

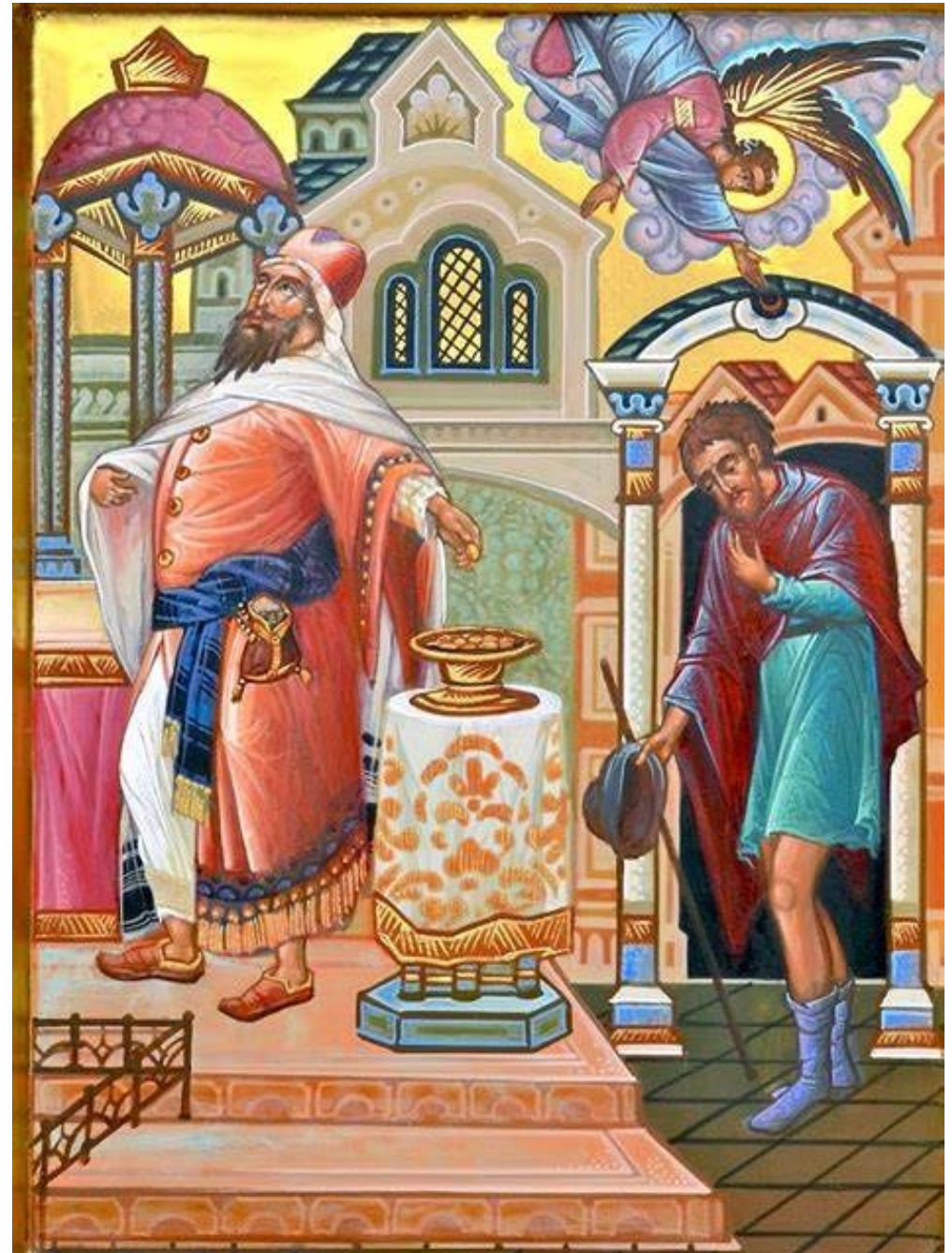
From the Divine Office for Maximos the Confessor (Jan 21)

Christ was made man for us in His good pleasure and reveals Himself to our hearts in two wills and two natures. You preached Him, O venerable Maximos, and closed the mouths of the impious. By the diabolical instigation of the worker of all evil, they had proclaimed Him as having only one will and one energy. (Vespers)

Let us, O faithful, honor with worthy hymns the great Maximos, so highly devoted to the Holy Trinity. He preached faith in God with great courage and glorified Christ in His two natures, two wills and two operations. Wherefore, let us cry out: "Hail, O Preacher of the Faith!" (Orthros)



**SUNDAY OF THE PHARISEE & THE PUBLICAN
JANUARY 21, 2024**



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Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
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Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to his name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 1) pg. 38

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of Life: “Glory to your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to your kingdom! Glory to your economy, O You who alone are the Lover of Mankind!”

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Pharisee & the Publican (Tone 3)

Let us shun the proud attitude of the boastful Pharisee, and learn humility from the Publican’s sighs; let us cry out to our Savior: “Have mercy on us, O You who alone are merciful!”

Kontakion of the Presentation of our Lord (Tone 1)

O Christ our God, who through your birth have sanctified the virginal womb, and have blessed the arms of Simon, You have come today to save us. When wars prevail, keep your people in peace, and strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, for You alone are the lover of Mankind.

Fasting and Our Renewal

The preparation for the Great Fast in the Byzantine Churches focuses to a great extent on fasting. Why is fasting so emphasized if the purpose of this season is the renewal of our life in Christ?

In the Scriptures the great “icon” of our communion with God is “*Eden, the Garden of God*” (Ez 28:13) where God walked with Adam and Eve. That communion was broken by eating the so-called forbidden fruit. Eating became the sign of choosing one’s own will over the will of God. This is why the first way in which the devil tempted Christ concerned food. Fasting – not eating – is thus a symbol of putting aside our own will in order to recover our communion with God.

In our society, where food is so abundant, eating is an even more fitting symbol for doing our own will. We can choose to eat whatever we feel like. We can pass up foods which don’t please us. We throw away food without a second thought. We may not be able to indulge our lust for power or wealth very easily; we can always reach for another piece of cake.

Many people prepare for Lent by deciding what they will give up. Fasting in the Christian East is not a matter of personal choice, but of surrendering one’s will to the Church which determines when and how to fast. This does not mean that the fasting rules are unchangeable, but one should have the blessing of one’s spiritual guide before excusing oneself from the fast. The heart of the fast is putting aside one’s ego.

In the Great Fast we refrain from eating for at least part of each day (until noon, or mid afternoon or until we receive the Eucharist) for 40 days. This number recalls the 40-day fasts of Moses before receiving the Ten Commandments (see Ex 34:27-29) and of Elijah before encountering God on Mount Horeb (see 1 Kgs 19:8-12). For Christians, of course, the Lord Jesus’ 40-day fast in the wilderness after His baptism stands out as the foremost example of fasting and communion with God.

During the pre-Fast weeks of the Triodion we prepare for our 40-day fast by abstinence – not eating certain foods while continuing to eat others. Many people consider abstinence to be fasting; in fact it is merely a part of fasting. We fast completely for a period of time. Then when we do eat, we abstain from eating X, Y, and Z.

Why Animal Products?

Again let us return to the Garden of God. In the book of Genesis we read that God said to our first parents, “*See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food*” (Gen 1:29). Fruits and vegetables, nuts and grains made up the diet of humanity both before and after the fall (see Gen 3:18). It was only after the flood, when the earth had been laid waste, that God tells Noah, “*The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you*” (Gen 9:2, 3). In abstaining from animal products, then, we are returning to the “food of paradise,” the diet of the first created, to symbolize our desire to recover the communion with God for which they were made.

Homily 45 by St Theodore the Studite Brethren: fasting is the renewal of the soul, for the Apostle says that as the body weakens and withers from the ascetic labor of fasting, then is the soul renewed day by day. It is made beautiful and shines in the beauty which God originally bestowed upon it. And when it is purified and adorned with fasting and repentance, then God loves it and will live in it as the Lord has said: “I and the Father will come and make Our abode with him” (Jn 14.23). ... Now at the beginning the Fast seems laborious, but if we shall apply ourselves from day to day with ardor and discipline, then with the help of God it will be made easier. At the same time, if we desire that the Fast be true and acceptable to God, then together with abstaining from food, let us restrain ourselves from every sin of soul and body, as the sticheron instructs us: “Let us keep the Fast not only by refraining from food, but by becoming strangers to all sinful passions” (Aposticha at Vespers, First Tuesday in the Great Fast).

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Robert Aboody (40 day). Requested by his family
+Katherine Thomas
+Thomas Syseskey

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by the family of Robert Aboody
Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Maria Filewicz

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplains, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Tom Sarrouf, Sandra Hanlan, Melissa Kalpakgian, Susan Bailey, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,665
Coffee Hr.	\$ 126
Candles	\$ 45
Stole	\$ 250
Other	\$ 130
TOTAL	\$2,216



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.



BISHOP'S APPEAL

The Bishop's Appeal is in full swing. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to support the important work of the Diocese. If every family donated \$100 the Appeal would generate over one million dollars.

You can donate by using the letter you received or by going to www.melkite.org and clicking on the Donate button.

God bless you for your generosity!

HOUSE BLESSINGS

If you would like to have your house blessed, please contact Fr. Bryan to arrange a date and time. It is a blessing to be able to spend time with you outside of Sunday morning.

Call me @ 774-502-8547 or email me @ olphmelkite@gmail.com.

God bless you!



The Triodion

ON THE ISLAND OF ZAKYNTHOS a unique ceremony takes place at the beginning of the Triodion. The book of the Triodion is placed on a stand before the icon of Christ. Before the first hymn from this book is chanted, the volume is presented to the bishop. He venerates it as if it were an icon, followed by all the clergy. Then the book is presented to the chanter who intones the first hymn. The time of the Triodion has begun.

The term *Triodion* refers to the ten weeks leading up to Pascha as well as to the book which contains the hymns, readings and prayers proper to this season. Triodion literally means “three odes” and refers to the canons at daily Orthros which contain three rather than the usual nine odes.

The Triodion as we have it today was organized by Studite monks in ninth-century Constantinople. They drew chiefly on texts from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by a number of outstanding hymnographers, including Andrew of Crete, Cosmas of Maiuma and John of Damascus – some twenty composers in all.

In general the prayers and services of the Triodion may be considered a great catechesis for the faithful, setting forth the entire scope of divine revelation through the reading of several books from the Old Testament and allusions to many others in the Great Canon and other hymns as well as patristic homilies and chants based on still other sacred texts. This catechesis is not about imparting information but about motivating us to embrace the great task of the season: repentance and the renewal of our life in Christ.

This ten-week period is made up of the following components:

- The pre-Fast weeks which ease us into the practices of the Great Fast;
- The six-week long Great Fast itself;
- The two-fold feast of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday;
- and The Great and Holy Week of the Lord’s Passion.

The Pre-Fast Weeks

Documents from the sixth through the eighth centuries attest to a growing custom in the East of observing one week in preparation for the Great Fast. Today this pre-Fast period in the Byzantine Churches consists in the following:

Two Sundays in which the Gospel readings at the Divine Liturgy invite us to reflect on humility (Pharisee and Publican) and God’s ever-welcoming love (Prodigal Son).

- A **Fast-Free Week** between these two Sundays in which we are told not to fast, lest we take pride in our efforts like the Pharisee.

- **Meat-Fare Week**, the last time meat is eaten before Pascha. This week includes a Saturday of the Dead in which we make a general commemoration of all who have gone before us.

- **Cheese-Fare Week**, the last time dairy products are eaten before Pascha. Cheese-Fare Week ends with Forgiveness Sunday and the ultimate preparation for the Fast: mutual forgiveness.



Prokimenon

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Reader: God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, great is His name.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them;

People: Let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Epistle: 2 Tim. 3:10-15

Alleluia Verses

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us sing joyfully to God our Savior!

Verse: Let us greet his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Gospel: Lk. 18:10-14, Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican

UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Thu, Feb. 1, 6PM—Great Vespers for Hypapanty (Encounter)

Fri, Feb. 2, 6PM-Divine Liturgy for the Hypapanty w/Blessing of Candles

