

#### Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Cheesefare Sunday

March 13, 2016

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

#### We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area. We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual

enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives,

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

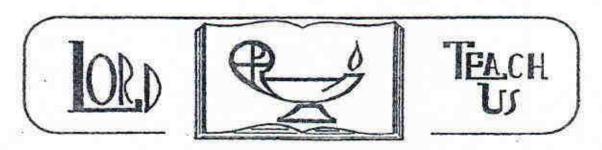
We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

#### GLAD TIDINGS

+++ The Breakfast prior to the Great Fast will be today after the Divine Liturgy which will be followed by Forgiveness Vespers. Please plan on being with us.

- +++ Tomorrow the Great Fast begins. It is a day of strict fast. Please refrain from Meat and Dairy Products. Do not fail to avail yourselves of the grace of this season and impose the privilege of fasting and penance on yourself for salvation of soul. Remember to practice charity.
- +++ There will be no Pirohi Sale in March. The Bake Sale took place this past Friday and Saturday. We sincerely thank all the helping hands in securing orders, making them, and delivering 5hem which always occurs. God bless you and your loved ones for your faithful service to our parish. We pray the Lord continues to bless us with good health for Many & Blessed Years!
- +++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Patricia, Pani Anna Marie and Andrea.
- +++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.
- +++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received last Sunday: Tithe Offering, \$359.00; Candles, \$32.00; Kitchen, \$80.00; Special Gift, \$100.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00; March Bulletin, \$25.00, for a total of \$825.00. We express our profound 4ratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls!
- +++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Maria Idronmenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Bob Gorbich, Marilyn Korba and Pani Buletza.
- +++ We make a PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1860.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.
- +++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$6750 on this project to date!
- +++ The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.
- +++ We invite all pray the Lord our God grants us the grace of enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.



#### Worship

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samuritan Luke 17: 15, 16.

Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God Luke 24: 52, 53.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen Ephesians 3: 20, 21.

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord Ephesians 5: 19.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen 1 Timothy 1: 17.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess his name Hebrews 13: 15

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light 1 Peter 2: 9.

For it is we...who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus; and who put no confidence in the flesh Philippians 3: 3.

# WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

O Guide to Wisdom, O Giver of understanding, O Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor: strengthen and enlighten my heart, O Master, Give the word to me, O Word of the Father, that I may not refrain from crying out to You: "O Merciful One, have mercy on me, a fallen one!" Troparion, Cheesfare Sunday.

Greed made us deserve our first nakedness; the bitterness of the fruit has brought disgrace, and we have become estranged from God. Let us now turn back in repentance; let us cleanse our senses, and may the Fast be our food. Let us strengthen our hearts with the hope of grace and not in the passing provisions of this life. For our food shall be the Lamb of God on the night of the glorious Resurrection. He is the Lamb Who offers Himself as a Victim for us, at the Mystical Supper in which the disciples take part, the Lamb Who dispels the darkness of the night, by the brightness of His holy Resurrection Vesper hymn, Cheesefare Sunday.

The doors of divine repentance open before us; let us enter with jost and purifly our bodies. Let us fast from food as well as from our sinful desires, conducting ourselves as servants of Christ, Who calls the world to the kingdom of heaven. Let us offer this tithe of the whole year to the King of the universe, so that with love, we may contemplate His holy Resurrection Matins hymn, First day of the Great Fast.

O friends of God, behold the gate of repentance is beginning to open; come, let us hasten to pass through it before Christ closes it in our unworthiness. Behold the week of pruning has arrived, the announcement of Spring! It prepares us for the holy Fast by purifying our souls and bodies Matins Hymn, First day of the Great Fast.

Daniel the Prophet, a man greatly beloved, having seen the power of God, cried out: God is seated in judgment, and the books are opened. O my soul, if you fast, do not deceive your neighbor. If you abstain from food, do not judge others, lest you go to be burned like wax in a fire. But may Christ lead you freely to His heavenly kingdom Vesper Hymn, Cheesefare Sunday.

#### Go For The Goal !

Teen age children generally are almost fanatical about sports. Weeks of grueling practice lead to the much-anticipated initial game, then the next, and on through the season into the playoffs.

During each contest, the overriding purpose is to score a goal. It is not enough to just have a great-looking uniform, and be able to pass the ball back and forth between team mates so that every one participates.

You may or may not be an athlete, but no matter what you do in life, you need to focus on a goal in order to succeed. That is true in every area, whether it involves your occupation, your family, your personal health, or your recreation. If you don't have a goal, you are headed for failure.

We all need spiritual goals as well. The Apostle Paul had one goal that was the foundation for all his other objectives. He wanted everything he did to be motivated by one purpose; to receive God's approval "It is not that I have reached it yet, or have already finished my course, but I am racing to grasp the prize if possible, since I have been grasped by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind, but push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me – life on high in Christ Jesus" Philippians 3: 12 – 14. Because of that goal, St. Paul hungered to know Jesus more intimately, and he was willing to endure incredible hardships to tell others about the Lord.

Do we share that same passion to grow closer to Christ and to serve Him faithfully? When people look at us, or listen to us, can they tell the purpose of our life is to know and please Christ, so that we can find our salvation in Him?

The homilies preached in our parish church, the bulletin issued each week and the variety of religious literature disseminated from time to time are tools that can help us reach the goal of growing closer in our relationship with the Lord. As we take time each day to read, to pray, to ponder and faithfully study what we receive in nurture from our parish, we must listen to Him speak to us through Scripture, through our daily prayer life, through our meditations, through our worship at the Divine Liturgy and most certainly by the invigorating life He imparts to us in the Eucharist when it is received worthily. As you translate all these into living the Christian life, God will transform your thinking and help your faith grow.

Permit the coming sacred season to provide the atmosphere in which your soul will be transform seedling faith to fully blossomed blooms.

### What Happened To Sin???

One of the great evils of our modern times is that people not only sin, but that they have, to a great extent, lost the consciousness of sin. The fundamental cause of this blunting of morals has been the development of a subjective philosophy which denies the existence of any objective moral laws.

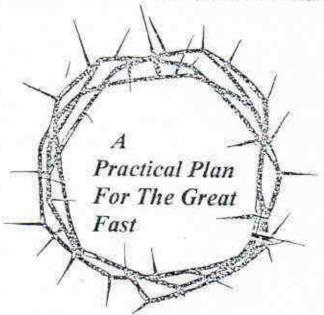
According to this outlook, there are no God-given, God-sanctioned objective moral laws based on the nature of man. Morality becomes a matter of subjective individual opinion, and one man's opinion is as good as that of another. In order to prevent total amoral chaos, the state steps in and creates laws regarding certain areas of human behavior. However, such laws are based on nothing more solid than legal custom or public opinion, and are subject to shifts and variations of opinion among judges, lawmakers, and the general public. Our God is left entirely out of the picture.

In the realm of public morality, anything is permitted that is not prohibited by civil law as, and these laws have become more and more permissive under the prevailing legal climate of promoting individual freedom and expression. With regard to private morality, everything is said to depend upon 'conscience.' However, for many, this means a purely individual subjective unenlightened conscience, based entirely upon a person's own ideas and feelings, without any reference to an objective law of God or the teachings of the Church.

All this of course, is a far cry from the morality found in God's revelation to us in Scripture, in the teaching of Christ, and in the teaching of His Body, the Church. These teach clearly and constantly that there is a difference between good and evil, between right and wrong in human activity. This difference is due not merely to human law or custom, nor to the personal ideas of the individual, but is from the law of God which is based on the nature of man and ultimately on the nature of God Himself. Hatred of God and neighbor, murder, adulterous affairs and abortion are wrong, no matter what anybody says or thinks about them. They are opposed to the essential relationship between God and man, and between man and his neighbor in human society.

Of course, a man is not guilty of sin if he does not know that what he is doing is wrong and sinful. However, his action is objectively evil and he has a duty to educate his conscience in accordance with the laws of God and the Church.

Before the advent of modern subjectivism, that is, individual interpretation and opinion, the basic elements of the Ten Commandments were generally accepted and were incorporated into the laws of civilized nations. It is to this recognition of intrinsic morality, of the fundamental difference between good and evil, of right and wrong in human relations, that we must return. Otherwise, under the impulse of ignorant human selfishness, our civilization will assuredly be buried in a swamp of moral decadence and corruption.



Until fairly recently, most of us thought of the Great Fast as a time when we "gave up" things. The present trend of deeper and profounder understanding in the Church is not to eliminate the penance but to make some changes in its direction, in the spirit which pervades it. Instead of merely 'giving up', we must also learn to 'give' to God and our neighbor of ourselves.

Here is how a young woman observed the spirit of giving during the Great Fast. Her program is all inclusive and difficult to improve upon, although each person can adapt it to their own personal life.

"The first week I called 'make room for the gift of God.' During this week I paid a daily visit to the church to talk with God. Each day I read a Psalm and reacquainted myself with Scripture. It was remarkable how I could see direction in my forthcoming day from these readings, I even got to church a little earlier on Sunday to make room to thank God unhurriedly in private prayer and personal devotion."

"The second week was making room for the voice of love. Each day I phoned at least one person I had intended to call, but somehow never got around to, if only for a 'Thank you,' or 'How are you?' At least seven persons knew that I was thinking of them and praying for them that week."

"I named the third week 'make room for the hand of love' and each day I wrote an unexpected letter to surprise a friend with a compliment or tell them how much I appreciated them."

"The fourth week I referred to as 'make room for a deed of love.' I prepared and gave little things from my home: a pie for a bachelor; a hand-poured candle for a college student; an embroidered apron for a new bride, a little candy for a nursing home patient; all little things, yet wrapped in Christian love.

"I labeled the fifth week 'make room for the heart of love.' I made a list of people who needed my prayers, not only family and friends but importantly, enemies as well, praying that I would find the grace to forgive them and to love them genuinely in Christ.'

"The final week I called 'make room for the victory of love.' Each day I took time to enjoy a piece of God's love for us, revealed in so many ways. Just getting outdoors, breathing deeply of the air, touching newly formed tree leaves, putting out bread crumbs for the birds, having friends over for supper and games. By this, I hoped to drop a little sunshine, a reflection of God's love, into these people's lives.

What if every devoted believer : touched the lives of those around them with such signs of love? "It means merely sacrificing a few coins here and there or giving a few moments unselfishly or disciplining myself to put someone else before me." What if every neighbor, every communicant of the parish, gave witness to Christ by giving to others in the spirit of love? Their giving would multiply as rapidly as the loaves of bread and the fish in Christ's miracle! How quickly we would observe a change in the world because we practiced the spirit of the Great Fast instead of simply observing its legal prescriptions.

truth need not remember what he said...



Proverbs 12:5

A good man's mind is filled with honest thoughts; an evil man's mind is crammed with lies.



The All-knowing Age

It's too bad all of life's problems can't hit us when we're 18—the stage of life when we know everything.



Faith and the Rain

Prayer is asking for rain, and faith is taking an umbrella.



# THE GREAT FAST

The Great Fast, with its penitential spirit accompanied by liturgical prayers and services in he Byzantine Tradition, is much like the whole and entire Church going on retreat together. We are surrounded by other Christians who are embracing a similar experience, and we find support from the larger group which surrounds us and thus encourages us as well. Even though not everyone in our communities and neighborhoods may be keeping a penitential style of life appropriate to the Great Fast, there are enough supports around to remind us of the spirit of this holy season.

We see this especially in our parish churches. Darker covers adorn the altar and icon stands; the haunting penitential melodies linger with us long after the services end; deep bows and prostrations punctuate our personal as well as liturgical prayer; and we are all touched by the famous Prayer of St. Ephrem that is said so many times during the period. Services such as Vespers of the Great Fast and the Presanctified Liturgy set a tone for this season. And of course, there is the fasting!

The discipline of fasting turns our attention away from ourselves and our own preoccupations and focuses us on the heavenly dimension of our lives. We know fasting is a sign of waiting, of anticipation.

Jesus replied, 'How can the guests at a wedding fast as long as the groom stays with them? So long as the groom stays with them, they cannot fast. The time will come, however, when the groom will be taken away form them; on that day they will fast' Mark 2: 19, 20.

When we fast, then, we are awaiting the Bridegroom who comes. In doing this, we are in the constant tradition of the Church which awaits the appearance of the Lord. The origin of the Great Fast can be traced to this same waiting for the Bridegroom. In the beginning it was a forty hour fast from Great and Holy Friday to the Resurrection. Its basic meaning was mourning the absence of the Lord and awaiting his return and promised coming. Later, it was extended to a full six days, our present Great and Passion Week. Finally, it was extended to the forty days we know as our present form of the Great Fast.

Thus the Great Fast is season of waiting; liturgically we experience our alienation, or expulsion from Paradise, the breakdown of our communion with our Creator God. In the Great Fast, we re-experience our human situation. We are Adam; we are created for glory, yet we are in exile. Adam was deceived and enticed to break the fast that our Creator God enjoined on him and Eve; he was enticed to break the fast, to eat and so be lost paradise. Hence, we return to Paradise by doing what Adam and Eve did not do; we return to Paradise by fasting. That is why this season is called the Great Fast.

Our experience tells us that we are never satisfied. We always long for something more. Some seek it in money and possessions, power and prestige, but these never satisfy us completely. Others seek it in ultimate experiences, the ultimate sound system, the ultimate automobile, the ultimate computer system, the ultimate clothing line or, wardrobe; the ultimate anything and everything. The word of advertising always promises us an ultimate experience which is very rarely achieved. It just never comes through. Nothing ever satisfies us ultimately and so we keep looking for something more

This continual searching tells us that there is nothing truly ultimate, except for that which Adam and Even lost, the fulfillment of God's promise to them. And we can only go back and regain it by doing what Adam and Eve did not do, what they failed to do, that is, by denying ourselves and fasting.

Even though there are many different rules and multiple traditions surrounding fasting, there is one that is the most simple, the easiest to remember and most common among the Fathers of the Church. It applies to everyone no matter how old or how young you are, how healthy or how weak we are, or what kind of diet we are following.

Many of the Desert Fathers and Mothers have taught this. Here is the teaching of Abba Poeman, the Shepherd:

Abba Joseph asked Abba Poemen, 'How should one fast?' Abba Poemen said to him: 'For my part I think it better that one should eat everyday, but only a little, so as not to be satisfied.' Abba Joseph said o him, 'When you were younger, did you not fast two days at a time, abba?' The old man said, 'Yes, even for three days and four and the whole week. The Fathers tried all this out as they were able and they found it preferable to eat every day, but just a small amount. They have left us this royal way, which is light.'

Yes, the simplest way of fasting is to get up from the table while we are still a little hungry. It preserves all the values of fasting. We will be hungering and yearning for something more. And then the light flashes within us and we realize that we are truly hungering and yearning for a closer relationship with the Lord. He is our true hunger and our true thirst.

What are some of the practical ways in which we can fast effectively? St. John Chrysostom often speaks about fasting in his homilies. He, too, has some very strong words about those who fast only from food products, but not from sinful practices.

"...for the honor of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from sinful practices...Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works!...If you see a poor person, take pity on him! If you see an enemy, be reconciled with him! If you see a friend gaining honor, envy him not!

"Let not the mouth only fast, but also the eye and the ear, and the feet and the hands, and all the members of our bodies...

"Let the hands fast by being pure from plunder and avarice. Let the feet fast by ceasing from running to unlawful practices and spectacles. Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves rudely upon handsome countenances or to busy themselves with strange beauties. For looking is the food of the eyes...The fasting of the ear consists in refusing to receive evil speech and calumny.

"Let the mouth too fast from disgraceful speeches and railing. For what does it profit if we abstain from birds and fishes, yet bite and devour our brothers and sisters?" On the Statutes 111: 11, 12.

Indeed, this is practical advice that is valuable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it was in its original context of the fourth century because man's nature is the same, with a proclivity towards sin. We can exert efforts to control our tongues by fasting from idle talking and scandalous speech. Fasting from the tongue is undoubtedly one of the most difficult forms of discipline for us today. We can also refrain from going to modern contemporary spectacles, that is, those forms of entertainment that rob us of our inner peace and from wholesome thoughts and divert us to sinful venues.

As St. John Chrysostom said, fasting is a perfect time to become reconciled with those from whom we are estranged. Is there someone with whom you have a parting of ways? Have you argued and disagreed with someone and brought about a close to your relationship? Are there tensions in the family that need to be resolved? Have you disagreed with someone enough to permit cleavage to enter your relationship? This is the time to take the first step and seek healing and reconciliation. This is what it means to fast from evil.

As we continue our journey in the direction of salvation victory, let the pray of our blessed Church from Forgiveness Vespers be our encouraging guide:

Let us begin the time
of this bright Fast,
giving ourselves over to spiritual struggle.
Let us sanctify our soul and purify our flesh.
Let us not fast only from food;
let us also abstain from every passion
and cultivate spiritual virtues.
And let us faithfully persevere in this,
that we may be worthy to see and participate in the
holy Passion of Christ our God
and experience the joy of his
Holy Resurrection.

# Did You Know That ...

...you can never have enough of a good thing like precious faith? ...man should never consider his material possessions his own, but common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need? ...everyone is the age of their heart? ... you do not try to forget the mistakes of the past, but you do not dwell on them? ... just as no one can be forced into belief, so no one can be forced into disbelief? ...you cannot sweep other people off their feet if you cannot be swept off your own? ... freedom means choosing your own burden? ...it is those who have a stable deep and real inner life who are best able to deal with the irritating details of outer life? ... courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go; it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow? ...in the end, what affects your life most profoundly are things too simple to talk about? ... waste of time is the most extravagant of all expenses? ...these things are good in little measure and evil in large: yeast, salt and hesitation? ...man must life by faith, faith in God, faith in himself and faith in others? ... youth is the best time to be rich and the best time to be poor? ...an optimist is a person who looks forward to enjoying the scenery on a detour? ... we never buy a saddle before meeting the horse?

...if we close the door on reality, it will enter by the windows?

#### The Icon Screen

# A CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE OF THE EASTERN CHURCH

I will come into your house, O Lord, and bow down in reverence towards your holy temple Psalms 5: 8, 9.

The most obviously characteristic feature of an Eastern Church is the Icon Screen, named from the Greek, eikon - image; stasis - stand, support, attracting attention by its artistic composition and unique design. It is a colorful picture screen that unites both sanctuary and nave, surrounding the sanctuary with a certain feeling of awesome mystery and protection. It arouses in the soul of a believer a sense of God's presence in the area beyond. Usually it is an elaborate work of artistic composition in which the skills of architecture, woodcarving or metal - work combined with executed iconography generously concur. It serves to arouse body and soul to worship since it dramatically reminds the believer of the encompassing mystery of the Nativity of our Lord, "God with us..." Exodus 18: 19. Its present form reflects the particular features of the people who worship in its presence. These should be meticulously preserved since they belong to a serious historical spiritual heritage.

