



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

May-June 2007

The Apostle's Fast

This liturgical year has been made very interesting by the early date of Pascha. As our Subdeacon Constantine has expressed it, it is an ascetical year. This was indicated first by the coming of the Services of the Triodion immediately after the Feast of Theophany, and now by the Peter & Paul Fast which is not only beginning at an early date, but also lasting nearly six weeks.

The Apostles' Fast, as it is often called, has existed from at least the fifth century. The Fast begins on the Monday after the Feast of All Saints (the Sunday after Holy Pentecost), and lasts until the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter & Paul on June 29/July 12. This particular Fast was greatly affected by the change to the Gregorian Calendar by some of the local Orthodox Churches. With a late date of Pascha it can nearly disappear under this condition. But for those of us who continue with the Traditional Church calendar the Fast is always a substantial one.

It is a somewhat less strict Fast than, for example, Great Lent. Fish, wine and oil may be consumed on all Saturdays and Sundays, and wine and oil on all Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Though it is less strict as a Fast, it comes at a somewhat awkward time for us Americans. It comes just as Spring is turning to Summer, as school days are ending and vacations are beginning. It comes just as we are eager for backyard barbeques and beach parties.

So, how are we to think about this, how are we to deal with it?

There are many who consider themselves observant Orthodox Christians who simply ignore it and put in its place the American way. After all, isn't it somehow just un-American to fast from hot dogs and hamburgers in the summer?

We pray, of course, that these folks are in the minority and that the predominant attitude of the Orthodox is that we must at least struggle to be obedient to the Rule of the Church.

We can, though, if we think about it a bit, understand that it is a great spiritual gift that is being offered in the Fast, and not a punishment.

Our Orthodox Faith is the Way of Life. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, in Holy Scripture, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John

14:6). All that we believe, all that we follow, all that we love in our Faith is in Jesus Christ our Lord. If we want life, if we want love in our life, if we want to know the Truth, we must follow Him.

The world, the flesh and the devil are continually pulling at us to leave The Way, to leave Christ our Lord. It is sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, but is always present while we sojourn in this earthly life.

There is nothing wrong in itself with enjoying the warmth and light of the summer days. There is nothing inherently wrong with being away from classes, or from the work-a-day world for periods of time. The problem comes in when we let down our guard, remove our spiritual armor and become prey to our adversaries. While we feel we are "just having fun" we can be eroding the benefit of the spiritual momentum we have gained during the Paschal Season. We can return to misdeeds of the past, or fall into new errors, if we are not vigilant. And so we move away from the Way, the Truth, and Life itself. It is the perennial delusion to believe that we are enjoying life when we are actually embracing death.

This Apostles' Fast, though it be extended, is a gift that we should receive thankfully. It is the perfect opportunity for us to remember that we are to be "in the world, but not of it" (Jn. 17:14-15). It is the most excellent aid in remembering our immortal soul, even while our bodies are more comfortable with the mild weather and diminished demands of school and work.

Even further, it is the most excellent time to increase our prayers for the Holy Church. We can make particular prayers to the Holy Apostles who endured continual persecution—a persecution which only increased their Faith and laid a true foundation for the Church. We are all aware of the stressful times the Holy Church is enduring even today with the onslaught of modernism and unbelief. And we are equally aware of our brothers and sisters who are agitated by recent developments in our own Russian Church.

So let us fast and pray and offer our meager struggles in the moment for the hope of Eternal Life and Truth.

—Fr. Michael

St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under the omophorion of Metropolitan LAURUS, First Hierarch, and Bishop GABRIEL of Manhattan. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Margaret Lark at (603) 332-9613, e-mail: woolfolk3@gmail.com, or to Father Michael at tcrowley@maine.rr.com. Thank you.

Rector:

Rev. Michael Crowley
 16 Channel Road
 South Portland, ME 04106
 (978) 204-0428 (cell phone with voice mail)

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment

Parish Council

President: Rev. Michael Crowley (207) 767-1889
 Starosta: Sdn. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
 Secretary: Natalie Pishenin (978) 658-5564
 Treasurer: Anthony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
 Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
 Cemetery: to be determined by search committee.
 Interim, Rev. Michael Crowley

Peter Danas (978) 459-9541
 John Danas (978) 454-0315
 Alexei Doohovskoy (978) 897-1734
 Roberto Gonzalez (978) 692-1229
 Michael Johnson (603) 893-4593
 John Kekis (978) 456-9865
 Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

*** =Strict Fast (no meats, fish or dairy)**

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday please call and switch with someone. If you have any questions contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410. Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare on your day. Some parishioners prefer to make a big lunch but this isn't necessary. As long as there is enough food for about 40 people anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

May

6 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris

13 Masha Harris, Kot Engalichev

20 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Laryssa Doohovskoy

27 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed, and Diane

June

3 Nick Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis

10 Tanya Sciaudone, Amy McLellan

17 Anna Kekis, Mireille Lang

Note: during the Summer months, Trapeza is always pot-luck. Please consider signing up on the list posted on the bulletin board.

Sisterhood News:

The Kulich bake sale raised \$502 for the building fund for St. Nicholas church in Springfield, MA. Thank you to all bakers and buyers!

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meeting will take place on June 3rd.

Thank You... to Gene Survillo for his donation of potted palms which enhanced our Holy Temple for the Holiday of Palm Sunday.

...to the Reeds for their generosity in printing music books for the use of our parishioners.

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Lilly Anne, Margaret, Fr. Roman & Matushka Irina Lukianov. Also please remember the newly-reposed servant of God Nina (Caron).

Please remember to inform the Myrrh-bearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Financial Update: As of April 30, 2007 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$55,335. If you have any questions, please see Subdeacon Constantine Desrosiers.

Sunday School: The class schedule for the advanced class during May and June is:

May 6: John Villahermosa, Military Saints

May 13: Reader Constantine, The Early Church

May 20: Meghan Crowley, Pilgrimage Slide Presentation

May 27: Pentecost – no class

June 3: Reader Constantine, Trip to Moscow

June 10: Reader Robert, Archeology and the Bible

June 17: Reader John, The Significance of the Cross

June 24: Danny McLellan, The Creed

Laryssa Doohovskoy has been confirmed as the new Sunday School coordinator, and will continue to instruct the middle group. Congratulations, Laryssa!

A cemetery reminder: Burning candles and vigil lights are a fire hazard! Please extinguish all flames after visiting the cemetery. Thank you for your cooperation.

Also, please remember to keep the cemetery road clear, not only on Sundays, but also when visiting.

Children's Play Loft: If your child has played (or eaten) in the loft area, please remember to pick up toys from the floor and discard food and plates. This will keep the area clean and safe for everyone's use and will help our hall cleaner to clean that area more thoroughly. Thanks!

Winter Outerwear: A large number of personal clothing items are hanging in our church hall on the limited

number of hooks we have. Please check to see if any of these items belong to you. If so, please take them home so that the hooks would be available for use for coats during these cold months. Thank you.

Summer School of Liturgical Music: Will take place this year between July 8 and July 21. The cost is \$450 for room and board, and \$450 for tuition for the full program. As always, our parish has a scholarship available for anyone who is interested in attending the Summer School, and we urge all to consider it. Please speak to Father Michael if you are interested. Further information available at:

<http://sslm.hts.edu/forum/index.do>

A Reminder about Pledges We are a little late this year in reminding our members to please come up to date with pledges. Even though we have increased our attendance at Sunday Divine Liturgy, it is still the pledges of individual members that make it possible for us to pay our bills and continue growing our parish. Please refer to the chart inside the door to the hall. It shows both our intended budget and our deficit.

