Forgive a wrong done you by your neighbor; then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.
Wisdom of Sirach 28:2

This Old Testament passage completely resonates with our Lord’s message of mercy and forgiveness. “Forgive us our trespasses,” Jesus teaches, “as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Forgiveness and mercy play such a central role in our Christian faith, and yet, how difficult it is to live according to this divine principle. Others offend us, hurt us, do all sorts of things against us, and our fallen human nature wants to respond with anger, hurt, pain, bitterness, self-righteousness, and the decision NOT to forgive. We look at how others treat us, and we want to respond in like manner.

Yet, when we strive to live under the reign and rule of God, we make the conscious decision NOT to take the path of the majority; we decide NOT to imitate those who hurt us; we commit NOT to walk as our fallen nature leads us.

Instead, our faith reminds us to look at ourselves, and see our own shortcomings and sinfulness. Before God, who among us can say we are sinless? Before God, who among us can say that we are so good? Before God, who among us can claim that we have done no wrong to anyone else?

When we keep our focus on our sinfulness, it is much easier to realize our own need for mercy and forgiveness from God. And humbly turning to God for His compassion leads us to similar compassion towards others.
The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE. We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are under the jurisdiction of
His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Father Luke A. Veronis
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THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Continued from Front Cover

Listen carefully to what the Wisdom of Sirach 28:2-7 teaches us:

Forgive a wrong done you by your neighbor; then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.

Can a person preserve wrath against his neighbor and still seek healing from the Lord?

Can a person show no mercy towards another like himself, and still beg God for mercy for himself?

If one being flesh keeps his anger continually, who will atone for his sins?

Remember the end of your life, and cease from enmity.

Remember destruction and death and stand fast in the commandments.

Remember the commandments and do not express your anger against your neighbor.

Remember the covenant of the Most High God, and overlook faults of others.

One of the most common problems a priest deals with in his community will be the issue of people not willing to forgive one another, which leads to greater anger and bitterness, which then leads to breaking one’s communion with another. How many of us know of people who won’t speak to one another for weeks or months, and then it turns into years.

Life is too short to hold onto such grudges. Our Lord Jesus is so merciful and gracious to us, and those of us who follow Him are called to imitate his love and compassion.

I remember two men who were best friends with each other. Misunderstandings led these two best friends to break communion with one another, to hold on to certain bitterness, to not accept to forgive one another, and to go TEN YEARS without speaking to each other. Only after one was diagnosed with cancer and ready to die, did they grudgingly acknowledge one another. And the sad ending to this so common story is that years later, I witnessed the children of one of these men who now have fought with each other and who presently are going on several years without speaking to one another.

The spirit of the world arrogantly instills in us a self-righteous attitude of how we are better than others. If someone hurts us, then “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” We must seek justice when we are hurt. Others must pay for their transgressions. The world too often looks at anger, bitterness, stubbornness, and self-righteous pride as acceptable responses to hurt and offense. The world, unfortunately, does not follow the Good News which our Lord brought into the world.

Jesus Christ teaches us to “turn the other cheek,” to “forgive 70 x 7,” to “love your enemies” and “to do good to those who harm you.” This may sound impossible for many people of the world, but for those of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus, we must realize that this is the spirit of His Kingdom. Living under God’s reign, and striving to allow His Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us in our lives, we should realize that forgiveness and mercy are not impossible ideals.

The key is for us to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, and allow Him to direct us. We need to meditate upon Holy Scripture and allow this mindset to influence and govern our own world view.

It surely is hard to forgive at times, and we may be tempted to shut out a person who has hurt us, yet this path leads to death. Life, as it was meant to be lived, is a life of communion with one another. Mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and kindness - these are the virtues of living in God’s Kingdom!

As we prepare to enter into our Great Lenten journey, let us reflect on our need to forgive one another.

In Christ’s love,

+ Fr. Luke
GREAT LENT technically begins the evening before CLEAN MONDAY with the VESPER SERVICE OF FORGIVENESS on February 22. During this service, we hear beautiful and inspiring hymns calling us to begin our 40-day Lenten journey towards our Lord’s Resurrection with the spirit of forgiveness in our hearts. We seek out God’s forgiveness in our own lives, and we readily forgive others who have hurt us in any way.

