coming forth by way of faith, prayer, humility and fasting, things, which are pleasing to God. This is the time for repentance, says the Church “Behold the day of salvation, the entrance to the Fast. O my soul, be watchful, close all the doors through which the passions enter, and look up towards the Lord.”

The services of the first week are especially lengthy, and the ascetic struggle of physical abstinence during that week is considerably more rigorous than in the subsequent days of Great Lent. Over the course of the first four days of Great Lent, Compline is served, with the reading of the Great Penitential Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, which as it were sets the tone which is to resound throughout Great Lent. During the first week of Great Lent, the Canon is divided into four separate parts, one chanted at each Compline. On

Thursday (actually Wednesday evening) of the fifth week of Great Lent, our attention is again directed to St. Andrew's marvelous composition, this time in its entirety, so that with the conclusion of Great Lent in sight, we might not become lackadaisical, careless, and negligent, so that we might not forget ourselves and stop strictly watching over ourselves in everything.

The refrain "Have mercy upon me O God, have mercy upon me" accompanies each verse of the Great Canon. Several troparia in honor of St. Andrew, composer of the canon, and to St. Mary of Egypt are also included. The Church of Jerusalem implemented this practice during St. Andrew's lifetime. When in the year 680 AD, St. Andrew traveled to Constantinople for the 6th Ecumenical Council, he brought with him and made public both his great composition and the life of St. Mary of Egypt, written by his compatriot and teacher, Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Life of St. Mary of Egypt is traditionally read together with the Great Canon at Matins on Wednesday of the fifth week of Great Lent.

The Great Canon consists of a conversation between the penitent and his own soul. The conversation begins: "Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer O Christ in this my lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins." – with what shall I begin to repent, for it is so difficult. A marvelous troparion follows: "Come wretched soul, with thy flesh to the Creator of all. Make confession to Him, and abstain henceforth from thy past brutishness; and offer to God tears of repentance." The words are astonishing, containing both Christian anthropology and asceticism: our flesh, an inseparable part of human nature and being, must also participate in our repentance. The apogee of this conversation with the soul, its constant unremitting call to repentance, comes in the kontakion sung following the 6th canticle of the Canon:

“My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why art thou sleeping? The end draws near and soon thou shalt be troubled. Watch, then, that Christ thy God may spare thee, for He is everywhere present and fillest all things.”

In the subsequent troparia we hear many references from the Old Testament, placed there by St. Andrew to give us clear examples of those of the Old Testament who both transgressed the law, and the repentance of some of them. But these in St. Andrews poetic views, do not bring enough desire to repent, therefore he moves onward.

In the concluding ode chanted on the first day, after all of the historical recollections, there follow troparia of amazing power:

“The Law is powerless, the Gospel of no effect, and the whole of Scripture is ignored by thee: the prophets and all the words of the righteous are useless. Thy wounds, my soul have been multiplied, and there is no physician to heal thee.” – it is useless to remind you of the Old Testament; everything is useless. I will give you examples from the New Testament, and perhaps you will then repent.

“I bring thee, O my soul, examples from the New Testament to lead thee to compunction. Follow the example of the righteous, turn away from the sinful, and through prayers and fasting, through chastity and reverence, win back Christ’s mercy.”

Finally, having presented all from the Old Testament, the writer ascends toward the Giver of Life, the Savior of our souls, and like the thief, he cries out “Have mercy upon me!” and like the publican exclaims “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Emulating the persistence of the Canaanite woman and the blind man at the crossroads he says “have mercy on me O son of David! Like unto the harlot, he pours out tears instead of myrrh onto Christ’s head and feet, and weeps bitterly over himself as Martha and Mary did over Lazarus.

