

SUNDAY, MARCH 18TH

SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER

- 8:40a.m. Hours
- 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
- Coffee Hour

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21ST

- 7:00p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

THURSDAY, MARCH 22ND

- 7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew

SATURDAY, MARCH 24TH

AKATHIST SATURDAY

- 9:00a.m. Akathist to Theotokos
- 6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH

ANNUNCIATION

- 8:40a.m. Hours
- 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
- Coffee Hour

ON SILENCE

From the Ladder



One who knows his faults has controlled his tongue, but the talkative has not known himself deeply as he should.

The friend of silence draws near to God and conversing secretly is illuminated by God. The silence of Jesus turned Pilate to respect. A man of stillness brings to condemnation the voice of empty-glory.



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 18, 2007



The New Parish Council

was installed, with the blessing of our diocesan hierarch, Metropolitan Herman, last Sunday at the end of the Divine Liturgy. We congratulate the new council and we offer our prayers that they may serve the Church worthily in their high calling. May the Lord bless them!

Update on Isabelle

Isabelle is now at home and doing very well. Jodi thanks you all for your prayers and asks you to continue them during Isabelle's recovery period. For information on Isabelle's surgery and progress, please see: <http://isabellevalentina.blogspot.com>. May the Lord continue to help Isabelle and Jodi through this trying time!

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

If you haven't been able to attend a Presanctified Liturgy this Great Lent, there is only one more chance: Wednesday, March 21st, at 7:00pm. If you cannot keep a total fast from midnight the night before because of medical reasons, weakness, or work responsibilities, and you would still like to receive Holy Communion, you may eat a light lenten meal in the early morning, or by 12 noon at the latest. Should you have any questions, please speak with Fr. John.



The Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete

is one of the most beautiful and powerful services of the Lenten season, and will be served for the final time this Thursday evening at 7:00pm. In this service, only about 50 minutes long, St. Andrew wonderfully weaves our own personal story of sinfulness and restoration in Christ with the accounts of the sinful and righteous of the Old and New Testaments, giving us greater awareness of not only the history of salvation for the people of God, but also greater insight into how we must participate in the writing of our own personal salvation history. If you have never attended this service, or have not yet attended during this Great Lent, do not pass up your last opportunity.

The Parish Bookstore

in the back of the church, now offers a small collection of excellent books. If you haven't yet selected a book for spiritual reading this Lent, now is your chance. Highly recommended are *Father Arseny*, *Mountain of Silence*, *Walking in Wonder: Nurturing Orthodox Christian Virtues in our Children* and *Preparing for Confession*. If you are interested but don't know which book is right for you, ask Fr. John.





ABOUT THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

In the sixth century, a monk of Mount Sinai named John wrote a book outlining the stages of the spiritual life. He based his entire work on the image of a ladder of thirty rungs, stretching from earth to heaven. Each rung described a step in the pursuit of virtue and the spiritual life. Since it was first written, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* has been an essential part of the formation of Orthodox monastics, and a mainstay of Orthodox ascetic spirituality. However, *The Ladder* is not just for monks and nuns because all Christians are called to make an ascent to the heights of heaven. For this reason the Church places the commemoration of Saint John and his Ladder on the 4th Sunday of the Great Fast, as the faithful continue their ascent with the Lord to Golgotha and through Golgotha to His Heavenly Kingdom.

The 30 Steps of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

- ❖ Steps 1–4: renouncement of the world and obedience to a spiritual father
- ❖ Steps 5–7: penitence and affliction as paths to true joy
- ❖ Steps 8–17: the defeat of vices and acquisition of virtue
- ❖ Steps 18–26: avoidance of the traps of asceticism (laziness, pride, mental stagnation)
- ❖ Steps 27–29: acquisition of stillness or peace of the soul, of prayer, and of dispassion
- ❖ Step 30: the union of faith, hope, and love

The Sacraments of Confession and Communion

should be received by all Orthodox Christians during the season of Great Lent. If you have not approached the Chalice since last Pascha, or if you are a frequent communicant and have not been to Confession since the Nativity Fast, now is the time. Fr. John is available to hear confessions, following any service or at any other time by appointment. If you have not been to confession in a long time, or if you would like to learn more about making a meaningful confession, there is an excellent, and very short book in the back of the church, entitled *Preparing for Confession*. Pascha is April 8th this year, less than one month away, don't be caught unprepared for the Feast of Feasts.



Church Attendance

Overall attendance for the weekend and weekday services is up. For the Sunday Divine Liturgy we are averaging 43 people this winter. This is 33 percent more people than last winter when the average was only 32. This is without a doubt a positive sign for parish growth. May the Lord continue to bless those who faithfully gather to sing His praises at the Divine Services!



The Mystery of Holy Unction

will be served on Wednesday, March 28th, at 7:00 in the evening. The Church's practice of anointing with holy oil for the healing of soul and body dates back to Apostolic times, when St. James wrote, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters (priests) of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14) According to Church discipline, those who wish to receive this Mystery should approach only after having first received both Confession and Communion during Great Lent.

Out of Town for Pascha?

Be mindful to let the priest of the parish you are visiting know beforehand who you are. If you are prepared to receive Holy Communion, you should let him know. This should not be done at the time you approach for Communion, but before the Liturgy. A phone call or email is in good order.



The Parish Website

has a new section entitled "For Inquirers", which will attempt to answer questions about Orthodoxy and how it differs from other Christian confessions. Highlighted in this area of the website is a short but moving video presentation on Orthodoxy. Check it out!

ASK FATHER: 3 QUESTIONS / 3 ANSWERS

Q. Father, last week the Parish Council was installed into office, and I have some questions about it. First, in the old country we never had parish councils, is this a genuinely Orthodox practice?

A. While the appearance of the parish council is relatively new to the Orthodox Church, and is most likely a phenomenon which developed in part due to Protestant, or even secular influences, there has never been a time in the Church when the clergy and the laity did not work together for the accomplishment of the same goal – the building up of the Body of Christ and the spreading of the Gospel. In the Orthodox Church, the work of the parish council is holy and blessed; a grace-filled work accomplished in union with Jesus Christ. For this reason council members not only receive a blessing from the bishop to take office, but they also prepare themselves for installation to office by prayer and the Sacraments of Confession and Communion. In this way the parish council member is made a worthy servant of the Lord, and the Parish Council becomes a genuinely Orthodox instrument for spreading the Gospel and extending the Lord's Kingdom.

Q. Well who runs the parish? The Priest or the Council?

This is a difficult question to answer, because really neither "run" the parish; Christ is the Head of the Church, and it is the Holy Spirit who animates His Body, of which the clergy and laity are both members and servants. Yet from a practical standpoint the administration and good order of the parish fall under the sole responsibility of the bishop, and by extension the priest, who is his representative. However, while ultimately the bishop and priest must give an account for the flock (Hebrews 13:17), they do enlist the help of the laity by calling them to certain offices, whether they be ordained (such as deacons, sub-deacons, or readers) or simply blessed (such as iconographers, choir directors, youth group leaders, or council members). Those who are enlisted in these offices assist the priest, much in the same way that the priest assists the bishop, and the Apostles assisted Christ Himself.



WE ARE CONCILLIAR

From the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

The Priest is head of the Parish, and is charged with the guidance of the total Parish program. The parish council consists of the Priest, and the elected lay members, and is referred to as a board only when so required by local statute. In internal matters of the Church, we always use the designation of Parish Council. This is because one of the identifying traits of the Orthodox Church is that we are concilliar – decisions are made in council.

To refer to the Parish Council as "The Board" is a symptom of our inclination to apply the corporate paradigm to the operation of the Church. Although some tools used in corporate life may also be useful in the operation of the Church, the corporate paradigm falls short and reduces the local church to something less than she was meant to be.



