

**The Weekly Messenger – March 14, 2021**  
**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
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*Epistle Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel Matthew 6:14-21*

**Upcoming Events:**

March 14<sup>th</sup> Forgiveness/Cheesefare Sunday  
March 15<sup>th</sup> Great Lent Begins  
Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup> Pre-sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm  
March 21<sup>st</sup> Orthodoxy Sunday Following the Divine Liturgy Baptism of  
Gus Dylan Brown Son of Ali (Shepherd) & Rich Brown  
Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> ZOOM Semi-Annual Parish Meeting @ 7:00 pm  
Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> Annunciation March 28<sup>th</sup> Gregory Palamas  
Wednesday March 31 Pre-Sanctified 7:00p April 4<sup>th</sup> Veneration of the Cross  
April 11<sup>th</sup> St. John Climacus April 14<sup>th</sup> Pre Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm  
April 18<sup>th</sup> St Mary of Egypt April 24<sup>th</sup> Lazarus Saturday 10 am Liturgy  
April 25<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup> Holy Unction 7:00 pm  
April 30<sup>th</sup> Holy Friday-7:00 p Lamentations May 2<sup>nd</sup> Holy Pascha 11:30 pm Sat May 1st



**Sunday of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise / Forgiveness Sunday**

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and

obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...."

**Great Lent Begins Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**; The season of Great Lent is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Christ. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds in conformity with Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors. In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of morbidity and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification. We are called to "anoint our faces" and to "cleanse our bodies as we cleanse our souls." The very first hymns of the very first service of Great Lent set the proper tone of the season:

*Let us begin the lenten time with delight . . . let us fast from passions as we fast from food, taking pleasure in the good words of the Spirit, that we may be granted to see the holy passion of Christ our God and his holy Pascha, spiritually rejoicing.*

*Thy grace has arisen upon us, O Lord, the illumination of our souls has shown forth; behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the time of repentance (Vespers Hymns).*

It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse. We sorrow for our sins, but we do so in the joy of God's mercy. We mortify our flesh, but we do so in the joy of our resurrection into life everlasting. We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ's Resurrection and our own.

**Pre-sanctified Liturgy on every other Wednesday night beginning March 17<sup>th</sup>**

@ **7:00pm**. As we get closer to that date, we will evaluate whether this will be feasible to have Lenten (Pot Luck) dinner and fellowship in the church hall following the Pre-sanctified Liturgy. Either way WE WILL HAVE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY @7:00, Wednesday March 17, March 31 and April 14, 2021.

**Commemorations for the Departed:** Archbishop Nikon, Metropolitan Theodosius, the 530,000 victims of the Covid-19 virus, Ernie Douris (6 yrs.), Bettye Ledford (5 yrs.), Charlie Ryan (Colleen Xhoxhi's brother), Deacon Stephen Stefani and those servicemen and women who have fallen asleep in the Lord. *If you have a name to add to the Commemorations for the departed or the living please email [info@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:info@stjohnsphila.org)*

**Commemorations for the Living:** Health care workers, First responders, those suffering with the Covid-19 virus, Archbishop Anastasios, Bishop Daniel, Father Gregory Dudash, Dorothy Tomassini, Marge Nowmos, Peter Dimitri, Christina Murianka, Linda Turner, Marie Portway (Nancy Ghicondey's Mother), Joyce & Maurice Robert (Christine Dardaris' Mom & Dad), Jim Ghicondey, Sophia Sarkos (Michele's sister), Lisa Kosta Bowser, