

## Sunday of Orthodoxy

John 1:43-51

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (KJV)

God's Holy Church celebrates the Sunday of Orthodoxy around the world today. This the first Sunday of Great Lent. The proper presence of icons in God's Holy Church is fundamental to the celebration.

Believers learn immeasurably from holy icons. Holy icons are venerated by believers and are beneficial in serious prayer. Miraculous icons are associated with physical and spiritual healings and in saving events in the Church and community.

Repentance is a major theme during Great Lent and icons facilitate the Lenten journey. Every attentive believer can draw strength from gazing upon icons of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and the Saints.

Renewal in Jesus Christ is possible and desired during Great Lent. The Church prescribes the Lenten Fast for believers to take responsibility for personal sin, repent and begin anew in Christ.

Serious repentance and confession followed by communion brings unity with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church nourishes and supports believers in the Lenten journey.

Believers benefit from Great Lent to the extent an investment is made in serious prayer, fasting and charitable works. Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving are sound investments in the Kingdom of God.

The Lenten journey involves purity of heart and purity of intentions. Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving are to be done discretely, not to draw attention or praise to the believer.

Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving are for the benefit of the believer's soul. Too often the soul is tarnished by sin. Honesty with the self and God reveals the extent of personal sin.

Taking responsibility for personal sin, repenting and beginning anew in Christ is possible and encouraged during Great Lent. Joy arises in the heart, mind and soul when repentance occurs and the believer is absolved of sin by Jesus Christ.

Attentive believers are informed of the practices of the Church during Great Lent. Serious believers increase attendance and participation in the Church's Divine services.

Prayer at home, at work and in the community during the course of the day can be increased during Great Lent. Multiple resources from the Church are available for believers to learn more about prayer beneficial to the soul.

Personal relationships are expected to improve during Great Lent. Forgiveness is a dominant theme at the beginning of Great Lent. Forgiveness is to be practiced throughout the Lenten journey.

Forgiveness is beneficial throughout life. Each Lenten journey is an opportunity to ensure forgiveness in personal life and daily relationships. God is good, loving and forgiving.

Believers are expected to imitate the goodness, love and forgiveness shown by God to all humanity. Being forgiven of personal sins is related to practicing forgiveness in daily life.

The home, the parish church and the community challenge the believer to live more like Jesus Christ during the Lenten journey. The current Gospel refers to the deep history of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Holy Apostles Philip, Andrew, Peter and Nathaniel are named specifically in the present Gospel. Moses and the Holy Prophets are referenced as well. The Church wants believers to always remain mindful of them.

The Holy Gospel provides nourishment for believers during Great Lent, throughout the year and throughout life. We learn from and about Jesus Christ and are united with Jesus Christ in the reading of the Gospel.

The Epistle to the Hebrews states: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb 13:8) The present Gospel reading in the Divine Liturgy unites attentive believers with the content and nourishes the depths of the soul.

The Lenten journey is underway and continues toward Holy Week and Pascha. The time is at hand to concentrate on the condition of the soul and the opportunity to repent and begin anew in Christ. Unity and newness in Christ lift the believer to new heights.

Jesus told Nathaniel he would see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (Jn.1:51) Believers seriously following Jesus Christ will have amazing experiences in life as well.

This Lenten journey is time to change life for the better in the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek the lasting peace, love and joy in Jesus Christ. Be mindful of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and go forth with great resolve in the Lenten journey.

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First Sunday of Great Lent. Sunday of Orthodoxy. Venerable Basil the Confessor; Venerable John Cassian. February 28/March 13, 2022.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic