

Notes on Great Lent I

His Holiness Patriarch PAVLE. "On Fasting." The Voice of Saint Stephen Lackawanna, New York, Vol.24 No.2.March-April 2000, p.1.

Always and especially during Lent we should diligently read and listen to the Word of God, Holy Scriptures, and pray to God both at home and in the Church with others, in this time of adversity for our people. Fasting was not established by man but by God, Who through the prophet Moses called it a "perpetual statute"(Lev.3:17). Christ consecrated it by fasting Himself for forty days and ordered all His faithful ones to fast. Fasting was practiced by the apostles, by all the faithful of that time, and subsequently for all these 2000 years.

His Grace Bishop Dr.MITROPHAN. "PODVIG-Fighting the Good Fight." The Path of Orthodoxy, April 2005, p. 1.

What is spoken of here is nothing other than asceticism, the podvig of abstinence. You are familiar with the fact that a team or an athlete that wants to succeed must abstain from many different kinds of foods, drink and even contact with people. This is the athletic quarantine. The goal of such a quarantine is the defeat of ourselves but not out of some ambitious, pharisaical pride, rather out of humility and for the glory of God.

"From the Clergy of the Eastern American Diocese." The Path of Orthodoxy. April 1999, p. 3. March 29, 1999.

We, the Serbian Orthodox Clergy of the Eastern American Diocese, have the custom of gathering together in Pittsburgh at the residence of His Grace, our Bishop, Dr. MITROPHAN, on the fifth Wednesday of the Great Fast each year. We gather to confess our sins to God and to receive forgiveness, to partake of the Holy Mysteries at the Presanctified Liturgy, and to share in fellowship to strengthen us for the final part of the Fast. However, this year our prayerful preparation is taking place against what is to us an unbelievable background. Our country, the United States of America, has even now begun to bomb the country of our forebearers, Serbia.

His Grace Bishop ARTEMIJE." The Child's Fast. "(Translated and Reprinted from Pravoslavlje) in the The Voice of Saint Stephen Lackawanna, New York, Vol.20. No.7.November-December 1996, p.4.

But parents who are concerned for the spiritual side of the child's life will not wait for the child to finish growing up before they start accustoming him to the fast. They start gradually, from the third or fourth year. Not that the fast is necessary for the child of that age, in the sense that it is for adults, but just to accustom him from the early years to begin to distinguish that all days are not the same with regard to food, which will remain with him as a priceless treasure all his life.

Very Reverend Stavrofor Radovan Milkovich. Sermons and Speeches. Raska skola, Belgrade, 1999, p.109.

There is work to be done by all Orthodox. Especially now during this holy season, when we are asked to re-examine our lives, to prostrate ourselves before God, to humbly seek forgiveness, and to pledge sincere efforts to uplift our daily lives and to straighten the course. This applies not only to theologians, writers and clergy, but to all Orthodox.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Dr.Nedeljko Grgurevich. The Eucharist as Sacrifice. Johnstown, Pennsylvania 1993, p.151.

This means that the liturgical eucharistic life is based on the necessity and indispensibility of an active participation in Communion, but of the need for preparation as well. Preparation and worthiness, are some things that result from the everyday life of a Christian, including here fasting and more frequent participation in the holy mystery of confession. Concerning fasting, the Church has prescribed four periods of fasting in the course of several days, as well as every Wednesday and Friday, excepting those exempted. The regime of fasting is as it is provided in the Typikon and in no other way.

Very Reverend Protos Stavrophor Vojislav Dosenovich. Spiritual Reminders. Omaha, Nebraska, p.144.

But against the greatest illness, the insanity of the soul, there are two cures which have to be taken simultaneously fasting and prayer, to prevent it as well as to cure it. The Apostles and the Prophets and the Saints in both the Old and New Testaments with our Lord did fast and prayed to show us how and why to do it. This is the prescription of the Greatest Physician of our soul and body against the greatest illness and the cause of many other smaller ones. As we enter the Great Lenten season let us do as our Lord and His church directs us. We want to be healthy in soul, mind and body.

Father Justin Popovich. Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ. Translation, Preface and Introduction by Asterios Gerostergios, et al. Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. Belmont, Massachusetts, 1994, p.74.

Human knowledge confronts, in the person of the God-man Christ, absolute divine good and acknowledges through Him, even in the limits of human existence what is good and what is evil, just as the human heart through Him is able to sense good and evil in a concrete way.

St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. The Faith of the Saints. Seraphim Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2005, p.114.

Q. What is the aim of fasting?

A. The aim of fasting is to:

- (a) purify the body
- (b) strengthen the will
- (c) elevate the soul over the body
- (d) glorify God and honor His saints.

St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. Prayers by the Lake. Translated by Rt. Rev Todor Mika and Rev.Dr. Stevan Scott. The Free Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the United States and Canada, Grayslake, Illinois, pp.70-71,

Get it in your heads, my fellow wayfarers, that seeing God is not a cheap affair. You who sacrifice fortunes to see the luxuriance of the tropics or the polar lights of the artic, must pay more dearly to see the One for whom the luxuriance of the tropics is poverty and the polar lights are a tallow candle. When you give your entire life in order to see Him, you have barely paid a penny. Nevertheless He is magnanimous and good-hearted, and expects nothing more from you than this. You who train your bodies, who every morning do not forget to exercise your arms and legs, your head and neck are you in truth contemplative beings?—you who are like samurai warriors? Are you in truth contemplative beings, if you maintain that your faith in God will become and remain clairvoyant without training?

St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. The Faith of Chosen People Translated by Fr.Theodore Mika and Fr. Steven Scott. The Free Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the United States and Canada, Grayslake, Illinois, 1988, p.57.

Vigilance is demanded of you---and vigilance is alertness, keeping watch with expectation. Vigilance over yourself, over your thoughts, desires, and deeds---this is the strict ordinance of your faith. Alertness sharpens spiritual vision, so that it can see and discern good and evil, and can know who is coming into your heart and thoughts. By keeping watch, one repulses an enemy and admits a friend. Expectation fortifies love and a clean conscience. To whom does this greatest expectation pertain? To the Beloved, to the Most Beloved, to the One whose love brought you into this world, and whose love will greet you in the other world.

St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. Homilies Volume One. Translated by Mother Maria. Lazarica Press, Birmingham, England, 1996, p.128.

When you fast, you do so for the sake of God and for the salvation of your soul, not for men. It is not in the least important that men see and know that you are fasting---indeed, it is better for you that they do not see and know. You await no reward from men for this. And what can they who, like you, look to God for all things, give you? It is important that God sees and knows. And God will see in any case; it is not possible to hide anything from Him. And do not display your fasting by any sort of external sign; He reads it inwardly, from the heart itself.

Father Sebastian Dabovich. The Holy Orthodox Church. Reprinted 1993 by St. Nectarios Church, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, p.73.

All Apostles fasted, following the example of their Divine Master. Likewise all the earlier Councils of the Church, whether the one presided over by the Apostles themselves, or those under their Successors, decreed that Christians should keep the fast. The most important Fast is the Quadragesima. It lasts for forty days, in accordance with the fasting of the Lord Jesus for forty days. To this Fast is added, besides the passion week, in commemoration of the sufferings of our Lord and Savior.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Vasilje Sokolovich “Freedom or Stupidity.” The Path of Orthodoxy. February 1979, p.2.

What does it mean to be an Orthodox Christian? It means to be that Christian who, in the right and true manner glorifies God. That is man’s purpose on earth: to glorify God. Salvation and the promise of eternal life will be received only through the Church of Jesus Christ, which He Himself established and which was confirmed through the faith of Her saints. Our Church has such saints as St.Sava, St.Basil of Ostrog, St.Peter of Cetinje, St.Stephan of Decani, and many, many others who are true witnesses of our faith---our Orthodox faith. Let us look to them as examples and preserve our holy heritage.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Rastko Trbuhovich. The Voice of Saint Stephen Lackawanna, New York, Vol.21 No.2.March 1997, p.2.

Does this mean Great Lent is really just a time for Self-Improvement? Great Lent is a time for returning to God, and that always includes self-improvement. None of us is perfect precisely because we are separated from God. As we grow in God, we grow in likeness to Christ. We become more like Christ, or as St. Paul says it, we grow “to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”(Eph.4:13). This is the vocation that God gives to us. Our bad habits stand in the way of fulfilling God’s plan for us and therefore must be given serious attention.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Rastko Trbuhovich. "Dear Parishioners." The Voice of Saint Stephen Lackawanna, New York, Vol.24 No.2.March-April 2000, p.2.

The reason I'm sharing this with you now is because we are now at the beginning of Great Lent. And now is the time to plan to be in the most important place during the greatest week of the year, Holy Week. The place to be, to see, to hear, to watch, to wait, to ponder, to experience, to join the saints of all ages in the eternal events that changed all creation, is only in church. This is not the time to be in front of the TV or on vacation, as important as that may be at other times.

Protopresbyter Rade Merick. "Risking Great Lent." The Path of Orthodoxy. March 2001, p.2. We often complain that the Church doesn't "meet our needs" Yet perhaps the real problem is that the needs we feel are important are not the ones the Church strives to teach us are ultimately important. Of course we want the Church to make us feel better about ourselves, as long as we don't need to change anything about ourselves. Yet the whole point of the Great Fast is to help us see just how much about us needs changed, and then to give us the tools to help us begin that change. But that means work, and commitment, and perhaps some discomfort, and certainly honesty on our part. Most of us would rather have the cheap and easy grace of pop psychology than the true and undeniably challenging self-examination and repentance offered us by the Church.

Hieromonk Seraphim Rose. "The Rule of Fasting in the Orthodox Church." Saint Herman Calendar 2006, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California.

The rule of fasting, to be sure, is not intended to be a "straight-jacket" for Orthodox believers, nor a source of pharisaical pride for anyone who keeps the letter of the Church's law. It is rather the rule, the standard, against which each is to measure his own practice, and towards which one must always strive, according to one's strength and circumstances. Whenever, for sickness or any other reason, one falls short of the rule, he applies to himself the spiritual medicine of self-reproach and strives to enter more fully into the spirit and discipline of fasting, which is indeed of great spiritual benefit to those who sincerely strive to follow it.

Heiromonk Father Irinej Dobrijevic. "Great Lent, Love and Salvation." The Path of Orthodoxy, March 1996, p.2.

Great Lent is a summons to constantly re-evaluate our lives. Where are we? Where have we been and where are we going? The command to love is no summons to licentiousness but rather a drastic alarm. Are we capable of love?

Reverend Father Aleksa Micich. St.Luke Newsletter. St.Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, September 2004, Vol.3, Issue.6, p.2.

It is time that we prove that we are people of God, as we claim to be. No ethnic group can lay claim to that title as some have tried through the centuries. Holy Scripture offers us many examples of individuals and entire nations on the path of salvation only because they put their faith into action. They practiced their faith wholeheartedly with devotion and humility. They were always seeking even a small tidbit of spiritual food. They were seeking the "Living Water" that Christ spoke about to the woman at the well.

Notes for Great Lent II

His Grace Bishop Dr. MITROPHAN. "A Pastoral Letter on Gambling." The Path of Orthodoxy, April 2001, p.15.

The spiritual strength of any Christian is in his firm and steadfast faith, trust in the Lord and the fulfilling of God's will in his or her life. In the same way, the spiritual strength and richness of any parish is in the pure and strong faith of the individual members and the parish as a whole. It is in submitting our wills to God's will; submitting our ways to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Way; in obeying the Gospel of our Savior through the acceptance of His Teachings as preserved and taught by the One, Holy, Apostolic and Orthodox Church.

St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. The Faith of the Saints. Seraphim Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2005, p.115.

Q. In what does Fasting consist for an Orthodox Christian?

A. In abstention from rich foods such as meat and dairy products, evil thoughts, desires and deeds, as well as prayers, alms and more strenuous exercising of all the Christian virtues.

Very Reverend Stavrofor Radovan Milkovich. Sermons and Speeches. Raska skola, Belgrade, 1999, p.106.

Our Christian Birthright is not ours only; it is an all-Christian inheritance of the undivided Christianity of the first millennium. We are stewards or guardians of it. It is a torch in our hands to be lifted up and held high for the sake of those who are wandering and groping in the prevailing darkness, searching for truth.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Slobodan Prodanovich. "Reflections of Conscience." The Path of Orthodoxy, November-December 1979, p.2.

However, the Church can use the media to demonstrate our spiritual strength and our commitment to the authentic teaching of Christ. These avenues can help us to educate, to influence, and to communicate with our own flock, as well as with secular society, rather than having the secular society transform the Church into its own image.

Very Reverend Protos Stavrophor Vojislav Dosenovich. Spiritual Reminders. Omaha, Nebraska, pp.143-144..

But as soon as man starts to fast and pray to God, the evil spirit becomes filled with indescribable fear. For the aroma of fasting and prayer is repulsive to him. As the fasting and prayer brings our soul and body under the control of God, at the same time the powers of evil are deadened to complete paralysis. Where man just thinks and talks about God there is plenty of room for evil, but in the case where the person starts to pray with sincerity and to fast with patience and hope, it becomes too crowded for evil, and evil has to abandon such a person.

His Grace Bishop CHRYSOSTOM. "Bishop Chrysostom's Enthronement Address". The Path of Orthodoxy. February 1989, p.8.

I challenge you, brothers and sisters, to always remember the moment of death and the future dreadful judgment. Contemporary false teachers are sowing the spirit of doubt toward everything, and who can stop our death and with that the end to all our worries? Measure and evaluate thought about the hour of death and all your deeds. That is the best philosophy of life. That is the rule which cannot be destroyed with any shrewd intrigues or lies; the goodness and firm support of sown faith in God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

WORDS OF A SHEPHERD: The Life and Writings of the Very Reverend Protostavrofor Vojislav Dosenovich. Compiled and Edited by Nicolae Roddy, Ph.D, 2004, p.12.

An enjoyable life lived to the fullest is one that is well organized and governed by the law of God, the same law that orders the universe, nature and life itself. When we lack that ordering principle in our lives, we start to lose control of ourselves, falling prey to irritation, resentment, anxiety, and sinful activities.

Protopresbyter Rade Merick. "Risking Great Lent". The Path of Orthodoxy. March 2001, p.2.

The first challenge of the Great Fast is for us to put it to work for us. It offers us powerful, time-tested and effective tools for spiritual growth, but only if we use them. It can be a life-changing experience for us, but only if we meet it on its own terms, instead of trying to make it fit us. We all need to check ourselves into this hospital of repentance so that we might be healed.

Father Justin Popovich. Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ. Translation, Preface and Introduction by Asterios Gerostergios, et al. Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. Belmont, Massachusetts, 1994, p. 45.

Again, if you want one, two, or thousands of irrefutable testimonies of the life-bearing and life-creating nature of the All-Venerable Cross of the Lord, and with it an experimental confirmation of the all-truthfulness of the holy dogma of the saving nature of the death of the Savior on the Cross, then start out with faith through the lives of the saints. And you will have to feel and see that each saint individually, and to all the saints together, the power of the Cross is the all-vanquishing weapon with which they conquer all visible and invisible enemies of their salvation.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Stevan Stepanov. The Bulletin. St. Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, April 1991, p.1.

God does not die on the day we cease to believe in a personal deity but we die on the day we cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, and renewal daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Srboljub Jockovich. The Messenger. St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, Steelton, Pennsylvania, March 1994, p.2.

During these seven weeks, Orthodox Christians are called upon to give extra attention to their inward lives. The Church makes this task of self-examination and spiritual renewal easier by creating an atmosphere during the Great and Holy Fast, conducive to contemplation and spiritual exercise. Lent can be an exciting and dynamic experience if we use this period of the church year properly.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Slobodan Prodanovich. Voice of Lazarica. St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Midland, Pennsylvania, April 1988, p.2.

Let us each make our own personal sincere effort and let us resolve to be more fruitful and more faithful in the use of the Sacraments of Penance and of Holy Communion, of our Holy Liturgy, and our daily prayers, and thus prepare ourselves to rise one day.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Rastko Trbuhovich. The Voice of St. Stephen. Lackawanna, New York, March, 1995, p.2.

We know that Great Lent began as a period of preparation for baptism for new converts to Christianity. But when the Church became too large and there were no great numbers of converts coming in, Great Lent remained as a period for the members of the Church to recover their baptism; to recover that joy and certainty of Christ's resurrection, that purity that accompanies unity with the transcendent God, that strength of spirit that overcomes fear and doubt and places those 'constraints and pressures' in their proper, eternal perspective.

Protopresbyter Stephen Zarembo. Lazarica. St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Midland, Pennsylvania, Pascha 1998, p.2.

Our life in this world is not an easy one. It is full of trials and tribulations, temptations, struggles and falls. It is not the life that God intends for us. The life He desires for us is none other than His Life, none other than Himself, for He is Life, He is our Life. His will is that we become partakers of His divine goodness, to become communicants of His life, to be in eternal communion with Him.

Dr. Dimitrije Stefanovic. "The House of the Lord." The Path of Orthodoxy. February 2001, p. 3.

Attending the Liturgy should be transformed into active participation, even if we do not sing in the choir. The Liturgy is never the same as the previous one. It is always different, although the order and content is mainly the same. Each one of us experiences the Liturgy in a different way each time. We experience the presence, the power and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes not at all. It does not depend on us. The Spirit blows when and where He wishes. What we ought to do is be prepared, to be open to receive Him. The more we follow the Lord's commandments, the more we will be open to all the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts and souls.

Milica Yaksich. "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." ISTOCNIK-Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Church-Canadian Diocese, Campbellville, Ontario. March 2004, p.27.

We are nearing the end of our climb, and these last seven steps on the ladder of St. John Climacus, are the most difficult both to achieve and to write about. Sins, vices and weaknesses are something common to all of us and when we are honest with ourselves, we can recognize them and the harm they do. Virtues, on the other hand cannot always be adequately described with words because true understanding is contingent on experience. Color cannot be described to someone blind from birth. We can, for example, understand being truthful as the opposite of being a liar, because we have all experienced both., but how can someone prideful truly understand humility?

His Holiness Patriarch GERMAN. "The Serbian Orthodox Church To Its Spiritual Children on Pascha." The Path of Orthodoxy. April 1990, p.1.

In other words, death came into the world by way of sin through Adam---the forefather of all mankind. Even as human nature is passed from age to age, so too is Adam's sin from generation to generation. So sin became the cause of all misfortune, unhappiness and grief in this world and this life. Sin ruins both human spiritual and physical nature. And finally it brings death. Truly every person begins to die when in this life he begins to sin into prodigality, evil and sin. Sinfulness comes because of spiritual blindness. This is why the Savior, quoting the Old Testament prophet, warned his contemporaries, "Having eyes, do you not see; and having ears, do you not hear?"

His Holiness Patriarch PAVLE. "The Serbian Orthodox Church to Her Spiritual Children at Pascha, The Path of Orthodoxy, April 1993, p.12.

Just think how this world would look and how this life would be without the comfort of the resurrection! How great would be the unconsolated pain, the despair and sorrow in this vale of tears and death? Where would mankind be if God had not revealed to us the concepts of good and evil? If the One Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life had not shown the true way of humanity, people would wander like a flock of confused birds, as do those who do not have this faith and this spiritual treasure. This is why His sublime teaching of faith and morality always has been and always will be needed by humanity, no matter what level of culture and civilization it attains.

His Grace Bishop Dr. MITROPHAN. "Holy Scripture and the Writings of St. Sava." The Path of Orthodoxy. March 1993, p.3.

But are we his heirs? Sadly, even we priests may open the Holy Scriptures only at the Divine Liturgy, when the rubrics demand it. What can be said about our faithful? Many of them do not even have a Bible in their home, much less read it. And so we ask, "Why are we in such a spiritual state?" We cannot be perfected in the faith if we do not know what it is. But we will learn it only through the teaching of God's word. This is what the Holy Apostle Paul said in a slightly different way: "But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher...So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."(Rom.10:14, 17)

His Eminence Metropolitan AMPHILOHIJE, His Eminence Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER, His Eminence Metropolitan IRINEJ, His Grace Bishop IRINEJ. "Letter to President William Clinton". The Path of Orthodoxy. May 1994, p.10.

We Orthodox Christians are now in our Paschal Lenten Season, and remembering Christ's Golgotha, we carry our cross to our Calvary. As we now enter the observance of Passion Week in preparation for the solemn Feast of Feasts, the Radiant Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we pray the Risen Christ to enlighten the hearts, minds, and understanding of those who have given cause to the rise of this senseless slaughter and indescribable pain and suffering of innocent people; of those who executed their will, and of those who react with violence to the violence done to them when left abandoned.

“Statement of the Bishop’s Consultation of the Serbian Orthodox Church” The Path of Orthodoxy, April-May 1995, p.3.

On the eve of the Holy-Forty day Lent, we call all the faithful to fasting and prayer, mutual forgiveness and repentance. Never have we needed fasting and prayer more than today, because, in the words of the Lord, every demon, every demonic evil, and therefore that which has befallen us on account of our sins, can be cast out only by prayer and fasting. That which is impossible for men is possible for God, and in Him alone do we place our hope, and in the Hands of Him Crucified and Resurrected do we place our future as well as the future of all men and all nations.

“SCOBA Sunday of Orthodoxy Encyclical” The Path of Orthodoxy, March-April 2003, p.1.

Our Orthodox faith is the Apostolic Faith. Its power and truth rests upon the living testimony of the Apostles who were called by Christ to see His miracles firsthand, to hear His words of truth and wisdom and to give witness to the wonders of His glory. After His Resurrection, Christ commissioned the Apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit(Mt.28:19) So great was their fervor for this sacred endeavor that they could not remain silent in the face of persecution or even death, but were inspired to speak of what they had seen and heard.(Acts4:20)

Reverend Father Dr. Alexandar Webster. “Do You Know Me?” The Path of Orthodoxy, December 1986, p.2.

What we need, I am convinced more and more, is a spiritual revival in our Church in America, especially if we hope to bring Orthodoxy to the many unsaved and unchurched million in this country. There is no better place for us to begin that within our own families and homes...

Milica Yaksich. “The Ladder of Divine Ascent.” ISTOCNIK-Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Church-Canadian Diocese, Campbellville, Ontario, April 2003, p.19.

We are nearly two thirds of the way up the ladder. Steps do not get easier or faster as one climbs higher. Quite often the temptations get greater though more subtle, and if one is not ever vigilant, more dangerous. The world may be at war with terrorism and worldly foes, but make no mistake; we are all at war with evil. The higher one climbs the more satisfaction Satan and his fallen angels feel in pulling that one down. Our Lord came into the world to save sinners, but Lucifer is always hard at work to rob Him of His saints. Therefore, be steadfast in your hope and faith in our Lord and firm in your resolve to strive for salvation so that you may reap the eternal reward in heaven.

An Orthodox Nun. “But Grant Rather Thy Servant the Spirit of Chastity” The Path of Orthodoxy, March 1988, pp.1,8.

This talk is now taking place during the holy season of Great Lent. Don’t we kind of see a parallel between the word chastity and the word fasting. Don’t you think that we achieve chastity by fasting.? By fasting and giving up worldly things, we get closer to God. When we give up good food, entertainment and start keeping a check on all of our physical needs there is only one thing that can happen. We open a door for ourselves for Christ to enter. And Christ and His Holy Spirit cleanses us from all impurity. Don’t first think fasting is just an act of giving something up. In fasting we are offering a sacrifice of righteousness.

Notes for Great Lent III

His Grace Bishop Dr .MITROPHAN. The Teaching of Saint Apostle Paul on the Church. Translated by Protopresbyter Stefan Zaremba. Sremski Karlovac 2001, p.61.

Thanks to the Holy Spirit who abides in the Church, and who is the “soul of the Church,” each Christian can become a temple of the Holy Spirit, a small Church of God, if he becomes a member of the body of Christ, the Church (Eph.2:19-22, 3:5-6). With the Mystery of Baptism man is clothed in Christ (Gal.3:27) and becomes the temple of the living God (2 Cor 6:16). Whether or not man will receive the Holy Spirit depends on him himself.

St. Bishop NIKOLAI (Velimirovic) The Life of St .Sava. Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese for the United States and Canada. The Serbian Orthodox Monastery of St. Sava, Libertyville, Illinois, 1951, p.59.

The constant longing for a solitary, hermitic life never left him. Indeed, that very longing had drawn him to Sveta Gora. It increased in him after he met the real Hermits secluded in the huts, caves and precipices of Athos, unharassed by the world, undisturbed in meditations, careless of their bodily lives, free like birds, having only God for a companion, but with a sweet conviction: solo Dio basta. Their mode of life strongly gripped Sava’s imagination. That is the way to holiness, thought he.

Father Justin Popovich. Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ. Translation, Preface and Introduction by Asterios Gerostergios, et al. Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. Belmont, Massachusetts, 1994, p.86.

For what does it mean for someone to profess to be Orthodox? It means this: to be part of the continuous struggle that leads from man to God-man, that is, to be involved in the unending improvement of oneself through the theantropic mysteries, struggles, and virtues. Here the Orthodox Christian is never alone. Every feeling, act, and thought is both individual and universal, not merely personal and catholic but theanthropic.

Father Sebastian Dabovich. The Holy Orthodox Church. Reprinted 1993 by St. Nectarios Church, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, p.3.

Genuine piety cannot long be concealed in the heart without manifesting itself by exterior practices of religion; and hence, though interior and exterior worship are distinct, they cannot be separated in the present life. The fire cannot burn without sending forth a flame and heat. Neither can the fire of devotion burn in the soul without reflecting itself on our countenance, and even in our speech. It is natural for man to express his sentiments by signs and ceremonies, for, from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Very Reverend Stavrofor Radovan Milkovich. Sermons and Speeches. Raska skola, Belgrade, 1999, p.139.

There are four essential elements without which, or any one of them, there is no meaningful church life. The essential four are: Apostolic Teaching, Fellowship (Friendship), Participation in the Holy Sacraments and Prayers. These essential four are not any theological proposition, opinion or sermon. On the contrary, these four are clearly marked in the Holy Scriptures as essence of the New Way, Christ Way in the first congregation of Christ’s church in Jerusalem. It is recorded in the book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, 2:42.

St .Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic. The Faith of the Saints. Seraphim Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2005, p.90.

Q. What is Christian Prayer?

A. It is our communication with God, in which we express our Faith, Hope and Love.

Q. What kinds of prayer do we use?

A. Four kinds.

- (a) Inward prayer
- (b) Outward prayer
- (c) Private prayer
- (d) Public prayer

Very Reverend Father Vojislav Dosenovich. So Help Me God! Vantage Press, New York, 1992,p.179.

I then felt it would be appropriate to ask the old man and Nikica to join me in the Trisagion prayer, which I had learned long ago as a seminarian participating in funerals at the New Cemetery in Sarajevo. Following this, I sang the proper hymns, beginning with “With the spirits of the righteous dead give rest, O Savior, to the soul of thy servant Ilija, who has fallen asleep, preserving him unto the life of blessedness which is with Thee, O thou who lovest mankind.” This was then followed by the rest of the service, which I recalled by rote from memory. I knew that my father and Kosta had not had the benefit of such a ceremony (I knew by this time of their deaths), so in my heart I included them in these prayers as well.

Protopresbyter Stavrofor Dr.Mateja Matejic. Biography of St.Sava. Kosovo Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1976, p.27.

After the completion of Hilandar, Saint Sava also purchased a beautiful piece of property in Karyes where he built a small chapel dedicated to St.Sava the Sanctified. There was also his personal kelia in which he, and, after him, other monks of Hilandar, spent time in silence and meditation. There they performed their monastic duties and, some of them, copied manuscripts or authored their own. This kelia has always had an autonomous status: it was exempted from the jurisdiction of the protos of Karyes as well as the abbot of Hilandar. Saint Sava provided it with a Charter securing permanently its special rights and privileges. He also wrote a special Typikon of Karyes which governed the life and duties, as well as the rights and privileges, of individual monks who were to abide there.

The Lives of the Monastery Builders of Meteora. Translation and Compilation from the Greek of The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church and Meteorite Sources. Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista, Colorado, P.53.

During the Serbian occupation of Thessaly, under Emperor Symeon, more monasteries were built at Meteora. Symeon ruled Thessaly from 1359 until his death in 1371. During the lifetime of his father John (Joasaph) Uros Paleologos, held the title of co-emperor. From an early age, the gracious and highly-favored John turned away from the world and its sweet delights. He kept his mind towards God and not upon any vain imaginings. He only considered those good things prepared by God from the beginning of the world for those who love Him. John regularly followed the divine services of the Church and frequently visited the holy monasteries and coenobitic communities. He had no other desire than to associate with the renowned fathers.

Very Reverend Protos Stavrophor Vojislav Dosenovich. Spiritual Reminders. Omaha, Nebraska, p.92.

Remember the next time you are in church and hear the short prayer: Lord, have mercy! GOSPODI POMILUY! Once or three times, that "over" asking is three times more important than "my" asking; that "I" and "WE", have to be one channel with two ends: one by which we obtain mercy, and the other by which we in like manner discharge the mercy. But above all, this two word prayer: GOSPODI POMILUY! Is the all important key on our way to the Kingdom of God.

Protopresbyter Dr. Danilo Rogich. Serbian Patericon. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, 1994, p.75.

The Karejski Typicon expressed a most fundamental understanding and belief concerning human beings held to this day by all pious Orthodox Christians: the truth that all human beings are originally made and therefore destined to know and be friends with their Creator---God the Holy Trinity---and to be personally and intimately known by Him, which is a flowing and most powerful relationship of love, peace and joy. And this is totally possible for those who are seriously committed to "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," our Lord Jesus Christ who rests in the bosom of God the Father, and for those who are animated by the Holy Spirit. And if there is one clear message revealed in the life of St. Sava, it is precisely this: that the Christian life consists primarily in seeking and finding God, in searching and discovering His will, and in hungering and thirsting for His righteousness...

Hieromonk Damascene. Father Seraphim Rose. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, 2003, p. xv.

It was only after his repose that I learned of his former life, and of the darkness from which he had emerged. And I was even more I awe --of Christ Who had transformed him into a new being, and of Fr. Seraphim himself, who had allowed his old self to be put to death so completely and, along with the Apostle Paul, had been "dying daily." I saw that not only had my first impression been true, but that it had only scratched the surface of a profound mystery which the world can never comprehend: the re-creation of a soul through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Protosindjel Konstantin Djokic. Divine Worship in the Orthodox Church. Isococnik: Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Church-Canadian Diocese, June-September 1990, p.103.

Prayers to God can ascend in any place, but in order to properly, continually conduct joint common worship it is necessary to prescribe a specific place. That place is a temple or a church.

The temple is the House of God, where God pours out the abundance of His Gifts. The temple is the healing place where we get ease and humility. The temple is the school of righteousness and piety. The temple is the place of judgement, but where judgement is tempered by mercy, because before the Lord we are represented by the Holy Mother of God and all the saints. In one word, the temple is the house of mercy, where we find mercy from God for all our sins and offenses.

Healings of Soul and Body: Saint Basil of Ostrog. Translated from the Serbian by Ana Smijanac. Svetigora, Cetinje, Serbia and Montenegro, 2003, pp.45-46.

The prayer of a Christian for others is fruitful. Even more so is the prayer of a priest, or of a priest who prays together with the Church. Any Christian with strong faith and great humility before God can perform miracles. When ardent love is added to such prayer mothers can give back health to their children with heartfelt prayers to Christ our God and the Theotokos. There are well known examples of mothers protecting their sons who are physically in far-off places by fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Such mothers are true wonderworkers.

Protopresbyter Radomir Nikchevich and Vesna Nikchevich. The Mystery of The Wonderworker of Ostrog. Translated from the Serbian by Ana Smylyanich. Svetigora. 2003, p.77.

Personal prayer, and even more so, communal prayer in church as well as the words of the Holy Gospels, carry within them the power of the grace of God, a spiritual power which we feel like a flame that consumes our hearts, before which all evil spirits flee. That power, the burning of the heart with the flame of the Spirit of God can have, as you said, a lasting effect on us, only if we learn how to preserve it within us and not drive it away from ourselves with movements and actions of the soul which are contrary to it. This is a very difficult task, especially for people living in the world. However, for everything there is repentance. The priest is a witness of a person's repentance during the holy mystery of confession. He has the God-given power to grant the forgiveness of sins to the penitent one who comes to him.

Conquering Depression. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, 1998, pp.7-8.

We focus on the life of a healer of depression in modern Russia. The Life of New Martyr Maria of Gatchina is brief, and we probably will never get more information on her. But her significance is not to be found in earthly biographical data. Instead, her power lies amidst the saints of the 20th century who are able to hear the prayers of us down below, intercede before God, make our souls see the cage opening, and with God's help show us a path by which we can fly out.

Dimitrije Bogdanovic. Vojislav J. Djuric. Dejan Medakovic. Chilandar. Translated by Madge Phillips-Tomasevic. Monastery of Chilandar, The Holy Mountain, 1997, p.40.

In 1302 King Milutin raised Hrusija, known as Basil's Tower, beside Chilandar's harbour, explicitly giving it the status of an independent kellion...It is noticeable that these

towers and kellia were built in places that were both strategically important and also suitable for spiritual activity and intellectual work in complete tranquility: the Karyes hermitage at the very top of the Karyes depression, with a magnificent view of Athos and the sea; Hrusija-on an isolated rock above the sea, dominating the coastline; the Transfiguration Tower on a cliff terrace with a distant view of the sea, in a lonely inaccessible, wooded spot. Chilandar was thus intended to cultivate all degrees of Orthodox spirituality and asceticism, from the “common” one, open to all, in a community, to the elite withdrawal into solitude of two or three monks for the purpose of contemplation, Hesychastic prayer and literary work.

Sima Cirkovic. Vojislav Korac.Gordana Babic. Studenica Monastery. Jugoslavenska Revija. Belgrade, 1986, p.16.

The adoption and adaption of the Evergetis typicon sanctioned the communal (cenobitic) type of monastic life customary in Serbian monasteries of the period. Its external forms were uniformity in dress, meals and daily routine, while from the spiritual aspect it demanded conscious obedience to discipline and performance of duties delegated by the superior or the fraternity as a whole. The rule did not permit ownership of any possession whatsoever, nor the cooking and taking of meals separately in one’s cell. Exceptions were only for guests and the sick. Spiritual duties were performed by collective worship following the set patten of daily and nightly “hours” and the annual calendar of movable and immovable feasts, but also by individual striving towards spiritual well-being and perfection, in which confession, communion and obedience to moral teachings played the most important part.

Archpriest Vaso Ivosevic. Staretz Simeon-A Serbian Ascetic of Our Century.” The Serbian Orthodox Church: Its Past and Present. Published by”Pravoslavije”-Institution of the Serbian Patriarchate, Belgrade,1989, p.40.

The deeds of Father Simeon and his healing prayers became famous. Next to Ostrog, his acetic cell was mostly visited place. He kept until his death a diary of the miraculous healings that took place there. Many intellectuals, even atheists, came to him for advice. All visitors were impressed by his personality and words. He conquered people by his kindness and by his wise advice. The ascetic life, the surrender to the Will of God, the deep prayers of this lofty person, his tears and his pains for the trespasses of people his appeals and wails by which he implored people to repent, brought good fruit. This man was blessed by God, his appearance reflected the saintness of his person, therefore people confided in him and listened to his advice.

Dr. Blagota Gardashevich. “The Cult of St.Basil of Ostrog” The Serbian Orthodox Church: Its Past and Present. Translated by Deacon Rastko and Mrs. Victoria Trbuhovich.Published by”Pravoslavije”-Institution of the Serbian Patriarchate, Belgrade,1973, p.30.

In Montenegro St. Basil is venerated more than any other Christian saint, and Ostrog is considered the most sacred shrine. He was an inspiration to the people of Montenegro in all their trials. They turned to him whether in time of sorrow or happiness, and on every occasion of spiritual and national crisis. Before beginning a task, the Montenegrin says, "God and St. Basil, help me." In the morning, a Montenegrin could often be seen turning toward Ostrog, crossing himself and saying a prayer before setting out on a trip or beginning some work. When a man takes an oath in the name of St. Basil, it is the greatest guarantee for the Montenegrin that someone is speaking the truth.

Dr. Lazar Milin. "The Theology of Icons." The Serbian Orthodox Church: Its Past and Present. Translated by Militsa Rekalich-Popovich. Published by "Pravoslavije"-Institution of the Serbian Patriarchate, Belgrade 1972, p. 46.

However, for the Orthodox believer, an icon has incomparably more than just a material value or the artistic value it possesses, because of the fame and success of the artist who painted it. It will have for him above all a religious value even if it does not possess any other. It is a holy object for him. Holy in two senses: subjectively and objectively. The subjective holiness of an icon consists, as we have already said, in the feeling of holiness which it inspires in the soul of man because of its associations. The objective holiness of the icon lies in the fact that it has been consecrated by the Church and must therefore be used only for prayers and divine service and not for any other profane purposes.

Prepared for the Adult Class, St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Carmichaels, Pennsylvania,

Father Rodney Torbic