Q. What about the Council President? What is his role?

Before answering your question, it should be explained that it is not really correct, according to Orthodox theology, to use the word "president" in this case. By definition the "president" is the one who presides as the highest elected official (e.g. the President of the United States) – in the Church, the President is the bishop, and by extension the priest, who presides in his absence. Instead, the term "warden" is used which signifies custodianship or guardianship, since in the extended absence of the priest, the official parish seal and keys to the church building are placed in the temporary guardianship of the Senior Warden. In addition to serving as a custodian, the Senior Warden, may be appointed by the Rector if he so desires, to chair a parish meeting. It is the privilege of the Senior Warden to be a signature on parish checks (two signatures are required for all expenditures), as well as one of the two required signatures on official ecclesiastical and civil documents – the other signature required being that of the Rector. Like the Rector, the Senior Warden is an ex-officio member of all parish organizations. The term of office for the Senior Warden is the same as for all other council officers – two years. In the event, that the Senior Warden cannot fulfill his duties, he is to be replaced by the Junior Warden. If any other office is vacated, the parish council elects one of its members to fill the vacancy.



PROOF OF CONFESSION

From OCA.org and Fr. John Matusiak

Question:

If I choose a Father confessor other than my local Priest, am I required to provide written proof that I have performed an act of penitence and received absolution to my local priest?

Can he refuse me communion? If he will accept my unlying word, how long can I receive communion before I make another confession?

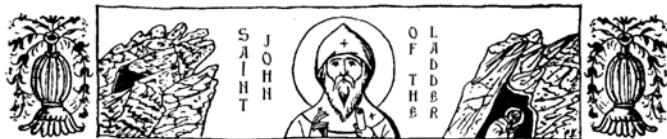
Answer:

In general, every Orthodox Christian should have a Father Confessor. Ideally this should be the person's parish priest. If, for some worthy reason, a person desires to confess in the presence of another priest and to consider him as his or her Father Confessor, he or she should, out of respect and in an open and honest manner, discuss his or her reasons with his or her parish priest and seek his blessing. While I have never heard of providing written proof for confessing or receiving absolution from one's Father Confessor, it stands to reason that, if one's parish priest is aware of the circumstance, one would choose to maintain communication with his or her parish priest and inform him of the occasions on which he or she went to Confession.

With regard to whether or not the parish priest can refuse to give an individual Communion, it must be understood that the priest is the guardian of the Holy Mysteries which, as the Holy Fathers warn, can be to our condemnation as well as our salvation. Technically a priest does not "refuse" to give Communion to someone; it would be more correct to say that the priest must discern, recognize, and respond to any circumstances by which an individual has cut off himself or herself from the Eucharist or any other sacrament. In other words it is not the priest who "refuses" to offer the sacrament but, rather, the circumstance in which the person is involved which makes it impossible for the priest to offer the sacrament.

Concerning the frequency of the reception of Holy Communion and its relationship to the frequency of Confession, this is a matter which must be thoroughly discussed with one's parish priest and one's Father Confessor, should they be two separate persons. There is no "standard" here, just as there is no "standard" frequency that should be followed in tending to physical ailments and needs under the guidance and direction of one's family physician.

In every instance, it is always best to discuss such concerns with one's pastor and to follow his guidance, just as one would discuss one's physical health with one's physician and follow his advice and direction.



Some people living in the world have asked me: "We have wives and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the spiritual life?" I replied to them: "Do all the good you can; do not speak evil of anyone; do not steal from anyone; do not lie to anyone; do not be arrogant towards anyone; do not hate anyone; do not be absent from the divine services; be compassionate to the needy; do not offend anyone; do not wreck another man's domestic happiness, and be content with what your own wives can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

From Step 1 of the Ladder of Divine Ascent



CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND SOUL

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk

Christ was risen, and so we too must be resurrected with Christ, in order to ascend with Him. Our resurrection is two-fold: in body and in spirit. Our bodily resurrection will take place on the Last Day. We speak of this when we recite the Creed, the Symbol of Faith: "I look for the resurrection of the dead." To be resurrected spiritually is to depart from our sins, to turn away from the vanities of this world, and to abide in true repentance and faith; to take up the struggle against any sin, to do the will of our Heavenly Father, to live His truth, and to follow Christ, the Son of God, with humility, love, meekness, and patience. This is the new creation of which the Holy Apostle Paul speaks when he says, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (1 Cor. 5:17); a new person, renewed through repentance and faith, a true Christian, a living member of Christ and an heir to the Kingdom of God.