

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Orthodox Church of America

A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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## March 14, 2021

40<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost - *Tom 7*

### Cheesefare & Forgiveness Sunday

- 9:10 am - Hours
- 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy followed by Vespers with rite of Forgiveness. Rom. 13:11-14:4 Matt. 6:14-21

### Schedule of Services

#### Monday, March 15

- 6:00 pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew of Grete. Part 1.

#### Tuesday, March 16

- 6:00 pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew of Grete. Part 2.

#### Wednesday, March 17

- 7:00 pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew of Grete. Part 3.

#### Tuesday, March 18

- 6:00 pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew of Grete. Part 4.

#### Saturday, March 20

- 5:00 pm - Great Vespers

#### Sunday, March 21

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

- 9:10 - Hours
- 9:30 - Divine Liturgy followed by rite of Orthodoxy (*procession with the holy icon*).

### WEEKLY BIBLE MESSAG

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit..."

### Venerable Benedict of Nursia

Commemorated on March 14

Saint Benedict, founder of Western monasticism, was born in the Italian city of Nursia in the year 480. When he was fourteen years of age, the saint's parents sent him to Rome to study. Unsettled by the immorality around him, he decided to devote himself to a different sort of life.

At first Saint Benedict settled near the church of the holy Apostle Peter in the village of Effedum, but news of his ascetic life compelled him to go farther into the mountains. There he encountered the hermit Romanus, who tonsured him into monasticism and directed him to live in a remote cave at Subiaco. From time to time, the hermit would bring him food.

For three years the saint waged a harsh struggle with temptations and conquered them. People soon began to gather to him, thirsting to live under his guidance. The number of disciples grew so much, that the saint divided them into twelve communities. Each community was comprised of twelve monks and was a separate skete. The saint gave each skete an igumen from among his experienced disciples, and only the novice monks remained with Saint Benedict for instruction.

The strict monastic Rule Saint Benedict established for the monks was not accepted by everyone, and more than once he was criticized and abused by dissenters.

Finally he settled in Campagna and on Mount Cassino he founded the Monte Cassino monastery, which for a long time was a center of theological education for the Western Church. The monastery possessed a remarkable library. Saint Benedict wrote his Rule, based on the experience of life of the Eastern desert-dwellers and the precepts of Saint John Cassian the Roman (February 29).

The Rule of Saint Benedict dominated Western monasticism for centuries (by the year 1595 it had appeared in more than 100 editions). The Rule prescribed the renunciation of personal possessions, as well as unconditional obedience, and constant work. It was considered the duty of older monks to teach the younger and to copy ancient manuscripts. This helped to preserve many memorable writings from the first centuries of Christianity.

Every new monk was required to live as a novice for a year, to learn the monastic Rule and to become acclimated to monastic life. Every deed required a blessing. The head of this cenobitic monastery is the igumen. He discerns, teaches, and explains. The igumen solicits the advice of the older, experienced brethren, but he makes the final decisions. Keeping the monastic Rule was strictly binding for everyone and was regarded as an important step on the way to perfection.

Saint Benedict was granted by the Lord the gift of foresight and wonderworking. He healed many by his prayers. The monk foretold the day of his death in 547. The main source for his life is the second Dialogue of Saint Gregory.

Saint Benedict's sister, Saint Scholastica (February 10), also became famous for her strict ascetic life and was numbered among the saints.

### Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Genevieve Bobenko, Barbara Bogart, Michael Bzik, Mary Ann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Barbara Kary, Margaret Kovalycsik, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Sytagen, Patricia Galley.

### Birthday Greeting

Happy Birthday go out this week to **Robert Czech** - March 14; and **Nicholas Kovalycsik** - March 20. May God continue to enrich their life with the fullness of joy and happiness for many years - Mnogaya Lyeta!

### Announcement

#### DIOCESAN GUIDELINES (Continuation)

- **Palm Sunday:** Palms and pussy willows, pre-wrapped or pre-tied, may be distributed while observing all current safety protocols. For example, those whom they delegate, wearing a mask and gloves, may distribute the branches by holding one end of the palms and/or pussy willows, and the recipient taking hold of them at the other end.

- **The Service of Holy Unction** may be served, while observing all current safety protocols. Anointing should be done with the priest wearing a mask and using a separate cotton swab for each person being anointed. Used cotton swabs are to be burned.

- **Pascha Red Eggs** may be distributed while observing all current safety protocols. Eggs should be pre-wrapped in plastic or wax-paper bags.

- **Delaying Pascha Liturgy** to Sunday Morning may be blessed, for reason of COVID considerations, for this year only.

- **Pascha Baskets** may be blessed at times that are according to the present practice of the parish, while observing all current safety protocols.

- **Bell Ringing** for services is permitted according to usual parish custom.