



Evangelist

St. Luke the Evangelist Orthodox Church

Palos Hills, IL

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Canon Of St. Andrew

By Lee Kopulos

**St. Luke's Gospel on The Beatitudes
and The Love of Enemies**

**"Blessed are you when men hate you,
And when they exclude you,
And revile you, and cast out your name
as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.
(Luke 6:22)**

**Greetings in the Name of the Lord and
Savior Jesus Christ!**

My Great Lenten exercise this year is to take a moment on the train or at work each day and dwell upon the passages of the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete. Even though we read it all in the first week of Great Lent, it is quite revealing and penitential, I decided this year to read cover to cover from Frederica Mathewes-Green's book on this Great Canon. She has much more to say about its content and biblical meaning. It's great stuff to say the least. One of my problems is following our Savior's admonition to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." In today's world we have the Muslim enemy who is extraordinarily brutal in every way. And, even more significant is the way they have brutalized our own Orthodox Christians in Syria, Egypt and elsewhere in North Africa. How about the **21 New Martyrs of Libya** who were beheaded for their Coptic Christian belief just recently? Sometimes, I feel they have brutalized me

Journey Through The Lenten Season

By Diane Nickolaou

Looking back through my, shall we say "29 years" of Lenten Seasons, I realized each Lent has its own unique characteristics, like friendships we have had in life. Each year our journey through Lent is different, because each year we are different. It is like the relationship we have with people, some relationships we take the time to nurture, and others we let pass through our lives without much thought.

When I was little, Lenten services were like a play date my parents would make us go to. We didn't have a choice. But as I grew and matured, I went to Church because I wanted to. The Greek Orthodox services and hymns began to take hold in my soul. And after I would hear certain hymns and Troparions, ones that even though I hadn't heard since the last Lent, would spark my heart, like an old friend I hadn't seen a while, and we would pick up right where we left off last time.

As life got busier, some Lenten seasons I let pass by without much thought or effort. I would think "I am too busy for this now, we will catch up later." I didn't take the time to fast, read, and attend special services. I am so grateful that Jesus did not ignore me, as I ignored Him. And I always took comfort in the Sermon at the Resurrection Service on Easter that says "If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let them not fear on account of tardiness", because sometimes that was me.

And other Lenten Seasons I have slowed down and taken the time to really get to know. I made a date to show up to

as many Church services as possible. I have "road tripped" with my fellow parishioners as we stopped at Sunday of Orthodoxy. We visited with St. Gregory Palamas, St. John Climacus, and St. Mary of Egypt. We rested and sought refreshment at the Sunday of the Cross. I have cried out "Hosanna in the Highest" on Palm Sunday. I have wept with Mary when they nailed Jesus to the cross. I have rejoiced with His other followers as we discovered the tomb was empty! I have read the Bible, attended the services, fasted, and gotten to better know God, His Son Jesus, and the Saints.

The Season of Lent is what YOU make of it. Just like any other relationship in your life, you need to make time for it. Set aside your worldly cares, and spend some time with the Church. St. Luke's Church offers us many opportunities for this time with Jesus. There are many services, some in the morning, some at night. There are opportunities to read, chant, listen, pray, confess, teach, learn, clean His house, watch over His tomb, and feed His sheep! Make an unbreakable relationship with the Church. It is the beginning of a beautiful friendship!



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“O Death, Where Is Your Sting”

By Aristeia Zekios

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Cor 15:55) These words from Saint Paul to the Corinthians were probably written around 55 AD. That would mean they are 1,960 years old! Yet every year they are proclaimed in the Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom (+407 AD) before the Paschal Liturgy. And every year I wait with anticipation to hear them again. Admittedly as a youngster, these words did not register with me in the slightest degree.

Holy Saturday was a day of preparation. The aroma of lamb roasting in the oven permeated the entire house. The delicious Greek pastries and homemade bread with a red egg in the middle were laid out ready for the feast. I would pester my mom all day asking her for a taste of lamb or a just one koulouri (Greek cookie). But she would tell

me we had to fast and we couldn't indulge until after midnight. Of course, I couldn't understand why we should be tormented with all these tasty temptations. A brand new dress hot off my mother's sewing machine was ready to be worn. The dress would match my three sisters' dresses. We would be outfitted from head to toe with new straw bonnets and shiny white patent leather shoes. Thus we would make our fashion statement at the Paschal services.

Finally we were ready for the midnight service. For me, that meant it was time to wear my new outfit. And better yet, it was getting closer to cutting into the leg of lamb and eating the forbidden goodies. I loved standing next to my dad in church as we sang “Christos Anesti” while holding our lit candles. But one Pascha in particular I happened to look up at dad as he was singing. I noted a huge smile on his face while tears ran down his cheeks. In my confusion I asked, “Daddy, why are you crying?”

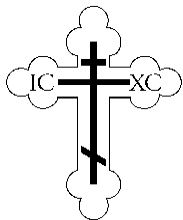
Fast forward 20 years later to April. I am in church standing next to my husband with my two children at my side. I am singing “Christos Anesti” and tears are running down *my* cheeks. You see, dad had been laid to rest the week before Pascha. That evening the light dawned on me. I knew dad now lived in heaven! The passage I had memorized in Sunday School hit me like a ton of bricks. “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, yet he shall live.

And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25,26)

But that wasn't the end of the story. About 30 years later in April my three sisters and I were with my mother as she took her last earthly breath. At her funeral “Christ Is Risen” was sung over and over again. It was a feeling of joy that my mother had left her failing body to live with Christ in His kingdom. Sadly 5 years later in April, one of my beloved sisters left her cancer-ridden body to join mom and dad. Her funeral service, too, rang out with “Christ Is Risen.”

Thus every April at Pascha these words now register with me. “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are abolished.” I cry tears of joy not only for mom, dad, and my sister, but now for my husband of 48 years who also made his final journey to our Creator 4 years ago. These words are the message of hope for all mankind. The Resurrection of Christ is the final blow to the enemy of death. Because Christ died and rose again, we can anticipate that glorious reunion with our loved ones in heaven never to be separated again. In his sermon, Saint John Chrysostom invites us to the divine feast, “The table is richly loaded: enjoy its royal banquet.” Our Savior invites all of us to dine with Him in His kingdom where we will behold His everlasting glory. In gratitude we humbly say, “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 15:57)

The Evangelist

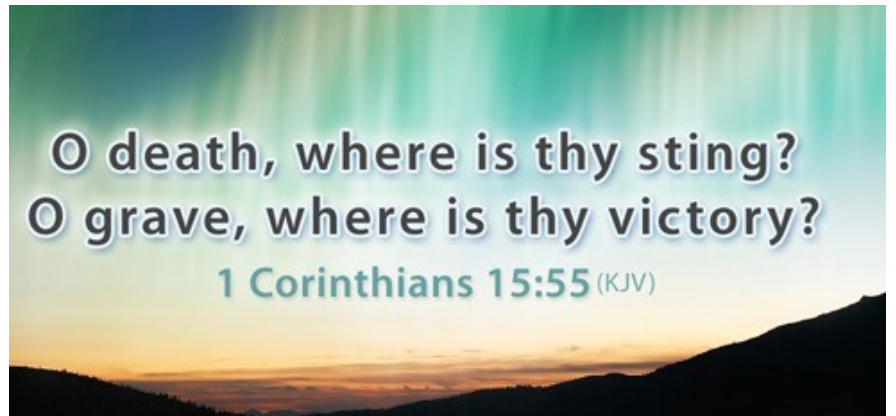


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O death, where is thy sting?
 O grave, where is thy victory?
 1 Corinthians 15:55 (KJV)



Canon of St. Andrew

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when I hear of our Christian brothers and sisters put to death for their Faith.

In Luke 6:27-36, the Lord goes on to say, "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.....But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be the sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

The Canon of St. Andrew on verse 140 says: "I have passed my life in arrogance: make me humble and save me, all-pure Lady, for you have borne the Lord who has exalted our humiliated nature."

Frederica's commentary on this verse reads as follows;

Humility is indispensable to salvation. This is hard for us contemporary Christians to grasp. Our favorite stories and movies show heroes standing up boldly or arrogantly and cutting their opponents down to size with a weapon or clever words.

But Christ enveloped evil with love. He forgave those who split his hands and feet with iron nails. If this was a contemporary movie script He would have called down "12 legions of angels" for revenge.

The mistake in our thinking is that our earthly opponents are our enemies. Instead, they are hostages of the enemy. Christ died for them and for us and for all sinners. We must imitate Him, and in humility show our enemies love, in the hope that they will accept God's mercy too. "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God.....Do not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:19, 21)

Name yourself some enemies whom you need to love. Make a decision to never avenge yourself and ask God to bring them to the same joyous salvation He has for you.

