

Holy Apostles Newsletter

DIOCESE OF THE WEST ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



GREAT LENT - TITHE OF THE YEAR

From the Venerable Abba Dorotheus of Gaza, 'On the Holy Lenten Fast', Discourses & Sayings, trans. Eric P. Wheeler [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1977], pp. 215-6.

In the Law, God laid down that the sons of Israel should each year give tithes of all they possessed, and if they did so they were blessed in all their works (cf. Num 18). The holy apostles, knowing this to be for the help and advancement of our souls, resolved to fulfil it in a better and higher way, namely, for us to deliver up a tithe of the very days of our lives as if to consecrate them to God, so that we may be blessed in all our works, and each year to be unburdened of the whole year's sins. They elected to consecrate out of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, seven weeks of fasting, and so they ordained; but our Fathers, in their time, thought it advisable to add another week, both to train and better prepare themselves to enter on the labor of fasting and to honor with their fasting the holy number of forty days which Our Lord fasted. The eight weeks, subtracting Saturdays and Sundays, makes forty days, but we honor Holy Saturday with a fast because it is a very holy day and the only Saturday fast of the year.

The seven weeks, without Saturdays, gives thirty-five days, and if finally we add the half of the brilliant and light-giving night, this makes thirty-six and a half, which is exactly a tenth of three hundred and sixty-five. For thirty is the tenth of three hundred, six is the tenth of sixty, and the tenth of five is one half. Here then, as we said, are the thirty-six and a half days, the very tithing of the whole year as one might say, which the holy apostles consecrated to penance for the cleansing of our sins of the whole year. Whoever, therefore, keeps careful guard over himself, as is fitting during these holy days, will be rewarded with blessings, brothers, even if it happens that, being a man, he has sinned either through weakness or carelessness. You see, God gave us these holy days so

that by diligence in abstinence, in the spirit of humility and repentance, a man may be cleansed of the sins of the whole year and the soul relieved of its burden. Purified he goes forward to the holy day of the Resurrection, and being made a new man through the change of heart induced by the fast, he can take his part in the Holy Mysteries and remain in spiritual joy and happiness, feasting with God the whole fifty days. Paschal time, as has been said, is the resurrection of the soul and the sign of this is that we do not kneel in church during the whole season up to Pentecost..

The Venerable Abba Dorotheus of Gaza was a spiritual child of St John the Clairvoyant in Palestine. After his elder's death St Dorotheus became abbot of a new monastery, where he wrote his own Discourses and may well have edited the Questions & Answers of Ss Barsanuphius and John [the Clairvoyant]. He fell asleep in the Lord sometime in the second half of the sixth century, and is commemorated on some calendars on 5 June and on some on 13 August. St Ignatius (Brianchaninov) places Abba Dorotheus among the essential reading for cenobitic monks (The Arena: An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism, trans. Archim. Lazarus [Moore] [Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1991], p. 22), while Sergei Bulgakov, in his *Nastolnaia Kniga*, calls St Dorotheus's Discourses 'rather remarkable for their edification and soul-saving ideas'.



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From The Holy Fathers

It is necessary most of all for one who is fasting to curb anger, to accustom himself to meekness and condescension, to have a contrite heart, to repulse impure thoughts and desires, to examine his conscience, to put his mind to the test and to verify what good has been done by us in this or any other week, and which deficiency we have corrected in ourselves in the present week. This is true fasting.

St. John Chrysostom

It is better to eat meat and drink wine and not to eat the flesh of one's brethren through slander.

Abba Hyperechius

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Community Forum

LENT AND CONFESSION

One of the most important aspects of the Lenten journey is the Sacrament of Penance. This is the season of repentance and therefore every Orthodox Christian should prepare to make a good confession during these days.

It is the teaching of the Orthodox Church that sacramental penance is necessary for those receiving Holy Communion when they have committed grave sins or when they have failed to prepare to receive the Eucharist regularly.

There are three main elements to the act of formal penance:

1. Sincere repentance - a change of mind, which proceeds from the sorrow for the breaking of communion with God.
2. An open and heartfelt confession in the presence of the pastor who stands in behalf of the whole community.
3. The prayer of absolution by the priest through which the forgiveness of God is sacramentally bestowed upon the repentant sinner

Fr. Dimitri will hear confessions before or after any of the weekday Lenten services or at any other time by appointment. If you must come on Sunday mornings (not preferred), please let Father know by Saturday evening so that Proskomede can be completed and Liturgy will not be delayed.

NOTE: PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO COME TO CONFESSION BEFORE PALM SUNDAY. HOLY WEEK IS NOT THE OPTIMAL TIME FOR CONFESSION. DURING HOLY WEEK, THE FOCUS COMES OFF OF OURSELVES AND IS TRANSFERRED TO CHRIST'S PASSION.

ALMSGIVING OPPORTUNITY

This lent, we would like to help out the Portland Rescue Mission, which serves men, women and children. Here is some information about their mission:

...By creating a safe and healing environment for homeless men, women, and children that is more than just a shelter and soup kitchen, the Mission offers the means to transition individuals into new lives armed with education, recovery skills, and spiritual grace. The Burnside Men's Shelter, Shepherd's Door Women's and Children's Shelter and the Next Step Transitional Home are all vital to the Portland Rescue Mission's goal to address the root causes of home-

lessness and actively break its hold on thousands of precious lives. Our goal is total life recovery for every person to whom we minister.

The Mission needs clothing, bedding, food, and other needs such as hygiene items. For a complete wish list, see their website:

<https://portlandrescuemission.org/give/wishlist>

Please bring any items (except perishable foods) you wish to donate to church on Sundays as we will start a collection to be delivered at a later date during lent.

MEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

Just a reminder that the Lenten Men's Retreat will be Friday, March 27th & 28th at Goldendale Monastery. Don't forget to send in your registration and money by March 21st to reserve a spot to sleep. If you wish to carpool, we will leave from Fr. Dimitri's house at 2 pm on Friday afternoon. So far, Sub-deacon Philip and Alexei have offered to drive, but we may need one other driver. If you are available to drive, please contact Fr. Dimitri. We will return Saturday evening probably late. There will be no evening Vespers service on Saturday, March 28th at Holy Apostles. ❖

Kitchen Corner

CALIFORNIA FETTUCINE TOSS

Contributed by Kh. Krista West

- 4 oz. regular fettucine
- 4 oz. spinach fettucine
- 1 jar artichoke hearts
- 2 T. balsamic vinegar
- 1 T. sundried tomatoes
- ½ lb. asparagus, cut into 2" pieces
- 2 med. Carrots, shredded
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 1 8-oz. bottle Italian dressing
- ½ c. pistachio nuts
- 1 ripe avocado, chopped

Cook fettucine until al dente. Toss with artichoke hearts, vinegar, and sundried tomatoes. Cook asparagus until barely tender, drain and toss with pasta. Add carrots, green onions, and salad dressing. Toss to mix. Place in serving bowl and sprinkle with nuts and avocado.

**Don't forget to check out our website for other great tasting Lenten ideas, contributed by the families of our parish.

PRAYER REQUESTS

In the back of the Church, you will be able to find Prayer Request Sheets and a box to put them in, where you can list both Orthodox and Non-Orthodox, departed and living. Keep in mind that only Orthodox living and departed are commemorated during the Divine Liturgy.

POTLUCK COFFEE HOUR

We will continue having coffee hour potluck style. It is important that each family bring something to contribute to the coffee hour, so we have enough food for members and guests.

Clean-up teams remain in place and are as follows:

Team Blue - Aiello, Harvey, Virosteck, Perez, Harvest
Team Green - Donnor, Campbell, Story, Tregub,
Vaganova, Cable
Team Orange - VanDenend, Harmon, Beckel, Koehn
Team Yellow - Ivkin, Domico, Watt, Kojenov

See the calendar for dates you are on clean-up. If you are unable to clean up on your day, make sure to trade with someone. Clean-up duties are light and include sweeping, cleaning the coffee maker, wiping down tables, stacking chairs, making sure everyone takes their dish home from coffee hour, etc. We should leave it the same way in which we arrived.

FASTING RULES FOR LENT

GREAT LENT AND HOLY WEEK 2009
(March 2 - April 18)

The Lenten fasting discipline commences after Forgiveness Vespers on March 1 and concludes with the breaking of the fast at Pascha on April 19. In general, the fasting rules during Great Lent and Holy Week are as follows:

WEEKDAYS (Monday - Friday) are observed as Strict Fast Days. On these days we abstain from meat, dairy, fish with backbones, fowl, alcoholic beverages, and olive oil.

WEEKENDS (Saturday and Sunday) are observed as Wine and Oil Days. On these days the fast is relaxed to permit alcoholic beverages and olive oil.

In addition, two special feast days that fall during this period - Annunciation (April 7) and Palm Sunday (April 12, this year) - are kept as Fish, Wine, and Oil Days. On these days the fast is relaxed to permit fish with backbones, in addition to alcoholic beverages and olive oil.

There are certain days of the Lenten-Holy Week cycle that have special fasting rules.

Great and Holy Thursday (April 16, this year) is observed as a Wine and Oil Day due to the commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist.

Great and Holy Saturday (April 18, this year) is observed as a Strict Fast Day-the only Saturday of the year kept as a strict fast; however, wine (but not oil) is permitted.

Additional Notes:

Meals for the fast should follow the dietary restrictions and be cooked simply. Portions should be smaller than usual.

Fasting on the weekdays of the first week of Great Lent is especially severe. The strictest observance would be to take only two meals during this week - one on Wednesday evening and one on Friday evening after the services scheduled for those nights - keeping Pure Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday as absolute fasts (i.e., no food whatsoever). For many this is impracticable. A good starting place to work towards the strict observance is to keep the first day of Great Lent, Pure Monday, as an absolute fast and to limit meals on the other days.

It is a pious practice to observe Great and Holy Friday as an absolute fast. If one does not have the strength to do this, it is good to abstain from food until after venerating the epitaphios (winding sheet) during Vespers on this day.

If you have a medical condition that requires you to relax the fasting guidelines, then do so.

Before you attempt to strictly follow the fasting guidelines, consult with Fr. Dimitri. It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that fasting is merely a means to an end (that is, our salvation) and not an end in itself.

Generally speaking, children and elderly people are allowed to relax the fast under the guidance of their spiritual father.

