

ST. NICHOLAS BULLETIN

Sunday, Apr. 4th 2021

Third Sunday of Great Lent – Tone 2. Veneration of the Precious Cross
Hebrews 4:14-5:6 | Mark 8:34-9:1

God bless you as you keep the fast! Pre-sanctified Liturgy is every Wednesday night at 6pm. **Singers are needed.**

The remainder of the Lenten season, we will be collecting canned/non-perishable food items for the Mon Valley Youth and Teen Association's food bank. Donations in the Charity box will also go to local ministry. May God bless your almsgiving in secret!

The Inter-parish book study will be on **Tuesday nights at 7pm** via Zoom. The Sunday morning book study is also meeting prior to liturgy throughout Lent. Both studies are reading "Hymns of Repentance" by St. Romanos. All are welcome. Another good way to spend the Lenten season is to read a holy book; feel free to check out a book from the library downstairs.

During the Lenten season, I encourage you to attend the services outside Sundays – without Lenten worship, you really won't get the Lenten experience or the Joy of Pascha. If you have not done so for some time, make plans to prepare for and to give confession, and to receive holy Communion.

Services and events this week

Wednesday

5pm music rehearsal
6:00pm – Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy;

Friday

6:00pm – General Panikhida

Saturday

Great Vespers @ 4:30pm, followed by confessions

Sunday

9:00am – "Hymns of repentance" book study
10am – Divine Liturgy

Prayer list Feb. Mar. 14th

Mary Behanna – in memory of parents Andy & Petrina Gernat (Virgin Mary Kiot)

Fred & Caroline Ruev – in memory of recently departed Erma Jean Carroll / May God's healing hand be upon all our shut-ins and grant them a speedy recovery

Dimitri & Pauline Petro – God's blessings upon granddaughter Alexandra on her 17th birthday / for birthday of son-in-law Nick / God's blessings upon Fr. Igor on his birthday / for safe travel for Christine, Nick, Alex & Nicholas / in

memory of the newly departed Erma Carroll / in memory of Uncle Michael Drake / for health of Natalie & Rob / for health of Bunnie
Michael Horan – memory eternal to my loving wife, Rebecca / for health of Cindy / for special intentions / for newly departed Erma Carroll
Vladimir Kash – in thanksgiving

Persevere in Hope! Keep the Fast and Hope in the Lord!

"Ask with tears, seek with obedience, knock with patience. For thus he who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

St. John Climacus - "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" (Step 28)

"Do not be surprised that you fall [into sin] every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honour your patience."

St. John Climacus - "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" (Step 5)

"Do not be cast down over the struggle- the Lord loves a brave warrior.
The Lord loves the soul that is valiant"

St. Siloan the Athonite

"...And so let us be glad and bear with patience everything the world throws at us, secure in the knowledge that it is then that we are most in the mind of God."

St. Basil the Great - "Gateway to Paradise"

We are obligated to hasten to repentance (continued)

"Warning that we are obligated to hasten to seek the Lord, the Lord Himself declares: "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me" (Jn. 7:34). Therefore, as long as grace invites us, we are obligated to approach continually. Perhaps when we seek grace we will not find her, because the door will have been shut, and as we cry out "open, open up for us," the Bridegroom will respond to us, "I know you not" (Mat. 25:12). We have lived in sin; perhaps we will die in it. Who can verify for us the opposite since we remain unrepentant? Behold what the Lord says to the Jews: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and [ye] shall die in your sin" (Jn 8:21). If, therefore, we do not repent while we have Christ calling us to Him, we will die in our sin; we will seek Him, but our search will

end in vain. Hence, it is necessary to understand well that we are obligated to hasten towards repentance, both because the grace of God may abandon us, and because often the sins themselves bring forth untimely and sudden deaths, as the Apostle Paul states in his epistle to the sinning Corinthians: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many die" (1 Cor. 11:30)...

...Truly, it is frightening, but also just. It is just for him who abandons God to be abandoned by Him. It is just for him who pushes away the inviting grace of God to be pushed away. It is just for God to turn His face away from them who desert Him and who do not approach Him. St. Gregory of Nyssa notes: "In this manner god's righteous judgment resembles our dispositions; whatever we have within us, such things justice remits to us from our own things."

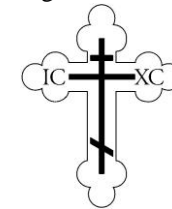
Our haste to return and repent quickly is also dictated by the danger of inability to return to God; an evil habit is capable of rendering us incapable of repentance – which should frighten us immensely. The habit resulting from the continual repetition of a sin becomes a natural stated within man and renders itself so powerful that man is not longer able to resist it: its power overcomes even the natural law. Consequently, when habit reigns over us, we submit to it and become its slave. Free will has lost its independence permanently. Man expels his free volition, his will power is proved weak and unable to fight against the habit, and every attempt to regain the lost freedom is in vain. The battle makes this weakness more apparent. The person who has been conquered by habit carries out, acts, and executes as a servant, as a subordinate. Self-will has ceased; he carries out orders as instructed. The voice of the inner man is drowned within his sternum. The habit becomes very torturous, because even though the strength of the passions has dissipated, the habit insists on being remedied by them. Such is habit, such is its power, such is its tyranny. When it rules over us once, then it controls our desires, it regulates our actions, and the reins with which it controls our dispositions never part from its hands. Then, everything has been lost; every hope of salvation has vanished; not even one ray of light has remained. Has someone lived in sin? He will also die in sin. Therefore, it is necessary for us to hasten to repentance before sin becomes a habit for us; because then it is impossible for us to be saved." – St. Nektarios of Aegina



"There is no labor greater than prayer to God. For every time a man wants to pray, his enemies the demons, want to prevent, for they know that it is only by turning him from prayer, that they can hinder his journey...Prayer is warfare to the last breath." –Abba Agathon, Sayings of the Desert Fathers

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