Keep praying for His guidance in all matters.

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A few words about the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete and the book by Frederica entitled, "First Fruits of prayer: a Forty-Day Journal through the Canon of St. Andrew"

The Great Canon is a prayerful hymn of epic length served every year in the Eastern Orthodox Church during the first week of Great Lent. St. Andrew was born in Damascus, Syria and spent his early years in Jerusalem and then served orphans and the elderly in Constantinople. Later, he was consecrated bishop of Crete and fell asleep in the Lord in 740 AD.

St. Andrew built this Canon after a close examination of Holy Scripture, primarily Old Testament. The work is very personal in tone seeking to learn life's lesson for his own life and urging himself to love God more completely. It is a rigorous self-examination as a path to self-healing and eventually union with the Lord. **It is using repentance as a positive tool.** As St. Andrew searches the Scriptures, we see his humility and great confidence in the Lord who has total compassion for mankind's sin. St. Andrew gives everyone a glimpse of the great healing power of repentance.

The experience of the presence of Christ is just that, it's real. Many today talk of God in terms of the mind or the heart, but early Christians experienced Him in a primary sense.

Theosis is what Eastern Christian link to salvation. Western Christians see an image of a suffering Christ crucified. For Orthodox Christians of St. Andrew's world and today, salvation is seen as the restoration of the person to the image and likeness of God. It means God dwelling within us. It is a process of transformation to the way God originally intended us to be. He is the light and "in His light shall we see light." Theosis is the goal of life for every human being. The early church Fathers from St. Irenaeus (202 AD) to St. Athanasius (373 AD) expressed it all as, "God became man so that man might become god-like."

Repentance means a "transformation of the mind." It doesn't mean feeling guilty or miserable. It is seeing the truth: admitting the truth about

your sinful self, and the truth about the Lord. It is like the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) where the Father receives the lost sinful son with complete forgiveness. We are all tied up with fear and pride that is hard to admit how much we sin. Salvation is therefore a process of transformation, allowing more of our sins to come to light and be healed. St. Paul said, "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

The Cardinal rule is humility. Our culture doesn't understand humility very well. We are looking for heroes to punish the wrongdoers. Early Christians treated sinners with love in the awareness that we are all equally sinners. Look at the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee as an example of humility. Publicans (Tax-collectors) skimmed money off the top and suppressed the poor serving the brutal Roman Empire. Yet, Christ used the Parable as a great example of repentance and forgiveness – we learned humility from the Publican's tears.

What's missing in Western Theology? Eastern Christians have no idea that our sins put us in God's debt legally. No idea that one has to pay something before He can forgive us. He just forgives us. The father of the Prodigal Son did not require some payment or service time in consideration of his other faithful son. He didn't say, "I'd like to take you back but..." The father accepted the son without hesitation and had a party for him caressing him with unconditional love.

What about Original Sin? We are not born carrying the guile of Adam's sin. Augustine of Hippo in the 5th century came about with this idea which has permeated the Western churches. Can you imagine that a baby who died before baptism would be damned. St. Andrew and most Eastern Fathers view sins self-inflicted wounds. However, God is totally compassionate to His people rather than wrathful. Christ came to "trample down death by death" and save us from our sins. He is like the fireman carrying that child from the burning building. Our Savior is there present in every person working with those of us willing to receive His light, the light of faith, love and understanding.

St. Mary of Egypt. Frederica con-

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Father's Corner

Mother Ines of Hogar Rafael Orphanage in Guatemala asked me last year if I would return and present a prevention program for the teenage orphans about the dangers of drug abuse and chemical dependency. Last month I fulfilled that request. I asked David Velazquez to go along with me as translator. Instead of a formal lecture, I decided an informal conversation about drug abuse may be more effective and would answer their questions. I planned to demonstrate the effects that certain illegal drugs have on the brain. This demonstration was developed by Dr Erickson of Texas University. It was used with his permission.

The children were given different color balls representing natural brain hormones which affect how we feel. Dopamine is a feel good hormone. GABA is the sleep hormone. Each teen was instructed to imagine they were a nerve cell in the brain. They were instructed to pass the ball to the next cell representing the natural communication between nerve cells. I then demonstrated the difference when drugs, such as cocaine or alcohol were introduced into the system. It was very graphic showing the long term damage of these drugs cause.

