



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 21, 2010

SUNDAY, MARCH 21ST

ST. MARY OF EGYPT

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

MONDAY, MARCH 22ND

7:00p.m. Lenten Vespers
Greatest Story: Part V

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24TH

7:00p.m. Matins

THURSDAY, MARCH 25TH

ANNUNCIATION

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

FRIDAY, MARCH 26TH

7:00p.m. Reception of Converts

SATURDAY, MARCH 27TH

LAZARUS SATURDAY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 28TH

PALM SUNDAY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
7:00p.m. Bridegroom Matins

Please Remember in Prayer

Gabriela Jones, Connie Mitsopolous, Melvin Woodall, Mat. Dunia Hubiak, Anna Varone, Jerrie Rife, Michelle Wilson, Bill & Kathy Parrish, Carole Boris (newly-departed), Archpriests Michael & Andrew, Monk Christian, Marie, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Steven, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Todd & Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Constantina & Christos, Mirela & Chris, Jaroslav, Troy Paul Duker, Frank & Mary Miranda, Kathy T. Requests? See Fr. John.

Welcome to Fr. Daniel!

We are very pleased to have Fr. Daniel Hubiak led us in the Divine Services this weekend as Fr. John and a group of parishioners are away in New Jersey on a Lenten outing. Sincere thanks is offered to Fr. Daniel for his wise words offered in the homily.

Happy Birthday!

to Mat. Dunia who celebrates on March 24th. Many blessed years!

Memory Eternal!

On March 18, 2010, Mary Boris, mother of Mickey Boris reposed in the Lord at the age of 92. We express our condolences to Mickey, Tanya, and the entire Boris family. May Mary's memory be eternal!

Holy Week & Pascha Sign-Up Sheet



In the back of the church there is a sign-up sheet for those interested in helping with the preparations for Pascha. Questions? Please see Fr. John.

The Paschal Meal

will be held immediately following the "Midnight Service", which concludes with the Pascha Liturgy. If you are able to bring food to share, please sign your name on the sheet in the coffee hour room to let us know what you can bring.



Altar Server / Usher Meeting

For Holy Week and Pascha Sunday, March 28th, after coffee hour.

Spring is Here!

As you plan your spring cleaning, home improvements, and landscaping projects, please considering purchasing your supplies via our Script program; see Jodi or Jane to help support our Mission!

The Mystery of Holy Unction

will be served on Great and Holy Wednesday, March 31st, 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) Those who wish to receive this Mystery should approach after having made a recent Confession.



READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Mar. 28th

Gabriela Jones

Sunday, April. 4th

Kathy Parrish



PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR 16TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL ANNOUNCED: THE FIRST TO CONVENE IN THE DIOCESE OF THE WEST

SYOSSET, NY [OCA] -- For the first time in the history of the Orthodox Church in America, an All-American Council will be held in the Diocese of the West.

Seattle Hyatt Regency"After exploring a dozen cities across North America, Seattle, WA was confirmed by members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council as the site of the 16th All-American Council, October 31 through November 4, 2011," said Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary. "A major consideration in the site selection was the desire to garner full participation by clergy and lay delegates from the Diocese of Alaska. In past years, travel costs from Alaska to Councils held in east coast and midwest US cities prohibited most Alaskan parishes from sending participants."

All sessions will be held at the Hyatt Regency in suburban Bellevue, WA.

Father Eric, accompanied by Archpriest Myron Manzuk, Council manager, and Peter Ilchuk, logistics manager, visited the Hyatt Regency in February to make a final assessment of the venue and meet with members of the local planning committee, co-chaired by Archpriest John Pierce and Lynnell Brunswig. Dmitri Pletz and Michelle Mewhinney-Angel will serve as local treasurer and secretary respectively.

"The local committee has started organizing working groups, establishing local accounts and contacts, and overseeing ongoing site preparation," Father Eric added. "Initial response from the region's parishes has been quite enthusiastic."

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West, will chair the Preconciliar Commission,

which is responsible for selecting the Council theme and developing its agenda and related materials and resources. The Commission will meet for the first time shortly after Pascha 2010.

According to the organizational timeline mandated by the Statue of the Orthodox Church in America,

- the Preconciliar Commission will publish the proposed AAC agenda, notices and final arrangements on August 24, 2011.
- the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council will approve the final agenda at their fall session in September 2011. All proposed changes to the Statute, resolutions, and related actions must be submitted by this date.
- the Chancery will issue delegate credentials and certification and distribute Council reports on September 30, 2011.



