



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January - February 2018

Prayer, Feasts, and Fasts

by the Ever-Memorable Metropolitan Philaret of New York

We all understand how important prayer is for the spiritual life of an Orthodox Christian. But how are we to pray? Two forms of prayer are evident in the Orthodox Christian life: private prayers said at home and unified Church prayer. Each has certain special characteristics. Our Saviour gave instructions in the Gospel about private prayer: “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Mt.6:6). Of course, home prayers are basic to us. Prayer is deeply intimate and heartfelt. Everyone who has sincerely searched for heartfelt and moving prayer, knows well how easy and natural it is to pray in solitude, in silence and peace. Moreover, our Lord firmly warns us against hypocritical prayer done for show, to elicit praise from people.

When a Christian prays to God, he must strive to contemplate the words of the prayers which he reads, and to concentrate his thought on the content of the prayers. Everyone knows how difficult it is to struggle against the pressure of outside thoughts and images which tiresomely besiege the person who is praying. This comes to us both from our personal distraction and from the indirect action of the evil-one. The task of a Christian is to apply all his powers to persistently shake off all these side thoughts (which are sometimes impure) that torment him, and to pray piously and with concentration. One should remember that an extra pressure of thoughts and images—often vile and blasphemous—comes to us directly from Satan, and the struggle of resisting these thoughts is a direct struggle against evil. Consequently, one receives great benefit from such a struggle.

Usually, we pray with Church prayers which we learn from childhood. This is necessary, because they lead us into that prayerful atmosphere by which the Church breathes. In this, one must beware not to slide into an automatic, mechanical reading of prayers without attention and penetration into the sense and meaning of the words of the prayer. To this end, a full re-

ference and concentration of attention is demanded, so that one actually prays—converses with God.

According to the harmonious testimonies of the great ascetics of prayer, in addition to reading the Church prayers, one must add their own prayers in their own words, praying for one's own spiritual needs, and for neighbors and enemies. Often, a Christian cannot fully express his feelings and afflictions in the words of the written prayers. In this case,, a living, sincere prayer in one's own words is more appropriate, together with a confession of one's daily sins and an expressed determination to struggle, with God's help, against those daily sins. Such a prayer will come from the depth of the human soul.

Only a person who has developed sincere, penetrating and constant home prayer can fully participate in the public prayers in church. This participation is a firm necessity for every Christian. The Lord Himself said, “Where two or three [members of the Church] are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” The great preacher and teacher of prayer St John Chrysostom says, “One can, of course, pray at home also: but you cannot pray there as you do in church where so many people are gathered, where a harmonious voice is raised to God: for here is something greater than individual prayer: one-mindedness, a union of love, the prayers of the priest. During public prayers, not only do the people send up their own voices to God, but together with them, the angels and archangels glorify the Master.” Thus, church prayer has a preeminently sacred character and it is given this nature by the grace of the Holy Spirit which, as we I know, enlivens our spiritual life, cooperating with our personal spiritual efforts.

A priest serves in church; he is not a priest because he receives a theological education, or has a calling to serve the Church. All this only prepares him for pastoral service. He is a priest only because he was consecrated to it by ordination, and enters through the mystery of priesthood into the pastorship, of the Church. So it is that our church is a consecrated temple, with a

specially consecrated Holy Table. According to the word of the Holy Scripture, our church is a house of prayer. The Lord gave us an example of the honor due to God's house when, during His earthly sojourn, He twice cleansed it of all disorder and indecency. At the divine services, we repeatedly hear the Holy Church exclaim the petition, "For this holy house and for all those who with faith, reverence and fear of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord." Each of us must enter a church in this disposition, remembering that here, one stands before the face of the Lord Himself.

One of the greatest and most painfully evident deficiencies of our contemporary life is our inability to celebrate our feasts in a Christian manner. Our lives are ordered in such a way that interests of a purely worldly character dominate them. Jobs, worry over income and shallow considerations and impressions of each day—all this fills our time and man does not have time to simply think about his soul, and its demands and needs. Our feasts are windows in our colorless lives of vanity and worldly cares. They teach us that this world is not so empty and impoverished as it seems to us, for above it, there is a different world giving our souls joy and ineffable peace. Who does not know what joy fills the heart of an Orthodox Christian in the days of the greatest feast, Pascha, the Radiant Resurrection of the Lord?

How often, though, do days of Christian commemoration and festivity turn out to be days of even greater emptiness and senseless idleness. A feast is a special day of God and should be dedicated as fully as possible to prayer and deeds of Christian mercy. In our tunes though, the feasts are often treated as any other day, and sometimes people even use them as excuses for drunkenness and unseemly partying. How often do we see that people, or even whole clubs, "societies," "institutes" and, God forbid, even parishes and diocesan centres, organize their "balls," dances and entertainments on the eves of major feasts and on the feast-days themselves. How do such persons differ from pagans and atheists?

Yet more reprehensible is the way many people view the fasts which the Holy Church has given us. We have many fasts: four lengthy ones, the Great Fast (Great Lent), the Apostles' Fast, the Dormition Fast and the Nativity Fast; and a number of shorter ones.

What an amazing and un-Christian relationship so many people now have to these fasts. The fasts are violated by people without a qualm of conscience, as if the matter was about some nonsense which had no significance. The Church, on the other hand, takes a very serious view of the matter, and excludes from Holy Communion those who refuse to keep the fasts without cause. Indeed, St Seraphim of Sarov very pointedly said, "One who does not observe the fasts is not a Christian, no matter what he considers or calls himself ... and you should not pay attention to him, no matter what he says."

Fasting is absolutely indispensable for man. From the external aspect, it is a struggle of filial obedience to God, Who has given us the rules of fasting through His Holy Spirit. From the inner aspect, fasting is a struggle of restraint and self-limitation. In this lies the great value and sense of fasting, since a strict observance of fasts tempers one's will and perfects the character of one who is firm in his religious convictions and actions. Let us not forget that Christ Himself fasted, and foretold that His apostles would also fast.

We hear people claiming that fasting is harmful to the health. But strict fasting is not required of people who are ill, and they fast only according to their strength. Most important, one should remember that it is only those people who do not fast who speak about the "harm to health" of fasting. But those who do observe fasting will never say this, for they know from personal experience that not only is fasting not harmful, but it is positively beneficial to bodily health.

Fasting is not merely a restraining from food. During the days of the fasts, the Church sings, "While fasting bodily, let us also fast spiritually..." True fasting includes deeds of Christian mercy. It is an alienation of the evil-one, a restraint of the tongue, a laying aside of anger, a cutting off of vices and an exposure of falsehood... Thus, for a Christian, fasting is a time of restraint and self-education in all respects, and a real Christian fast gives believers a great moral satisfaction. The great teacher of Christian asceticism Bishop Theophan the Recluse says of fasting:

"Fasting appears gloomy until one steps into its arena. But begin and you will see what light it brings after darkness, what freedom from bonds, what release after a burdensome life..."

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. HILARION of Eastern America & New York. 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 Father Michael at frmichael@stxenia.org. Thank you.

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

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Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday, please contact someone directly to switch. If you are not on this list and would like to help, please add your name on the hard copy posted in the church hall and you will be added for the next round. If you have any questions, contact Judy Engalichev -- dujy-kot@comcast.net.

Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare, anything is appreciated. **Note: If you are preparing anything containing nuts or other allergens, please put a small label to that effect in front of your dish. Nut allergies are especially fatal to small children.**

A note about Trapeza etiquette: Standing, even for short periods of time, is often extremely difficult for older people and expectant mothers. It would be an act of Christian charity to allow them to collect their meal first and to be seated. It should go without saying that this courtesy should also be extended to visiting clergy.

January

7 Pot Luck
 14 Pot Luck – YOLKA
 21 Katia Fredette, Natasha Kirichuk, Vera Sarantakis
 28 Matushka Nancy, JoJo, Dorothea

February

4 Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez
 11 Meatfare Sunday - Mary Doohovskoy, AnneMarie Hakim, Sonya (Mukhanov)
 18* Cheesefare Sunday - Olena Fedina, Irina Dokukina, Lena Rodzianko
 25* Nancy Vaters, Brigid Amy Fischer, L&A Doohovskoy

Sisterhood News

Thank you:

~ to everyone who donated coats for our children's coat drive. Natalie Pishenin delivered 36 coats to the Methuen school and they were **very** grateful for our efforts. Natalie, thanks very much for collecting and delivering the coats each week.

~ to all who helped with the Nativity preparations and cleaning. The Church looks beautiful!

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Athanasia Tamvlakis, Peter Danas, Dimitry Emelianoff, Dimitri Nikshych, and Masha Harris.

Also, please be sure to inform the Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations

~ To the newly-illuminated Laura Halloran, daughter of Leonard and Alena, who was baptized on Dec 9th.

~ To the newly-illuminated Julian Ronan, son of Maria & Dan and Great-Grandson of Lidia Lynch, baptized on Dec 16th.

~ To the newly-illuminated Ann McKearin, baptized on Dec 23rd.

Many Years to all!

St. John of Damascus Church School News

Our Parish Yolka will be held January 14 after Trapeza.

Regular Sunday School classes will resume Jan 21. Please contact Matushka Nancy for more information or go to: <https://www.stxenia.org/churchschool.html>

Choir News

If you have a private service - wedding, baptism, funeral, etc. - and would like to have choir singers, please contact Laryssa directly at stxeniachoir@gmail.com.

If you are interested in singing in the choir, please see Laryssa Doohovskoy.

A Reminder: House Blessings will begin January 20 and are available until Great Lent. Father Michael will place a sign-up sheet in the Church for all those interested.

Parish News

Charitable Deductions on Income Taxes: Consistent with good financial practice, the Parish has maintained records of all donations made to the Church. These contributions include those made by cash, checks, electronic funds transfer, credit card, or payroll deductions. Donors who want to itemize deductions cannot claim a tax deduction for any contribution regardless of the amount, unless you keep one of the following:

1. A bank record that shows the name of the qualified organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution. Bank records may include:
 - a. A canceled check.
 - b. A bank or credit union statement, or
 - c. A credit card statement.
2. A receipt (or letter or other written communication) from the qualified organization showing the name of the organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution.
3. The payroll deduction reductions (see Publication 526 (2007)).

To ensure tax compliance for contributions to our parish, if you are planning to itemize your deductions using Schedule A, the following donation methods are recommended:

1. If you plan to include deduction of your cash donations, please use the parish envelopes provided to you on the candle counter and write your name on the envelope.
2. For checks, if your name is not on the check (for instance, if it is the name of your business), please put the check in the donation envelope and write your name on the envelope.
3. Direct deposit from your bank account
4. Payroll deduction.

Our Parish does track contributions made and will, upon request, produce a written statement of contributions. This information will include the name of our Parish, name of the parishioner, date of each individual contribution, and the dollar amount. Our Parish cannot track cash contributions, regardless of amount, that are not properly identified by using the contribution envelope and writing in your name. Everyone

who has given single contributions of \$250 or more will still receive a statement without needing to request it, as required by the tax code. This is our best understanding of the current law; if you have additional questions, please consult with your tax advisor.

Tax Deductions for Church Volunteers: If you itemize your income-tax deductions, you can deduct your out-of-pocket expenses for church-related activities. In order to qualify for charitable tax deductions, you must: A Reminder: House Blessings will begin January 21 and are available until Great Lent. Father Michael will place a sign-up sheet in the Church for all those interested. 1. Keep accurate records of mileage to and from church, or to and from church-related activities (e.g., post office, when picking up church mail). 2. Keep all receipts for expenses over \$25.00. 3. Keep records of all out-of-pocket expenses for trips taken to church events, such as choir or clergy conferences, at which you are an official representative of St. Xenia's parish. These include: a. hotel rooms b. parking c. tolls d. meals e. conference fees f. travel expenses (air fare, train tickets, cab fare) Be sure to deduct any reimbursement you receive. Consult with your tax preparer to confirm allowable deductions.

And finally, information on another way to support our parish community, and save on your taxes: donations of stocks and bonds. Supporting the church with a stock gift allows you to deduct the original cost, and also to avoid the tax incurred upon its sale. The church immediately sells the stock, and pays no tax on the sale. For example, if you bought fifty shares of Dunkin' Donuts common stock for \$30 per share, you paid \$1,500. If you donate the stock to the church at \$50 per share, the church would receive its full appreciated value of \$2,500 tax free! Please consult with your broker if you are interested in supporting the church in this way.

Synod News

June 15-July 1, 2018

Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York will lead a pilgrimage to Ekaterinburg and other holy sites of Russia on the 100th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Royal Family. Further information:
<http://www.synod.com/synod/pdf/12russiapi lerimage18eng.pdf>

Sainted Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea Cappadocia, (commemorated Jan 1/Jan 14) “belongs not to the Church of Caesarea alone, nor merely to his own time, nor to his own kinsmen was he merely of benefit, but rather to all lands and cities worldwide, and to all people he brought and yet brings benefit, and for Christians he always was and will be a teacher most salvific”, -- thus spoke the contemporary of Saint Basil, -- Sainted Amphylokhios, Bishop of Iconium (+ 344, Comm. 23 November).

Saint Basil was born in about the year 330 at Caesarea, the administrative centre of Cappadocia. He was of illustrious lineage, famed for its eminence and wealth, and giftedly zealous for the Christian faith. The grandfather and grandmother of the saint on his father's side, during the time of persecution under Diocletian, had to hide themselves away in the forests of Pontum for a space of seven years. The mother of Saint Basil -- Saint Emilia (Emily), was the daughter of a martyr. The father of Saint Basil was also named Basil: he was a lawyer and reknown rhetorician and lived constantly at Caesarea.

Into the family of this elder Basil ten children were born -- five sons and five daughters. Of these, five were later enumerated to the ranks of the Saints: Basil the Great; Macrina (Comm. 19 July) -- was an exemplar of ascetic life, and exerted strong influence on the life and character of Saint Basil the Great; Gregory, afterwards Bishop of Nyssa (Comm. 10 January); Peter, Bishop of Sebasteia (Comm. 9 January); and Righteous Theozua -- a deaconess (Comm. 10 January). Saint Basil spent the first years of his life on an estate belonging to his parents at the River Irisa, where he was raised under the supervision of his mother Emilia and grandmother Macrina. They were women of great refinement, preserving in memory the tradition of an earlier sainted-hierarchy of Cappadocia -- Sainted Gregory Thaumaturgos (Wonderworker) (+ c. 266-270, Comm. 17 November). Basil received his initial education under the supervision of his father, and then he studied under the finest teachers in Caesarea Cappadocia, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of Sainted Gregory the Theologian (Bogoslov, i.e. title of Saint Gregory Nazianzus; Comm. 25 January and 30 January). Later on, Basil transferred to school at Constantinople, where he listened to eminent orators and philosophers. For the finishing touches to his education Saint Basil set off to Athens -- a centre of classical enlightenment.

After a four or five year stay at Athens, Basil the Great had mastered all the available disciplines: “He so thoroughly studied everything, more than others are wont to study a single subject, each science he

studied to its very totality, as though he would study naught else". Philosopher, philologist, orator, jurist, naturalist, possessing profound knowledge in astronomy, mathematics and medicine, – "this was a ship, loaded down full of learning, to the extent allowed of by human nature". At Athens a close friendship developed between Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), which continued throughout all their life. Later on, in an eulogy to Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian speaks with delight about this period: "Various hopes guided us and in deed inevitably -- in learning... Two paths opened up before us: the one -- to our sacred temples and the teachers therein; the other -- towards preceptors of disciplines beyond".

In about the year 357 Saint Basil returned to Caesarea, where for a certain while he devoted himself to rhetoric. But soon, refusing offers from Caesarea citizens wanting to entrust him with the education of their offspring, Saint Basil entered upon the path of ascetic life.

After the death of her husband, Basil's mother together with her eldest daughter Macrina and several maid-servants withdrew to the family estate at Irida and there began to lead an ascetic life. Basil, however, having accepted Baptism from the bishop of Caesarea Dorianos, was ordained a reader. As an expounder of the Sacred Scriptures, he at first read them to the people. Later on, "wanting to acquire a guide to the knowledge of truth", the saint undertook a journey into Egypt, Syria and Palestine, -- to the great Christian ascetics dwelling there. Upon returning to Cappadocia, he decided to do likewise. Having given his wealth to the needy, Saint Basil settled on the opposite side of the river not far from his mother Emilia and sister Macrina, gathering around him monks living in common community. Through his letters, Basil the great attracted to the wilderness monastery his good friend Gregory the Theologian. Saints Basil and Gregory asceticised amidst strict abstinence in their hovel, without roof and without fireplace, and the food was very humble. They themselves heaved the stones, planted and watered the trees, and carried heavy loads. Their hands were constantly calloused from the hard work. For clothing Basil the great had only chiton-tunic and monastic mantle; the hairshirt he wore only at night, so that it would not be obvious. In their solitude, Saints Basil and Gregory occupied themselves in an intense study of Holy Scripture with manuscript guidances from the most ancient commentators, and in parts Origen also, -- from all whose works they compiled an anthology -- a Philokalia (Dobrotoliubie). And also at this time at the request of the monks, Basil the Great wrote down a collection of rules for virtuous

life. By his preachings and by his example Saint Basil the Great assisted in the spiritual perfecting of Christians in Cappadocia and Pontus; and many indeed turned to him. Monasteries were organised for men and for women, in which places Basil sought to unite the coenobitic (koine-bios or life in common) lifestyle with that of the solitary hermit.

During the reign of Constantius (337-361) the heretical false-teachings of Arius spread about, and the Church summoned both its saints into service. Saint Basil returned to Caesarea. In the year 362 he was ordained deacon by the bishop of Antioch, Meletios; later on, in 364 he was ordained to the dignity of priest by the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebios. "But seeing, -- as Gregory the Theologian relates, -- that everyone exceedingly praised and honoured Basil for his wisdom and reverence, Eusebios, through human weakness, succumbed to jealousy of him, and began to show dislike for him". The monks rose up in defense of saint Basil. To avoid causing Church discord, Basil withdrew to his own monastery and concerned himself with the organisation of monasteries. With the coming to power of the emperor Valens (364-378), who was a resolute adherent of Arianism, there began for Orthodoxy the onset of a time of troubles -- "the onset of the great struggle". Saint Basil then hastily returned to Caesarea at the call of bishop Eusebios. In the words of Gregory the Theologian, he was for bishop Eusebios "a good advisor, a righteous representative, an expounder of the Word of God, a staff for the aged, a faithful support in matters internal, and an activist in matter external". From this time church governance passed over to Basil, though he was subordinate to the hierarch. He preached daily, and often twice so -- in the morning and in the evening. And during this time Saint Basil compiled the order of his Liturgy; he wrote a work "Discourse on the Six Days" and another in 16 Chapters on the Prophet Isaiah, yet another on the Psalms, and also a second compilation of monastic rules. Saint Basil wrote also Three Books "Against Eunomios", an Arian teacher who with the help of Aristotelian concepts had presented the Arian dogmatics in learnedly philosophic form, converting the Christian teaching into a logical scheme of rationalist concepts.

Saint Gregory the Theologian, speaking about the activity of Basil the Great during this period, points to "the caring for the destitute and the taking in of strangers, the supervision of virgins, written and unwritten monastic rule for the monasticising, the arrangement of prayers (Liturgy), the felicitous arrangement of altars and other things". Upon the death of the bishop of Caesarea Eusebios, Saint Basil in the year 370 was elevated onto his cathedra-chair. As Bishop of

Caesarea, Saint Basil the Great was the newest in rank of 50 bishops in eleven provinces. Sainted Athanasias the great (Comm. 2 May), with joy and with thanks to God welcomed the bestowing of Cappadocia with such a bishop as Basil, famed for his reverence, deep knowledge of Holy Scripture, great learning, and his efforts for the welfare of Church peace and unity. In the empire of Valens the external government belonged to the Arians, who held several various opinions on questions of the Divinity of the Son of God and hence were divided into several factions. And to these dogmatic disputes were connected questions about the Holy Spirit. In his books "Against Eunomios", Saint Basil the Great taught about the Divinity of the Holy Spirit and Its Oneness together with the Father and the Son. Subsequently, for a full explanation of the Orthodox teaching on this question, -- at the request of the Bishop of Iconium Saint Amphylokhios, Saint Basil wrote his book "About the Holy Spirit".

The generally sorry state of affairs for the Caesarea bishop was made even worse by various circumstances: Cappadocia was divided in two under the re-arrangement of governance of provincial districts. Then too at Antioch a schism occurred, occasioned by the ordination of a second bishop. There was the negative and haughty attitude of Western bishops to the attempts to draw them into the struggle with the Arians. And there was also the departure over to the Arian side by Eustathios of Sebasteia, with whom Basil had been connected by close friendship. Amidst the constant perils Saint Basil gave encouragement to the Orthodox, affirmed them in the faith, summoning them to bravery and endurance. The holy bishop wrote numerous letters to the Churches, to bishops, to clergy and to individuals. Overcoming the heretics "by the weapon of his mouth, and by the arrows of his letters", as an untiring champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Basil all his life gave challenge to the hostility and the every which way possible intrigues of the Arian heretics.

The emperor Valens, mercilessly dispatching into exile any bishops that displeased him, and having implanted Arianism into other Asia Minor provinces, suddenly appeared in Cappadocia for precisely this purpose. He sent off to Saint Basil the prefect Modestus, who began to threaten the saint with ruin, banishment, beatings and even death by execution. "All this, -- replied Basil, -- for me means nothing, since one cannot be deprived of possessions that one does not have, beyond some old worn-out clothing and some books, which comprises the entirety of my wealth. For me it would not be exile, since I am bound to no particular place, and this place in which I now dwell is not mine, and indeed any place whither I be cast shalt be

mine. Better it is to say: everywhere is the place of God, whither be naught stranger nor new-comer (Ps. 38 [39]: 13). And what tortures can ye do me? -- I am so weak, that merely but the very first blow will be felt. Death for me would be an act of kindness: it wilt bring me all the sooner to God, for Whom I live and do labour, and to Whom moreover I do strive". The official was bewildered by such an answer. "Perhaps, -- continued the saint, -- thou hast never had encounter with a bishop; otherwise, without doubt, thou wouldst have heard suchlike words. In all else we are meek, the most humble of all, and not only afront the mighty, but also afront all, since such is prescribed for us by the law. But when it is a matter concerning God and they make bold to rise up against Him, then we -- being mindful of naught else, think only of Him alone, and then fire, sword, wild beasts and chains, the rending of the body, would sooner hold satisfaction for us, than to be afraid".

Reporting to Valens on the not to be intimidated Saint Basil, Modestus said: "Emperor, we stand defeated by a leader of the Church". Basil the Great again showed firmness and in front of the very person of the emperor himself and his retinue produced such a strong impression on Valens, that the emperor dared not give in to the Arians demanding the exile of Basil. "On the day of Theophany, amidst an innumerable multitude of the people, Valens entered the church and mixed in amidst the throng, in order to give the appearance of being in unity with the Church. When began the singing of psalmody in the church, it was like thunder to his hearing. The emperor beheld a sea of people, and in the altar and all around was splendour; in front of all was Basil, acknowledging neither by gesture nor by glance, as though in church was occurred aught else, than that everything was intent only on God and the altar-table, and the clergy thereat in awe and reverence".

Saint Basil almost daily celebrated Divine-services. He was particularly concerned about the strict fulfilling of the canons of the Church, and kept attentive watch, so that only worthy individuals should enter into the clergy. He incessantly made the rounds of his own church, lest anywhere there be an infraction of Church discipline, and setting aright any unseemliness. At Caesarea Saint Basil built two monasteries, a men's and a women's, with a church in honour of 40 Martyrs whose relics were buried there. On the example of monks, the metropolitan clergy of the saint, -- even deacons and priests lived in remarkable poverty, to toil and lead lives chaste and virtuous. For his clergy Saint Basil got an exemption from taxes. All his personal wealth and the income-proceeds from his church he

used for the benefit of the destitute; in every centre of his diocese he built a poor-house; at Caesarea -- an home for wanderers and the homeless.

Sickly since youth, the toil of teaching, efforts at abstinence, the concerns and sorrows of pastoral service early sapped the strength of the saint. Saint Basil died on 1 January 379 at age 49. Shortly before his death, the saint gave blessing to Saint Gregory the Theologian to enter upon the Constantinople cathedra-chair.

Upon the repose of Saint Basil, the Church immediately began to celebrate his memory. Saint Amphylokhios, Bishop of Iconium (+ 394), in his eulogy to Sainted Basil the Great, said: "It is neither without a reason nor by chance that holy Basil hath taken leave from the body and had repose from the world unto God on the day of the Circumcision of Jesus, celebrated betwixt the day of the Nativity and the day of the Baptism of Christ. Wherefore this most blessed one, preaching and praising the Nativity and Baptism of Christ, extolling spiritual circumcision, himself forsaking the flesh, doth ascend to Christ now especially on the sacred day of remembrance of the Circumcision of Christ. Therefore also let be established on this present day annually to honour the memory of Basil the Great festally and solemnly".