The Icon Screen is the result of a gradual development of the primitive balustrade that was placed before the sanctuary, the place of officiating clergy, to connect and unite the nave, the place of worshipping faithful. It was made with all the resources of art out of rich materials like gold, silver, ivory, gilded oak, etc. Paul the Silentiary, the secretary to Emperor Justinian 1, writing in the middle of the sixth century, gives a detailed description of a magnificent silver balustrade of *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople, which was decorated with arabesques and semi – precious stones, silver screens, connected to twisted columns, supported oval medallions with the icons of Christ, the Birthgiver of God, the Prophets and Apostles. In the center, above the Holy Doors, an imposing gem – encrusted cross was erected.

First Christians, imitating the temple of Jerusalem, used a richly decorated curtain in their churches (Matthew 27: 51) the use of the balustrade came later. In the West, because of barbarian invasions and the decay of art, the balustrades were reduced to a simple railing by the eighth or ninth century. In the East, however, where Christian art continued to flourish, the

balustrades developed into a solid closed partition, artistically enriched with exquisite designs and icons, a style still used in parishes of Greek descent to the present day.

The classical form of open Icon Screen developed in Eastern Europe, where at the beginning of the I3th century, wooden architecture began to flourish. The popular art of wood carving and the golden age of icon – writing among the Eastern Slavs in the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries tremendously contributed to the development of the wooden open Icon Screen which reached their definitive form during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the Carpathian region, the poor highlanders had neither the opportunity nor the means to build rich palaces or impressive basilicas, so they had to use their God – given artistic resources in building their humble wooden churches. As a result, artistically speaking, we do not find any two wooden churches exactly alike. They all compete with each other by their attractive form, impressive composition and artistic detail, dictated and inspired primarily by highly individualized talent and particular need. The Icon Screen, in a particular way, gave our ancestors an opportunity to develop their own national style of Icon Screen, which they called: pred'il (Partition), ohrada (enclosure) or even, from the Greek, templon (chancel). Ir was only in the 16th century that our ancestors adopted the term iconostas.

The Slavic form of Icon Screen, especially in the Carpathian region became much lighter and more open on account of its wooden construction and artistically carved wooden screens and decorations. The favorite motif of these wooden screens was he grapevine with long, intertwined branches, wide leaves and numerous clusters of grapes. Such screens offered a sufficient and artistic support to the icons and at the same time, contained a deep mystical meaning, symbolizing our union with Christ, who said, "I am the vine and you are the branches" John 15: 5

In Subcarpathia, Icon Screens are preserved from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The oldest Icon Screen is in the village of Kolodne, Irshave County. A complete Icon Screen with all four rows of icons can be found in Krajnikovo, Chust County, which was erected in 1662. But the most monumental Icon Screens, built in 1750 with an accentuated influence of Barocco, can be found in Rus'ka Dolina. In the cathedral Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Uzhorod, the Icon Screen was installed by Bishop Andrew Bachinsky in 1779 and in the Presov Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, by Bishop Joseph Gaganets in 1846 when they were adapted from former Roman rite churches for use of the Eastern Church.

The Icon Screen basically is composed of three doors and four rows or tiers of icons. Today it is the custom, especially here in the United States, to build much lower Icon Screens primarily because of cost and knowledgeable talent, with only one or two tiers of icons as in the Seminary Chapel in :Johnstown.

The central doors of the Icon Screen, having two wings and richly decorated are called the Royal or Holy Doors. They are called Royal because the Eucharistic Christ referred to as the "King of Glory" passes through them. They are also called Holy because only the bishop, the priest or the deacon, when carrying the "Holy Gifts" (Gospel or Holy Gifts), can enter through them. The Royal Doors also should be decorated with the Icon of the Annunciation and the four Evangelists, since the "Incarnate Word of God, our Saviour, opened the gates of heaven (the sanctuary symbolizing heaven). The Good News of salvation was first announced by the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin and then to the entire world by the four Evangelists.

