

**YES (Youth Equipped to Serve)
(A program of FOCUS North America)**

When: Friday, April 28-Sunday April 30

What: A wonderful opportunity to serve and love the people of Chicago, IL

Who: 13 yrs old through College

Where: We will meet at 5:00pm on Friday and stay Friday and Saturday nights at All Saints Antiochan Orthodox Church: 4129 W Newport Ave Chicago, IL 60641. The service learning weekend will come to a close following Liturgy on Sunday, April 30.

Cost: A registration gift of \$150 will cover all trip expenses, make it possible for the Yes Program to prepare and execute the trip, and enable our service team to meet the needs of those we serve.

Register: www.yesnorthamerica.org / Questions: Please contact Katrina Bitar, YES Program Director @ kbitar@focusna.org or Larissa Hatch, Trip Leader: larissahatch07@gmail.com

DEANERY LENTEN VESPERS SCHEDULE

Service begins at 6:00 p.m.

Join us in the spirit of prayer, harmony and peace! Let us get to know one another in our local Church.

Brief Homilies will focus on the “psalms of Ascent” chanted at the Presanctified Liturgy.

Sunday, March 12:

Saint Joseph Church
412 Crescent Street, Wheaton, IL
Sermon: Archpriest Paul Jannakos (from St Lukes)

Sunday, March 19

The Deanery Lenten service will be here at St. Panteleimon.
Sermon: Deacon Thomas Keith (From Holy Trinity Cathedral)

Sunday, March 26

St. Nicholas Church
1000 Barber Lane, Joliet, IL
Sermon: Archpriest Mykola Bodnarchuk (from St. Joe’s)

Sunday, April 2

St Cyril & Methodius Church
2505 South 30th Street, Milwaukee, WI
Sermon: TBA

Sunday, April 9

(Palm Sunday Bridegroom Matins)
Holy Trinity Cathedral
1121 North Leavitt St., Chicago, IL
Sermon: His Grace Bishop Paul

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 (Epistle)

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 1:43-51 (Gospel)

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

“Now is the Acceptable Time”—Lent as “Beginning”

by Fr. Steven Kostoff

A “good beginning” to Great Lent can go a long way toward a “good ending.” Today, on “Pure Monday,” it certainly may seem premature—if not a bit ludicrous—to already allude to the end of Great Lent. We are just beginning our Lenten journey, and the end is not quite in sight! But I bring this up with a pastoral purpose in mind. I have, in previous years, raised the question, “Is there life after Lent?” With this question in mind, I am asking whether or not there is something good and wholesome that we practiced in Great Lent that we can take with us *once the season is over*. If so, then it may be then that we can speak of a “good Lent.” Yet, how often do we immediately go back to our earlier patterns of living as if Great Lent never really occurred, or as if Lent was some kind of pious interlude interrupting our “normal” way of living, to which we eagerly return as we wipe our brow in gratitude that the ordeal is over! Obviously, we bring the fasting element to Great Lent to an end. But there is hopefully more to the season than adherence to fasting rules.

Bearing this type of approach and experience in mind, I would offer the following pastoral and practical advice: Is there some practice, habit or attitude in your life *right now* that you very much desire to eliminate from your life? Or, to pose that question with a bit more bluntness, is there any such thing in your life that you *should* eliminate from your life as a Christian? Something sinful or at least something that undermines your relationship with God and your neighbor? With some effort, determination and focus—nourished by prayer, humility and a reliance on the grace of God—why not let this Lent be the “beginning of the end” of that practice, habit or attitude that you desire/need to overcome once and for all? Then there would indeed be “life after Lent!” Taking Lent seriously forces us to come to terms with our sinful inclinations, as well as serve as the appointed opportunity to face up to and struggle against those very inclinations with their eradication in mind as a goal.

If we look to our profound spiritual tradition in the Church, we know how the great saints of the past catalogued the more universal and characteristic “bad habits” that either tempt or actually afflict us to one degree or another. These “bad habits” or vices the Fathers called “the passions” [in Greek, *ta pathi*]. The presence of the passions would preclude the possibility of obtaining “purity of heart.” The classic list of the eight passions, first drawn up by Evagrius of Pontus [+399]—called the great “psychologist of the desert”—include gluttony, lust, avarice, anger, dejection, spiritual listlessness / lassitude (the technical word behind this being *acedia*), vanity, and pride.

A certain “self-love”—here understood as an unhealthy self-absorption or self-regard—is the “mother of the passions”

We hear about these passions and their harmful spiritual effect in the Great Canon of Repentance, celebrated during this first week of the Fast:

*A soiled garment clothes me - one shamefully stained with blood flowing from a life of passion and love of fleshly things.

*I fell beneath the weight of the passions and the corruption of my flesh, and from that moment has the Enemy had power over me.

*Instead of seeking poverty of spirit, I prefer a life of greed and self-gratification; therefore, O Savior, a heavy weight hangs from my neck.

*Rhetoric or reality? You have to decide for yourself as you stand quietly in church as these verses from the Great Canon ring out.

Actually, these passions begin as “thoughts” [in Greek, *logismos/oi*] that assail the mind. (Hence, the aforementioned list of sins may at times be called the “eight thoughts”). When entertained and acted upon, the thought enters and lodges itself in the heart, and once rooted there it is a difficult process to uproot that particular passion. What may begin as a temptation from the evil one will eventually become an ingrained action or attitude that has gained control over us. We are then basically “programmed” to return to that thought or action as our will to resist has become thoroughly weakened. Thus, what is an “unnatural”—because it is sinful—passion seems to be quite “natural” to us after endless repetition! In our contemporary vocabulary, these very passions are called addictions, though the term addiction is usually used for more concrete vices such as alcohol or drug abuse. Yet, according to our spiritual tradition, we can become as “addicted” to gluttony, avarice or pride as others may be to alcohol or drugs! The ultimate goal is not elimination of the passions, but their replacement with the virtues. Can gluttony and lust be replaced by self-control? Avarice by generosity? Anger by patience or even meekness? Vanity and pride by humility? Warfare against the passions—the negative way of describing this struggle—is simultaneously an effort to acquire the virtues, a more positive way of describing the same struggle.

Is there anything in that list that we need to work on overcoming? The very universality of the list makes that a real possibility! Is anyone just sick and tired of doing the same thing over and over again, even when we acknowledge that it is either sinful or detrimental to our own lives or relationships—beginning, again, with God and neighbor? Only then, however, will we seriously enter into the battle against a certain passion.

Of course, if that all sounds a bit

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“heavy,” or as something that will have to be approached professionally or therapeutically, there may be many simple but very human and positive actions and attitudes that we may desire to embrace beginning with Great Lent and continuing with beyond the forty days and Pascha. Acts of kindness, concern and compassion, perhaps. Do we need to visit a sick friend or call a housebound aunt on the phone more often than we are now doing? Do we need to work at becoming a more positive presence in our work environment? Can we work at becoming more considerate toward others? Are we as charitable or willing to share our resources with others as we can be—especially with the poor and dispossessed? Do we need to change our attitude toward people we disagree with ideologically or politically? Do we still retain vestiges of racial, social or ethnic prejudices that are based on nothing but worn-out stereotypes? With a certain focus on our “Church lives,” can we begin to read the Scriptures with greater regularity? Or practice charity, prayer and fasting with greater care? Finally, are we interested in becoming a decent human being that just may enrich the lives of others around us?!

As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now is the acceptable time.” Great Lent can become the “beginning of the end” of a way of life we need to abandon, and the “beginning of the beginning” of the acquisition of the virtues we desire to embrace and practice. All this may be realized “through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.” I therefore believe that there is indeed abundant “life after Lent!”

19th AAC theme, youth program, related issues reviewed

A variety of issues including possible themes and youth participation related to the Orthodox Church in America’s [19th All-American Council](#) [AAC] topped the agenda of the Preconciliar Commission during its second meeting on Friday, February 24, 2017.

The 19th AAC is slated to convene July 23-27, 2018 at Saint Louis, MO’s landmark [Union Station Hotel](#).

In his opening reflections, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon emphasized the importance of involving youth in the Council in a meaningful way. He also offered insights into proposed themes and the AAC’s general operations.

Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, OCA Secretary, reported that a proposed theme and logo will be presented for approval to the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops at their March 2017 Spring Session. He also reported that a contract had been signed for a dedicated AAC web site, slated to be launched this summer. Related AAC projects in process include a video on the Council theme, diocesan videos, possible work

shops themes, and a host of functions including a breakfast for clergy wives and a breakfast for youth and the members of the Holy Synod. He further noted that the Sitka Icon of the Mother of God and the Myrrhstreaming Icon of Saint Anne will be present during the Council, as will the reproduction of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God recently enshrined in Chicago’s Holy Trinity Cathedral. AAC attendees also will have an opportunity to view artifacts from the Metropolitan Museum at [Saint Tikhon’s Monastery](#), South Canaan, PA.

With regard to communications, daily video updates and live-streaming of AAC plenary sessions once again will be made available.

Deacon Peter Ilchuk reported on the finalization of additional contracts, coordination with the Local Committee, and other matters related to the planning process. Archpriest Timothy Sawchak and Robert Butchko, clergy and lay co-chairs respectively, noted that all local committee chairs have been filled and that the response for volunteers has been strong.

Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer, reported on the current budget for the AAC. She related the recommended finance plan that involves billing each diocese for AAC assessments directly, rather than billing individual parishes as in years past. She stressed that parishes should budget appropriately for AAC expenses. Fees were set for AAC observers and other attendees, although retired clergy and widowed clergy wives will no longer have to pay a fee to attend.

Priest Benjamin Tucci outlined the proposed youth program. He will begin to recruit and vet volunteers in the months ahead. A database of youth delegates is being planned. Potential donors to offset the cost of the youth program are being explored. Becky Tesar shared plans for the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America’s annual convention, slated to be held concurrently with the AAC.

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky related his conversations with some of the recommended AAC speakers, while a list of ecumenical and interchurch observers was reviewed.

Additional information will be made available after the Holy Synod of Bishops’ Spring Session.

Bright Sadness

by Father Andrew Morbey

The American poet and Orthodox convert, Scott Cairns, writes in a chapter of *God For Us: Rediscovering the Meaning of Lent and Easter*:

.... at first, I was surely among the crew that Father Alexander Schmemmann acknowledges when he writes (in his amazing and very helpful book, *Great Lent*), “For many, if not for the majority of Orthodox Christians, Lent consists of a number of formal, predominantly negative, rules and prescriptions.... Such is the degree of our alienation from the real spirit of the Church that it is almost impossible for us to understand that there is ‘something else’ in Lent — something without which all these prescriptions lose much of their meaning.”

Father Schmemmann goes on to explain that this “something else” is another disposition altogether. He characterizes it as an “atmosphere,” a “climate,” and “a state of mind, soul, and spirit.” In my own experience — which, as I say, required some years of practice before I so much as noticed — Lent can become an incentive and a powerful means by which we can enter the kingdom of God, even as we abide here on earth.

This disposition is the harmolype — the bright-sadness — of which the fathers and the mothers speak. Even in the dryness of our desert journey, we are offered a sustaining taste of the sweet, the living waters. Even amid the gloom, we apprehend a glimmer of the light.

This bright sadness permeates much of the wonderful poetry of the Lenten Triodion. These hymns fill our liturgical services with a sadness that is at once bitter, as we consider the wretched state we find ourselves in, and yet leavened with joy, the bright promise of God’s presence and forgiveness. Bright sadness is connected with tender-heartedness, that is, compassion, a compassionate heart, from out of which a loving gaze embraces the suffering of others. What begins as something inward, and deeply personal — being touched by the poetry and melodies of bright sadness — is meant to be a source or well-spring of empathy, of mercy and forgiveness, of loving acts.

Father John Breck wrote in a meditation many years ago:

Bright sadness may be the most powerful and important experience we can know. It brings to our mind and heart, in the most direct and personal way, the ultimate purpose of our life and the object or end of our most passionate desire. It reminds us of who we are, as beloved children of God, created in His image and invited to glorify and enjoy Him forever.

bestowed by the God who loves us with a “love without limit.” It comes to us through our ascetic struggle during the Lenten season, as it does through the solemn beauty of the Church’s liturgical services. But it can come to us as well when we observe it in the people around us: people with whom and for whom we pray, people who in many cases pray for us without our being aware of it. We find that bright sadness in communion with them, in hearing their stories, in sharing their hopes, fears and longings. We find it through being attentive to the beauty and truth of their life and their unique presence.

The elder Paisios once said that for love to blossom in the heart, we must pray with pain of heart. In explaining this he noted that when we hurt some part of our body — our hand, for example — all our attention and energy focuses on where we hurt. So too it is a hurting and broken heart that focuses our spiritual attention. When asked what can we do if, in fact, we are not suffering and our heart is not hurting, the elder replied: “We should make the other’s pain our own! We must love the other, must hurt for him, so that we can pray for him. We must come out little by little from our own self and begin to love, to hurt for other people as well, for our family first then for the large family of Adam, of God.”

May our attention to the bright sadness of Lent bring us to the joy of the Resurrection! On Monday of the first week of the Fast, at Matins we sing:

Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; and let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer, with the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So, clothed in raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, that shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life.

Father Andrew Morbey is Dean of Saint Mary’s Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN.

PYSANKY WORKSHOP

Saturday March 11 @ 1:00pm @ St Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Hall 6980 S County Line Rd, Burr Ridge

If you wish to make your own please bring 4 raw eggs with you. Supplies will be available for you to use & purchase.

Please RSVP by March 4 to

Ken Cuprisin: kencuprisin@gmail.com (708-895-3074)
or Arlene Gardiner: a-gardiner@sbcglobal.net