



ST. ATHANASIUS THE GREAT GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

MONTHLY PARISH BULLETIN - ASKISIS

February 2010

REFLECTIONS ON GREAT LENT

In the grand scheme of events, the Great and Holy 40-day preparation period or Great Lent, as it is commonly referred to, will commence on/with “Pure or Clean Monday” (In Greek: “Kathara Deftera”), Monday, February 15, 2010. Forty days from that day takes us to the Friday (3/26/2010) before the “Saturday of the Raising of Lazarus” (March 27, 2010), where Christ raises Lazarus from the tomb/from the dead (John 11:1-46). From this day forward, Holy Week begins for every Eastern Orthodox Christian. Pascha or Easter is on Sunday, April 4, 2010. Eastern and Western Christianity celebrate on the same date this year, April 4, 2010.

The Themes for the 5 Sundays In Lent are:

1. <<**Triumph and Joy**>> (1st Sun in Lent, February 21, 2010): The Sunday of Orthodoxy) The icons of the Church are restored to their proper place of veneration (8th century). The children of the Sunday Church School process around the Church, holding their icons.
2. <<**Prayer, Meditation and Self-Examination**>> (2nd Sunday in Lent, February 28, 2010): St. Gregory Palamas, born in Thessalonica, 1296-1359 A.D.) St. Gregory is remembered this day for sharing with us the Jesus Prayer, (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”), and helping us to understand that silence and inner prayer will guide us to a deeper understanding of God.
3. <<**The Cross is THE Way to the Resurrection**>> (3rd Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2010): We celebrate the veneration of the Holy Cross. It’s an opportunity to remember that there are no shortcuts on the road to salvation. Sacrifice is a part of life...The road to the Resurrection is through the Crucifixion...This is the midpoint of Holy and Great Lent.
4. <<**The Ascent to Heaven**>> (4th Sunday in Lent, March 14, 2010)): St. John Klimakos (St. John who authored the book called: “The Ladder of Divine Ascent”) St. John Klimacos (6th-7th century) wrote the classic, spiritual work on how to get to Paradise through “spiritual exercise.” A true Christian lifestyle will guide us to Heaven.
5. <<**Humility and Repentance**>> (5th Sunday in Lent, March 21, 2010): We honour and remember St. Mary of Egypt who lived a sinful life, but changed her ways when she found Christ. We too can change and become better Christians at any time, when we want to make adjustments and focus on living by the guidelines of Christ.

A BLESSED AND HOLY PREPARATION PERIOD/GREAT LENT TO ALL

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