The door to the right is called the Deacon's Door because it is used primarily by the deacon and formerly led to a *diakonikon*, replaced now by a sacristy, where the sacred vessels and vestments were preserved. It is identified by the icon of some saint, mostly, St. Stephen the Protomartyr. On the left is the Service Door, used by minor clerics or other servers. It is adorned with the icon of an angel, usually St. Michael the Archangel, standing with a drawn sword in his hand as Defender of the Church.

Unauthorized people cannot enter the sanctuary. The following instructions have been always advanced: "Admittance to the sanctuary is reserved to priests, deacons, cleries and servers. Laymen who do not partake in Divine Worship have no place in the sanctuary, much less women, regardless of reason or their status.

The screens between the doors support the four Main Icons (Namistny ikony), which form the first row of the prescribed icons. To the right of the Royal Doors, the icon of Christ the Teacher and of the Patron Saint or Patronal Feast of the parish are placed, and to the left, the icon of the Birthgiver of God and of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Patron of the Eastern Church. If St. Nicholas is also the Patron Saint, of the parish, the icon of St. John the Baptist, highly venerated in th Eastern Church (Matthew 11:11), is placed on the left corner.

Over the doors, the second row of icons depict the twelve Major Feasts of the liturgical year which represent the main events of our salvation. In the center of the row, the icon of the Mystical Supper, constantly reenacted at the Divine Liturgy, stands out. The central figure of the upper part of the Icon Screen is that of Christ in glory, the Pantocrator, sitting on a throne

as King of the Universe. On both sides of Christ – Pantocrator in the third and fourth rows, the Apostles and Prophets and Patriarchs are pictured in an adoring posture out of deference to Christ.

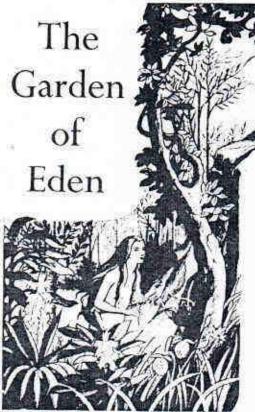
Finally, the entire Icon Screen is topped by the Crucifixion with the Blessed Mother and St. John the Evangelist standing beneath the Cross (John 19: 26, 27). It was by Christ's sacrifice on the cross that the work of our salvation was accomplished, opening to us the gates of heaven.

To properly appreciate an Icon Screen, we must its liturgical function and meaning. The Icon Screen unites the sanctuary which symbolizes the triumphant Church with the nave, representing the Church Militant and the vestibule or narthex, the place of penitents, denoting the Church Suffering. Thus the Icon Screen contributes to the symbolic expression of the mystical union of the universal Church. It prevents unnecessary traffic in the sanctuary, which is reserved for the Eucharistic Christ who really and truly abides in the tabernacle on the holy altar table. According to Archbishop Simeon of Thessalonica (1429), the Icon Screen indicates the "presence of Jesus Christ in his glory, surrounded by the angels and saints."

The Icon Screen also serves as a liturgical commodity in helping to properly perform the most beautiful ceremonies of the Eastern Church. The mind of the Church is very clear: "Altars, as long as they lack their own Icon Screen, are not considered properly suitable for liturgical celebration. In addition, the Icon Screen, being a characteristic feature of the Eastern Church, fosters love and attachment to our own Church.

The Icon Screen places before the eyes of the faithful, projects in their minds the main events of salvation and helps better to understand the true meaning of history, supports their faith and fills their hearts with nostalgic mystical experiences for which the mind of modern man yearns. The Icon Screen also greatly contributes to the prayerful atmosphere of the parish church and inspires awe, reverence and respect for this holy place, as we are reminded in every Divine Liturgy by the intonation of the priestly celebrant, "Let us stand in awe...to offer the Holy Oblation."

Finally, the Icon Screen serves as a sacred ornament of our churches, contributing to their beauty. It should therefore always be richly furnished, beautifully designed and constructed and artistically painted. In contemplating the Icon Screen, the faithful should be inspired to exclaim, ":How awe - inspiring is this place! This is nothing less than the House of God; this is the gate to heaven!" Genesis 28: 17.



 God planted a garden eastward in Eden. There He put the man, whom He called Adam. While Adam slept, God took one of his ribs, and made it into a woman.



 Then Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman." He named the woman Eve, and she became his wife.



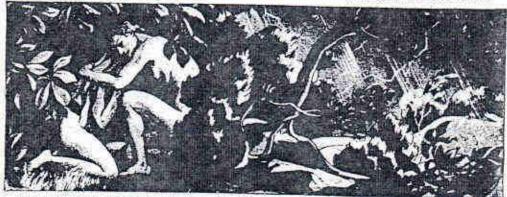
4. God said: "The fruit of every tree in the garden you may eat freely, except that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is in the midst of the garden."



But the serpent tempted Eve, "If you eat you and Adam shall be as gods—



6. "—knowing good and evil." Then Eve took the fruit, and gave some to Adam.



7. And when they had eaten the fruit, they knew not happiness, but shame and fear; and hid themselves from God when He called. When God heard what they had done, He put a curse on the serpent. To Eve, God said: "In sorrow you will bear your children"; to Adam: "Because you have disobeyed Me, the ground is cursed for your sake.



8. "It will grow thorns and thistles. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground from which you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you will return." Then God drove Adam and Eve from Eden, and placed angels with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of Life.

#### HOLY MYSTERIES



## Reconciliation

When we want to tell God in a special way that we are sorry for what we have done or said, we come to the holy mystery of Reconciliation (Confession). We hear Father say the beautiful words, "Your sins are forgiven."



# The Holy Eucharist

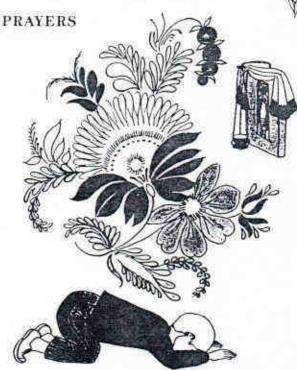
The Holy Eucharist is the body and blood of Jesus Christ.





#### The Great Fast

Spring time is a time of preparation for summer. Everything is getting ready to come to life. The Great Fast is also a time of preparation for the glorious Resurrection of Christ. During this time we try harder to come closer to God. We pray more. We help each other more. We give up some things we really like. We go to church more. We want to be ready to celebrate the Resurrection joyfully.





# St. Ephraim's Prayer

O Lord, help me not to want to have my own way all the time.
(deep bow)

Help me to love others. (deep bow)

Keep me from being jealous, and help me to know when I am wrong. (deep bow)

#### RULES FOR THE GREAT FAST . . .

W

ith Lent upon us, how shall we keep the Great Fast? From the lips of our Lord Himself, we have three vital regulations for the keeping of this sacred season.

First of all. Christ teaches the necessity to forgive. He points out the dual nature of forgiveness: If we seek the forgiveness of God for our sins, we must also forgive others their sins against us. And if we do not forgive those who have wronged us in any way, neither will God forgive us. In other words, as we treat others, so will God treat us. Of course, this great truth is also contained in the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." It is clear from this how important it is to make our peace with others before attempting any spiritual growth.

Secondly, Christ speaks about fasting, a spiritual discipline often neglected in our times. Not only is abstaining from meat and its by-products important, but the volume of food consumed, is vital; as is the abstaining from all evil deeds.

Thirdly, Christ says we must "store up for ourselves treasure in heaven." The Lord bids us to be millionaires, not in riches of this world, but in the treasures of God. It is clear from the Scriptures that Prayer and Charity are two of the great means to gather this treasure in eternity. Both are hallmarks of the true follower of Christ.

Heed the admonition of St. Paul: "Let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and the sin which holds on to us too tightly, and let us run with determination the race which lies before us . . ."