In addition to plenary sessions, the AAC schedule will include liturgical services, workshops, displays and exhibits, and related activities. Other Council-related events, including two possible pilgrimages to Sitka and select sites in the Pacific Northwest, are in the planning stage.

In addition to Bishop Benjamin; Fathers Tosi, Manzuk, and Pierce; and Mr. Ilchuk, other members of the Preconciliar Commission include Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, Chancellor; Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer; Priests Victor Gorodenchuk, Alexander Rentel, and John Vitko; and Prof. David Drillock, Lisa Mikhalevsky, and Valerie Zahirsky. Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky will serve as a consultant, while Archpriest John Matusiak, OCA Media Coordinator, will oversee press and public relations and communications efforts.

ON THE TRULY INTELLIGENT MAN

By St. Anthony the Great

The truly intelligent man pursues one sole objective: to obey and conform to the God of all. With this single aim in view, he disciplines his soul, and whatever he may encounter in the course of his life, he gives thanks to God for the compass and depth of His providential ordering of all things. For it is absurd to be grateful to doctors who give us bitter and unpleasant medicines to cure our bodies, and yet to be ungrateful to God for what appears to us to be harsh, not grasping that all we encounter is for our benefit and in accordance with His providence. For knowledge of God and faith in Him is the salvation and perfection of the soul.



CONFESSION AS A SOCIAL ACTION

Featured Article on Antiochian.org / By Jim Forest

It is impossible to imagine a healthy marriage or deep friendship without confession and forgiveness. If we have done something that damages a relationship, confession is essential to its restoration. For the sake of that bond, we confess what we've done, we apologize, and we promise not to do it again; then we do everything in our power to keep that promise.

In the context of religious life, confession is what safeguards and renews our relationship with God whenever it is damaged. Confession restores our communion with God and with each other.

It is never easy to admit to doing something we regret and are ashamed of, an act we attempted to keep secret or denied doing or tried to blame on someone else, perhaps arguing—to ourselves as much as to others—that it wasn't actually a sin at all, or wasn't nearly as bad as some people might claim. In the hard labor of growing up, one of the most agonizing tasks is becoming capable of saying, "I'm sorry."

Yet we are designed for confession. Secrets in general are hard to keep, but unconfessed sins not only never go away, but have a way of becoming heavier as time passes—the greater the sin, the heavier the burden. Confession is the only solution.

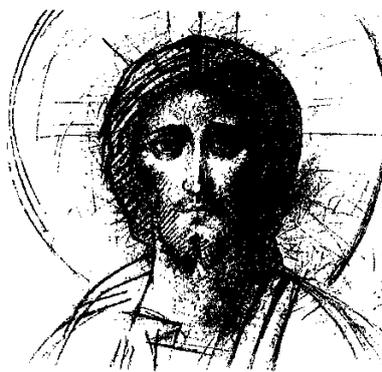
To understand confession in its sacramental sense, one first has to grapple with a few basic questions: Why is the Church involved in forgiving sins? Is priest-witnessed confession really needed? Why confess at all to any human being? In fact, why bother confessing to God, even without a human witness? If God is all-knowing, then He knows everything about me already. My sins are known before it even crosses my mind to confess them. Why bother telling God what He already knows?

Yes, truly God knows. My confession can never be as complete or revealing as God's knowledge of me and of all that needs repairing in my life.

A related question we need to consider has to do with our basic design as social beings. Why am I so willing to connect with others in every other area of life, yet not in this? Why is it that I look so hard for excuses, even for theological rationales, not to confess? Why do I try so hard to explain away my sins, until I've decided either that they're not so bad, or even that they might be seen as acts of virtue? Why is it that I find it so easy to *commit* sins,

yet am so reluctant, in the presence of another, to admit to having done so?

We are social beings. The individual as autonomous unit is a delusion. The Marlboro Man—the person without community, parents, spouse, or children—exists only on billboards. The *individual* is someone who has lost a sense of connection to others or attempts to exist in opposition to others—while the *person* exists in communion with other persons. At a conference of Orthodox Christians in France a few years ago, in a discussion of the problem of individualism, a theologian confessed, "When I am in my car, I am an individual, but when I get out, I am a person again."