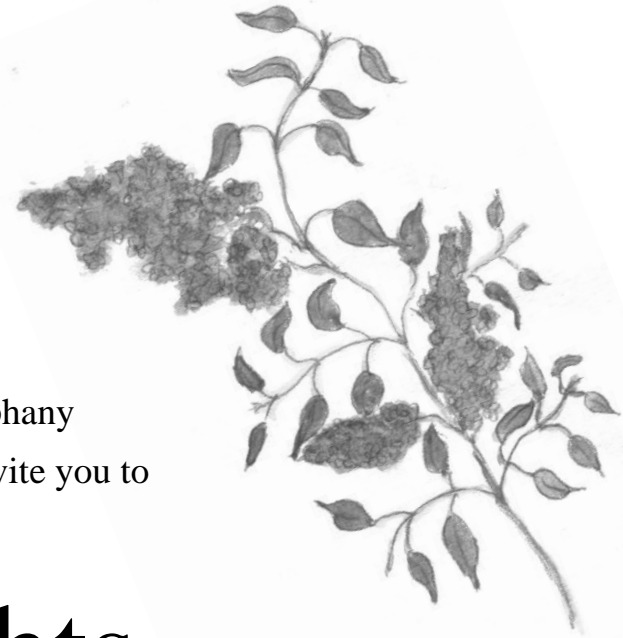
Although it can sometimes seem like a burden upon our household budgets, pledging and giving to the Church is not only our Christian duty, but also a wonderful opportunity to express our love of God and of our fellow man. And again, though it can seem that we need this money in other areas of our lives, anything that we give to the Holy Church is returned to us ten-fold both here and in the life to come.

So make every effort to be generous—and please follow through on what you have already pledged. We are building this parish not only for ourselves and our children, but for our children's children and beyond.

About Prospora: The Prospora on the candle counter on Sunday is given as an offering to God for the remembrance of our relatives and friends, whose names are written in a little book or on a sheet of paper for commemoration. Christian names alone should be used, without surnames, and they should be in the proper form, not a shortened form or a nickname. If written in Russian, they should be in the genitive case.

Of late, some of the brethren who send up the Prospora for commemoration are not finding it at the end of the Liturgy. It appears that, misunderstanding the procedure for the commemoration loaves, some people are taking loaves that they did not send to the altar.

Please feel free to send up a Prospora with your commemorative names, but only take what you have sent up at the beginning after the Divine Liturgy is ended. For those who have books of names kept in the church, we do not automatically send up a Prospora with each book. You must do this yourself when you arrive for the service.



The parishioners of Holy Epiphany
and St. Xenia Orthodox Churches invite you to

Lilac Nights

A semi-formal evening of dinner and dancing
for the entire family
Friday, June 1, 2007

Doors open at 7 PM Dinner at 8 and dancing until Midnight

St. John of Damascus Hall

200 West Street

Dedham, MA

* Dinner * Dancing * Cash Bar * Raffle *

Russian, Greek, and American music provided by

The Rita and Naum Orchestra

Tickets: \$50 Adults, \$25 Children 5-12, under 5 no charge

Please make checks payable to: St. Xenia Sisterhood

Send to: Lilac Nights c/o St. Xenia Church

P.O. Box 147

Methuen, MA 01844



Contact: Matushka Lena Jarostchuk – Lenaj2@comcast.net; (978)266-1339

Matushka Nancy Crowley – ncrowley@maine.rr.com

To Cross or Not To Cross

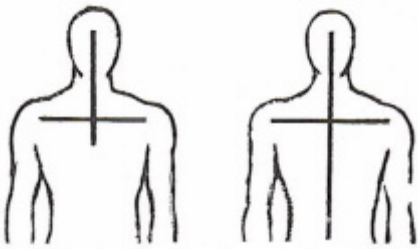
Anyone who has looked around on a Sunday morning will notice that different people cross themselves at different times (and sometimes in different ways). To a certain extent, when to cross oneself is according to personal piety and not an issue of dogma. But there are times when it is specifically proper to cross yourself, and times when you should not. Here is a brief list of when to cross and when not to cross:

To Cross: When you hear one of the variations of the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; at the beginning and end of the liturgical service or your private prayers; entering or exiting the church, or when passing in front of the Holy Altar; before venerating an icon, the cross, or Gospel book.

Not to Cross: At the chalice before or after taking Communion (you might hit the chalice with your hand); when the priest or bishop blesses saying, "Peace be to all" — bow slightly and receive the blessing; when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (kissing the right hand of the bishop or priest is appropriate, but not making the sign of the cross).

How to Cross: In the sacred book, the Psalter, from which Orthodox people were educated from ancient times, it is said in the "Brief Instruction": "about how it becometh the Orthodox Christian, according to the ancient tradition of the Holy Apostles and Fathers, to form on himself the sign of the cross... I shall state: first on our foreheads, which touches the highest part of the cross, second on the stomach, which touches the lowest point of the cross, third on our right shoulder and fourth on the left, by which the crossbeam is signed by the extended arms of the cross, on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, His hands extended to gather all the nations scattered to the ends of the earth into one."

This drawing gives a complete visual explanation:



(Editor's note: Please observe that touching the breast instead of the stomach forms an upside-down cross, something we emphatically do *not* want to do! Also note that we touch our right shoulder first to remind ourselves that our Lord sits at the right hand of the Father, and also that

we hope to stand at the right hand of God on the Day of Judgement.)

Some Suggestions on the Raising of Children from an Orthodox Priest (continued)

7) Your own life-style, your personal tastes, your words, the books you read, the music you listen to, and the things that draw your interest and attention will all speak louder to your child than anything else. Hallow your child's eyes with the holy icons. Sanctify his hearing with the holy hymns, his sense of smell with sacred incense, and his entire body and soul with the holy Mysteries. If your home is a haven of spiritual sanity, love, and peace, your child will know where to turn when he or she inevitably encounters the blasphemous, shocking, and sordid things that fill our society. Teach your child the Jesus Prayer.

8) Instruct your child in almsgiving and compassion towards those who are in need. And teach them also that they should help in house duties and, if they are old enough, that they should labor at various odd jobs, so that they may learn from an early age that, as the Holy Apostle Paul tells us, one who does not labor should not eat. Idleness and affluence together have, in our society, destroyed countless young people and led them into sin and even an early death. Never be ashamed to say to your child: "We can't afford it."

9) Teach your child by your own example - and by the examples found in the Holy Scriptures and the *Lives of the Saints* - that abstinence from food and drink and personal comforts is a noble and beautiful thing, taught to us by our Saviour Himself and by the Saints. Aside from being good for our souls, austerity is also good for our little planet.

10) Be fair if it should ever happen that your child gets into a dispute with another child, or with teachers, or with other authorities. If your child is wrong, he/she is wrong, and show him/her, together with your love and support, why he/she is wrong. Your child will learn something of God's justice from your example.

11) As the years pass, if you persist faithfully in these matters, as you must, you will discover, much to your surprise, that you have grown spiritually also. Saint Paul was quite serious when he said that "a woman shall be saved by childbearing" - and we know and understand that, especially in a society such as ours, both parents are essential for the proper kind of Orthodox Christian spiritual nurturing that is needed.

12) Prepare yourself for a life of spiritual struggles and prayers. You and your children will need them and the grace of God, for we are not living in the world as God originally created it. We are living in occupied territory - a land occupied by the enemy. But, by our holy Faith and God's grace, we are nonetheless a free people, living in hope and expectation of our deliverance in our true and everlasting country. And if we are heedful in these matters, we will have the boldness to say to our Saviour in that last day, "Behold me, your servant, and the children which Thou hast given me."

May 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 (18 Apr) St John the De- capolite	2 (19 Apr) St John of the Ancient Caves Fish, wine & oil allowed	3 (20 Apr) St Theodore Trichinas	4 (21 Apr) HM Januarius Wine & oil al- lowed	5 (22 Apr) St Theodore 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
6 (23 Apr) 9:30 AM Sa- maritan Woman Hours & Liturgy	7 (24 Apr) M Sabbas	8 (25 Apr) Ap Mark	9 (26 Apr) HM Basil of Amasea Wine & oil al- lowed	10 (27 Apr) HM Symeon	11 (28 Apr) Ap Jason & comp Wine & oil al- lowed	12 (29 Apr) 9 MM of Cyzicus 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
13 (30 Apr) 9:30 AM Blind Man Hours & Li- turgy	14 (1 May) Pr Jeremiah	15 (2 May) St Athanasius	16 (3 May) MM Timothy & Maura 6:30 PM Ascen- sion Vigil	17 (4 May) 9:30 AM As- cension Hours & Lit- urgy	18 (5 May) GM Irene Wine & oil al- lowed	19 (6 May) Pr Job 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
20 (7 May) 9:30 AM Fa- thers of the First Council Hours & Lit- urgy 12:30 PM Parish Council	21 (8 May) Ap John the Theologian	22 (9 May) St Nicholas	23 (10 May) Ap Simon the Zealot Wine & oil al- lowed	24 (11 May) SS Cyril & Methodius	25 (12 May) St Epiphanius Wine & oil al- lowed	26 (13 May) VM Glyceria 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
27 (14 May) 9:30 AM Pen- tecost Hours & Liturgy	28 (15 May) Day of the Holy Spirit	29 (16 May) St Theodore the Sanctified	30 (17 May) Ap Andronicus	31 (18 May) M Theodosius of Ancyrus		

June 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 (19 May) HM Patrick of Prussa	2 (20 May) M Thalalaeus 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
3 (21 May) 9:30 AM All Saints Hours & Liturgy	4 (22 May) M Basiliscus	5 (23 May) St Michael of Synada Wine & oil al- lowed	6 (24 May) St Symeon of the Wondrous Mtn Wine & oil al- lowed	7 (25 May) 3 rd Finding of Head of the Forerunner Fish, wine & oil allowed	8 (26 May) App Carpus & Alphaeus	9 (27 May) HM Therepon 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil Fish, wine & oil allowed
10 (28 May) 9:30 AM All Saints of Russia Hours & Lit- urgy Fish, wine & oil allowed	11 (29 May) V Theodosia	12 (30 May) St Isaacius Wine & oil al- lowed	13 (31 May) M Hermias	14 (1 Jun) M Justin & comp Wine & oil al- lowed	15 (2 Jun) St Nicephorus	16 (3 Jun) MM Lucillian & comp 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil
17 (4 Jun) 9:30 AM Pente- cost 3 Hours & Liturgy Fish, wine & oil allowed	18 (5 Jun) HM Dorotheus	19 (6 Jun) St Bessarion Wine & oil al- lowed	20 (7 Jun) HM Theodosius of Ancyra	21 (8 Jun) GM Theodore the General Wine & oil al- lowed	22 (9 Jun) St Cyril of Alex- andria	23 (10 Jun) HM Timothy of Prussa 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil Fish, wine & oil
24 (11 Jun) 9:30 AM Pente- cost 4 Hours & Liturgy Fish, wine & oil allowed	25 (12 Jun) St Onuphrius	26 (13 Jun) M Aquilina Wine & oil al- lowed	27 (14 Jun) Pr Elisha	28 (15 Jun) Pr Amos Wine & oil al- lowed	29 (16 Jun) HM Tychon	30 (17 Jun) MM Manuel & comp 6:30 PM Sun- day Vigil

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Methuen, MA 01844

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DIRECTIONS TO ST. XENIA CHURCH:

From I-93 North or South take Exit 46, Routes 110 and 113 Dracut and Lawrence. If you were travelling North on I-93, take the exit and go around the rotary and under the highway. Follow the signs and bear right off the rotary for Route 110/113 Dracut. **If you were travelling South on I-93,** bear right at the bottom of the exit ramp towards Route 110/113 Dracut.

Where Routes 110 and 113 split, bear right onto Route 113 towards Dracut. You will pass several cemeteries on your left, including the Polish National Catholic Cemetery. The very next gate on the left is the entrance to St. Xenia's. Please note that the church is on the left just before the Hickory Hill Golf course, so if you pass the golf course, you will have missed the church. Parking is available on church grounds.