This service ends with a very meaningful ritual of forgiveness. Everyone in the Church will approach the priest, and then one another, offering the kiss of peace and asking for forgiveness from one another. This act serves as a very concrete reminder that we cannot begin our spiritual journey of Lent without God’s love and mercy for one another dwelling in the center of our lives.

Following is a meditation on FORGIVENESS SUNDAY by Fr. Alexander Schmemann, one of the outstanding theologians of the past century.

The Sunday before Lent begins is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, we hear the words of Christ:

“If you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”
Matthew 6:14-15

Then after Vespers in the evening - after our entrance into the Lenten worship, with its special melodies, with the prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian, with prostrations - we ask forgiveness from each other. We perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of the Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merits and its reward.

The Church, however, spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

“In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O my soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.”
Now forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian Faith and of Christian Life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity, we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten Season.

One may ask, however, “Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies?” Why should I ask for forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know?

To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine Commandments. But the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them - in short, that all which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being polite and friendly, we fulfill God’s commandments.

The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize that our entire relationship to other people is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, makes us feel that mutual recognition which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood and sisterhood. As I advance toward the other, as the other comes to me—we begin to realize that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of peace and love, of reconciliation with God and in Him, with all that exists, we hear the hymns of that feast, which once a year “opens to us the doors to Paradise.” We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage.

Forgiveness Sunday is the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting, true fasting; when we make our effort, a true effort; when we make our reconciliation with God, a true reconciliation with God.
UNDERSTANDING THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Orthodox Christians around the world begin their yearly spiritual journey of Great Lent on February 23. This is a journey which should lead us into the depths of our souls, examining and preparing ourselves for the joyous celebration of Pascha, our Lord's victorious resurrection from the dead. When many people think of Lent, the first thought that comes to mind is giving up certain foods. Unfortunately, too many people don't properly understand fasting, and why we need to practice it.

According to Alexander Schmemman, “The purpose of Lent is not to force on us a few formal obligations, but to soften our heart so that we may experience the hidden ‘thirst and hunger’ for communion with God.”

Thus, a primary aim and purpose of fasting is first TO MAKE US CONSCIOUS OF GOD.

True fasting involves real hunger. It means denying ourselves food during times of hunger. The fathers of the Church recommended that we should always rise from the table feeling that we could have eaten more. During these times of sacrifice and struggle, we are called to turn our minds toward God and remind ourselves of our utter dependence on Him. All the blessings of life -- food, drink, and health -- come from Him. He is our provider, our sustainer, and our source of life. Fasting make us abundantly aware of our utter dependence on God.

Another purpose of fasting is to help us DEVELOP SELF-DISCIPLINE in our lives.

The mentality of the world is to satisfy your desires whenever you can. However, the Christian life presents a radical reversal of such thinking. The Church calls us to discipline our minds, bodies and spirits. Until we learn to control all our habits, our actions and our thoughts, and place our whole being under the power of Christ, we can never properly grow in the Christian life.

A third purpose of fasting is to act as A TIME OF ILLUMINATION in our lives.

If fasting is combined with increased prayer and acts of mercy, then Great Lent becomes a period of revelation and discovery. Throughout history, God has spoken to those people who have fasted and focused their whole being on Him. In the life of Jesus, as well as in the life of many Biblical characters and saints of the Church, we see that periods of fasting were times when they encountered God.

Finally, fasting helps us FREE OURSELVES from the dictatorship of flesh over spirit.

Don’t look at fasting as a personal punishment or as something negative, but as something positive. If guided by the Holy Spirit, fasting should produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which involves most notably the gift of JOY!

This is what the hymns at the beginning of Lent remind us, “With joy let us enter the beginning of the Fast, let us not be of sad countenance... There are 40 days in the Fast and let us keep them all with joy.”

So let us all begin our Lenten journey with a proper understanding of the Fast. Let us try to fast with our whole being, making this journey toward Pascha a time of sincere discovery and renewal in our relationship with our Almighty and loving God.
OTHER DISCIPLINES FOR LENT

Great Lent implies making a conscious decision to change our lifestyle for even a few weeks.