Several of the orphans shared their stories about how they were affected by adults who used drugs. They came to understand how genetics can play a part in their future lives and why they should be very wary when introduced to any of these dan-

gerous drugs.

Michaelyn Sloan, ministry leader of St. Luke mission teams, also went along to set up the activities for our future mission trip to Hogar Rafael Orphanage this coming June. We sat down with Mother Ines and mapped out our activities. We would be doing activities with the children, teaching church school classes, interacting with them similar to last year with hikes and field trips. Last June, we all went to the zoo and afterwards, had chicken dinners in a local fast food place. This was all funded by donations from parishioners and other donors. This year we are planning a very special trip with the children.

Besides interacting with the children we will be doing maintenance projects, such as moving debris left over from construction, repairing facilities, cleaning fish ponds, and gardening. This work will be done between the daily Orthodox service cycle of Matins in the morning and Vespers before dinner and Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

We will also be meeting with a local

Christian group made up of five churches who are interested in the Orthodox faith. Father Andrew will be teaching them about Orthodox services and answering questions about the Orthodox faith. Lee Kopulos will be teaching the Orthodox understanding of the scriptures. Some of the women on our June team will be teaching about Icons and giving sewing instructions. Under the guidance of Mother Ines, we are hoping we can facilitate the reception of all five parishes into the Orthodox Church.

Looking back to that busy week in March, I can hardly believe that in one short week we climbed a volcano with the children, when to a spa, visited and had lunch with the Christian pastor and his staff, took a tour of the future hospital facility under construction and the online university, all from the work of Mother Ines and the nuns of Hogar. I also served one Divine Liturgy, two Presanctified Liturgies and one funeral and attended a Liturgy with Mayan elders who are being missionized by the Oriental Orthodox Church. What a week.



Father Andrew, Michaelyn and David climbed a volcano with all the teens from Hogar Rafael Orphanage.



David playing soccer with the children of the orphanage.



New Members

SOJOURNS

Funerals

Teresa Kozbiel 1/24/2015

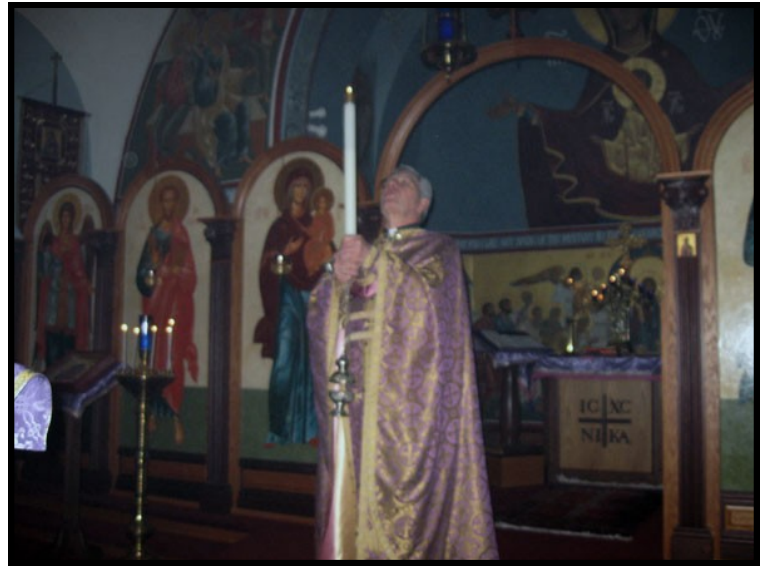
Maria Pitrouas 3/16/2015

New Members:

Lilijana Naprta,
Galina Noble,
Nicholas Wassilkowsky,
Sarah Hansen,
Nicholas Lisowski Jr



Orthodox Sunday



Presanctified Liturgy



Great Blessing of the Water



OCMC Dinner

Canon of St. Andrew

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cludes this book with the life of this great saint since many of the verses of the Canon ask for her prayers. St. Mary was an uncontrollable harlot who asked the Virgin Mary to cure her sin. Her story is an example of someone who repented from sexual pleasures of the flesh and through prayer and fasting found it is far more important to care for the soul for it is immortal. The church commemorates her on the 5th Sunday of Great Lent.

Frederica Mathewes-Green has been a great credit to our faith through her many books. Initially her books sought to help the converts (cradles, too) grasp Orthodoxy in the modern sense here in America. Of late her books have been very spiritual and prayer oriented. This one is brilliantly organized with thoughtful further reflections. This is one of her best books and a huge credit to our Church and all of us living in the West.

What is a Christian? What must they have? Certainly, they must have patience in everything. The road that takes wayfarers to the city of Paradise is completely strewn with thorns; those who travel along it will bleed. But the hope of enjoying Paradise overcomes everything and provides the wayfarers with patience – as the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste said when they were thrown into the frozen lake: “Winter is bitter, but paradise is sweet; the frost is painful, but the enjoyment will be sweet.” Elder Ephraim of the Holy Mountain

The Beauty of Spiritual Reading

By Else Tennesen

The first time I read the ancient Church Fathers, I was still a Protestant without any knowledge of church history. I discovered a small book of what was termed “ancient writings” in a Protestant bookstore and brought it home. At that time, I was already wondering what had happened to the ancient church, not knowing if writings from the time of the church’s beginnings even existed. And here they were! Reading them was like a light coming on in a dark room and the first of many “breadcrumbs” that the Lord would lay out in my journey to Orthodoxy.

What is spiritual reading? Yes, it is definitely reading the Scriptures. As well, it is reading any writing by a devoted Christian person, historic or contemporary, about faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Books in this category may include commentaries, biographies, writings of the Church Fathers, poetry, hymns, homilies and more. Even some works of fiction can turn our eyes to God. Check out the giveaway shelves in the Sunday School wing or the St Luke Bookstore for books you can begin to read, or visit St Luke’s

School of the Seventy at 70school.blogspot.com for book suggestions.

The beauty of daily spiritual reading lies in the grace imparted by the words of the faithful. This grace is many-fold: it keeps us mindful of the Lord, it may cause us to pray spontaneously as our souls relate to something written, it humbles us as we see the spiritual journeys others have made, and it can illumine us and grant us understanding into things the Lord wants us to know and learn.

Spiritual reading can be a fruitful part of one’s daily devotions. Meaningful words can become part of our prayers. We may even be motivated to keep a journal of our favorite passages and write our own thoughts about them and what they mean to us. This journal can become a record of our spiritual journey and be a comfort to us in dry times.

No time to read? Start with ten minutes of Scripture during lunch or break time. Any effort, no matter how small, is honored by God. And as we begin to listen, the Lord will speak. May your reading be blessed!

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Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 5

Matins 8:15 AM Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM at St. Luke — Commemorates Christ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Palm, Basil leaves and pussy willow branches will be distributed for the procession around the Church. In the procession the Church is Jerusalem and we are the children singing, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (John 12)

6:00 PM Bridegroom Service at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago — The Church (represented by all of us), who is the bride of Christ, awaits the arrival of the Bridegroom, who is Christ. All youth are invited to participate.

Holy Monday, April 6

7:00 PM at St. Luke, Bridegroom Service — The priest represents Christ and the congregation is the bride waiting for the Bridegroom. The Gospel Lesson is Matthew 22: 15-46, 23:1-30, "Woe unto to you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites."

Holy Tuesday, April 7

7:00 PM at St. Luke, Bridegroom Service — Includes a procession with the Hymn of St. Cassia, which describes the life and conversion of the sinful woman who anointed Christ. The congregation will be blessed with rose water. The Gospel lesson is from John 12:17-50, "The hour has come for the Son to be glorified."

Holy Wednesday, April 8

7:00 PM Sacrament of Holy Unction — The Church is called the Body of Christ. We are members of the Body through our Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, and Holy Communion. As the sinful woman anointed Christ, we are also anointed with the oil of healing so we can go with Christ to the Cross to suffer, die, and be resurrected with Him. We prepare by fasting and through confession.

Holy Thursday, April 9

8:30 AM Mystical Supper Liturgy — This service relives the Lord's Supper and the betrayal by Judas. The hymn "Of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God" is sung throughout the service. At the conclusion of the service all are invited for breakfast at a local restaurant.

