



St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122



A parish of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia



V. Rev. Fr. Martin Swanson, Pastor
Fr. Sergii Alekseev, Associate Pastor
V. Rev. Fr. Radomir Chkautovich, Attached

February 2018

The Meeting of the Lord (Feb 2/15)

As with all of the sacred events celebrated by the twelve great feasts, the Meeting of the Lord also is so rich in content that it is difficult immediately to grasp it. Let us dwell in thought only as it were on the historical meaning of the event.

On the day of the Meeting of the Lord, an encounter occurred between the Old and New Testaments. Old Testament humanity in the person of the Elder Simeon and the Prophetess Anna saw with its own eyes, in the Person of the Child Jesus, the realization of all its expectations and the meaning of its own existence. Old Testament humanity, although it was not deprived of Divine Revelation concerning the meaning of life and even had communion with God to a limited extent, all the same, became increasingly more conscious of the limited degree of this communion. This humanity, through its best representatives, thirsted for something greater, and unto these people the best of the Old Testament God gradually revealed that in the future the fullness of good and the fullness of communion with God would be given, so that the spiritual thirst of humanity would be satisfied. Gradually, to the ancient prophets was revealed the mystery concerning the future appearance of the Messiah, the special Anointed of God, the Bearer of Supreme Truth.

People understood and conceived of the image of the future Redeemer in different ways. Of course, the Jews, correctly considering themselves to be the chosen people, saw in the Messiah their Saviour from those historical calamities that had overtaken them; but many of them also understood that the future Messiah would be the Possessor of Supreme Truth and even a Man who would suffer for the Truth. Based upon what Simeon himself said, it is possible to think that he expected both from the Messiah. But what exactly he waited for is not

even so important as the fact that he thirsted for the appearing of the Messiah. Old Testament Simeon lived by this expectation, and in this expectation he lived not for himself, but for his people, God's people. It is hard to doubt, that it was exactly because of the special intensity of his Messianic expectations, in which his spiritual life was expressed, that Simeon was chosen to receive a special Revelation. And this was a great revelation, a revelation above measure; it cut short the life of Simeon himself, because the life of the Old Testament the fullness of which Simeon lived by ended.

Such a death could only be joyful, because in it was revealed the meaning of all life. The words of Simeon Himself "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart...." was, as it were, the Old Testament "It is finished!"; the "It is finished!" which the Crucified Messiah Himself said in the New Testament. In the one and the other "It is finished!", there was great joy, in spite of the fact that death followed in each case after these words. The joy consists in the fact that there is Meaning in the world. Moreover, from the words of Simeon we know that this meaning can be revealed to others also; it is revealed before the face of all peoples and is the glory of the people of Israel and the world even for pagans.

This meaning is the glory of the people of Israel because God Himself chose them in order to become incarnate in one of their sons.

And the pagans are not forgotten by God. Now the Light of Divine revelation becomes approachable even to them.

What does this farewell encounter between the Old Testament now passing away and the New Testament now suddenly appearing teach us, the people of the New Testament, the people of the New Israel, among whom there (continue page 6)

Special Services & Events for February

2/5 Mon. Meatfare Week
2/6 Tues 6:00 p.m. Moleben for St. Xenia of Petersburg
2/10 Sat 5:00 p.m. Memorial Saturday Pannyhida
2/11 Sun. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for the Feast of the Three Hierarchs
2/12 Mon. Cheese fare Week
2/12 Mon. 8:00 D. Liturgy for the Three Hierarchs
2/14 Wed. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple
2/15 Thur. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the Meeting of the Lord in the

Temple

2/18 Sun. 6:00 p.m. Forgiveness Vespers
2/19 Mon. Beginning of Great Lent
2/19 Mon. 6:00 p.m. Compline and Great Canon
2/20 Tues. 6:00 p.m. Compline and Great Canon
2/21 Wed. 8:00 a.m. Presanctified D. Liturgy
2/21 Wed. 6:00 p.m. Compline and Great Canon
2/22 Thurs. 6:00 p.m. Compline and Great Canon
2/23 Fri. 6:00 p.m. Presanctified D. Liturgy
2/25 Sun. of Orthodoxy
2/28 Wed. 8:00 a.m. Presanctified D. Liturgy

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Parish News

Subdeacon Ephraim Graduates from the Pastoral School of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America

After successfully completing his comprehensive oral examinations and defending his thesis, Subdeacon Ephraim Galloway was awarded a Diploma in Pastoral Theology by Archbishop Peter on New Year's day 2018. The graduation occurred at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in Des Plaines, Ill., Immediately following a Divine Liturgy honoring St. John of Kronstadt, the Patron Saint of the School. The event was witnessed by the administration of the Pastoral School, and by his wife Sophia and their son Gabriel, along with many parishioners of the Cathedral parish.

Subdeacon Ephraim has worked diligently for over four years to achieve this honor and becomes eligible to advance in the clerical rank by virtue of having won this distinction.

Over 60 credit hours of course work were required to complete the degree along with the submission of a scholarly thesis. Subdeacon Ephraim wrote his thesis on the harmony between Church and State in the Russian Empire. In addition, the Diploma graduates of the School become accredited Catechists meeting the certification requirements of The Commission on Education of the Moscow Patriarchate. May God grant him Many Years!

Nativity and Theophany

Christ is Born! After a long season of preparation we began the festive season with the services of the Nativity of Christ on January 7th. The beautiful Christmas services were followed in the parish hall by a festive buffet sumptuously prepared by parishioners. The parish Sunday School serenaded diners with a wonderful program of Nativity carols to which many parishioners joined in.

The Parish Feast day broke on a cold January 14th morning and was attended by most of the parish. It was a glorious Winter Pasch (a separate article on the Feast follows).

The Third Great Feast to take place in January was Theophany or Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist. The Feast was celebrated on Friday January 19 and was followed by the Great Blessing of Water.

It is customary in the Orthodox Church for people to have their homes blessed annually by a priest with Holy Water sanctified on the Feast of Theophany. The blessing of homes begins on Theophany and continues until the start of Great Lent. Those who wish to have their home blessed still have time and should make an appointment by signing up on the bulletin board in the hall. Prepare for the blessing of your home by

having a small table covered by a clean white cloth in the main room of your home. On the table you should have a small bowl for Holy Water, two small candles in stands and an icon of the Baptism of Our Lord in the Jordan. If you don't have these items the priest can provide them. Also, please have all animals contained and televisions and radios turned off. Remember this is a religious service and should be conducted with as much dignity as possible. Family members including children should participate to the degree that they are able.

Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady Barabtarlo (Health)

Boris Artemov (Health)

Archimandrite Seraphim of Holy Cross Hermitage (Health)

Michael Orlando (Health)

Carolyn Orlando—Health

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Martin to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

Contact Your Priest if You are Ill or Hospitalized

Contact Fr. Martin to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

USE eSCRIP

It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get Cards at the candle counter. Sign up for the AMAZON rebate program to have a portion of you Amazon purchase donated by them to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the stair case in the hall.

SERVERS WANTED!

Boys may begin to serve in the altar at St. Basil's from the time they begin to go to Confession (usually about 9 years old). We encourage all our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/StBasiltheGreatSTLMO

For daily edification and updates of interest, like our Facebook Fanpage! Parishioner Ron Wall brings the best of Orthodoxy to us there everyday! "Like" us to appear in your FB Newsfeed

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St. Basil Feast Day

Patronal Feast Day in St Louis

On January 1/14, the Holy Orthodox Church observes the Feast of Circumcision of Our Lord along with that of the Holy Hierarch Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. On this day Saint Basil's parish in St Louis, MO, celebrates its patronal feast.

For every parish the feast of its patron saint is a solemn and joyful event. The festivities acquire an extra dimension when presided over by the ruling hierarch.

The celebration began with the All-night Vigil on Saturday night, Jan. 13, when serving together with Archbishop Peter were a number of local, as well as visiting clergy: St Basil's rector Archpriest Martin Swanson, priests Joseph Strzelecki and Josef von Klarr (Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, Town and Country, MO), Achilles Karathanos (Sts Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, Swansea, IL), Michael Volzhansky (Holy Archangels Monastery, House Springs, MO), Sergii Alekseev (cleric of St Basil's) and Archdeacon Sergius (Holy Cross Hermitage, Wayne, WV). At the end of the Vigil Archbishop Peter took the opportunity to thank the local priests for coming to celebrate the parish feast day, as most of them would be serving the next morning Divine Liturgy in their own parishes, since the feast of Holy Hierarch Basil the Great fell on a Sunday this year.

The following morning Archbishop Peter was welcomed by young girls in traditional Russian dresses who presented Vladyka with flowers and parishioner Michael Orlando who greeted our Archpastor with the traditional bread and salt. In the narthex awaiting Vladyka's blessing were Archpriests

Martin Swanson and Radomir Chkautovich (retired Serbian priest attached to St Basil's), priests Michael Volzhansky and Sergii Alekseev and Archdeacon Sergius.

During the reading of the Hours, St Basil's parishioner Daniel Domer was tonsured a Reader and Reader Thomas Nichols was ordained a Subdeacon. Following the Great Entrance, Subdeacon Ephraim Galloway was ordained a Deacon.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Peter greeted the parish clergy, including the newly-ordained Deacon, Subdeacon, Reader and the faithful of St Basil's with their second Pascha. In his homily, Vladyka spoke about the significance of the Circumcision of the Lord wherewith, following the Virgin Birth of the Saviour, the world could once again be assured that the incarnation of the Divine Logos was not an apparition, nor illusion. The Son of God truly took on human nature, remaining True God and becoming True Man. Vladyka also thanked the monks of the Holy Cross Hermitage Archdeacon Sergius and rhyasaphor monk Nicholas (who served in the altar) for helping make serving the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great with a triple ordination "painless". At the festive trapeza, Vladyka answered many questions of the parishioners and spoke about his roots, the history of his family and his own childhood. The faithful did not want to let Vladyka go, for St Basil's parish has the joy of seeing their archpastor only once a year, but he had to rush to the airport to return to Chicago.

We thank God for making it possible for our ruling hierarch to be with us, to pray with us and to teach us how to remain on the path to salvation.



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More Photos from St. Basil Feast Day



Martha Alekseev (Fr. Sergii's daughter) greets Archbishop Peter as Subdeacon Nicholas from Holy Cross Monastery looks on



Parishioner Daniel Domer being tonsured as Reader by Archbishop Peter



Reader Thomas Nichols being ordained Subdeacon



Archbishop Peter leading the procession around the church



Left: Subdeacon Ephrem Galloway after his graduation from the Pastoral School, wife Sophie, son Gabriel, Archbishop Peter (center), Fr. Martin (right).

Right: Subdeacon Ephrem Galloway being ordained Deacon by Archbishop Peter on St. Basil's Feast Day.



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Thoughts on Great Lent by Patriarch Kyrill

A Time of Healing

Words from Patriarch Kirill on Great Lent

We are passing through the field of Great Lent to purify our souls, to sanctify ourselves by the grace of God, to root ourselves in the truth of God, and to learn how to withstand sin, evil, and unrighteousness, first of all in our own lives.

Lent is a tool which man can use to truly affect the state of his soul, because through abstinence from food, entertainments, and various types of temptations, we train our will, and we elevate our senses.

Fasting and prayer are great means of elevating the soul, overcoming sins, and transforming the inner state of a man. It especially belongs to us in Great Lent to use these means to help ourselves, to change our inner world, and to be closer to God.

The days of Great Lent are given to us that we might think about our inner lives, analyze our thoughts and actions, and determine how far we are able to resist sinful temptations, and how far we are ready to build our lives according to God's law.

We devote Great Lent to analyzing our inner spiritual life, to rigorously examining our thoughts, feelings, willful ambitions, and actions.

The Holy Quadregesima presents us with the special opportunity to go deeper into self-contemplation.

Great Lent is a time of freedom from sicknesses, a time of healing. It is a spiritual sanatorium which we enter with hope for recovery, for the refreshing of our senses, for the renewal of our thoughts, and the strengthening of our faith.

