

## **Parish Prayer List (Living)**

*(Parish)*

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Seraphim	Evdokia
Anthony	Pauline	Nadja	Jerry
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Tatiana	Travis	Jason
Susan Mary	Clint	John	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	Sophia
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	Efthalia	Denny

*(non-Parish)*

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Grant
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Blake
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Travis, Jr.	Alma	Constance
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Genevieve	Carla and family	Michael C.

## **Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)**

Olga Specian (+2/19)

Pauline LoGalbo (+2/22)

Lorraine Solinko (+2/27)

Metropolitan Nicholas (+3/13)

Laura Crikis (+3/17)

Michael Baker (+3/26)

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## **Thoughts from the Fathers**

...Lent and fasting mean the intensification of that fight [against every evil thing and carnal passion]...because - according to the Gospel - we then are face to face with evil and all its power. It is then therefore, that we especially need the help and the power of that Divine Fare; hence, the special lenten communion with the Presanctified Gifts, i. e., the Gifts consecrated at the Eucharist on the preceding Sunday and kept on the altar for distribution on Wednesday and Friday evenings. There is no celebration of the Eucharist on fasting days because the celebration is one continuous movement of joy; but there is the continuous movement of the Eucharist in the Church. Just as the “visible” Christ has ascended into heaven yet is invisibly present in the world, but as the Pascha is

celebrated once a year yet the rays illumine the whole life of the Church, just as the Kingdom of God is yet to come but is already in the midst of us, so to with the Eucharist. As the sacrament and the celebration of the Kingdom, as the feast of the Church, it is incompatible with fast and is not celebrated during Lent; as the grace and power of the Kingdom which are at work in the world, as our supplier of the “essential food” and the weapon of our spiritual fight, it is at the very center of the fast, it is indeed the heavenly manna that keeps us alive in our journey through the desert of Lent.

*Alexander Schmemmann, “The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts,” in **Great Lent***

If, in the case of one human being who has done wrong to another, God in His grace has commanded that we should be forgiving to the offender seventy times seven (Mt. 18:22), how much more will God forgive the person who offers up supplication for his sins?

*John the Solitary, “Letter to Hesychius”*

So living and true, is sometimes said of a portrait, that only speech is wanting; if man is capable, by his art, of giving life to a canvas, or a board, or paper - then what can be impossible to God? Why cannot He breathe life into an image, and give it the capability of speaking, if it pleases Him? Only speech is wanting - you have done everything, artist, on your part; now let the Lord complete your work, and He will make the image speak.

*Saint John of Kronstadt, My Life in Christ*

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**The First Sunday of Great Lent Prior To the 9th Century**

The first Sunday of Great Lent, since the 9th century, has been called “The Sunday of Orthodoxy.” This is due to the fact that on the first Sunday of Great Lent in the year 843, (a purely historical coincidence, having little to do with our journey to Pascha per se) the icons, frescoes, mosaics and other liturgical graphic art as well as relics were restored to the churches after

nearly 95 years of iconoclasm between 730 and 843 (there was a respite of about 25 years in the middle).

Prior to the ninth century, Great Lent was primarily used for catechesis, especially for the preparation of catechumens for baptism. Sundays would present themes for their benefit and these themes were reflected in the Epistle and Gospel readings for the day. The first Sunday commemorated the Prophets, especially Moses, Aaron and Samuel; on this day, the catechumen would learn how they foreshadowed the coming of Christ.

Today, the Divine Liturgy contains elements of this tradition, especially in the readings chosen for the day: both the Epistle and the Gospel suggest that Christians, living in the time when the words of the prophets have been fulfilled, have access to greater things than the prophets could ever have imagined.

After speaking of the faith and sacrifices of the Old Testament righteous, the author of Hebrews concludes: "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40).

The Alleluia verses are then chanted in Tone 4 (from Psalms 99:6; 34:17): "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name." "They called upon the Lord, and He hearkened unto them."

The Gospel reading makes this very real clear: it presents Jesus as the expectation of the prophets, the Messiah.

At the deepest level, the focus of Great Lent was (and should still be) catechetical preparation of the catechumen for the Paschal Mystery of Baptism. Thus, the first and essential theme of the first Sunday of Great Lent is the proclamation that New Life in Christ comes after a long period of preparation. The Epistle and Gospel reading for Liturgy that day affirms — even

promises — that the catechumens who are preparing themselves for Baptism at Pascha will behold great things: they will lay aside the Old Creation and embrace the New Creation; they will leave behind the Old Aeon and enter into the New Age; they will give up the kingdom of this world, replacing it with the Kingdom of which the Old Testament Righteous, by faith, experienced only as a foreshadowing. The catechumens (and all the faithful) will experience not in shadow but in truth. We are surrounded by the cloud of witnesses who urge us to throw off everything that weighs us down and clings to us. We will see the heavens open up and we will behold the Lord Jesus.

Now, when most Orthodox Christians are baptized as infants, and Christianity has entered the mainstream, the time of Great Lent means something else. Certainly the educational practice remains – it is, of course, always helpful to remind ourselves of the truths of our faith, because each time we encounter them, the more they penetrate our lives. But the themes have changed, they are now emphasizing different aspects of the Christian faith - as we find, for example, with the first Sunday of the Great Fast. It's now the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and it celebrates the restoration of the icons in Hagia Sophia on Feb. 19, 842, issued by the Synod of Constantinople in 842 on that date, and declared, by that Synod, to be remembered every First Sunday of Lent. It was seen as the triumph of the true faith over heresy, because the veneration of images was not only allowed, but proclaimed, and those who wanted to explain why the practice is in accord with the Christian faith could do so without without fear of persecution. The veneration of the images became, itself, an image of Orthodoxy, for orthopraxis and orthodoxy are intricately linked: when one is rejected, how it is explained entails a rejection of the other. Unorthoprax iconoclasm was fueled by unorthodox Christology and Soteriology. It sponsored a gnostic understanding, not only of the incarnation, but of the Christian life, because, by its dictates, the physical could no longer be seen as united with the spiritual.