

O Lord and Master of my life!
Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk.
But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.
Yea, O Lord and King!
Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother;
For Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

- 'The' Lenten Prayer, St. Ephrem the Syrian



Upcoming Events >>>

FEBRUARY 2024

Feb. 1 – 6:00 pm Prez. of the Lord to the Temple - Vespers with Litiya

Feb. 2 – 9:00am – Prez. Of the Lord... Feast Day Divine Liturgy

Feb. 3 – 4pm. Family Vespers.

Feb. 4 – 10:30am. Divine Liturgy. Potluck Lunch to follow.

Feb. 7 – 6:30pm. Christianity 101: An Orthodox Perspective.

- 5:30pm. Youth Group.

Feb. 10 – 6pm. Great Vespers

Feb. 11 – 10:30am. Divine Liturgy. Potluck Lunch to follow.

Feb. 14 – 6:30pm. Christianity 101: An Orthodox Perspective.

Feb. 16 – 7pm. Perogy Night - filling.

Feb. 17 – 6pm. Great Vespers, followed by Perogy Night - pinching.

Feb. 18 – 10:30am. Divine Liturgy: Zacchaeus Sunday. Potluck Lunch to follow.

Feb. 21 – 6:30pm. Christianity 101: An Orthodox Perspective.

Feb. 24 – 6pm. Great Vespers.

Feb. 25 – 10:30am. Divine Liturgy: Publican and Pharisee Sunday.

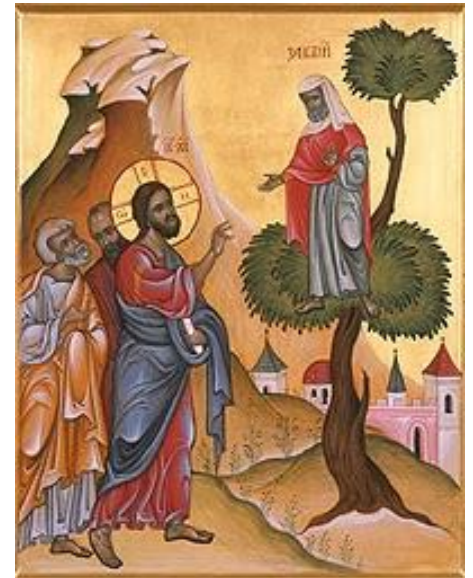
Feb. 28 – 6:30pm. Christianity 101: An Orthodox Perspective.

Father's Desk: Radical Transformations!

The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is also preceded by its own liturgical preparation. The first sign of the approach of Great Lent comes five Sundays before its beginning. On this Sunday the Gospel reading is about Zacchaeus the tax-collector. The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through Lent towards Pascha.

We are to join Zacchaeus in his great desire to encounter Christ as we begin to anticipate and prepare ourselves for the great fast. His great anticipation and efforts were rewarded far beyond his wildest imagination when Jesus came to stay at his very house. We share in Zacchaeus's great joy when we bless our houses and pray, "*O God and Saviour...Who condescended to enter under the roof Zacchaeus, bringing salvation to him and to all his house. As the same Lord, also keep safe from harm all those who dwell here.*"

As a "chief" tax collector, Zaccchaeus took everything he could from the Jewish people for the Roman oppressors, and for himself. He would be seen as the worst of the worst and would be one of Jericho's most hated citizens.



But God was calling him to repentance, to completely change his actions and view of life, and his greedy pursuit of ill-gained riches. This is how it is in the economy of God's kingdom. When we make an effort, to seek God, God in His love for us, brings all of heaven to meet us, beyond anything we could ever imagine.

Let us anticipate with great expectation the opportunity the great fast brings to us, to truly seek the transforming gift of repentance in our own lives. Let us anticipate the coming of Great Lent with great excitement and thank God for His faithfulness and love in granting us this time to slow down, reflect, and repent once again. Glory to Jesus Christ!

If you choose not to find joy in the snow, you will have less joy in your life, but still the same amount of snow.



Kootenay Spotlight

SKIJORING



The 1st annual Ponies & Planks Skijoring Event

February 17th 2024, Fernie Lion's Club Derby grounds, 11:30am.

The goal is to raise funds to remove all financial barriers to accessing Freedom Equine's therapeutic horseback riding, equine assisted learning & wellness programs for any individual or group, and to build community while doing it!

Teams of two (one horse rider and one skier or snowboarding) will race the clock through a course with jumps, gates, berms and flying obstacles to claim fastest team in Fernie B.C.

The Sundays of Pre-Pre-Lent

If you were going on a long auto journey to some lovely place, how would you approach it? Here, I think, is what you would not do: You would not wait till the very last minute, then just jump in your car and drive off. These things require planning. If you're a sensible person, (as I'm sure you are) you'd approach it in three stages:

1. You would plan ahead – where you want to go, what you might want to see, articles you'll carry along for the trip. You'd also prepare yourself for what you'll have to leave behind for a while: your television, your bed * and your favorite easy chair.
2. Then you would make the actual preparations. You'd get enough money for the trip. You'd check carefully online to see how to get there – the best route, avoiding road construction and so on. You'd get a guidebook. You'd make sure your car was tuned up, tire pressure checked, and enough gas in the tank. You'd pack your suitcases.
3. Only then would you get into your car and leave.

That is what happens at this time of year in the Holy Orthodox Church. We are about to begin what Father Alexander Schmemmann called our *Journey to Pascha*.

Why is this Lenten journey so important? Because it is not just about fasting and Church services. Far more, it is our annual symbol, our annual "living out" of our journey through life towards Christ, through the Lent of this world towards our own Resurrection in the heavenly Kingdom, through the darkness of this world's late winter into the Light of the eternal Spring and Summer.

The day when we leave on our annual Lenten journey to Pascha goes by two names: the Sunday of the Last Judgment and Forgiveness Sunday. However, the Orthodox Church (being a sensible Church) provides us with four Pre-Lenten Sundays when we *prepare* for the journey. In addition, the Orthodox Church (being an extraordinarily sensible Church) provides us with two Sundays before Pre-Lent (which I call Pre-Pre-Lent), when we, in effect, begin to *plan* for Great Lent.

The first Sunday of Pre-Pre-Lent is the Sunday of Zacchaeus. Why does Zacchaeus help us plan for a good Lent? a good journey? a good End? Because he was a seeker. He wasn't satisfied where he was, with what he was. Zacchaeus was dreaming about somewhere better, becoming something better, even if he didn't know quite where or what yet.

Face up to reality. Zacchaeus was a little man, not only physically but also morally and spiritually. All of us are like little Zacchaeus: spiritually small. We all have a long way to grow. So be dissatisfied with yourself. "I'm ok, I am who I am, I am what I am" will get us nowhere. Seek to improve, become better.

Go climb a tree. Go where you can see Jesus better. During Lent worship more, pray more, read the Scriptures, study more, and above all do good to others, love more.

Lent is coming. Consider now how to seek Jesus, and then prepare yourself for what may happen next.

[-read more of Fr. Bill's article at frbillsorthodoxblog.com](http://frbillsorthodoxblog.com)

CHURCH SCHOOL

Repentance – as we see in the two tax collectors – is an odd little thing. It transforms sin into light and sainthood.

If you took a beautiful wedding dress, rolled it around in the mud, and left it outside to get stained, smudged, and moldy for a few years, it would probably look more like a Halloween costume than like a wedding dress.

But that is how our mind and hearts work.

The ways of this world cause our souls to become like a wedding dress rolled in the mud of sinful desires and habits. Sometimes the wedding garment gets REALLY stained. Sometimes we feel like, “I won’t ever get these stains out.” It can make us feel hopeless.

But, again, repentance is an odd little thing.

In the kingdom to come, those who fall down, get back up, fall down, get back up – and keep doing that – will find that the stains and scars on the soul are transfigured into bright light, into jewels that sparkle in the divine light.

These difficulties, these habits that we hate, these hidden, shameful scars that we carry in our souls – these are transfigured into something beautiful when we bring them into the light of repentance.

Our eternal wedding garment won’t be made spotless and clean. Instead, our muddy scars will be transfigured into beauty – they will become royal crowns studded with jewels, glistening in the light of the kingdom to come.

Let us not be ashamed. Let us bear our scars into the light like the Publican in the parable so that the stains on our wedding garment may be transformed. We will become beautiful children of God, transfigured by grace and love.

- [‘From Scars to Beauty’, Fr. Jeremy](#) at [orthodoxroad.com](#)

Church Youth

Publican and Pharisee

Here we have another repentant tax collector, in agony upon realizing his true sinful condition before God, and he gives us the most powerful and salvific prayer we have in the Church – the Jesus prayer: “*God have mercy on me the sinner.*”

We also hear the Pharisee say ‘*God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.*’” He wasn’t even praying to God, the scripture says, “*The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself.*”

If we are honest, we will see we often resemble the Pharisee more than we wish to acknowledge in our pride filled self-centeredness. Lucifer himself is the embodiment of pride. In (Isaiah 14:12-14) we hear, “*How are you fallen from heaven O’ Lucifer, who rose up in the morning! He who sends for all the nations, is crushed to the earth! For you said in your mind, ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will place my throne above the stars of heaven; I will sit on a lofty mountain, on the lofty mountains towards the north. I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High.’*” He even tells Eve in the Garden of Eden “Don’t trust God”. That’s the very essence of pride: “**I can be my own god. I can make my own decisions, my own judgments, my own laws and rules. I know what is best**”

The big difference between the tax collector and the Pharisee was that the tax collector knew who he was, “the sinner,” but the Pharisee had no awareness of his own sin. All through the scripture’s, we sinners fare very well in God’s economy – as long as we realize our sinful state and in humility turn to Him in repentance. (Proverbs 3:34) “*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*” Life in Christ is a life of humility, knowing we fall far short, yet we are always loved completely and unconditionally by Him.

– Fr. Andrew

Questions Answered >>>

Q: What are the ‘Saturdays of Lent’?

‘The Fathers often compared Lent to the forty years journey of the chosen people through the desert. From the Bible we know that in order to keep His people from despair, in order also to reveal His ultimate design, God

A: performed many miracles during that journey; by analogy, the same pattern of explanation is given by the Fathers to the forty days of Lent. Although its final destination is Pascha, the promised land of God’s Kingdom, Lent has at the end of each week a special “stopover” – an anticipation of that goal. Saturday’s special liturgical status in our tradition is a day not of FAST but of FEAST for God Himself instituted it as feast: “and God blessed the seventh day (Saturday) and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:3)’

Great Lent: Journey to Pascha by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Outreach Ministry Updates ...

Family Vespers

February 3rd at 4pm!

Everyone is welcome to join us at Family Vespers, always the first Saturday of each month.

After Great Vespers at 4pm, we will be eating pizza together, and doing puzzles/activities.

Please invite friends and family to come with you to Family Vespers!

Perogy Pinching Nights

Feb. 16 and 17, 7pm

We are having our monthly perogy making sessions in our new Church kitchen. Friday night (Feb. 16) will need 6 volunteers to peel and cook potatoes, and make the filling. Saturday night (Feb 17, right after Great Vespers) will need many volunteers to roll dough and pinch perogies. We split it into two nights in order to make enough perogies for the fundraising dinners and to sell frozen in bags.

Please let Joanna or Fr Andrew know if you are planning on coming so that we know how many ingredients to buy.

Orthodox Faith Study

Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28.

6:30pm to 8:30pm

Join us on Wednesday evenings, beginning Feb. 7th

Held at the Church in the form of a public lecture and then a Q and A session. We will be starting with an Akathist at 6:30pm and the talks will begin at 7pm.

Open to all. Invite your friends!

House Blessings

Please give Fr. Andrew a call to arrange a time for a house blessing.

Bookstore

It's Time To Put In Your Lenten Orders!

One big order will be put in to save shipping costs. You can let Jessie know at staidanbookstore@gmail.com what you would like to order from the following sites:
<https://store.ancientfaith.com/>
[https://www.uncutmountainssupply.c](https://www.uncutmountainssupply.com)
[om](https://stmpress.com/)
<https://stmpress.com/>
And others.../



The Lighter side of Orthodoxy

My sister as a little kid once asked who was Zephus and why did we always ask the Lord to save him. (O lord, save the pious...)



Social Media Links

Website: saintaidan.ca

[Facebook](#)

[Facebook Group](#)

[Instagram](#)

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