Few people would disagree that life is too busy. We all keep up a hectic pace. Technology has brought many blessings, but has also made our lives run 24/7. Cell phones, texting, twittering, facebook, internet surfing, constant music and TV, along with incessant talking and never ending busyness.

Great Lent is a time when we try to take control over our lives. The Church challenges us to limit the control other things have over us. This means making a conscious decision to change our lifestyles to a slower, less active, quieter pace.

Not only will this give us a chance to rest, but more importantly it places us in a position to hear the voice of God. We cannot hear God in the midst of noise. God speaks to us in a quiet, still voice. Thus, we must create an atmosphere in our lives to allow this voice to be heard.

Here are some concrete ideas for changing your lifestyle during Lent:

1. Devote time every day to pray - 10 minutes, 15 minutes, half hour or even an hour per day. Get an Orthodox Prayer Book and be disciplined in your morning and evening prayers.

2. Read the Bible every day during Lent. We usually read the Old Testament books of Genesis, Proverbs and Isaiah during this period, but if you are not a regular reader of the Bible, begin by reading one of the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

3. Free up your schedule so that you are not in such a rush. Make time in your daily schedule to think more about what the meaning of life is. Where are you going in life? What are your goals and dreams? If you are at the latter stage of life, how are your preparing to meet Your Creator?

4. Commit to coming to Church every Sunday and receiving Holy Communion. Attend also one extra weekly service - the Pre-sacrament Liturgy on Wednesday, or the Salutations on Friday, or Vespers on Saturday.

5. Go to Holy Confession. As hard as this may seem, make a decision to make an evaluation of your own life, go to a priest, and confess your sins in this Holy Sacrament.

6. Make the decision to watch no TV or movies for 40 days. If this seems impossible, try to turn off the TV for the entire first and fourth week of Lent, as well as during Holy Week.

7. Don’t listen to the Radio when you drive. Say the Jesus Prayer and other prayers. Try to create an atmosphere of silence outside, so that you can focus on the silence from within.

8. Fill your day with meaningful experiences and positive people. Do a good deed for another person each day.

9. Try to control your speech, limiting meaningless conversations, joking, and a lack of seriousness. Fulfill St. Paul’s advice to bless people with every word that comes out of your mouth.
Why Do We Make the Sign of the Cross?

St. Basil the Great wrote that the tradition of making the sign of the Cross comes from the Apostolic Tradition.

Tertillian, who lived from AD 160-220, said, “In all our travels and movements, in our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down in sitting down, whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross.”


St. Augustine tells us that "It is by the sign of the Cross that the Body of the Lord is consecrated, that baptismal fonts are sanctified, that priests and other ranks in the Church are admitted to their respective orders, and everything that is to be made holy is consecrated by the sign of our Lord's cross, with the invocation of the name of Christ."

The exact origins of making the sign of the Cross are unknown, but as our Church Fathers have noted, making the sign of the cross with reverence and faith acted as a prayer itself. Through the making of the Cross, we not only remember the means through which salvation came into the world through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we also proclaim our belief in the Holy Trinity, and in the two natures of Christ. In addition, making the sign of the Cross reminds us of the words of our Lord when He taught His disciples, “If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”

We Orthodox put our thumb and first two fingers together to symbolize the one God as Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then we put our pinky and fourth finger to our palm to remind us of the two natures of Jesus, who was fully God and fully human.

Throughout history, our saints have believed that through making the sign of the Cross in a reverent and pious way, one could discover great spiritual power and strength to fight off demonic temptations and struggles.

May we all begin each day, before we get out of bed, by making the sign of the Cross, and throughout the day, avail ourselves to the power and strength that comes through the continual practice of making the sign of the Cross.
LENTEN PRAYER CHAIN

During the first week of Lent (Feb 23—Mar 1), we will have our 24-HOUR A DAY PRAYER CHAIN. We are looking for 24 parishioners who will each commit to pray in their homes for one hour a day during this period. Each parishioner will commit to praying at a different hour of the day and night. This means that at every moment during the first week of Lent someone from our Church Family will be lifting up their voice in prayer, supplication and praise.

The purpose of our Prayer Chain is twofold: to help the participants enter into the spiritual life of Lent, and to get our Church Family to pray for one another and all those who have special needs. If you know someone who needs extra prayers, please give their names to Fr. Luke.

If you are interested in participating in this Prayer Chain, please contact Fr. Luke as soon as possible and he will provide you with the prayers and the structure of how to pray for one hour a day.

Words of Wisdom

The saints acquired pure hearts by fasting, vigilance, prayer, meditation, reading the Word of God, martyrdom, labor and sweat... Strive above all, then for the cleansing of the heart.

St. John of Kronstadt

The two main enemies of the spiritual life are anger and greed. Anyone who wants to fight these demons of his/her soul on their own is a fool. Only Jesus Christ can help you overcome the power of evil.

Henri Nouwen

The devil manifests himself by a kind of spiritual laziness, exhaustion and lethargy towards every good and useful work, especially works of faith and piety which require attentiveness and soberness of heart. He strikes the intellect with dullness during prayer, and coldness when it is necessary to do good and show compassion to others.

St. John of Kronstadt

Every sin that is not eradicated quickly becomes strengthened by habit, and then becomes deeply rooted in a person’s heart.

St. John of Kronstadt

Spend one hour a day in adoration of your Lord, and never do anything you know is wrong. Do this and you will be OK.

Mother Teresa
QUESTIONS GOD WON’T ASK ON THE FINAL DAY

God won’t ask the square footage of your house, but He will ask how many poor and needy people you invited into your house.

God won’t ask about the brand of clothes you wear, but He will ask how you clothed those who don’t have anything to wear.

God won’t ask what kind of car you drove, but He will ask how many people you took in your car who didn’t have transportation.

God won’t ask what your highest salary was, but He will ask if you compromised His values to obtain your salary. He will also ask what you did to help others with that salary.

God won’t ask how popular you are or how many friends you think you have, but He will ask how many people considered you their friend.

God won’t ask in what neighborhood you lived, but He will ask how you treated your neighbors.

God won’t ask about the color of your skin or your particular ethnicity, but He will ask for the content of your character.

God won’t ask how comfortable your life was, but He will ask how you comforted those with less and those in need.

It’s interesting to think about what God will be asking on that final day!!!
The Philosophy of Charles Schultz

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last Academy Award winners for best actor/actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do? The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name 3 friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of three who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier? Remember, the people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.
Youth Winter Wonderland
“GIVING TILL IT HURTS”

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz, who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.

The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it, if it will save her."

As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?"

Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her.

HOW TO FAST:

+ Fast from judging others; Feast on Christ dwelling in each person.
+ Fast from bitterness; Feast on forgiveness.
+ Fast from anxiety; Feast on faith.
+ Fast from complaining; Feast on appreciation.
+ Fast from hostility; Feast on love.
+ Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.
+ Fast from negative thoughts; Feast on the beauty of God all around us.
+ Fast from words that pollute; Feast on phrases that bless.
+ Fast from anger; Feast on patience.
+ Fast from worry; Feast on unceasing prayer.
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE
OFFERING A VIBRANT HOUSE OF FAITH AND
WORSHIP FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

ARCHANGELS ($100,000)
- Charlie and Helen Pappas

ANGELS ($50,000)
- In Honor of their parents Despina and Bill from the Condos Children (George, Lisa, Maria, Ann)
- Emmanuel James Pappas
- Olga Pappas
- Sam and Evelyn Pappas

PRINCIPALITIES ($45,000 )
- Sandi and Gerry Kunkel
- Stavros and Evangelia Pappas
- Mary Fatsi, Eleanor Teguis, Dina Teguis

GOOD SHEPHERDS: ($20,000- 30,000 )
- Michael and Titi Chito
- Van Thomas
- Steve/Sophia Foisy & Gail Foisy

TORCH BEARERS: ($11,000 - $15,000)
- Fr Luke and Pres. Faith Veronis

BENEFACTORS: ($6000 – $10,000)

PATRONS: ($3000 - $5999)
- Kiku Andersen
- Helen & Lou Nicozisis
- Nicholas/Bertha Constantine

SUPPORTERS: ($1000-$2900)

FRIENDS: (Up to $999)
- John & Samantha Gatsogiannis
- Susan Emerson Hill
- Kaiden and Hanna Kunkel
- Zinos and Angeliki Mavodanes

REMAINING NAMING OPPORTUNITIES (donation over three years):

- Classroom Building: Naming opportunities at $45,000
- Hall and Classroom Furnishings/Sound System: Two Opportunities at $25,000 each
- Stain Glass Windows in Interior of Church:
  - Large Interior South Wall $36,000
  - Small Narrow South Wall A $6,000
  - Small Narrow South Wall B $6,000
  - Back Wall Window $20,000
  - North Wall Window $18,000
  - North Wall Narrow A $3,000
  - North Wall Narrow B $3,000
  - Altar Window $18,000
- Church Sound System: Naming Opportunity at $20,000
- Parking Lot Resurfacing: Naming Opportunity at $30,000
- New Parking Lot (20 additional spaces): Naming Opportunity at $25,000
- Bell Tower Restoration - Naming Opportunity at $25,000

FUNDRAISING GOAL: $700,000
TOTAL CASH AND PLEDGED: $530,520
PARISH COUNCIL
PRESIDENT’S CORNER

DO NOT WORRY

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not a more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature” (Matthew 6:25-27)

I read this on facebook and remembered, at one time, I had highlighted this passage in my Bible. I read it again and again and wondered if my faith would ever be strong enough not to worry. There’s so many little things in our lives we worry about and in the whole scheme of things, are they really worth the worry? Do we want to fill our minds and hearts with “worry”, or would we rather replace the worry feelings with God’s “peace that passes all understanding?” (Philippians 4:6-7)

I was talking to a friend about something similar. She mentioned to me that every morning when she wakes she has anxiety attacks that last 30-40 minutes. I asked her what she did to help herself during that time. She answered “I pray.”

I hope we can all be reminded to substitute prayer for worry.

Many thanks to all those that helped with the Vasilopita dinner! My condolences to the family and friends of Doris Maniatis, May her memory be eternal.

God Bless each and everyone of you!

With love,
Lisa Healy
Parish Council President

THE AGAPE FUND

Once again, I blessed approximately 150 homes during the month of January. It was a joy for me to enter your homes and to bring God’s special grace for the New Year. I thank you all for welcoming me warmly. If I missed your home and you still want me to come, please call me to set up a time/

When I blessed your home, many of you gave me a monetary gift. Please know that it is my joy to come into your homes and bring the special blessing of our Lord. No monetary gift is ever expected, and if you give a gift, know that I do not keep it for myself. All the money I receive from House Blessings, as well as any money received from Sacraments (Baptisms & Weddings) or Memorials and Funerals goes into my “AGAPE FUND”.

I use this AGAPE FUND as a discretionary fund to help a variety of people in need - this may include people within our parish, as well as others outside our Church Family. I also use some funds to help various Church ministries. I always welcome any donations made out to this special fund.

If anyone tells me of a special need, I will try to respond to it. Of course, any such help is always held in the utmost confidence.

THANK YOU again for supporting this special AGAPE Fund!
THANK YOU

+ To Neal and Charlotte Neslusan for Three Poinsettias donated for Christmas.

+ To Sophia and Steve Foisy for a Christmas Poinsettia

CHRISTMAS CARD

We apologize for not including in our Christmas Card:

+ “In loving memory of my mother Pauline Subotich from Marianne Naumovski.”

+ For the Glory of God from Rita Carabina

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN JOY?

- **JOY** is the sign of God’s presence
- **JOY** is the echo of God’s life in us
- **JOY** is not the product of a mood, but of one’s personal relationship with our Lord Jesus
- **JOY** is prayer; **JOY** is strength; **JOY** is love; **JOY** is a net of love by which we can catch souls.
- The best way to show our gratitude to God and people is to accept everything with **JOY**.
- A **JOYFUL** heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love. Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the **JOY** of Christ’s resurrection.
- **JOY** is the peace that passes all understanding
- **JOY** is the overflow of God’s inexhaustible love
- **JOY** is union with our Creator

Fr. Anthony Coniaris

5th Annual “Bible Bowl”

All the Youth of our Church are asked to get ready for our 5th Annual “Bible Bowl”

Our “Bible Bowl” will be held on SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Parents please help your children learn their faith and read their Bibles during Lent!

More information will follow in Sunday School!!!
MAKE A SPECIAL DONATION DURING LENT IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

Please see Fr. Luke or our Church Treasurers to donate and dedicate your offering to someone.

Lenten Altar Flowers - $40/week
Friday Salutations Flowers – $30/week
  Cross Sunday Flowers - $75
  Incense (for a year) - $200
  Charcoal (for a year) - $150
  Altar Candles (for a year) - $100
Garlands at Entry of Church - $40
Palms & Trees - Palm Sunday - $200
  Bridegroom Icon Flowers - $40
    Holy Wednesday
    Unction Supplies - $50
Holy Thursday Flower Crown - $100
  Holy Thursday Candles - $40
Holy Friday Epitaphio Candles - $40
Holy Friday Epitaphio Flowers - $850
  Holy Saturday Rose Pedals - $75
Holy Altar Easter Arrangement - $200
  Resurrection Candle - $50
  Resurrection Icon Flowers - $50
    Circular Resurrection Icon Flowers - $75
  Easter Pew Flowers - $130
16 White Lilies for Easter - $40/each

WEEKDAY SERVICES

WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGY
(9:30 am)
Feb 2 - Presentation of our Lord

PARACLESIS SERVICE
6:30pm Every Wednesday

SATURDAY VESPERS (5:30pm)
Saturday Evening

LENTEN SERVICES
6:30pm Forgiveness Vespers Feb 22
6:30pm Great Compline Feb 23
6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Feb 25
6:30pm Salutations Service Feb 27

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS
Feb 14, 21, 28
9:30 Divine Liturgy with Memorial Service

ORTHODOOXY 101 CLASSES

If anyone is interested in taking this class, which introduces the fundamentals of our faith, please talk with Fr. Luke.
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:
We will NOT have coffee fellowship during the renovations of our Church Hall and Kitchen.
Remembering Our Church Family

*Important Dates in FEBRUARY:*

*Make a visit, give a call, or express congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days during this month.*

**BIRTHDAYS:**
- Feb 1: Michael Chito
- Feb 2: Fr Luke Veronis
- Feb 2: Teddy Benoit
- Feb 3: Vasiliki Zahariadis
- Feb 3: Katia Sidorchuk
- Feb 11: Lily Mueller
- Feb 12: Bozena Khozami
- Feb 13: Norman Desrosiers
- Feb 13: Michael Angelo
- Feb 15: Richard Bethune
- Feb 23: Eleanor Teguis
- Feb 25: Nike Avlas
- Feb 26: Angelina Papageorge
- Feb 28: John Sgouritsas

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**
- Feb 11: George/Mary Papageorge

**NAMEDAYS:**
- Feb 6: St. Katia
  - Katia Zhuk
- Feb 10: St Haralambos
  - Harry Jordanoglou
  - Harrison Jordanoglou

**Feb 11:**
- St. Theodora
  - Theodora Veronis
  - Theodora Stathis

**Feb. 17:**
- St. Theodore
  - Ted Tonna
  - Tenny Benoit

**Feb 26:**
- St. Fotini
  - Faith Fotini Veronis

---

**MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

DORIS MANIATIS

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**Congratulations And a Blessed New Year to Those Who Found the Three Coins in the Vasilopita Bread This Year!**

HARRISON & MARIA JORDANOGLOU

DEBORAH RAYMOND

JEN RICE

God Grant You Many Years!
8 SIGNS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILY

Eight signs for a healthy stewardship program are:

Prayer: The authentic steward must be rooted in the sanctifying presence of Christ through prayer and sacraments that give spiritual nourishment and a bond of unity. The steward needs to be sustained, above all with prayer and constant contact with the Church community.

Hospitality: Parishes need to warmly welcome all members and visitors. Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Communities known for their hospitality to members and visitors, for the vitality of their faith, and for the depth of their service to people in need invariably inspire others to participate in ministry and to be generous in financial support.

Accountability: Consistent accountability is fundamental to good stewardship. Stewardship efforts require a visible commitment to accountability for the full range of parish activities – from the way decisions are made and carried out by parish personnel to the way resources are collected, managed, and used to change lives.

Outreach: The parish as a whole needs to set aside a portion of its resources (both financial and human) to serve persons in need in the parish, the community, and the Universal Church by creating opportunities for human interaction.

Lay Witnesses: A key ingredient is the witness of lay individuals who have experienced a change of heart as a result of their commitment to stewardship. Personal witness is essential to building a solid foundation.

Goal Setting/Planning: Vibrant parishes have shared vision and goals. Challenging yet realistic goals should be set for all ministries. It is important to note that goals should be communicated clearly to the people of the parish. The parish also needs to report on the progress made toward reaching the various goals.

THANK YOU!

We collected $113,980 in Stewardship Donations for 2014. That is our BEST YEAR EVER for Stewardship Offerings!

The average pledge for our 148 Stewards was $770.

We had 20 Pacesetters ($1000-$1900), 8 Torchbearers ($2000-$4400) & 5 Good Shepherds ($4500 & up)

Re-commitment and Renewal: Stewardship is expressed not in a single process, but in a constant reminder and invitation to commit one’s very self to the Lord. Annual re-commitments help to transform individual lives and the life of the parish.

Stewardship Committee: Parishes need a systematic way of infusing the theology and practice of stewardship into the life of the parish – identifying opportunities for members of the parish to share their time, talent, treasure, and prayer and to establish an ongoing process to recruit, recognize, form, retain, and thank volunteers in all parish ministries.
**Learning the Word of God**

**HOLY SCRIPTURE**

“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

Revelation 3:20

“Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.”

1 Peter 5:7

Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

1 Peter 3:15

As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

1 Peter 1:15

Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

James 1:19

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

**FEBRUARY**

Feb 1 Romans 8:28-39 Luke 18:10-14

*Feb 2 Hebrews 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40
Feb 4 II Peter 3:1-18 Mark 13:24-31
Feb 6 Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2, John 10; 9-16

Feb 8 I Corinthians 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32
Feb 9 1 John 2:18-29; 3:1-8, Mark 11:1-11
Feb 11 Hebrews 4: 14-16; 5: 1-6 Matt 10:1, 5-8
Feb 13 II John 1:1-13 Mark 15:20, 22, 25, 33-41

Feb 15 I Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2 Matthew 25:31-46
Feb 17 II Timothy 2; 1-10 Luke 20; 46-47; 21:1-4
Feb 18 Joel 3:12-21 Joel 2: 12-26
Feb 20 Zechariah 8:7-17 Zechariah 8:19-23

Feb 22 Romans 13:11-14:1-4 Matthew 6:14-21 (Fast)
(Great Lent Begins)
Feb 24 II Corinthians 4:6-15 Matthew 11: 2-15
Feb 26 Isaiah 2:11-21 Genesis 2:4-19 Proverbs 3:1-18
Feb 28 II Timothy 2; 1-10 Mark 2:23-28;3:1-5 (Fast)
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!

If you would like to place an ad and support our monthly bulletin, please contact Fr. Luke or the Church Office.

$200/year or $20/month.

Dudley - Auburn - Blackstone

Robert J. Miller, Inc.
Funeral Services
366 School Street
Webster, MA 01570
Tel. (508) 943-0045
ROBERT J. MILLER  Toll Free 866-360-0045
Funeral Director  Fax (508) 943-3163
Email: miller.funerals@verizon.net  www.rjmillerfunerals.net

Sitkowski and Malboeuf
Funeral Home
340 School Street
Webster, MA 01570
508-943-1515

Roland P. Malboeuf, Funeral Director
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GREAT LENT
OUR JOURNEY BEGINS
CLEAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

A JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS
Forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian Faith and of Christian Life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity, we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love.

And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten Season.

TRUE FASTING
Let us observe a Fast acceptable and true to the Lord. True Fasting is to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to forbear from anger, to abstain from lust, slander, falsehood, and lying. If we renounce these things, than is our fasting true and acceptable to God.

From the Lenten Triodion

GUIDE ME DURING LENT
O Christ in Your compassion, I entreat You through fasting and repentance to restore my soul, which has been slain by the fruit of disobedience.

Grant that I may ever walk in the straight path of Your holy commandments, so that in the company of all who love You, I may share in Your divine glory and praise Your goodness towards all people, O Jesus.

A Lenten Hymn

A TIME OF REPENTANCE
Behold, now is the time of repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light, so that having sailed across the vast sea of the Fast, we may reach the third day Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A Hymn from Clean Monday