

# THE LADDER <sup>of</sup> Divine Ascent

Volume 10, Issue 7

The Newsletter of St. John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

March 2009

## The Lenten Spring Has Come! Let us begin the Fast with Joy!

Lent Begins with Forgiveness Vespers on the Sunday of Forgiveness, March 1<sup>st</sup>

### The 'There Are No Stupid Questions' Column

#### QUESTION: How should we fast in lent?

(An inquirer or catechumen or one who is for the first time entering upon such a fast should not try to undertake this all at once, as such an attempt likely would be neither successful nor beneficial. Adopting the discipline instead in increments, over a period of several seasons & years as necessary, avoids a sense of burden or being overwhelmed and allows rather a glad anticipation of each successive step. --- Fr Marcus)

ANSWER: There are any number of books, pamphlets and on-line sources which document and explain the Orthodox practice of fasting during lent and other seasons and days of fasting. You can look these up. Basically, some days are more relaxed than others, but the fundamental concept upon which the various relaxations and exceptions are built is abstinence from animal products (meat, fish, dairy), as well as from wine (alcoholic drinks) and oil. This means that the basic lenten diet is a vegan diet, as well as oil-free and alcohol-free. So the big picture or the big principle is the recommendation that, subject to health considerations for a very few, Orthodox Christians should attempt to follow a vegan diet during fasting seasons and on fasting days. Of course, when we say a vegan diet we are also talking about avoiding expensive and luxury items on the one hand, and obsessing about food on the other. A good rule of thumb is to simplify, simplify, simplify! Be frugal - and what you save in grocery monies contribute to the United Ministries food bank or our St John of the Ladder Alms Fund or another worthy cause. Cut back on quantity; which is to say, don't take second helpings, leave the table satisfied but not stuffed, don't over-eat in order to

make up for not eating the things you usually eat. Don't feel sorry for yourself and binge on vegan comfort food. Be strict with yourself and do not look at what other people do or don't do! On the other hand, if you do not fast, do not make it difficult for those who are fasting; be supportive and do not tempt them. Don't justify not fasting or breaking the fast with the argument that hospitality trumps fasting. Hospitality is an attitude, not a meat-platter, and can be expressed in vegetarian and vegan terms as well as carnivorous ones! It is quite possible to have a wonderful time without, for example, meat or booze (and if you can't have a wonderful time without them, you have a very serious problem). Finally - if your doctor told you that you must go on a vegan or restricted diet for a while - or if your personal trainer put you on such a regime to help get you in shape - no one would say boo or second guess what you were doing. Why then do we sometimes find such an unwillingness to accept fasting as the time-honored, biblical and traditional, and widely practiced spiritual discipline it is? Sometimes we know that something is right when there is such self-justifying resistance... But the short answer to how should we fast is: with a light heart and a serious purpose, glorifying God for the opportunity! (*slightly edited, from St Mary Orthodox Church Newsletter*)



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#### 2009 Financial Update

	Income	Expenses
YTD (thru Jan)	\$8,729	\$12,302
January	\$8,729	\$12,302
Charity YTD	\$980	\$1,800

# St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

## ~ ~ ~ Schedule of Services ~ ~ ~

### March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>01</b> March Sunday of Forgiveness Cheesefare Brunch Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Forgiveness Vespers approx 12:30 pm	<b>02</b> Beginning of Great Lent No OCF at Furman University  Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6:00 pm	<b>03</b>  Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6:00 pm	<b>04</b> Matins 7:00 am Confessions 4:30 – 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 5:15 – 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm	<b>05</b> No OCF at Clemson University  Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6:00 pm	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>  Inquirers' Class 'Salvation and Redemption' 4:30 pm Confessions Great Vespers 6:00 pm
<b>08</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Divine Liturgy 9:30 am ***Vespers*** @ St George 5:00 pm	<b>09</b> No OCF at Furman University *Spring Break*	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Matins 7:00 am Confessions 4:30 – 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 5:15 – 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm	<b>12</b> OCF at Clemson University 7:00 pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  Confessions Great Vespers 6:00 pm
<b>15</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent Gregory Palamas  Divine Liturgy 9:30 am SlavonicMolieben 12:30 pm	<b>16</b> wine & oil OCF @ Furman University 5:00 pm	<b>17</b> fish, wine, & oil	<b>18</b> wine & oil Matins 7:00 am Confessions 4:30 pm Choir Rehearsal Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm	<b>19</b> No OCF at Clemson University *SpringBreak*	<b>20</b>  Panikhida 6:00 pm	<b>21</b> Divine Liturgy 8:00 am Memorial Saturday Inquirers' Class 'Mary' 4:30 pm Vigil of the Cross 6:00 pm
<b>22</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of the Cross  Divine Liturgy 9:30 am	<b>23</b> wine & oil OCF @ Furman University 5:00 pm	<b>24</b> Forefeast of Annunciation  Vespers 6:00 pm	<b>25</b> wine & oil Festal Matins 7:00 am Annunciation  Choir Rehearsal 5:15 – 6:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy 6:00 pm	<b>26</b> Archangel Gabriel  OCF at Clemson University 7:00 pm	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Akathist 'Glory to God for All Things' 8:00 am Pre-Pascha Spring Cleaning Day 9 am – 1 pm Great Vespers 6:00 pm
<b>29</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent St John of the Ladder  Festal Brunch Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Vespers 5:00 pm	<b>30</b> St John of the Ladder OCF @ Furman University 5:00 pm	<b>31</b> Repose of St Innocent of Alaska  Fr Michael Oleksa Lecture at Furman 4:30 pm	Fr Michael Oleksa to Speak at St John and Furman March 29 <sup>th</sup> , Sunday of St John of the Ladder 9:30 am, Guest Concelebrant and Homilist at the Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm, Vespers 6:00 pm, Lecture at St John of the Ladder 'The Orthodox Missionary Heritage in North America' 4:30 pm, March 31 <sup>st</sup> , Lecture at Furman University Alaskan Encounter with Russian and American Cultures			

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm, Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at St George Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Fellowship and Coffee Hour: Sundays immediately following Divine Liturgy

Church School: Sundays at 9:00 am before Divine Liturgy

Inquirers' Classes: Wednesdays following Vespers, Saturdays during Lent --- as scheduled above

Choir Rehearsal: Saturdays as scheduled, see times and dates above

Confessions: Saturdays after Great Vespers and Wednesdays before, as scheduled and by appointment

# St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

~ ~ ~ Schedule of Services ~ ~ ~

## April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>A Word from the Desert</b> "When you see your brother, you see the Lord your God." From Abba Apollo (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers)			<b>01</b> wine & oil <b>Matins</b> 7:00 am <i>Confessions</i> 4:30 – 6:00 pm <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 5:15 – 6:00 pm <b>Presanctified Liturgy</b> 6:00 pm	<b>02</b> wine & oil <b>Matins</b> with the Canon of St Andrew of Crete 7:00 am <i>Clemson University OCF</i> 7:00 pm	<b>03</b> wine & oil  <b>Akathist to the Theotokos</b> 6:00 pm	<b>04</b>  <i>Inquirers' Class 'The Mysteries: Sacraments</i> 4:30 pm <i>Confessions</i> <b>Great Vespers</b> 6:00 pm
<b>05</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of the Venerable Mary of Egypt <b>Divine Liturgy</b> 9:30 am SlavonicMolieben 12:30 pm	<b>06</b>  <i>OCF at Furman University</i> 5:00 pm	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b> <b>Matins</b> 7:00 am <i>Confessions</i> 4:30 – 6:00 pm <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 5:15 – 6:00 pm <b>Presanctified Liturgy</b> 6:00 pm	<b>09</b>  <b>Palm Thursday</b>  <i>OCF at Clemson University</i> 7:00 pm	<b>10</b>  <b>Palm Friday</b>  <i>End of Great Lent!</i>	<b>11</b>  <b>Lazarus Saturday</b>  <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 5:00 pm <b>Vigil of the Palms</b> 6:00 pm
<b>12</b> Palm Sunday Entry of the Lord <b>Divine Liturgy</b> 9:30 am Beginning of Passion Week <b>Bridegroom Matins</b> approx 12:30 pm	<b>13</b> Holy Monday  <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 6:00 pm <b>Bridegroom Matins</b> 7:00 pm	<b>14</b> Holy Tuesday <b>Presanctified Liturgy</b> 7:00 am  <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 6:00 pm <b>Bridegroom Matins</b> 7:00 pm	<b>15</b> Holy Wednesday  <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> 6:00 pm <b>Holy Thursday Matins</b> 7:00 pm	<b>16</b> Holy Thursday <b>Hours and Vesperal Liturgy</b> 3:00 pm <b>Holy Supper Holy Friday Matins</b> 7:00 pm	<b>17</b> Holy Friday  <b>Royal Hours Vespers</b> 4:00 pm <b>Holy Saturday Matins</b> 7:00 pm	<b>18</b> Holy Saturday <b>Vesperal Liturgy</b> 9:30 am (with Baptism and Chrismation of Myra Dennis) <b>Midnight Office</b> 11:30 pm
<b>19</b> Holy Pascha Resurrection of the Lord <b>Matins/Liturgy</b> Midnight (with Agape Meal) <b>Paschal Vespers</b> Noon (Easter Egg Hunt)	<b>20</b> Bright Monday  <i>OCF at Furman University</i> 5:00 pm	<b>21</b> Bright Tuesday	<b>22</b> Bright Wednesday <b>Divine Liturgy</b> 7:00 am <i>Inquirers' Class</i> 7:00 pm <b>Bright Week Vespers</b> 6:00 pm	<b>23</b> Bright Thursday Holy Greatmartyr George <i>OCF at Clemson University</i> 7:00 pm	<b>24</b> Bright Friday	<b>25</b> Bright Saturday  <b>Great Vespers</b> 6:00 pm
<b>26</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pascha St Thomas Sunday  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> 9:30 am	<b>27</b>  <i>OCF at Furman University</i> 5:00 pm	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> wine & oil  <i>Inquirers' Class 'Prayer and Ascetical Life'</i> 7:00 pm <b>Daily Vespers</b> 6:00 pm	<b>30</b>  <b>Holy Apostle James, Brother of St John</b>		

"Dost thou fast? Give me proof of it by thy works! ....

"If thou seest a poor man, take pity on him! If thou seest an enemy, be reconciled to him! .... "For 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 graft and greed. "Let the feet fast, by ceasing from running to immoral spectacles. "Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves sinfully upon fair countenances, or to busy themselves with strange beauties. .... "Dost thou not eat flesh? Feed not upon lasciviousness by means of the eyes. "Let the ears fast also ...., in refusing to receive evil gossip and slander. .... "Let the mouth too fast, from disgraceful speech and from berating. "For what doth it profit, if we abstain from birds and fishes; and yet bite and devour our brethren? The evil speaker eateth the flesh of his brother, and biteth the body of his neighbour."

---St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), Archbishop of Constantinople: from Homily III, of his "Homilies on the Statutes."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

### CHARITY BRUNCH AND ALMS SUNDAY

March 1<sup>st</sup> is our Alms Sunday. We continue to collect food stuffs for the foodbank at United Ministries and Toiletry Items (especially razors, foot powder, and Vaseline) for The Place of Hope.. Donations can be put in the vestibule or hallway in the boxes marked for United Ministries.

### 'ASK THE PRIEST'

This month's 'Ask the Priest' sessions will be held on March 15<sup>th</sup> (Fr.Nikolay) and March 22<sup>nd</sup> (Fr Marcus), following Divine Liturgy during Coffee Hour. The monthly Slavonic Molieben will also be served on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Forgiveness Vespers, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 12:30 pm; Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at St George Orthodox Church, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm; Patronal Feastday Visit of Fr Michael Oleksa to St John with Vespers and Talk, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm.

### SIGN-UP SHEETS FOR LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Sign-up sheets are posted in the fellowship hall to provide meals after Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies and to offer Easter Lilies and flowers for other feasts.

.....  
simply a reminder...and a hearty 'Thank you'!

### March Fellowship and Coffee Hour

March 1<sup>st</sup> Cheesefare Brunch (*Team 8 Clean-up*)

March 8<sup>th</sup> *Team 7*

March 15<sup>th</sup> *Team 8*

March 22<sup>nd</sup> *Team 1*

March 29<sup>th</sup> Festal Brunch (*Team 1 Clean-up*)

### Celebrating Birthdays and Anniversaries in March

Angie O'Shaughnessy and Adele Webb (3<sup>rd</sup>), Kirsten Small (6<sup>th</sup>), Jamie and Jaye Levitsky (6<sup>th</sup>), Alexandra Karter (8<sup>th</sup>), Christian Evangelista (10<sup>th</sup>), Elizabeth Simon (12<sup>th</sup>), , George Middleton (15<sup>th</sup>), Sarah Middleton (16<sup>th</sup>), Florina Nicolae (18<sup>th</sup>), James Freeman (27<sup>th</sup>), Harry Bobotis, Ken O'Shaughnessy, and Kandice Crawford (29<sup>th</sup>), Jack Levitsky (30<sup>th</sup>)

### Prayer of St Ephraim

.....  
O Lord and Master of life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to thy servant . Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother; for blessed are thou unto the ages of ages .  
.....



### Orthodox Church in America

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**Rev Fr Marcus C Burch, Rector**  
**Rev Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Assistant**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

### Schedule of Services

Vespers or Presanctified Liturgy, Wednesday, 6:00 pm  
Great Vespers, Saturday, 6:00 pm  
Divine Liturgy, Sunday, 9:30 am

Let your prayer be completely simple.  
For both the Publican and the Prodigal Son  
were reconciled to God by a single phrase.

~~~ St John of the Ladder, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 28. ~~~

PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

March 2009