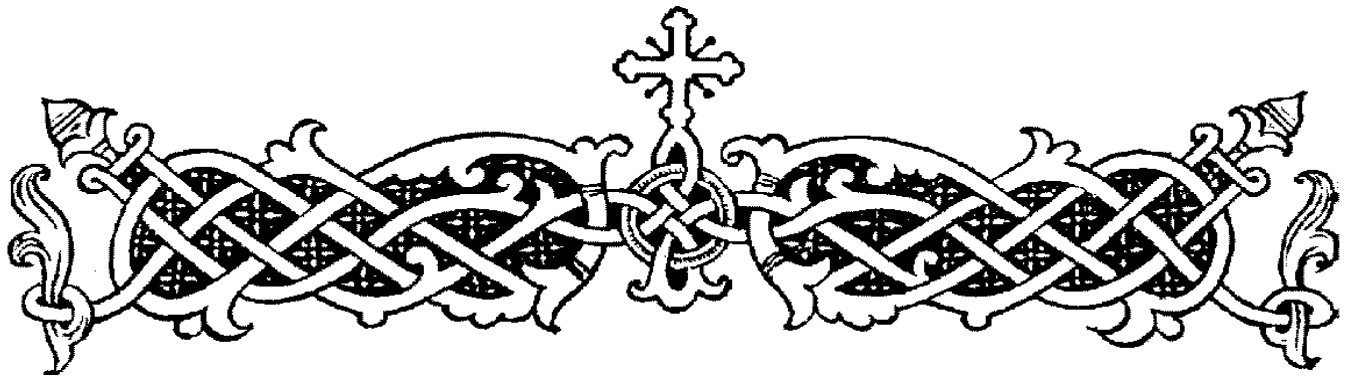
Farther on, the Canon underscores the fact that the worst of

sinners repented, and will enter the Heavenly Kingdom before we do:

“Christ became man, calling to repentance thieves and harlots. Repent, my soul: the door of the Kingdom is already open, and Pharisees and publicans and adulterers pass through it before thee, changing their life.”

Attending the words of the Great Canon, having scrutinized the history of people who ran from God only to be overtaken by Him, people who were in chasms, but whom God led out, let us contemplate the fact that God brings each of us out of the chasm of sin and despair, so that we might offer Him the fruits of repentance.

One should not imagine that repentance consists of rooting around in one's personal sins, engaging in self-flagellation, and striving to expose in oneself as much evil and darkness as possible. To truly repent is to turn from the darkness to the light, from sin to righteousness, to understand that our life has been unworthy of its high calling, to confess before God how insignificant we are, and confess that our only hope is God Himself. True repentance is when, standing before the face of God, we understand that life was given to us so that we might become children of God, so that we might commune of the Divine Light. True repentance is reflected not so much in words as in deeds: in readiness to come to one the aid of others, to be open with our neighbors, and not become involuted onto oneself. True repentance is understanding that, while we do not possess the power to become true Christians, God is capable of making us so. As it says in the Great Canon “wheresoever God wishes, the order of nature is overcome.” That is to say, where God so wishes, supernatural events occur: Saul becomes Paul, Jonah is brought out of the belly of the whale, Moses crosses the sea on dry land, the dead Lazarus is resurrected, Mary of Egypt is turned from a harlot into a great righteous one. For, according to the Savior “with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matt. 19: 26).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 1st – Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

- Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM

Monday, February 2nd – Meeting of the Lord in the Temple

- Festal Divine Liturgy – 9:00 AM

Saturday, February 7th

- Moleben to St. Panteleimon – 9:30 AM

- Adult Ed. Class – 10:00 AM

- NO VESPERS

Sunday, February 8th – Sunday of the Prodigal Son

- Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM

Wednesday, February 11th – Daily Vespers – 6:30 PM

Saturday, February 14th

NO MORNING SERVICE OR ADULT ED. CLASS

- Great Vespers and Confession – 6:00 PM

Sunday, February 15th Sunday of Last Judgement

- Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM

Thursday, February 19th

- Stuffed Cabbage Making – 9:00 AM – DONE

Saturday, February 21st – Stuffed Cabbage Dinner

- Dinner - 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM

NO VESPERS

Sunday, February 22nd – Forgiveness Sunday

- **Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**
- **Service of Forgiveness – Immediately after Liturgy**

BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT

Monday, February 23rd – Lenten Hours & Typika – 10:00 AM

- Great Canon of St. Andrew – 6:30 PM

Tuesday, February 24th – Lenten Hours & Typika – 10:00 AM

- Great Canon of St. Andrew – 6:30 PM

Wed., February 25th – Lenten Hours & Typika – 10:00 AM

- Pre-sanctified Liturgy – 6:30 PM

Thursday, February 26th – Lenten Hours & Typika – 10:00 AM

- Great Canon of St. Andrew – 6:30 PM

Friday, February 27th – Lenten Hours and Typika – 10:00 AM

- Comline & Akathist to the Mother of God – 6:30 PM

Saturday, February 28th

- St. Theodore Liturgy – 9:00 AM
- Adult Education Class - 10:00 AM
- Great Vespers and Confessions – 6:00 PM

MARCH

Sunday, March 1st – Sunday of Orthodoxy

- **Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

Wednesday, March 4th – Pre-sanctified Liturgy – 6:30 PM

Friday, March 6th – Compline with Akathist – 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 7th – Memorial Saturday

