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A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MID-AMERICA  
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

April 2019

## Historical Development of the Great Fast

*Excerpt from the Introduction to the Lenten Triodion on the length of the Great Fast*

The choice of the number forty for the days of Lent has obvious biblical precedents. The people of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness (Exod. 16:35); Moses remained fasting for forty years on Mount Sinai (Exod. 34:28); Elijah abstained from all food for forty days as he journeyed to Mount Horeb (3 [1]Kgs. 19:8). Most important of all, Christ fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1).

But how are the forty days to be computed? In the fourth and fifth centuries, the manner of reckoning varied. Some kept a fast of six weeks, some of seven or even eight. Three points arose: (a) Is Holy Week included in the forty days, or treated as a distinct and additional Period? (b) Is Saturday regarded as a day of fasting? (c) Are the forty days reckoned continuously, including Saturday and Sundays? Or is Sunday excluded from the calculation, and Saturday also, if this is considered not to be a day of fasting?

Divergent answers to these three questions account for present day difference between the Western and the Orthodox Lent. At Rome, Holy Week was included as part of the forty days, Saturday was regarded as a day of fasting, but in calculating the number forty, all Sundays were excluded from the reckoning. This produced a six-week fast of six days in each week, constituting a total of thirty-six days. To make up the full measure of forty days, four further days of fasting were then added at the beginning, with the result that Lent in the West commences on a Wednesday.

At Constantinople, on the other hand, Holy Week - together with the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday - was not regarded as part of the forty-day fast in a strict sense. At Vespers on Friday evening in the sixth week, immediately preceding the Saturday of Lazarus, the distinction between the forty days and Holy Week is very clearly marked in the existing text of the Triodion:

Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul,  
We beseech Thee in Thy love for man:



## Special Services & Events

- Wed. 4/3 8 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy
- Fri. 4/5 6 p.m. Vespers and Matins
- Sat. 4/6 9 a.m. 40 day Memorial D. Liturgy for Reader Gennady
- Sat. 4/6 11 a.m. Johnstone Baptism
- Sat. 4/6 5 p.m. Vigil
- Sun. 4/7 10 a.m. D. Liturgy Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos
- Wed. 4/10 8 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy
- Wed. 4/10 6 p.m. Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Fri. 4/12 6 p.m. Vespers and Matins with Akathist
- Sat. 4/13 5 p.m. Vigil
- Sun. 4/14 10 a.m. D. Liturgy St. Mary of Egypt
- Wed. 4/17 8 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy
- Fri. 4/19 6 p.m. Vigil
- Sat. 4/20 Lazarus Sat. 9 a.m. D. Liturgy
- Sat. 4/20 5 p.m. Vigil
- Sun. 4/21 10 a.m. D. Liturgy Palm Sunday
- Mon 4/22 7-10 p.m. Confessions
- Tues 4/23 7-10 p.m. Confessions
- Wed. 4/24 8 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy
- Wed. 4/24 6 p.m. Holy Unction
- Thur. 4/25 8 a.m. Vespers & D. Liturgy
- Thur. 4/25 6 p.m. Reading of the 12 passion Gospels
- Fri. 4/26 9 a.m. Royal Hours
- Fri. 4/26 4 p.m. Vespers and the taking down of Our Lord's Body from the Cross
- Fri. 4/26 6 p.m. Lamentation Service and procession with the Shroud
- Sat. 4/27 9 a.m. Vespers and Liturgy
- Sat. 4/27 Blessing of Baskets:  
Noon  
9:30 p.m.  
10:30 p.m.
- Sat. 4/27 10 p.m. Reading of the Acts of the Apostles
- Sat. 4/27 11:30 p.m. Midnight Office
- Sun. 4/28 Midnight Pascha Matins and D. Liturgy
- Sun. 4/28 2 p.m. Agape Vespers
- Sun. 4/28 3 p.m. Pascha Banquet in Church hall

# Parish News

## Choir Voices Needed

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir, all voices are needed. Choir practice is held every Wednesday evening in the church at 6:30. All members of the choir should attend as many practices as possible in order to prepare for the services of the coming week. The choir is an important ministry of the church and if you can sing, you serve God by joining the choir. WE NEED YOU!

## Weekly Tours of St. Basil's

Tours of St. Basil's church are conducted by one of the parish clergy every Wednesday between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., and are designed to acquaint the community with the church, its architecture, traditional design, iconography, and history. No appointments are necessary and the tours will accommodate both individuals and groups. Advance notice would be appreciated for groups over 5. For additional information or to schedule a group tour contact Fr. Martin at 314-835-1569.

## Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady Barabtarlo - Repose  
Nadya Danett - Health  
Archimandrite Seraphim - Recovery

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 do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

## Use eSCRIP and Amazon Smile Rebates

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 your Amazon purchase donated by Amazon 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 of our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

## St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

Check out <https://www.facebook.com/SaintBasiltheGreatSTLMO/> for daily edification and interesting updates. Like our Facebook Fanpage! "Like" us to have us appear in your Facebook Newsfeed.

## ПРОДАЖА КУЛИЧЕЙ



## KULICHI SALE

Kulich are available for sale from 10 A.M. to 1:30 PM on Sunday, April 14th and Sunday April 23rd. Kulichi will also be sold on Saturday April 27th from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 9:30 P.M. to midnight while supplies last

## March Wordsearch Answers

T	R	I	U	M	P	H	O	F	O	R	T	H	O	D	O	X	Y	K	
R	F	L	I	F	E	G	I	V	I	N	G	C	R	O	S	S	W	G	R
K	M	O	Y	E	T	L	I	C	O	N	O	C	L	A	S	M	U	B	K
B	M	A	R	G	P	D	A	G	V	L	V	N	L	W	N	R	N	R	N
G	D	B	R	G	Q	H	K	S	D	J	Z	T	J	X	T	W	N	Q	J
T	R	X	R	T	I	Z	R	J	T	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E	W	J
R	D	E	M	W	Y	V	M	A	Z	J	Y	P	L	R	N	V	T	B	M
I	P	X	G	Z	V	R	E	V	I	V	U	D	N	Z	R	N	R	L	L
O	D	R	T	O	R	Q	S	N	R	M	E	D	W	Y	E	W	N	Y	M
D	Y	Y	O	M	R	N	L	O	E	I	T	B	G	L	R	A	M	Z	L
I	V	W	N	D	Y	Y	G	J	F	S	X	H	T	E	C	V	M	D	R
O	N	V	J	T	I	G	P	I	Z	S	S	A	E	I	M	N	Y	T	Z
N	L	M	L	Y	N	G	T	A	M	G	E	S	L	S	D	E	N	R	V
Q	Y	D	R	T	Z	C	A	T	L	R	J	B	U	N	Y	R	N	Q	Q
K	W	P	Z	X	N	N	J	L	G	A	U	D	A	N	P	R	V	T	R
J	D	D	P	A	N	R	G	D	S	P	M	L	L	S	D	K	I	M	Z
K	N	S	M	L	T	K	R	Z	O	T	A	N	W	T	A	K	A	W	
B	B	E	R	Y	L	Y	T	N	R	N	G	S	N	M	E	Y	M	N	
T	R	P	L	M	L	T	G	N	W	Q	W	V	M	R	D	N	Y	G	
P	B	R	T	N	M	J	D	B	X	P	Y	R	T	K	V	W	Y	D	M

Lenten Triodion Excerpt continued  
Grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion...

At Constantinople and in the East generally, Saturdays, with the one exception of Holy Saturday, were not considered days of fasting. But in reckoning the number forty it was the custom to count continuously, including Saturdays and Sundays in the calculation. Thus the forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on the Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks.

### **Pascha: The Bright Resurrection of Christ**

Pascha will be celebrated on April 28th at St. Basils with joyful services and followed by Bright Week when we celebrate Christ's Resurrection. A festal luncheon will be held following Agape Vespers. Sign up sheets for dishes will be pinned to the bulletin board in the Church Narthex.

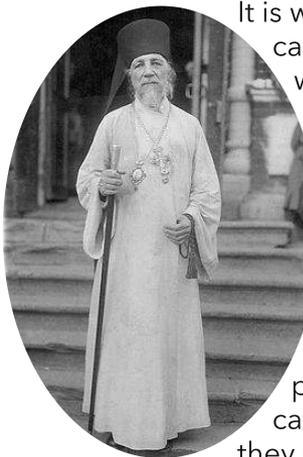
### **On Cassocks and Ryasas**

Everyday clothes worn by clergy - the cassock (a long robe with narrow sleeves) and the ryasa (a long freely-fitting robe with wide sleeves) - are essentially what an average person would wear in the East in the times when the Church was born. We can see Christ in our icons wearing a long robe with narrow sleeves. Even now, similar clothes are common to people in the Middle East. However, very early on the clothes worn by clergy acquired certain characteristics that distinguished the servers of the Holy Altar and the monastics from the rest of the populace.

The cassock and the ryasa are symbols of one's inner tranquility, and they witness that the wearer rejects the bustle of worldly life. Peace and tranquility of heart, which is in constant spiritual union with God, is the goal for any Christian. Clergy and monastics - the people who are specially set aside for serving God - are called to the struggle of attaining to Christian perfection more than anyone else.

The outer clothing of clergy and monks testifies to their high calling, reminds them of it, helps them to attain it. Signifying the garment which the Lord Jesus Christ wore during His earthly life, the cassock and the ryasa point to the fact that clergy and monastics are followers of Christ, as were His disciples. The long robes of clergy are images of the divine grace which envelops God's servants, covering their human weaknesses. The simple cloth cassock worn by the monks and girded with a leather belt - is a symbol of the hair shirt and leather belt worn in the desert by the preacher of repentance, John the Forerunner.

The black color of the robes is worth mentioning. In essence, the color black is void of any color, it is outside of the color spectrum. When used especially by monks, it signifies a lack of passions and death to sin, while at the same time it symbolizes one's concentration on the unseen inner life.



It is worth noting that the cassock is an undergarment, while the ryasa is an outer garment. Bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers always wear cassocks during the divine services, with the vestments put over the cassock. When serving Vigil, bishops and priests put on a ryasa over their cassocks and only then do they put on appointed vestments. When a man is tonsured a reader, he receives a blessing to wear a cassock. Readers and subdeacons do not wear ryasas - only cassocks. Both the cassock and the ryasa have a small cross stitched on the inside of the collar - this cross is kissed by the wearer before the garment is put on.

Monastics wear only black cassocks and ryasas, while the robes of the parish clergy can be of different colors (hierarchs, although being monks, wear ryasas and cassocks of other colors than black, as well). If during the services black ryasas are worn, outside of the services white cassocks and ryasas are often worn on such great feasts as Pascha and Nativity – after the seasons of long fasting periods, blue cassocks can be worn on the feasts of the Mother of God, green – on Pentecost. Although the cassocks and, less frequently, ryasas can be of different colors, the colors are always solid.

Yet, black remains the standard color for clergy clothing, especially during the Great Lent. Often the clergy can be seen wearing what looks like a longer vest. This, in fact, is a short ryasa and serves in place of ryasa, being also an outer garment.

### **Ask your Priest**

**Q:** What are Pre-Sanctified Liturgies and what significance or purpose do they serve? Why is it important to attend Pre-Sanctified Liturgies?

*A: On the weekdays of the Great Lent no Divine Liturgies may be served. Divine Liturgy is associated with feasting -- on Saturdays and Sundays of Lent, when the Liturgies are served, we set aside the usual fasting discipline and feast by adding wine and olive oil to our meals.*

*Although the services with communion during the weekdays of Lent we call "Divine Liturgies of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts", they are not Liturgies in the full sense of the word -- no bloodless sacrifice is offered, no bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the Saviour. Therefore, the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is a modified Vespers with the Holy Communion. How is the Holy Communion possible if no bloodless sacrifice is offered? The Holy Gifts of the Body and Blood of the Lord are prepared during the Sunday Divine Liturgy and are preserved on the Holy Altar Table till Wednesday and Friday, when usually the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is served.*

*The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy exists to allow those who fast very ardently to fortify themselves with the Holy Communion during the week. In parishes*

*and monasteries where the Lenten services are present in their full scale, the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is preceded by Matins, Lenten Hours and Typika. Thus, communion with the Dreadful Mysteries becomes a culmination of the Lenten labors of fasting and prayer.*

*The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts is a very solemn service with the undeniable Lenten flavor even for those whose everyday life makes them forget what season we are in. To remind ourselves of it and to awaken our souls from worldly daydreaming we must immerse ourselves into the timeless realm of the Lenten Divine Services.*

### **Getting to know our Deacon: Father Deacon Ephraim**

**Where were you born?**

*1972, St. John's Mercy Hospital, Creve Coeur, MO in West St. Louis County into the family of an architect father and a teacher mother who went on hiatus to raise me.*



**Where have you lived?**

*My parents raised me in Warson Woods, MO. From age 18 on, I lived first in South St. Louis (Soulard then Tower Grove South), then in Lake Ozark, MO, then back home, then South St. Louis, then back home, then University City, then Vienna, Austria, then Carbondale and Murphysboro, Illinois for graduate school, then the Debaliviere area, then South St. Louis again, then Maplewood, Crestwood, and now Florissant. We hope to get back to civilization soon.*

**Where and what did you study?**

*I completed the Pastoral Theology seminary program in the online diocesan Pastoral School, which prepares one for the holy priesthood. Before that I completed graduate studies in Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, including a residency and comprehensive exams covering the history of ancient, medieval and modern philosophy, ethics, logic, aesthetics, social and political philosophy, and philosophy of religion, but I focused in Classical and Generative Phenomenology and Continental Social Ontology. My undergraduate*

work was in Existential Philosophy at Webster University, although my official degree was English--Professional Writing (technical writing, grant-writing, journalism) with a minor in Philosophy.

#### **When and why did you convert to Orthodoxy?**

*Towards the end of my time in graduate school around 2005 I studied the phenomenology of mysticism and religious experience mainly through the experience of loving and the lived body and its method (i.e. the Epoche) was most dynamically exemplified in its generative aspect by the prayer of the heart or hesychia. I had recently given a lecture version of my thesis at a conference in New York and it was well-received by some friends who lived in Felton, California near Santa Cruz, one of whom (a famous musician) had recently converted to Orthodoxy through his Romanian girlfriend (who is now a nun in Bucharest). Their stories about their spiritual father, Hieromonk Symeon, who daily walked from his cell through the woods to my friend's log cabin home, and their description of the divine services and their profound humility captivated me. Like in my thesis defense, I had been forced out of my area of study and into the clouds one too many times due to the pluralist, professional academic nature of the philosophy department and I knew I had really discovered something or vice versa. I knew I needed to dig right in to something which requires a theology vast enough to encompass the unceasing praxis required for true transformation, and I needed the example of true saints of God. So I began praying, researching, and streaming services online. All it took was the witness of children receiving Holy Communion, of the intoning of hymns, of the iconography, of the lives of the saints. That and the notion of the apophatic or boundless and unfathomable essence of God. I began attending services at St. Basil's because of learning from the life of St. John Maximovitch through Fr. Seraphim Rose that the Russian Church Abroad had best preserved the Tradition of the Church. I had already studied hesychasm through St. Gregory Palamas and theosis in St. Maximus the Confessor, and I bought the entire Philokalia at the recommendation of the Romanian nun. Fr. Martin's homilies and the beauty of the services drove it home every time. When I began my weekly, year-long catechism course under Fr. Martin I put all that aside at his command, as it was like a baby eating steak before weaning on mother's milk. I was raised*

*Presbyterian but lived in a Catholic parish with lots of kids with whom I played parochial sports, and in junior high I converted to Roman Catholicism because I loved religion class and the liturgical nature of the mass although I didn't really "know" that: I really wanted to participate fully. After changing schools for high school I became "independent-minded" and by the end was reading more Dostoevsky and Nietzsche than my assigned textbooks. So it had been quite a while since any positive encounter with Christendom when I answered the call to right and true Christianity. I now find it hard to regret anything prior other than sin of course because I perhaps would have been led elsewhere than the only path to salvation, and I am converted over and over again all the time in timeless moments of similar prayerful realizations. I think this is called metanoia, or turning away from the world and back to God, and it is interesting that making the sign of the cross with the Holy Orar as instructed in the deacon's service rubrics is a derivative called a "metania."*

#### **How long have you been a deacon?**

*I recently more or less privately celebrated my one-year anniversary on our parish feast, and what better way to celebrate than serving at one's parish feast.*

#### **What do you like about being a deacon?**

*So far, just the utmost challenge of exceeding at prayerfully serving as a sort of magisterial interface between the faithful and God by assisting His ordained celebrants, trying unworthily to attune and re-attune souls to the truth through the bountiful beauty of the services in a God-given office where such becomes explicitly appropriate, whereas doing so on kliros one does so in an implicit manner as unified with the choir, or silently as in altar-serving. As St. John of Kronstadt counsels us, each service is an opportunity to allow one's wretched ignorance to peel away and to rise into alignment with God's will and perhaps to become His worthy servant.*

#### **Why did you choose your patron saint, St. Ephraim the Syrian?**

*When I first decided to commit to researching the Orthodox Church I happened upon a line from I think his Spiritual Psalter with this image likening obedience to the Apostle's exhortation to pray without ceasing to that of the worker bee ceaselessly praising the flower it pollinates. This particularly struck me who badly needed to*

replace a negative outlook on nature as blind clockwork and workers as communist slaves, and it stuck with me. I read the life of the saint and was fascinated by his cutting to the quick in repentance and dedication to the Church after an irresponsible youth--the only way to become able to respond is always to turn from conscience to prayer. Plus, something previously concealed for generations was revealed to me in my early 20s that my mother's paternal grandfather was Syrian and married a Tyrolian woman of French descent, and they lived in Tyrol (a unique ethnic hybrid of the warring southwestern Austrians and northern Italians).

**What do you like about St. Ephraim the Syrian?**  
 Like in my previous answer, I found through the fecundity of his words and also those of his contemporaries like St. Basil and St. Gregory a sense of a fragile and endangered immediacy with God. Also, I have yet to find an insightful churchman who does not express a profound respect for the venerable deacon. Pushkin would apparently make great occasion of and actually reposed on his feast day, and his only published prayer was a rhyming version of his Lenten prayer. Fr. Abbot Seraphim of Holy Cross Monastery quoted from him on one of his visits while I was a catechumen, and reassured me of the

tremendous wealth of holiness in the saint.

**Would you like to talk about your family?**  
 It is a great blessing to be raising a family in the Church and to be able to contribute to it in a dedicated way. Matushka and I look forward to seeing the parish grow and blossom along with our now-four-year-old son, Gabriel. I am 46 and Matushka is 33. I was baptized in 2009 and she in 2010, when we were also married in the Church.

**Do you have anything else you would like for the parish to know?**  
 Well, I did recently start a blog online which I plan to publish somewhat regularly but it may not be for everybody as at times it by default involves or seeks to develop some of my own viewpoints. I have commandeered the name *Diakonia*, which translates directly as "service" and generally refers to the service of God in His heavenly sheepfold the Church, and sometimes specifically the ideal of well-ordered beauty in the Diaconal Art. I have not yet received a blessing for it yet, so I will not publicly reveal the address at this time. I would also like to thank everyone for their prayers, kindness, and patience as I grow into my new clerical role.

**Great Lent / Pascha**

R A Y R N M P L P K Y M N R V X  
 J M N P E B A L A S P E Q R J D  
 L O M D K S J R O Z S A V Z U N  
 A Q H Y R R U K Y I A N S O G Y  
 Q N V N S E O R R O O R R C S N  
 P Z N N O T W S R N F H U R H Y  
 M A V U O F I O A E S E U S A A  
 N R S E N T T C F L C O G D J V  
 K A H S S C T H A C H T N Y N N  
 C T K I I A I I E L R U I D P R  
 M H R A E O R A A L S E Q O B T  
 L H R R T U N Y T M A U T W N Y  
 C D G I B H O W L I J D P E T N  
 D J N V S R I A E G O T D P B P  
 W J X Q R M P S W E N N D E E G  
 B G X X Y B B M T B K D D B R R

Answers to wordsearch to be included in May newsletter

- John of the Ladder
- Great Canon
- Andrew of Crete
- Annunciation
- Theotokos
- Akathist
- Mary of Egypt
- Palm Sunday
- Lazarus
- Passion Week
- Mystical Supper
- Burial Shroud
- Royal Hours
- Chrism
- Pascha
- Resurrection