

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**(301) 638-5035 Church**  
**4419 Leonardtown Road**  
**Waldorf, MD 20601**

**Very Rev. Father Joseph Edgington,**  
**Pastor**

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[www.apostlethomas.org](http://www.apostlethomas.org)

*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**Wed: Reader Vespers 6:30 PM**

**Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM**  
**Vespers 5 PM**

**Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM**

**Sunday School 9:30 AM |**

**Divine Liturgy 10 AM**

**March 2, 2025 – Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare)**

**Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia**

God has commanded us to put an end to our quarrels and strife and to forgive insults not because He needs these things, but because they are beneficial to us. Whoever forgives his neighbor's sins will himself receive pardon from God according to the promise of the Savior, and how many sins we have before God! What fear should come over us when we remember that we will have to answer for all of them at the Day of Judgment! To our great shame, all our dark deeds will be revealed to the universe at the terrible Judgment of God. Then we will not be able to expiate them in any way. However, now the Savior is offering us an easy way to erase all our sins: "*Forgive, and you shall be forgiven*" (Luke 6:37). Forgive from your heart the small sins of your brother against you, and you will receive pardon for all your countless sins before God! Is there anything better and more favorable than this? If love for God and His holy commandments cannot make us forgive, then let us forgive for our own interest at least! But alas, often not only the high motives of disinterested virtue, but even the insistent calls of our own interest are not able to induce us to forgive. Our spitefulness has blinded us so that it has made



us our own greatest enemy. In strife we are going against God with open eyes; we aim the blade of our spite at our own heart; we poison our health; and we ourselves seek eternal doom for our soul. Is there anything more foolish than this?

How good it is to forgive! The soul feels so light and pleasant afterwards! One feels such a tenderness after having forgiven that he is ready to embrace the whole world, to start loving everyone and to forgive everything. At that, it is not difficult to forgive; a little courage of the soul and some mercy of the heart are all that is required for the purpose. Numb your pride, and it will be easy to forgive your neighbor! Drive away the hatred from your heart, and you will win the love of your brother! Defeat spite, that enemy of yours, in your soul, and you will make a friend out of your enemy. When you overcome in this way the enemy within you, you will disarm the enemy without as well. It is not required of you to give anything to the person with whom you have quarreled. Only forgive him from your heart! For such forgiveness, God will not only forgive your own innumerable sins, but He will also present you with the most precious of all treasures—the Kingdom of Heaven, the eternal joy of Paradise! (*From holycross.org*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14:4 EOB**

Brethren, it is already time for you to awaken from sleep, for salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed! The night is far gone, and the day is near. Let us therefore throw off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk decently, as in the day; not in parties and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and lustful acts, and not in strife or jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think how to satisfy the flesh and its lusts. Accept the one who is weak in faith, but not to enter into arguments over disputable matters. One has faith to eat all things while the weak eats only vegetables. The one who eats [everything] should not look down on the one who does not eat. The one who does not eat should not judge the one who eats because God has accepted him. Who are you who judge someone else's servant? He stands or falls to his own master! Yes, that one will be made [able] to stand, because God has the power to make someone stand.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 6:14-21 EOB**

The Lord said, "If you forgive people their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive people their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites with their gloomy faces. For they disfigure their faces so that people may see that they are fasting. Amen, I tell you: they have received their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that people may not see that you are fasting. Only your Father who is in secret will see, and your

Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Do not store up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

“When you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting” (Matthew 6:16). At present there are very few people who, through hypocrisy, would want to seem to others during Great Lent to be great fasters – in order to earn glory from people. Most likely, there will now be people who do not want to be or seem to be fasters, because they consider fasting to be a useless and superfluous matter for themselves, and those who seem to others to be fasters – a stupid and ridiculous matter. But, despite these extremes, there are undoubtedly among Christians those who keep to the golden mean, and, without deviating either to the right or to the left, go the path of fasting straight and evenly, like true fasters, fasting a fast that is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

Tomorrow begins the Great Forty Days or Great Lent – a truly precious time for people who know how to fast as they should in the Christian spirit. So that this time may serve us for spiritual benefit and salvation, let us now talk about the necessity and benefit of fasting.

Is fasting necessary, that is, abstinence not only from certain foods that are not eaten during fasting, but also abstinence from eating them in large quantities? Is fasting necessary as abstinence from the pleasures of gross sensuality? Is fasting necessary as abstinence from disorderly thoughts and movements of the heart and disapproving actions? And do you want, beloved, to inherit blessed eternity, or the kingdom of heaven, which also undoubtedly exists, as undoubtedly as it is that we now live on earth, because the incarnate God the Word Himself, His prophets, apostles and all His saints assure us of this? How could we not want it! There, according to the faithful and immutable word of God, "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17) live forever and ever, there is God, there are blessed spirits, there are righteous people; and on earth, for a little more than seventy years only, and you see sins, confusion and disasters everywhere. If you want this, then you must certainly fast, since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50), because "the kingdom of God is not food and drink" (Rom. 14:17). Flesh and blood, food and drink, as gross, elemental, earthly things, must remain on earth and be subject to the common fate of earthly bodies - corruption. In heaven there is not and cannot be a place for gross flesh and blood

precisely because there is heaven, and not earth, because the creatures of that world have properties completely different from the properties of people living in the lusts of the world - spiritual, light-bearing properties.

Should I tell you about God Himself, the Father of the blessed inhabitants of heaven? He is the purest Spirit, Who abhors as filth the deeds of the flesh, which go beyond the bounds of law, moderation and decency. "My Spirit shall not dwell in these men forever," He said of the people who offended Him with their attachment to sensual pleasures. Why? "For," He says, "they are flesh" (Gen. 6:3), because they are gross flesh, a piece of earth, in which there is nothing spiritual, akin to Me. Behold, He also now speaks of us: "My Spirit cannot dwell in these men, because they are thick flesh, in which My Spirit cannot rest, since sin dwells in them, impurity, but I am righteous and holy."

Does he speak of created spirits? These are the second saints according to God, who, being also alien to all materiality, pure and holy, can accept into their blessed community only those who throw off the yoke of carnal slavery, and, living on earth, think about heaven, do not serve the whims of their flesh, knowing that it will decay in time in the earth.

Does he speak of the holy men of God, who have passed from the corruptible earth to the eternal abodes of heaven? These are earthly angels, who, either by fasting and vigil, or by the exploits of martyrdom and various virtues, rose above their flesh, made their nature so venerable that the bodies of many of them, having partaken of divine grace, became above the common lot of everything material, that is, corruption. They knew that our body is a house built by the hand of a skilled artist, in which a being of heavenly origin lives only for a time, who after a short time will leave his earthly hut and soar to his place, and therefore they lived not for the body, but for the soul. Yes, in order to make our existence most blessed, the Lord was pleased to settle us in this world. Only for a short time, so that, enjoying on earth and from earth the contemplation of the material creations of God, heavenly and earthly, their beauty, correctness, harmony and diverse, innumerable multitude, we would love their Creator, desire union with Him - the original beauty - and by deeds of holiness and love are found worthy of this eternal unity here.

It is as if He were saying to every person living here and contemplating His creations: "Look how immense My creations are, but at the same time how harmonious and beautiful. Look at yourself, how small and invisible you are in My creation, and I promise you, as an insignificant one, heaven as your lot, with its infinity, with its eternity; I promise it to you on certain conditions; and you know that I am the truth and cannot lie. Why do you not try to fulfill these conditions, why do you cling to the earth, and so strongly that you cannot be torn away from

it? Do you really not want to come to Me in order to receive eternal pleasure from the knowledge and contemplation of My innumerable creations in union with Me, the Creator of everything that you see, and most of all, to be blessed in Me, the source of blessedness for all rational creatures? How can you not soar your soul to heaven, not "to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11), not to gain the upper hand over your sin-loving flesh, which pulls you to the earth, and in time will certainly lie down in it, like a lump of earth?

What benefit do you get from tasty food and drinks, how are you not ashamed to burden yourself with them? Why do you give yourself over to the power of sensuality? Or do you enjoy it? Look: the imaginary sweetness of your pleasures is a dangerous bait of the flesh, through which it easily gains the upper hand over your soul, and does not give you the opportunity to think about heaven and strive there. Fear this bait. Like a fly in honey, you will get stuck in it and remain - until death."

