

Parish Prayer List (Living)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Thekla
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Susan Mary
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Lawrence	Emil	Seraphim	Evdokia
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Brian	Carolyn	Monk Nicholas
Ashley & Ben	Kathy Tanner	Anthony	Pauline
Olga	Marina	Salvatore	Josephine
Nicholas (Nadja's brother)	Nina	Alma	Jason
Tatiana	Clint	Nadja	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Frances Dreyer (+2/1)	June Henn (+2/2)
John Beach (+2/27)	Angelina Visconti (+2/14)
Pauline LoGalbo (+2/22)	Lorraine Solinko (+2/27)
Metropolitan Nicholas (+3/13)	Laura Crikis (+3/17)

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The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian (for daily prayer in Lent)

O Lord and Master of my life, take from the spirit of sloth,
faint heartedness, lust of power and idle talk, but rather give to
your servant the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.
Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions
and not to judge my brother, for blessed are you for ages of
ages. Amen.

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Words from the Fathers

That God may forgive us, let us forgive men.
We are all on this earth as temporary guests.
Prolonged fasting and prayer is in vain
Without forgiveness and true mercy.
God is the true Physician; sins are leprosy.
Whomever God cleanses, God also glorifies.
Every merciful act of men, God rewards with mercy.
He who returns sin with sin perishes without mercy.
Pus is not cleansed by pus from infected wounds,
Neither is the darkness of the dungeon dispelled by darkness,
But pure balm heals the festering wound,
And light disperses the darkness of the dungeon.

To the seriously wounded, mercy is like a balm;
As if seeing a torch dispersing the darkness, everyone rejoices
in mercy.

The madman says, "I have no need of mercy!"

But when he is overcome by misery, he cries out for mercy!

Men bathe in the mercy of God,

And that mercy of God wakens us to life!

That God may forgive us, let us forgive men,

We are all on this earth as temporary guests.

--*St. Nikolai Velimorovich*

And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. For we have many sins. For we offend both in word and in thought, and very many things we do worthy of condemnation; and if we say that we have no sin, we lie, as John says. And we make a covenant with God, entreating Him to forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our neighbours their debts. Considering then what we receive and in return for what, let us not put off nor delay to forgive one another. The offenses committed against us are slight and trivial, and easily settled; but those which we have committed against God are great, and need such mercy as His only is. Take heed therefore, lest for the slight and trivial sins against you, you shut out for yourself forgiveness from God for your very grievous sins.

--*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

"Amen, I say to you, unless you convert and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Thus speaks the Lord and His word is holy and true. What kind of advantage do children have over adults? They have three advantages: in faith, in obedience and in forgiveness. The child asks the parent about everything and whatever the parent replies, the child believes its parent. The child is obedient to its parent and easily subordinates its will to the will of the parent. The child is forgiving even though he provokes easily, but the child forgives quickly. Our Lord requires these three from all men i.e., Faith, Obedience and Forgiveness. He seeks that men

believe in Him unconditionally, as a child believes in its parent. To be unconditionally obedient to Him as a child is to its parent and to be forgiving in relation to one another, not to remember evil and not to render evil for evil.

Faith, Obedience and Forgiveness are the three main characteristics of a child's soul. In addition to that, comes purity and joy. A child is not greedy; a child is not lustful; and a child is not vain glorious. The child has an eye unspoiled by vices and a joy unspoiled by worries.

O brethren, who can make us over again into children? No one, except the one Christ. He can make us over into children and help us to be born again and, that by His example, by His teaching and by the power of His Holy Spirit.

O Lord Jesus, perfect in obedience and meekness, Eternal Child of the Heavenly Father, help us to become as infants by faith in You, by obedience toward You and by forgiveness one toward the other. Amen.

--*St. Nikolai Velimorovich*

Lent—Why Bother? For Spiritual Exercise

"Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:25, 27, ESV).

Lent is a time of year to remember that God has seen fit to make us not airy spirits but embodied human beings living in a beautiful, material world. The soul fills the body the way fire fills a lump of coal, and what the body learns, the soul absorbs as well. Spiritual disciplines such as fasting are analogous to weight-lifting equipment. One who uses them in a disciplined way will be stronger, not just when he's lifting weights, but also for every situation he meets.

While some people think of Lent as a time to personally choose

something to "give up," the practice of the Eastern Christians, from the earliest centuries, is to observe a common fast. This is not a complete fast, but rather abstaining from meat and dairy—basically a vegan diet. Tertullian (A.D. 160-225) likened it to Daniel's diet in the king's court, when he abstained from meat and rich foods and grew stronger than those who feasted.

There's something to be said for following an ancient, universal Lenten custom like this instead of choosing your own adventure. Most of us are not capable of being our own spiritual directors. We don't have the perspective needed to choose the things that will really change us. (Deep down, we may not even want to change. I like to say, "Everyone wants to be transformed, but nobody wants to change.") A fast like this, observed for 2,000 years by Eastern Christians in lands from Eastern Europe to Africa, India, and Alaska, is time-tested. (The Lenten vegan fast was once a Western custom too, seen by some churches still holding a "pancake dinner" just before Lent to use up the butter, milk, and eggs.)

In Lent we are one not only with the church through time, but also with those in our local church. Orthodox Lent begins with the Rite of Forgiveness, in which all church members form a circle and, one at a time, stand face-to-face with each other and ask forgiveness. This experience is profoundly healing and also preventive; I'm more likely to restrain a harsh word in July if I recall that I will have to ask this person's forgiveness again in March.

Lenten disciplines train us like athletes, strengthening our earthly bodies and souls, healing the body of believers in our local parish, and forging union with the body of Christ throughout time. "Forgetting what lies behind" and the sins of the past, we "press on" to combat those sins that lie ahead, made stronger by our Lenten disciplines, "for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14, ESV).

--*Khouria Frederica Mathewes-Green*