The constancy which we so often guard and which we consider comfortable and familiar for ourselves is actually a regression. If nothing occurs in the human soul which elevates that soul, then we lower the level of our spiritual lives. The purpose of Lent consists in disrupting our internal dormancy, a certain complacency, to place before ourselves very specific goals, the achievement of which is so necessary during Lent.

The thousands of years of spiritual life, which began from the very dawn of human history, bear witness that abstinence from food sharpens the mind and human senses, mobilizing the will.

Limiting our food helps to sharpen the senses and ability—rational, mental ability—to see the defects in our own lives.

Great Lent is the time when, reflecting upon our inner life, testing our conscience, we must begin to heal ourselves, through the correction of our mind, through the training of our senses, and through the training of our will.

The time of Great Lent is a time of battling with vice—with pride and envy.

We are given the saving days of Great Lent to contemplate the mystery of salvation, which God opened to us in Christ, and contemplating salvation, of which each of us can become an inheritor, we try, relying on the help of God, to conquer our feeble but real attraction to sin, overcoming vice and renewing our connection with God, which is our sole means of attaining salvation.

The whole point of Lent is to allow God into our lives, that the Lord would not be on the periphery of our lives, that we would remember Him not just once in a week as Sunday draws near, but to learn to walk before God, as did walk the Old Testament prophets, as did walk holy men, as did walk before God our holy, venerable, and God-bearing father Sergius, the igumen of Radonezh.

The meaning of Lent, as the holy fathers say, consists in the changing of our mind and heart.

Lent as limiting yourself in food is a very important indicator of human willingness and ability for inner spiritual growth.

Our Lenten podvig arises to the Lord as a fragrant sacrifice, and the Lord answers us because He is never in debt to us. If for His sake we sacrifice our interests and limit ourselves, then the Lord repays this limitation with that which is more essential for man: a change of our inner state, and a change of our mind and heart.

Be joyous and bright. Don't say anything to others about how you've taken these burdens upon yourself and then the fast will become pleasing to God.

If a person feels some fatigue, if irritability and conflicts accrue, then we must strengthen our prayer, and the main thing is that we must impress upon ourselves that any violation of inner peace and calm during Lent negates the entire point of the Great Lenten podvig.

The very first step each one of us must take, including entering upon the arena of Great Lent, is the attempt to understand what within ourselves, within our life's circumstances, dictates our

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Lenten Thoughts cont'd

sinful behavior.

The holy Great Fast is given to us to ascend to virtues from strength to strength.

The time of Great Lent gives us the chance to spiritually concentrate, to think of the most important thing: distinguishing sin from righteousness.

The arena of the Holy Quadragesima is given to us to become spiritually strong, and for this the Church offers the most necessary, the easiest and the most effective means for man: prayer, abstinence, and repentance.

The purpose of Lent consists in achieving an inner change.

Lent must not become an occasion for us to fall into the most grievous sin—the sin of pride and vainglory.



Forgiveness Sunday

(continued from page 1) is neither Greek, nor Jew, nor pagan? Of course, the "It is finished!", which was spoken by the Lord on the Cross, already comprises our preparation for salvation. But each of us, and, to a certain extent, all humanity, willingly accepts or does not accept this "It is finished!" Each of us is called to say his own "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart...", his own "It is finished!". We all must fulfill and complete our own destiny. As with the Righteous Simeon, as well as with Jesus Christ Himself, this personal destiny is accomplished and completed if it joins in the common cause, in the common destiny of humanity.

Simeon's mission was the mission of the Old Testament Church: to ignite faith in the coming Saviour and to be prepared and to prepare for this meeting. The mission of each of us is also the mission of the Church. We must prepare and be prepared for the new final Meeting with Christ. Then all

humanity will be called to say its third and final "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart...", its final "It is finished!" In simpler language, this means that we are saved not alone but together in the Church; we are saved while saving not only ourselves but others also.

The whole life of the Christian must be given over to God, and in the same way also to His Body, the Church. The Christian must always live his life not just humanly, but Divinelyhuman; he must always determine and perform not his own will, but God's.

If he will live always in this consciousness, in such a spiritual way, then at the approach of his end he will joyfully say his own "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart...", his own "It is finished!" (from www.orthochristian.com)