- Divine Liturgy – 9:00 AM

- Adult Education Class – 10:00 AM
- Great Vespers and Confessions – 6:00 PM

Sunday, March 8th – Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

- **Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

Wednesday, March 11th – Pre-sanctified Liturgy – 6:30 PM

Friday, March 13th – Compline with Akathist – 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 14th – Memorial Saturday

- Divine Liturgy – 9:00 AM
- Adult Education Class – 10:00 AM
- Great Vespers and Confessions – 6:00 PM

Sunday, March 15th – Veneration of the Cross Sunday

Archbishop Melchisedek is visiting this day!

- **Hierarchical Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

Wednesday, March 18th – Pre-sanctified Liturgy – 6:30 PM

Friday, March 20th – Compline with Akathist – 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 21st Memorial Saturday

- Divine Liturgy – 9:00 AM
- Adult Education Class – 10:00 AM
- Great Vespers and Confessions – 6:00 PM

Sunday, March 22nd – St. John Climacus Sunday

- **Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

Monday, March 23rd – Perogie Making

- Morning Workshop – 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Evening Workshop – 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Tuesday, March 24th – Perogie Making and Pickup

- Perogie Workshop – 8:00 AM – DONE
- Perogie Pickup – 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Wednesday, March 25th – Annunciation of the Theotokos

- Vesperal Liturgy – 9:00 AM

Friday, March 27th – Compline with Akathist – 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 28th – Akathist Saturday

- Divine Liturgy – 9:00 AM

- Adult Education Class – 10:00 AM

- Great Vespers and Confessions – 6:00 PM

Sunday, March 29th – Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

- Resurrection Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM

Wednesday, April 1st – Pre-sanctified Liturgy – 6:30 PM

ALTAR CANDLES

Sunday, December 21st - donated by Joan Hughes, in memory of John and Theresa Klos.

Wednesday, December 24th (Nativity Eve) - are donated by Joan Hughes, for the health and well-being of Hope Cain, Faith Hughes, and Joan Hughes.

Thursday, December 25th (Nativity) - are donated by Mark, Susan, Jayme and Megan Kennedy, in memory of Alan Kennedy, and Stanley and Pearl Zalupski.

Friday, December 26th - were donated by Fr. Paul and Matushka Helen Ziatyk in memory of John and Pauline Ziatyk as well as Walter and Pauline Radon.

Sunday, December 28th - donated for the health and well-being of Samantha and Genevieve Ziatyk on their Birthdays.

Sunday, January 4th – donated by Mark, Jayme, and Megan Kennedy for the health and well-being of Susan Kennedy on her birthday.

New Resurrection/Nativity Candle – donated by Tom Kachanuk in memory of Gean Tokarchuk and Dorothy Semenick.

Sunday, January 11th – donated by Valerie Kennedy in memory of Mary Fritzky.

****3 Candles at St. Panteleimon – donated by Subdeacon Harry papail

Sunday, January 18th - donated by Robert and Barbara Haught for the health and well-being of Julia Isabelle Purdy on the occasion of her baptism!

Sunday, January 25th - donated by Valerie Kennedy, for the health and well-being of Matthew Zalupski on his birthday.

Sunday, February 1st - donated For the health and well being of Linda Soulcheck on her birthday.

3 Candles at St. Panteleimon - were donated by Matushka Helen Ziatyk for the health and well-being of Fr. Paul Ziatyk on his birthday!

Sunday, February 8th - donated by Alexandra Eframo in memory of Pauline, Johnny, Wasel and Fred Eframo.

THANK YOU!

PEROGIES: Fr. Paul, Fr. Nikolai, Pam Kraynik, Nathan Kraynik, Joan Hughes, Dawn Miller, Alan Miller, Beverly D'amico, Evelyn Herrick, Nick Bia, Bruce and Linda Parshook, Alexis Parshook, Leon and Ellie Parshook, Becky Hixson, Jean Trebilcock, Valerie Kennedy, Mark and Sue Kennedy, Don and Dorothy Chlodney, Bob Kraynik, Don Rywak, Harry Papaila, and Frank Kaminsky.

ADDITIONAL BOILER FUND DONATIONS

Anonymous
Valerie Kennedy

PARKING LOT MAINTAINANCE

We want to thank Don Rywak, Frank Kaminsky who did lots of work filling in the cracks in the parking lot and especially Bill Rusiewicz who assisted them, and also purchaced the hot tar, and allowed us to use his equipment for free. This project would have easily cost up \$1000, but due to their labors, and Bill's generosity, we were able to get a professional-level job done on our parking lot from free. THANK YOU!

