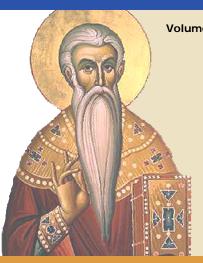


TOUCH



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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The Annunciation of the Theotokos



Today marks the crowning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery before all ages. For the Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims the grace. Wherefore, we also cry out with him, "Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you."

Great Lent

Discipline and Growth

Our growth as Orthodox Christians is a lifelong journey, and Great Lent provides us with a variety of useful tools that, when used properly, can be quite helpful on that journey.

If you have never made the Lenten journey, are not quite sure what is involved, but are ready to learn, please join us this month on Tuesday evenings following the Lenten Compline service. Five informative and thought-provoking presentations will be held in the Social Hall, and will conclude by 8:30 p.m.





Tuesday Compline Services

March 3rd – 7 p.m. presentation following

March 10th – 7 p.m. no presentation following

March 17th – 7 p.m. presentation following

March 24th – 7 p.m. presentation following

March 31st – 7 p.m. presentation following

April 7th – 7 p.m. presentation following

Coffee and refreshments will be served during each of the presentations in the Social Hall.

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PASTOR SLUMN FR. MICHAEL PALLAD

The purpose and benefits of Great Lent

"O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your servant. Yes, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed forever and ever. Amen."

The above prayer may look familiar because of its use in Orthodox Churches today, primarily during Great Lent, which begins Monday, March 2nd. It is attributed to St. Ephraim the Syrian, and is read repeatedly during the Lenten prayer services which are noted in the monthly calendar.

A brilliant teacher, author and Orthodox theologian of the 20th century, Fr. Alexander Schmemman of blessed memory, wrote with such clarity and understanding on a variety of topics. Let's look at what he had to say about Lent in general, and the prayer of St. Ephraim in particular.

"Why does this short and simple prayer occupy such an important position in the entire lenten worship? Because it enumerates in a unique way all the "negative" and "positive" elements of repentance and constitutes, so to speak, a "check list" for our individual lenten effort. This effort is aimed first at our liberation from some fundamental spiritual diseases which shape our life and make it virtually impossible for us even to start turning ourselves to God.

The basic disease is *sloth*. It is that strange laziness and passivity of our entire being which always pushes us "down" rather than "up" -- which constantly convinces us that no change is possible and therefore desirable. It is in fact a deeply rooted cynicism which to every spiritual challenge responds "what for?" and makes our life one tremendous spiritual waste. It is the root of all sin because it poisons the spiritual energy at its very source.

The result of sloth is faint-heartedness. It is the state of despondency which all spiritual Fathers considered the greatest danger for the soul. Despondency is the impossibility for man to see anything good or positive; it is the reduction of everything to negativism and pessimism. It is truly a demonic power in us because the Devil is fundamentally a liar. He lies to man about God and about the world; he fills life with darkness and negation. Despondency is the suicide of the soul because when man is possessed by it he is absolutely unable to see the light and to desire it.

Lust of power! Strange as it may seem, it is precisely sloth and despondency that fill our life with lust of power. By vitiating the entire attitude toward life and making it meaningless and empty, they force us to seek compensation in a radically wrong attitude toward other persons. If my life is not oriented toward God, not aimed at eternal values, it will inevitably become



selfish and self-centered and this means that all other beings will become means of my own self-satisfaction. If God is not the Lord and Master of my life, then I become my own lord and master -- the absolute center of my own world, and I begin to evaluate everything in terms of my needs, my ideas, my desires, and my judgments. The lust of power is thus a fundamental depravity in my relationship to other beings, a search for their subordination to me. It is not necessarily expressed in the actual urge to command and to dominate "others." It may result as well in indifference, contempt, lack of interest, consideration, and respect. It is indeed sloth and despondency directed this time at others; it completes spiritual suicide with spiritual murder.

Finally, idle talk. Of all created beings, man alone has been endowed with the gift of speech. All Fathers see in it the very "seal" of the Divine Image in man because God Himself is revealed as Word (John, 1:1). But being the supreme gift, it is by the same token the supreme danger. Being the very expression of man, the means of his self-fulfillment, it is for this very reason the means of his fall and self-destruction, of betrayal and sin. The word saves and the word kills; the word inspires and the word poisons. The word is the means of Truth and it is the means of demonic Lie. Having an ultimate positive power, it has therefore a tremendous negative power. It truly

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St. Haralambos **Greek Orthodox**

Rev. Michael Pallad

www.stharalambos.org

Sunday Worship

September - May Matins: 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

June - August Matins: 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 9:30 a.m.

623-486-8665 10320 N. 84th Ave., Peoria, AZ 85345 Office@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com Fr Michael @St Haralambos.phx coxmail.com

Hours Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parish Council

Ray Wysmierski, President Mike Danielek, Vice-President Mary Wysmierski, Secretary Stella Pagos, Treasurer **Angie Cholas** Dave Fredericksen

Mary Manos George Retsinas Peter Retsinas Roberta Szklarski Katherine Tally **Peter Tremoulis**

PARISH NEWS

Stewardship

By Roberta Szklarski

I would personally like to thank all of the members that have returned their 2009 Stewardship pledge cards. For those of you that have not, I would like to suggest that your commitment be at least the same as last year, perhaps with an additional increase of 10%. The scriptures quote tithing 10% monetarily to God; it does not say a fixed amount or a minimum amount. The giving should be made willingly and without any regrets.

Should you need an additional pledge card, they are available at the candle stand or you can request one from any parish council member. We would like to urge you, please fill out your steward card and return it to the office promptly to continue your commitment to the Lord and our Church.



2009 Lenten Vespers Services

Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches. All Vespers Services begin at 6 p.m.



The Sunday of Orthodoxy March 8, 2009 St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church 2716 N. Dobson Rd., Chandler 480- 899-3330



The Second Sunday of Lent March 15, 2009 St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, 4530 E. Gold Dust Ave. Phoenix 602-953-1921



The Third Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2009 St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church, 4436 E. McKinley Street, Phoenix, 602-275-7360



The Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 29, 2009 Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, 1614 E. Monte Vista Rd., Phoenix 602-253-9515



The Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 5, 2009 St. John Romanian Orthodox Church 3749 W. Behrend Drive, Glendale 623-582-3150

Marriage Enrichment

Join Dr. Philip Mamalakis, professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Mass., for a Marriage Enrichment Seminar.

Find out how, with God's help, to build a marriage that you look forward to coming home to each day. Discussions include how sometimes couples grow apart and against each other and the need to turn to God for answers. Dr. Mamalakis will offer some real, faith-based strategies and perspectives on how to deepen your connection to your spouse, and to God.

The seminar will be held, free of charge, on Saturday, Mar. 14 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Cathedral, 1973 E. Maryland Ave., Phoenix.

The workshop includes lunch and is open to married couples from all valley Orthodox parishes.

Please RSVP to the Holy Trinity church office at 602-264-7863.

God wants us to live happily ever after in marriage.

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ORGANIZATIONS

Parish Council Corner

By Ray Wysmierski, President

I would like to thank my fellow council members for their vote of confidence in electing me the Parish President for 2009.

We are acutely aware of the difficult economic times and are trying to be prudent in our future decisions about St. Haralambos and our project at 75th and Greenway. The Parish Council, Building Committee and Capital Campaign are working to deal with constant changes in our plans as reflected by the current economy.

We would like all of you to consider the informational materials that included a pledge commitment, which were sent out in November 2008. If you did not receive one, please call the Church office or stop by after Divine Liturgy to pick one up. The Church community needs your financial commitment so we may make our future home of St. Haralambos on 75th and Greenway a reality. Please pray and consider your pledge to the future of St. Haralambos Parish.

The Church community has both cautious and anxious members that want to see more progress on our project. The site submittal has been presented to the City of Peoria with numerous discussions led by our project manager and Parish Vice-President, Mike Danielek. He has been juggling many contiguous projects that complement our new church campus. (Possible sale of church, and project manager for new church campus.)

Under the watchful eye of our re-elected Treasurer, Stella Pagos, you can be assured our financial contributions are also being guarded through these trying economic challenges. Her updates keep the Building Committee and Parish Council apprised of our financial progress to our goal.

This year, more than ever, do we need not only the Building Fund commitments offered by you (only 3 out of 10 stewards to date). We are asking you to examine your stewardship going forward to sustain and grow our Parish.

As we begin 2009, we, as a Parish, have accomplished significant endeavors related to the new Church campus; not only from the time and effort of the Building Committee, Capital Campaign Committee, but to the entire Parish's input in shaping our vision for 75th and Greenway. We still have a stretch to reach our goal in fund raising and despite the state of the economy, our commitment needs to be in hand before we can move forward. So please, re-examine our life giving pledge to make our dream come soon.

The reasons to pledge go far beyond finances. "...because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) Follow your pledge with a generous intent in the mission and ministries of the Parish. Your pledge supports the hard work and determination of Parish members and volunteers. When you come and see the mission in motion, my hope is that your pledge can renew your own spirit.

You have our commitment as your Parish Council to be transparent with all the activities within the Parish. As your Parish President, I would like to provide better communications to Parishioners by making the monthly Meeting Minutes available so you are continually informed about your Church Family at St. Haralambos.

Finally, we need not only your financial stewardship, but also your time and talents. There are many events that will be taking place to continue our fellowship with one another and we need your help. Please talk with Fr. Michael and my fellow Council members to make 2009 not a challenging year, but a faithful and abundant one.

Quote: "Success in a business or on a football team, it boils down to one thing - Getting people who are talented to work together as a team." Coach Whisenhut, Arizona Cardinals, Arizona Republic Note: As of this publication Mike Danielek has resigned as Project Manager for the Church Building Project.

Lenten Chili

Try this recipe during Lent: Combine in large 5-quart cooking pot and cook until very tender:

- 1 Can <u>Mexican</u> Style Stewed Tomatoes
- 1 Can Stewed Tomatoes
- 1/2 Small cabbage (shredded)
- 1/2 Onion (diced)
- 1 Red Bell Pepper (diced)
- 1 Green Bell Pepper (diced)
- 1 Clove Garlic (pressed) Add:
- 1 Can Chili Beans (with liquid or sauce in can)
- 1 Can Black Beans (drained)
- 1 Can Kidney Beans (drained)
- 1 Can Corn (drained) or 1 lb. Frozen corn
- 1 Cup Brown Rice Ground Pepper to taste
- * If chili beans are mild, add additional chili powder, cumin or salsa to taste.
- * Serve with corn chips if desired.



In Touch Page 5

ORGANIZATIONS

Philoptochos

By Charlotte Servetas, President

"Faith without works is dead." James 2:12

We thank the parish participation in the Vasilopita Raffle. Proceeds totaled \$751, and \$800 was sent to St. Basil Academy.

Feb. 14, the four Valley Philoptochos Societies, sponsored an Agape Ball at St. Katherine's Church Social Hall. Proceeds were directed to Arizona's "Kids 'n' Cancer" Camp. Thank you all who volunteered financially, and for your time.

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy will be held each Wednesday during Lent. All services will be followed by a Lenten meal. Donations will be accepted at each meal with proceeds benefiting Holy Cross Seminary.

Hosts for meals:

March 4 Alice Hecht and

Anna Yacyshyn

March 11 Arliss Dennison and Chryss Danielek

March 18 Stella Pagos and Elaine Tsialafos

March 25 Charlotte Servetas and Voula Dodd

April 1 Available
April 8 Available

A "goodie" Package has been sent to John Migyanko, who is serving in Iraq. We wish him a speedy return home.

Remember to check the weekly Sunday bulletin for any changes and updates.
Next meeting will be on Mar. 2.

Enjoy your Spiritual Lenten Journey.

St. Christopher's Bookstore

Three Children's Books

The Tale of Three Trees

Angela Elwell Hunt, 1989, 25pp.

"Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up..."

The first little tree wished to become "the most beautiful treasure chest in the world," fit for a King; the second tree hoped to become "the strongest ship in the world" that would transport Kings; and the third wanted to become the tallest tree in the world, so people would look up towards "heaven and think of God."

Surprisingly, each of the three wishes comes true in an unexpected way. The use

of light and dark in the illustrations for this classic American folktale make the book awesome and wonderful.

The Shepherd and The 100 Sheep Machal Hudak 1999,24pp.

"One beautiful morning little Wooly gets out of bed on the wrong side." Because he doesn't want his coat cut off, he runs away from his 99 friends and gets lost.

Of course, the shepherd, who cares for all his sheep goes looking for Wooly and rescues him from wild animals which have surrounded him. The story ends with a big, happy celebration.

Even though one picture depicts the wild (Continued on page 7)

Choir

By Dennis Georgen, Director

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine Sunday morning without choir, without music, and without anyone leading the congregation gathered in the hymns and responses of the Divine Liturgy. Yes, it would still be Divine Liturgy in the fullest sense, but to many it would seem that maybe something was missing. The inclusion of music in our church is not intended for purposes of entertainment, however. Rather, it is intended to enhance the worship experience and inspire us in prayer.

Your St Haralambos Church Choir has grown significantly over the past few years, not only in our numbers, but in the depth of our understanding of our Church's hymnography and in the breadth of our repertoire. This year we have already introduced a new Magnificat composed by Nancy Chalker Takis in the Plagal Fourth tone, and sung in English. We are also working on a new arrangement of "We Praise You" that we hope to introduce in the very near future. Before we do,

however, we need to be able to sing it prayerfully, and not be concerned about our harmonization!

Sunday after Sunday I receive compliments from many of you on "how good Choir sounded today." I sincerely appreciate your comments and on behalf of every member of the Choir, I thank you. Your kind words inspire me and all of us to continue to work to improve what we do. I've also received comments that we sound so good that we really don't need an accompanist. While I appreciate the sentiment, I would be remiss if I didn't say that we would prefer to sing with accompaniment. The fact that we are not is not by choice. It is due to a lack of funding. We hope that this is only temporary and that we will soon be able to have our accompanist return. Many of you may not be aware, but Lahni played for us throughout January gratis.

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine once again our Sunday morning Divine Liturgy with a full choir and with accompaniment. How beautiful it is.

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ORGANIZATIONS

Sunday School

By Mike Danielek, Director

Does your child have a drug problem?

The other day I was talking with my neighbor from across the street when he began commenting on an article in the Arizona Republic where Sheriff Joe had found a methamphetamine lab right down our street at the end of our block and he asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?" I immediately replied that I had a drug problem when I was young - a huge drug problem:

- I was drug to Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning.
- I was drug to Church for weddings and funerals.
- I was drug to family reunions, dinners and community socials no matter what.
- I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.
- I was drug onto my fathers lap and spanked when I disobeyed my parents,

told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the Priest, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

- I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I cussed or used profanity.
- I was drug to the homes of family, friends and neighbors who needed help to mow the yard, rake the leaves, or help with other chores and, if my mother or father had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, they would have drug me back onto my fathers lap for a reminder that we give more than we take.

I have been a victim of drugs my whole life and those drugs are still in my veins and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, or think. They are stronger than marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, oxycotin or alcohol; and, if today's children had *this kind* of drug problem, America would be a better place. God bless our parents who drug us out of bed each Sunday morning to attend Divine Liturgy and Sunday School.

Coffee Hour

Thank You to Our Coffee Hour Hosts/Sponsors

Feb. 1 Charlotte Servetas

Feb. 8 St. Haralambos Luncheon

Feb. 15 Kalliope Chafoulias

Feb. 22 Meat Fare Sunday Luncheon

Mar. 1 Pancake Brunch

Mar. 8 Available

Mar. 15 Available

Mar. 22 Available

Note: Due to publication printing deadlines, any modifications or changes to coffee hour listing will be noted in next month's newsletter.

St. Christopher's Bookstore

(Continued from page 6)

animals with sharp, rather scary teeth, the illustrations are really a lot of fun. Preschoolers will enjoy the playful, talking sheep and the little rhyming songs they sing. Older children will see the comparison to Jesus struggling to help each of us return to Him when we stray.

<u>God's Bubbly, Gurgly, Overwhelming,</u> <u>Overflowing Love</u>

Barbara Pappas, 1999, 79pp.

"In the beginning...There was no sun...no sand...no sea...no moon...no stars. There was no you—no me! There was only God!!!"

God's love is so great "it builds up until it erupts into everything that is good." Readers are taken from the wonder of creation through the sorrow of Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden, and onto the Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The message of the book is two-fold: no matter what life brings, God cares and provides for His children; and "If we are a part of Jesus Christ—who is alive—we never really die!" The book includes Love Notes and Questions from Kids as well as the answers which adults could give. Here's one of the questions from kids: "Why didn't God just leave the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil out of the Garden of Eden?"

Illustrations are unique, full of love and hope. Hidden in each illustration is Chapter and Verse for older students (2nd graders and older) to read from the Bible.

Birthdays

George Retsinas (5th)
Alice Hecht (8th)
Pete Tremoulis (10th)
Kevin Marshall (12th)
Patti Christie (17th)
Bill Retsinas (17th)
Malia Panousopoulos (19th)
Darren Waters (22nd)
Sharon Crews (23rd)
Nick Milonas (23rd)
Kiera (Klabis) Sneeden (28th)
Shawna Tremoulis (30th)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.

In Touch Page 7

FAMILY EWS

Sacraments

Congratulations and God's blessings to Larry Kelone and Gigi Obren on their wedding, celebrated on Saturday, Feb. 14. We wish them many years of good health and happiness!

Assisted Living/ Hospitalization

The following parishioners may not be able to be with us physically, but are still loved members of our parish, and we ask you to please remember them in prayer: Orin Davis, Fannie Huzinec, Nikita and Josette Reisler, and John and Mary Karayaras.

Memory Eternal

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of his servant, Maryann Skocypec, who fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, Feb. 1. May our loving Lord grant comfort to her husband Russell and family, and may her memory be eternal

Name Days

Many years/*Chronia Polla* to those named after the following saints:

- St. Mark the Athenian (5th)
- St. Theophylaktos (8th)
- St. Anastasia (10th)
- St. Symeon (12th)
- St. Pangarios (19th)
- St. Myron (20th)
- St. Euthymios (22nd)
- St. John Climacos (30th)

Pastor's Column

(Continued from page 3)

creates positively or negatively. When deviated from its divine origin and purpose, the word becomes idle. It "enforces" sloth, despondency, and lust of power, and transforms life into hell. It becomes the very power of sin.

These four are thus the negative "objects" of repentance. They are the obstacles to be removed. But God alone can remove them. Hence, the first part of the lenten prayer; this cry from the bottom of human helplessness. Then the prayer moves to the positive aims of repentance which also are four.

Chastity! If one does not reduce this term, as is so often and erroneously done, only to its sexual connotations, it is understood as the positive counterpart of sloth. The exact and full translation of the Greek sofrosini and the Russian tselomudryie ought to be wholemindedness. Sloth is, first of all, dissipation, the brokenness of our vision and energy, the inability to see the whole. Its opposite then is precisely wholeness. If we usually mean by chastity the virtue opposed to sexual depravity, it is because the broken character of our existence is nowhere better manifested than in sexual lust - the alienation of the body from the life and control of the spirit. Christ restores wholeness in us and He does so by restoring in us the true scale of values by leading us back to God.

The first and wonderful fruit of this wholeness or chastity is *humility*. We already spoke of it. It is above everything else the victory of truth in us, the elimination of all lies in which we usually live. *Humility* alone is capable of truth, of seeing and accepting things as they are and therefore of seeing God's majesty and goodness and love in everything. This is why we are told that God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud.

Chastity and humility are naturally followed by patience. The "natural" or "fallen" man is impatient, for being blind to himself he is quick to judge and to condemn others. Having but a broken, incomplete, and distorted knowledge of everything, he measures all things by his tastes and his ideas. Being indifferent to everyone except himself, he wants life to be successful right here and now. Patience, however, is truly a divine virtue. God is patient not because He is "indulgent," but because He sees the depth of all that exists, because the inner reality of things, which in our blindness we do not see, is open to Him. The closer we come to God, the more patient we grow and the more we reflect that infinite respect for all beings which is the proper quality of God.

Finally, the crown and fruit of all virtues, of all growth and effort, is *love* - that love which, as we have already said, can be given by God alone-the gift which is the goal of all spiritual preparation and practice.

All this is summarized and brought together in the concluding petition of the lenten prayer in which we ask "to see my own errors and not to judge my brother." For ultimately there is but one danger: *pride*. Pride is the source of evil, and all evil is pride. Yet it is not enough for me to see my own errors, for even this apparent virtue can be turned into pride. Spiritual writings are full of warnings against the subtle forms of pseudo-piety which, in reality, under the cover of humility and self-accusation can lead to a truly demonic pride. But when we "see our own errors" and "do not judge our brothers," when, in other terms, chastity, humility, patience, and love are but one in us, then and only then the ultimate enemy – pride - will be destroyed in us."

May the blessings of the Lenten journey be with us all.

MARCH 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Cheesefare Sunday Pancake Breakfast	2 Beginning of Great Lent	8	4	22	9	7 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of Souls
6:00pm Lenten Vespers of Forgiveness	7:00pm Philoptochos	7:00pm Compline Service (presentation following)	6:00pm Pre-Sanctifled Divine Liturgy	7:00pm Choir	7:00pm Akathist Hymn (1st stanza)	
ON THE STATE OF TH	6	10	11 000 00	12	13	14
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 1st Sundav of Lent						9:00am Marriage Enrichment Workshop
6:00pm Lenten Vespers (St. Katherine's)		7:00pm Compline Service 7:30pm Parish Council	6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy	7:00pm Choir	7:00pm Akathist Hymn (2nd stanza)	(10) Hilly California
15 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	16	17	18	19	20	21
2nd Sunday of Lent						
6:00pm Lenten Vespers (St. George's)		7:00pm Compline Service (presentation following)	6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy	7:00pm Choir	7:00pm Akathist Hymn (3rd stanza)	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of Lent			9:00am Divine Liturgy Annunciation of the Theotokos			
6:00pm Lenten Vespers (St. Sava's)		7:00pm Great Vespers (presentation following	6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy	7:00pm Choir	7:00pm Akathist Hymn (4th stanza)	
29 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	30	31		!	X 5 Z 3000	
4th Sunday of Lent				0		
6:00pm Lenten Vespers (Sts. Peter & Paul's)		7:00pm Compline Service (presentation following)	9	A sample of Same		