Is fasting necessary as abstinence from disordered thoughts and movements of the heart and disapproving actions? If you agree that God is your Lawgiver and righteous Judge, Who knows how to punish violators of His laws, if your conscience tells you that your soul has more than once violated the order of moral life out of order, has disobeyed the laws of the Creator: then you must necessarily agree that you need to restore the order of your moral life, bring your thoughts into proper order from disorderly wandering here and there, force your heart to tear itself away from unworthy objects, to which, through your inattention and oversight, it has clung so strongly that it has forgotten the first object of its love - God; behave in such a way that your actions would not be shameful to present both before the judgment of your conscience and before the judgment of people and God.

You know that an unrighteous thought is an abomination to the Lord, that God asks for your heart, which you have given over to the will of passions, that "no evildoer" (Psalm 5:5) or unclean person will dwell with Him. If you want to be with God, if you want to be eternally prosperous, then you must agree that you need to fast with your soul, collect your mind, correct your thoughts, purify your thoughts, instead of the rags of unrighteous deeds adorn yourself with the precious garment of good deeds. Bodily fasting is established so that it would be easier for the soul to fast.

Should we speak any more after this about the benefit of fasting, since, having spoken about its necessity, we have also partly pointed out its benefit? It pacifies our sinful, capricious flesh, frees the soul from its heaviness, giving it, as it were, wings for free soaring to heaven; it gives place to the action of God's grace. He who fasts freely and correctly knows how light and bright the soul is during

fasting; then good thoughts easily come to the head, and the heart is purer, more tender, more compassionate. We feel a desire for good deeds; contrition for sins appears, the soul begins to feel the destructiveness of its situation and begins to contrite over sins. But when we do not fast, when thoughts are in disorder, feelings are unbridled and the will allows itself everything, then you rarely see a saving change in a person, then he is dead in his soul: all its forces act in the wrong direction; the main goal of action, the goal of life is lost sight of, there are many private goals, almost as many as each person has passions or whims. A strange work takes place in the soul, the result of which is, apparently, some kind of creation: you see the materials for construction, the beginning, middle and end of the matter, but in fact the end of everything turns out to be nothing. The soul goes against itself, against its own salvation with all its strength: with mind, will and feeling.

He who fasts in a Christian way, wisely, freely, he, according to the true promise of the Lord, is honored with a reward for his feat from the Heavenly Father. "Your Father," said the Savior about the true faster, "who sees in secret, will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:4). And this reward, without a doubt, is always generous, truly paternal, serving our most essential benefit.

Brethren! let us recognize that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that we are not our own, but God's, because we were bought with the price of the blood of the Son of God. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and are not your own, for you were bought with a price?" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Let us respect our nature, exalted to the communion of the divine nature; let us eat and drink as much as is necessary for the support of life and for the strength of our powers; let us not give it over to the power of impure passions, let us make it a sanctuary, which we ourselves would not be ashamed to look upon, and in which God would recognize the work of His hands.

Hitherto we have sinned and given ourselves over to the pleasures of gross sensuality; let us live at least now chastely and holy. We have hitherto been far from God by our carnal deeds; let us at least now draw near to Him. Let us learn how good He is. Behold, He gives us His flesh and blood to eat. If you are convinced that in yourself, without God, you are nothing more than unclean decay, dust, a sinner, alien to the blessed life, then you will understand how great is the good deed of the Lord, who feeds us with His flesh and blood. He is the source of life for all creatures and wants to settle in you, through union with Him in the Mystery of Communion, His life, His perfections, His peace, His blessedness, and to make you eternally alive. Let us always keep in mind that our soul must strive for godlike perfection, for the dear freedom of the spirit, and that it cannot attain

this perfection if we bound it with carnal deeds, fetter it with the tight and heavy chains of matter. May the Lord help us to meet Great Lent with joy. Amen. *(translated by John Sanidopoulos).*

– St. John of Kronstadt

### **Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian**

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. *(prostration)*

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. *(prostration)*

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not judge my brother. For blessed are You, forever and ever. Amen. *(prostration)*

O God, cleanse me, a sinner. *(bow)* (x12)

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not judge my brother. For blessed are You, forever and ever. Amen. *(prostration)*

*[This prayer is said, sometimes with only the first three prostrations, in virtually every weekday Lenten service. I encourage you to say the prayer during your weekday morning and evening prayers during this time of fasting and increased prayer. – Ed.]*

### **The Rules of Fasting**

*[This material is taken from the introduction to The Lenten Triodion published by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press – ed.]*

Precisely [what] do the rules of fasting demand? Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there ever been exact uniformity, but most Orthodox authorities agree on the following rules:

On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) during the seven weeks of lent, there are restrictions both on the *number* of meals taken daily and on the *types of food* permitted; but when a meal is allowed, there is no fixed limitation on the *quantity* of food to be eaten.

On weekdays in the *first week*, fasting is particularly severe. According to strict observance, in the course of the five initial days of lent, only two meals are eaten, one on Wednesday and the other on Friday, in both cases after the liturgy of the Presanctified.

On the other three days, those who have the strength are encouraged to keep an absolute fast; those for whom this proves impracticable may eat on Tuesday and Thursday (but not, if possible, on Monday), in the evening after Vespers, when they may take bread and water or perhaps tea or fruit-juice, but not a cooked meal. It should be added at once that in practice today these rules are commonly relaxed. At the meals on Wednesday and Friday *xerophagy* is prescribed. Literally this means 'dry eating'. Strictly interpreted, it signifies that we may eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread and honey. In practice, octopus and shellfish are also allowed on days of xerophagy; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil, not made from olives. But the following categories of food are definitely excluded:

*Meat; animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, drippings); fish (i.e., fish with backbones); oil (i.e., olive oil) and wine (i.e., all alcoholic drinks).*

On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) in the *second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks*, one meal a day is permitted, to be taken in the afternoon following Vespers, and at this one meal xerophagy is to be observed.”

During Holy Week: On the first three days there is one meal each day, with xerophagy; but some try to keep a complete fast on these days, or else they eat only uncooked food, as on the opening days of the first week. On Holy Thursday one meal is eaten, with wine and oil. On Great Friday those who have the strength follow the practice of the early Church and keep a total fast; those unable to do this may eat bread, with a little water, tea or fruit-juice, but not until sunset, or at any rate after [the Burial Service] at Vespers. On Holy Saturday there is one meal after the Liturgy of St. Basil, with wine but not oil.

The rule of xerophagy is relaxed on the following days:

- On Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, two main meals may be taken in the usual way, with wine and olive oil.

- On the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and Palm Sunday, fish is permitted as well as wine and oil.

- Wine and oil are permitted on the following days: Forefeast of the Annunciation (March 24) and Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (March 26).

*It has always been held that these rules of fasting should be relaxed in the case of anyone elderly or in poor health. In present-day practice, even for those in good health, the full strictness of the fast is usually mitigated. Only a few Orthodox today attempt to keep a total fast on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in the first week, or on the first three days in Holy Week. On weekdays, it is now common to eat two cooked meals daily instead of one. . . . Personal factors need to be taken into account, as for example the situation of an isolated Orthodox living*



*in the same household as non-Orthodox, or obliged to take communal meals at work or school. In cases of uncertainty each should seek the advice of his or her spiritual father. At all times it is essential to bear in mind that 'you are not under the law but under grace' (Rom. 6:14), and that 'the letter kills, but the spirit gives life' (2 Cor. 3:6). The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism; 'for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17).*

## **Holy Martyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia in Cyprus**

The Hieromartyr Theodotus, a native of Galatia in Asia Minor, was Bishop of Cyrenia in Cyprus. During a time of persecution against Christians under the impious emperor Licinius (311-324), Saint Theodotus openly preached Christ, calling on the pagans to abandon idolatry and turn to the true God. Sabinus, the governor of Cyprus, ordered that Bishop Theodotus be arrested and brought to trial.

When he heard about this order, the saint did not wait for the soldiers to be sent after him, but immediately went to the governor saying, "I, whom you seek, am here. I have shown myself in order to preach Christ my God."

The governor ordered that the saint be beaten without mercy, suspended from a tree, raked with sharp implements, and then be taken to prison. Five days later Saint Theodotus was brought to the governor, who presumed that after his tortures the bishop would prefer to renounce Christ, rather than endure new sufferings.

However, Saint Theodotus did not cease to preach about Christ. At first they put the saint on an iron grate, under which they lit a fire, and then hammered nails into his feet and let him go. Many witnessed the sufferings of the martyr. Astonished at the saint's endurance and his divinely-inspired speech, they came to believe in Christ. Learning of this, Sabinus gave orders to stop the torture and throw the saint into prison.

During the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (May 21), the freedom to confess their faith was given to all Christians, and among those set free from prison was Saint Theodotus. The saint returned to Cyrenia and after two years serving as bishop he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in about the year 326. (*from oca.org*)

## **Virgin Martyr Euthalia of Sicily**

The Holy Martyr Euthalia lived with her mother and brother in Leontina on the island of Sicily. Euthalia's mother, a pagan, suffered for a long while with an issue of blood. Once, the Martyrs Alphaeus, Philadelphus and Cyprian (May 10)

appeared to her in a dream and told her she would be healed only if she believed in Christ and was baptized.

After being baptized with her daughter, she was healed of her infirmity. When Euthalia's pagan brother Sirmianus learned of the baptism, went into a violent rage. The mother succeeded in fleeing, but Saint Euthalia confessed herself a Christian and suffered martyrdom. After fierce tortures, the saint was beheaded with a sword. (*from oca.org*)

### **Also Commemorated Today**

Appearance of the [Kolomenskoye](#) Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, "Reigning" (1917).

St. [Arsenius](#), bishop of Tver (1409).

Martyr Troadius of Neo-Caesarea (3rd c.).

Venerable Agatho of Egypt, monk (5th c.).

440 Martyrs slain by the Lombards in Campania (579). (Italy)

St. Sabbatius, monk, of Tver (1434), and his disciple St. Euphrosynus, w/w (1460).

Sts. Barsanuphius (1459) and Sabbas (1467), abbots, of Tver.

St. Chad (Ceadda), bishop of Lichtfield, England (672) (Celtic & British).

Righteous Father Nicholas Planas (1932) (Greek).

St. Quintus of Phrygia, confessor and wonderworker (283) (Greek).

Martyr Andronicus and the virgin Athanasia (Greek).

Hieromartyrs Nestor the bishop and Tribimius the deacon of Perga in Pamphylia (250).

Martyr Hesychius the Palatine of Antioch (304).

New Martyr Theodore Sladich of Komogovina (1788).

St. Joachim (Papoulakis) of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos and Ithaca (1868).

St. Cynibild, priest, brother of St. Chad (679)

St. Slebhine (Slebhene, Slebine, Sleibhin), Abbot of Iona (767)

St. Fergna the White (Feron), Abbot of Iona (637)

St. Joavan (Jaouen, Joevin, Jouvin) of Leon, Bishop (c. 576) (Brittany)

St. Willeic, prior of Kaiserwerth (726) (Germany)

St. Gistilian (Gistlian), monk and uncle of St. David (5<sup>th</sup> c.)(Wales)(See March 4)

Martyrs Jovinus and Basileus (c. 258)

Martyrs Paul, Heraclius, Secundilla and Januarina of Porto Romano (c. 305)(Italy)

Martyrs of Rome under Alexander Severus (a large number) (219)

St. Jacques (Jacob), bishop of Toul in Lorraine (767 or 768)

St. Kiwa, hermitess in Lan-Guivoa, Brittany (6<sup>th</sup> c.)

St. Macré, nun-martyr of Fismes, Champagne (unk)

St. Nizier, metropolitan bishop of Lyon (573)

# Diocesan Lenten Retreats



For All Orthodox Christians, Family & Friends

## CENTRAL REGION

Saint Nicholas Church  
903 Ann Street  
Homestead PA 15120

Saturday, April 05, 2025

10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Topic

Presenter

Adults/Teens

*Suffering and Healing in the Orthodox Tradition  
& From Healing to Evangelism*

Fr. Matthew Conjelko

Ages 6-12

*Healing through the Eucharist*

Fr. David Urban

*Akathist Hymn to the Mother will be served with fellowship meal being offered during the retreat*

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS 3/29/25

## EASTERN REGION

Saints Peter & Paul Church  
66 Beach Street  
Rockaway, NJ 07866

Saturday, March 29, 2025

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Topic

Presenter

Adults/Teens

*"Let Us Prepare Ourselves For Salvation - The Sacrament of Confession"*

Metropolitan Gregory

Ages 5-12

*Navigating Great Lent and our Lives!*

Fr. Nathaniel Choma

*Morning prayers, Sixth Hour, and Great Vespers being served with a Luncheon being offered at the retreat (see flyer)*

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS 3/22/25

## WESTERN REGION

Saint Michael Church  
7313 Waukegan Road  
Niles, IL 60714

Saturday, April 05, 2025

2:00 pm CST

Topic

Presenter

Adults/Teens

*"Modern Heresies"  
CrossRoad Institute Presentation*

Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews  
Victoria Karavitis

*Confessions and a fellowship meal following*

Come for a day of renewal and illumination  
The Retreats are sponsored by The National A.C.R.Y

# LENTEN RETREAT



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
METROPOLITAN  
GREGORY OF NYSSA

SATURDAY  
MARCH 29  
9:00AM TO  
4:00PM



Register Here

\$25 Registration Fee (\$10 for kids) includes both a Lenten Breakfast and Lunch. The day will also include Morning Prayers, the Sixth Hour, and Great Vespers (3pm).

Father Nathaniel Choma will be offering a presentation to the youth (ages 5-12). Teens should participate with the Metropolitan.

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church  
66 Beach Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866



# Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church Washington, DC



The Saint George Men's Fellowship would like to invite you to join us for an afternoon of fellowship and spiritual growth with our guest speaker

**Very Reverend Father Charles Nicholas Baz**

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**Topic:**

**Why The Old Testament?**

**Date : March 15th, 2025**

**When: 12:00-4:00 PM**

**Where : St George Ballroom**

#### About Fr Charles

Fr Charles was born in Lebanon, he received his Master of Divinity from St Vladimir's Seminary in 2000. He translated our Archdiocese's "Book of the Epistles" from Greek and Arabic in 2010. He's been a Priest for 15 years, and along with his wife Kh. Dina they have 4 children. He is Pastor of St John the Baptist Antiochian Orthodox Church in Long Island, NY. Fr Charles is multi-lingual, has led several retreats, and published articles on the Orthodox Faith. He is also a PhD candidate at the Antiochian House of Studies.



To register please visit : <https://forms.gle/RFpRo9VxauYqAht69>



*Office of the Metropolitan*

*312 Garfield Street*

*Johnstown, PA 15906*

## **GREAT LENT 2025**

Protocol No. 3/2025

My beloved Faithful Clergy and Laity (Young and Old) of our God-Protected Diocese:

As we begin Holy and Great Lent this year on March 3rd, I want to share with you a few thoughts so that we may journey through this reflective period and arrive at the Great Feast of Feasts, PASCHA to receive the Resurrected Christ.

We are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we at the same time reconcile with one another. In this holiest period of the ecclesiastical year, we should honestly examine our relationships with our families, our Church families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the society in general.

After all, a fast without mutual love and forgiveness is “the fast of demons”. Part of our salvation in our daily lives is the practicing of forgiveness and love. Forgiveness is truly a glimpse of the Heavenly Kingdom in our sinful and fallen world. Only with God’s grace and a repentant heart can we truly return to unity, love, and harmony.

Great Lent involves hard work: on ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, our relationships with those around us. Our Lenten discipline of fasting, prayer, and charity is given to us not as a burden or hardship, but rather as an opportunity for restoring our relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, The Holy Spirit, the Theotokos, our Guardian Angel, our Patron Saint, our neighbors and even ourselves. The Church invites us to transform our lives and to receive abundantly both peace and joy. Great Lent is an opportunity to renew our souls, minds, and bodies by entering more fully into a Christ-like life.

Therefore as we begin our Lenten journey together, I am asking for your forgiveness for any offenses I may have caused you. Let us pray for each other so that on that day of PASCHA, the Feast of Feasts, we may sing with loud voices the beautiful Hymn of the Resurrection.

I pray that this Great Lenten Season is a spiritually uplifting experience for all of us.

Working in His Vineyard with much agape,

*+ Metropolitan Gregory*

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

## Social Team for March 9

Team 9 is up next week – Carol Wright. Thank you!

### Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

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*In Your Prayers – Please Remember...* His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Tina Crull, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, John M. Janowiak, Johnson family, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine & the Holy Land, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)