The Icon of the Mother of God, named "Alleviatrix of my Grief", (*commemorated Jan 25*) was glorified at Moscow by many miracles in the second half of the XVIII Century, and particularly during a time of plague in the year 1771. The icon was brought to Moscow by Cossacks in 1640 during the reign Mikhail Feodorovich (1613-1645) and placed in a temple of Sainted Nicholas at Pupyshakh and Sadovnikakh. One time, likely following a conflagration and repeated rebuilding of the temple they forgot about the icon, and it was taken out and put in a bell-tower in great carelessness. But the abundant mercies, manifest through it by the Mother of God, compelled them to recollect their forgetfulness of the holy icon and to remove it into a proper place in the church, in which later a chapel was built in its honour. The celebration of the wonderworking icon, made annually on 25 January, was established in the year 1760 in memory of the healing of a sick woman, who had been granted a vision of the holy image, and was healed after a molieben service before it on 25 January in the church of Saint Nicholas at Pupyshakh street in Moscow. To this period are attributed the compilation to it of services and an akathist. Venerable copies of the Icon of the Mother of God, named "Alleviatrix of my Grief", are found in may of the churches of Moscow and other cities.



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JANUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 31 (Dec 18) 30th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5 Sunday before Nativity 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	1 (Dec 19) 9:00-Noon Church Cleaning Fast	2 (Dec 20) Fast: wine & oil	3 (Dec 21) Fast	4 (Dec 22) Fast: wine & oil	5 (Dec 23) Fast	6 (Dec 24) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
7 (Dec 25) NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Noon Festive Trapeza	8 (Dec 26) Synaxis of the Theotokos Fast free	9 (Dec 27) Fast free	10 (Dec 28) Fast free	11 (Dec 29) Fast free	12 (Dec 30) Fast free	13 (Dec 31) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
14 (Jan 1) Circumcision of the Lord 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Noon Parish Yolka Fast free	15 (Jan 2) Fast free	16 (Jan 3) Fast free	17 (Jan 4) Fast free	18 (Jan 5) 6:30 Vigil of Theophany Fast: wine & oil	19 (Jan 6) THEOPHANY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of the Feast Fast free	20 (Jan 7) Synaxis of the Baptist 5:30 All-Night Vigil
21 (Jan 8) 33rd Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	22 (Jan 9) Fast free	23 (Jan 10) Fast free	24 (Jan 11) Fast: wine & oil	25 (Jan 12) Fast free	26 (Jan 13) Fast	27 (Jan 14) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
28 (Jan 15) Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	29 (Jan 16) Fast free	30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great Fast free	31 (Jan 18) Fast free	Feb 1 (Jan 19) Fast free	Feb 2 (Jan 20) Fast free	Feb 3 (Jan 21) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free



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FEBRUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 28 (Jan 15) Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Jan 29 (Jan 16) Fast free	Jan 30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great Fast free	Jan 31 (Jan 18) Fast free	1 (Jan 19) Fast free	2 (Jan 20) Fast free	3 (Jan 21) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
4 (Jan 22) Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	5 (Jan 23) 6:30 Vigil of St Xenia	6 (Jan 24) St. Xenia of Petersburg 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of the Feast	7 (Jan 25) Fast: wine & oil	8 (Jan 26) Fast free	9 (Jan 27) Fast: wine & oil	10 (Jan 28) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
11 (Jan 29) Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare). Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	12 (Jan 30) Three Holy Hierarchs Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	13 (Jan 31) Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	14 (Feb 1) 6:30 PM Vigil of the Feast Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	15 (Feb 2) MEETING OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	16 (Feb 3) Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	17 (Feb 4) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil
18 (Feb 5) Sunday of Forgiveness. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	19 (Feb 6) Fast	20 (Feb 7) Fast	21 (Feb 8) Fast	22 (Feb 9) Fast	23 (Feb 10) Fast	24 (Feb 11) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
25 (Feb 12) First Sunday of the Great Lent: Triumph of Orthodoxy. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	26 (Feb 13) 6:30 Great Compline w/Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	27 (Feb 14) 6:30 Great Compline w/Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast: wine & oil	28 (Feb 15) 6:30 Great Compline w/Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	Mar 1 (Feb 16) 6:30 Great Compline w/Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	Mar 2 (Feb 17) Fast	Mar 3 (Feb 18) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil