

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Pauline	Nadja	Jerry
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Maximus	Emily	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	John H.
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	John	James S.
Maria	Sophia	Danny	

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Michael C.
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Travis	Billy Ray	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Astilee	Dan Brown
Tony	Donna	Joe and Jessie	Sherry
Pani Susan	Emily	Paige and Paul	
Rosco			

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Dominick LoGalbo (+12/25)

Joseph Visconti (+1/26)

Steven Shuniak (+2/2)

Josephine Ferrier (+1/24)

Angelina Visconti (+2/14)

Fernando Cannaverde (+2/14)

Thoughts from the Fathers

Repentance is often simply identified as a cool and ‘objective’ enumeration of sins and transgressions, as the act of ‘pleading guilty’ to a legal indictment. Confession and absolution are seen as being of a juridical nature. But something very essential is overlooked – without which neither confession nor absolution have any real meaning or power. This ‘something’ is precisely the feeling of alienation from God, from the joy of communion with Him, from the real life as created and given by God. It is easy indeed to confess that I have not fasted on prescribed days, or missed my prayers, or become angry. It is quite a different thing, however, to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my

spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence. Yet this, and only this is repentance, and therefore it is also a deep desire to return, to go back, to recover that lost home.

-- *Alexander Schmemmann*

...at the Prodigal Son's greatest despair, hunger and horror, a spark was lit within him; a forgotten, undreamed-of spark. Whence this spark on dead coals? Whence a spark of life in a corpse? It has come from that which we mentioned at the beginning: that the father, in giving His son his portion, gave him something more than his share. He gave him, as well as dust, a spark of conscience and understanding. As though the wise and merciful father said to himself, when he divided a part of his goods for his younger son: "I'll give him this also: something of conscience and understanding; something, in fact, of that from which he wanted to be separated. Why not? - he'll need it. He's going off to a cold and hungry land, and when he is in greatest want, this one spark will be able to light his path back to me. All right: let him take it; he'll need it. This spark will save him.

-- *Saint Nikolai of Zicha*

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A Lenten Primer

The following is from a discussion on Ancient Faith Radio

John Maddox: Well, I know we have a lot of listeners who are new to this. They are either inquirers or catechumens. Perhaps this is even their first Great Lent. And I can remember, as an Evangelical Christian, not thinking much about Lent or what that meant. However, I've noticed in recent years, some of my Evangelical friends are starting to talk more about Great Lent. But it's usually along the lines of, "Well, I've decided to give this or that up for Lent." So I think this is going to be a helpful program for anyone who is interested in how the Ancient Church has always viewed Lent, and how the Orthodox Church does it today.

Fr. Evan: Yes, it is a season that is really the highlight of the year for an Orthodox Christian, and all that we do within the Liturgical year points us towards the celebration of our Lord's death and Resurrection—the Glorious celebration of Pascha. For the Orthodox, Pascha is the feast of feasts that sets the rhythm for all that we do. And for those who, as you said, may be approaching this or are learning about it for the first time, we should say this is going to be a program that covers the basics. We won't have the time or ability to go in depth, but nevertheless we hope in some manner to express the depth and richness of this season.

John Maddox: That's right. And something that would be helpful, just at the start, would be for you to give us the historical perspective. Where did this all start, and why?

Fr. Evan: This is something that comes up in conversations on Great Lent. How did the Church arrive at such a season and structure of services? And whether you've been through Lent before or this is going to be your first season, you will see that this is a rather complicated season; there is a lot going on, a number of services you haven't seen. There are new names and phrases for things. Certain spiritual disciplines are highlighted that you may not be aware of, or at least you don't typically see during the rest of the season.

So, let's begin by saying that the Church arrived at this season in time and space. In the beginning, it didn't have the current structure it has now. We have to mention that. In fact, if you look at the historical resources we have that speak about the early celebration accompanying Pascha, one of the first things we see is a fast; and by fast, or *nestia* in Greek, is implied complete abstinence from all food and water. Thus, we see that in the early Church there was a complete and total fast—usually on Friday and Saturday before the Sunday of Pascha. I don't know if you were aware of that?

John: No that's new to me. I had certainly heard about the preparation for Baptism, but I had not heard that there was complete abstinence on Friday and Saturday from food and water.

Fr. Evan: Yes, that's where it started; and very early we even see Christians timing it to make it a forty-hour fast. They would keep a fast from any water or food for forty hours, in preparation for the celebration for our Lord's death and Resurrection. Of course, two questions may quickly come to mind. Why this absolute fast, and why the number forty? There are two quick answers to that. The first is that when the Lord was with us, He was asked why His disciples, unlike the Disciples of John, do not fast. He responds: "How can they? How can those who are with the Bridegroom fast?" Of course Christ likens Himself to the Bridegroom and his bride is the Church. So, in other words, when the Bridegroom is with you, when you are at the wedding feast, there is no fasting, but rather feasting. Then He said, "The day is coming when the Bridegroom will be taken away, and in that day, My bride, or I should say, My disciples, will fast" (cf. Mt. 9:14-15). So, very early, Christians understood that a fast—any fast—was always connected with their absence from the Lord and their subsequent reuniting with the Lord. This gives us a new perspective on the fast that we keep each week, beginning on Saturday evening through Sunday morning, before receiving the Eucharist.

John Maddox: It is in preparation.

Fr. Evan: Yes. It's total preparation. It's a Biblical mandate. It heightens our awareness of the absence of the Lord from our lives. So, we are reminded of the distance there may be between ourselves and the Lord; and then, receiving the Eucharist, with the celebration of Pascha, we are reminded of

His imminence, of His absolute presence, of the unification of our lives with His.

John Maddox: So what about the forty hours?

Fr. Evan: This is probably most easily attached to the Old Testament story of the Israelites in the wilderness. We all know the story in which the Israelites, having left the bondage of Pharaoh and having exited with Moses from Egypt, travelled through the Red Sea into the wilderness, and wandered for forty years there for their disobedience, before they are given the opportunity to enter the Promised Land. This connection with their wandering is made specifically in the prayers of Great and Holy Lent. The early Christians understood that. They understood this period of time that the people of God had been apart from God, and unable to enter into the full covenant and promise of His presence. Thus, the forty hours naturally comes from that remembrance.

John Maddox: In the New Testament, Jesus is in the wilderness for forty days.

Fr. Evan: In that specific story, He prays and fasts in his own way to prepare for His confrontation with Satan—the evil one. So this is a preparatory period before doing battle. In the Old Testament, we have the story of Noah and the Ark, in which he stayed forty days and forty nights. We have the story of Moses, who spends forty days in preparation on the mountain, to receive the Ten Commandments of God. We have the forty days of the prophet Elijah on the mountain before he confronts the false prophets.

John Maddox: But it's not something that is practiced everywhere today. I wonder why that is?

Fr. Evan: Well, in time, the Church began to develop, and you even see evidence in the early Church of variant practices. While some may have fasted Friday and Saturday, we have evidence that Christians would fast longer than that, incorporating the week prior. Very early on, we see by the time of the First Ecumenical Council the establishment of a season—forty days prior to the celebration of our Lord's death and Resurrection, the great Feast of feasts, Pascha. In addition, Ethodea, a pilgrim who went to Jerusalem and wrote about her visit around the year 400. In it her record we see that she wrote about a fast of forty days in Jerusalem. This is in the fourth century. And of course, the Apostolic constitutions, written around the year 400 A.D., proscribe a forty-day fast. As we move forward to the Council of Trullo, which occurs in 692 A.D., we see the seven weeks of Lent being mentioned, and we get the idea that this practice is generally accepted in the East. By the eighth and ninth centuries, it is universal.