7:00 PM Passion Gospel Service — This is one of the most important and solemn Holy Week services. It is a remembrance and an entrance into the suffering and death of Christ. The priest, standing in the center of the church surrounded by twelve lighted candles, reads the words of the Apostles who witnessed the events. As each Gospel is read, one candle is extinguished. During the fifth reading, the priest processes with the Cross over his shoulder as he chants, "He who hung the earth upon the waters is now being hung on the cross." At the point of the sixth Gospel when "He yielded up the spirit" is read, the priest places a wreath of red flowers over the Cross. The service concludes with the veneration of the Cross. The lighted candles, which have been held by the faithful during the service, are taken home.

Holy Friday, April 10

8:30 AM Royal Hours — The Psalms are read interspersed with New Testament readings about the Crucifixion. This is a deeply meditative service.

3:00 PM Procession with the Burial Shroud — At this service the icon of Christ is removed from the Cross as the priest reads, "And taking Him down, they wrapped Him in a linen shroud." The Shroud is then carried in procession as the choir sings the hymn of Noble Joseph. The procession ends as the Shroud is placed in the flower-decorated tomb. While the Lamentations of the Virgin Mary are sung, the faithful make a prostration before the tomb and kiss the wounds on the figure of Christ on the Shroud.

7:00 PM The Lamentations — These continue as Psalm 119 ("Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord") is chanted by the priest. The refrains are sung by the congregation: "O Life, how can You die?" During the singing of the 9th Ode of the Canon, the priest blesses the congregation with rose water as rose petals are scattered around the church. When the hymn of Noble Joseph is sung, the priest, deacons, choir and congregation process around the outside of the church. They return to the church to hear the reading from Ezekiel about the Valley of the Dry Bones. The service ends with the veneration of the shroud and distribution of flowers.

Holy Saturday, April 11

9:00 AM Vesperal Liturgy — The service celebrates Christ's descent into hell to free Adam and Eve and all who lived and died in anticipation of the coming of Christ. Fourteen Old Testament stories are read. The beautiful hymn from the Liturgy of St. James is sung, "Let all mortal flesh be silent." The Eucharist is extended into an agape meal consisting of wine, bread, fruit, dates, figs, and nuts.

Holy Saturday/Pascha Sunday, April 11/12

10:30 PM Late Evening on Saturday and flowing into the early hours of Sunday — Nocturnes, Procession, Matins and Liturgy with blessing of baskets and dinner. These services celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pascha, Sunday, April 12

12 Noon Agape Vespers — Includes a procession proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ. The Resurrection Gospels are read in as many languages as we have people to read them. An Easter egg hunt for the Church School children follows the service.

Bright Monday, April 13

8:30 AM — The Paschal Liturgy is celebrated again with the proclamation procession.

40

By Karen Verderber

It all started with a conversation I had with a friend concerning her new age. She was turning 40 and felt that she had not accomplished all that she could have and that half her life was over. For different reasons this number 40 really seems to upset many people. Trying to console my friend, I told her to look at this event as a time of transformation and preparation, expecting good things to happen. As I pondered this conversation, the thought struck me of how often the number 40 is found in scripture. Starting at the beginning in Genesis 7:12 we find God cleansing the world “forty days and forty nights.” Soon after in Genesis 8:6 we read about Noah waiting another 40 days before he opened the window of the ark. Reading further in the book of Exodus, twice we find Moses up on Mount Sinai with God for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18, Exodus 34:28-29), after which he comes down with the two tablets of testimony. Moving on through the Book of Numbers 13:25, it took the spies 40 days to search out the Promised Land. There Joshua and Caleb brought back the fruit of a land flowing with milk and honey. Although there are many more examples, I will end with Matthew 4:1-2, Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

As I read through these scripture passages, I realized just how significant this number 40 is in the Bible. God made major changes and transformations after the period of 40. I take this number literally because it is mentioned so often in the Bible and, in reality, there are meanings behind a length of time signifying a long wait, a time of atonement, and a time of preparation resulting in an expectation of a big event about to happen.

I have heard many over the years start a Lenten conversation by listing things that they are thinking of “giving up” for Lent; i.e., chocolate, meat, watching movies, etc. But for others they have another plan—experience; maybe attending more services, reading more scripture and volunteering at shelters or soup kitchens. Lent is a time that is not about what we give up, but what we can add to our own 40 day journey.

While Jesus walked the earth for 40 days after His resurrection he was preparing us for the birth of His Church. He told the apostles to spread the Gospel to all nations, preparing and teaching them, while leaving them with an abiding peace and glorious anticipation of the 2000 year old church.

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