We are social beings. The language we speak connects us to those around us. The food I eat was grown by others. The skills passed on to me have slowly been developed in the course of hundreds of generations. The air I breathe and the water I drink is not for my exclusive use, but has been in many bodies before mine. The place I live, the tools I use, and the paper I write on

were made by many hands. I am not my own doctor or dentist or banker. To the extent that I disconnect myself from others, I am in danger. Alone, I die, and soon. To be in communion with others is life.

Because we are social beings, confession in church does not take the place of confession to those we have sinned against. An essential element of confession is doing all I can to set right what I did wrong. If I stole something, it must be returned or paid for. If I lied to anyone, I must tell that person the truth. If I was angry without good reason, I must apologize. I must seek forgiveness not only from God, but from those whom I have wronged or harmed.

We are also verbal beings. Words provide a way of communicating, not only with others, but even with ourselves. The fact that confession is witnessed forces me to put into words all those ways, minor and major, in which I live as if there were no God and no commandment to love. A thought that is concealed has great power over us.

Confessing sins, or even temptations, makes us better able to resist. The underlying principle is described in one of the collections of sayings of the Desert Fathers:

If impure thoughts trouble you, do not hide them, but tell them at once to your spiritual father and condemn them. The more a person conceals his thoughts, the more they multiply and gain strength. But an evil thought, when revealed, is immediately destroyed. If you hide things, they have great power over you, but if you could only speak of them before God, in the presence of another, then they will often wither away, and lose their power.

Confessing to anyone, even a stranger, renews rather than contracts my humanity, even if all I get in return for my confession is the well-worn remark, "Oh, that's not so bad. After all, you're only human." But if I can confess to anyone anywhere, why confess in church in the presence of a priest? It's not a small question in societies in which the phrase "institutionalized religion" is so often used, the implicit message being that religious institutions necessarily undermine spiritual life.

Confession is a Christian ritual with a communal character. Confession in the church differs from confession in your living room in the same way that getting married in church differs from simply living together. The communal aspect of the event safeguards it, solidifies it, and calls everyone to account—those doing the ritual, and those witnessing it.

In the social structure of the Church, a huge network of local communities is held together in unity, each community helping the others and all sharing a common task, while each provides a specific place to recognize and bless the main events in life, from birth to burial. Confession is an essential part of that continuum. My confession is an act of reconnection with God and with all the people who depend on me and have been harmed by my failings, and from whom I have distanced myself through acts of non-communion. The community is represented by the person hearing my confession, an ordained priest delegated to serve as Christ's witness, who provides guidance and wisdom that helps each penitent overcome attitudes and habits that take us off course, who declares forgiveness and restores us to communion. In this way our repentance is brought into the community that has been damaged by our sins—a private event in a public context.

"It's a fact," writes Fr. Thomas Hopko, rector of St. Vladimir's Seminary, "that we cannot see the true ugliness and hideousness of our sins until we see them in the mind and heart of the other to whom we have confessed."

A Communion-Centered Life

Attending the liturgy and receiving Communion on Sundays and principal feast days has always been at the heart of Christian life, the event that gives life a eucharistic dimension and center point. But Communion—receiving Christ into ourselves—can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. For example, Christ solemnly warns us against approaching the altar if we are in a state of enmity with anyone. He tells us, "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt 5:24). In one of the parables, He describes a person who is ejected from the wedding feast because he isn't wearing a wedding garment. Tattered clothing is a metaphor for living a life that reduces conscience to rags (Matt ch. 22).

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy is the keystone of *living* in communion—with God, with people, and with creation. Christ teaches us that love of God and love of neighbor sum up the Law. One way of describing a serious sin is to say it is any act which breaks our communion with God and with our neighbor.

It is for this reason that examination of conscience—if necessary, going to confession—is part of preparation for Communion. This is an ongoing process of trying to see my life and actions with clarity and honesty—to look at myself, my choices, and my direction as known by God. The examination of conscience is an occasion to recall not only any serious sins committed since my last confession, but even the beginnings of sins.

Conscience is an inner faculty that guides us in making choices that align us with God's will, and that accuses us when we break communion with God and with our neighbor. Conscience is a reflection of the divine image at the core of each person. In *The Sacred Gift of Life*, Fr. John Breck points out that "the education of conscience is acquired in large measure through immersing ourselves in the ascetic tradition of the Church: its life of prayer, sacramental and liturgical celebration, and scripture study. The education of our conscience also depends upon our acquiring wisdom from those who are more advanced than we are in faith, love, and knowledge of God."

Conscience is God's whispering voice within us calling us to a way of life that reveals God's presence and urges us to refuse actions that destroy community and communion.