ASSESSMENTS AND MAINTENANCE PLEDGES

There are several people whose assessments and maintenance pledges for 2014 are still due. Please make sure that the minimum monetary responsibilities are met as soon as possible to remain a member in good standing. As per the parish

By-laws, everyone 18 years of age or older are requested to remit \$220 for each year for the work of our National Church, Diocese, and local parish.

CONFESSIONS

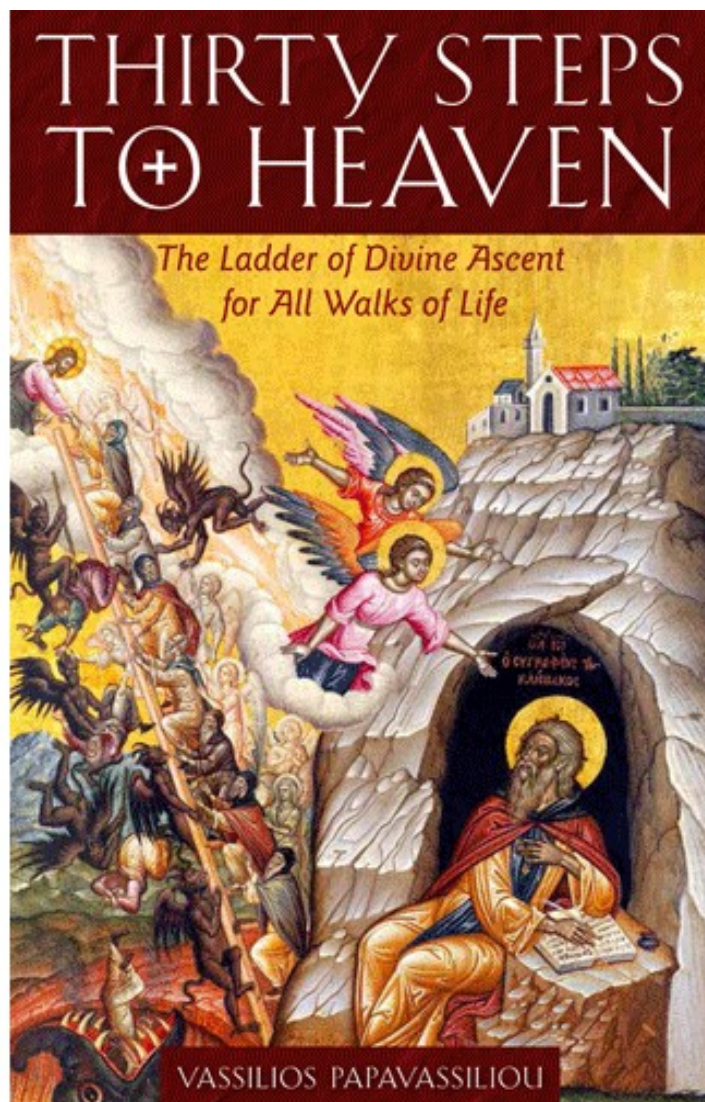
Fr. Nikolai is available to hear individual confessions anytime after the Vespers service is offered, as well as a limited number on Sunday before the Divine Liturgy. Anyone may also schedule a confession with Fr. Nikolai, if those times are not doable. The mysteries of confession and repentance are vital to good spiritual health, as well as proper preparation for partaking of the Holy Eucharist. Everyone should make every effort to partake of this mystery during the great lenten fast.

MEMORIAL SATURDAY NAMES

It is the tradition of the Orthodox Church that on most Saturdays of Great Lent, we take time in the Proskomedie and during the Liturgy to remember our loved ones who have departed this life. Attached to the back page of this newsletter is a sheet to list the names of those who are dear to you. Remember that our prayer for the dead is just as important as our prayers for the living. If we continue the tradition now, we can have confidence that when we depart this life, there will be others to pray for us! It is traditional, but by no means necessary, to include a donation to the Church together with your list of names.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS

EVERY Saturday in Great Lent at 10:15 AM
after Memorial Saturday Liturgy (9:00 AM)



Our topic will be on the various steps from the ladder of Divine Ascent as presented by “Thirty Steps to Heaven” by Fr. **Vassilios Papavassiliou**, a priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.

PLEASE JOIN US!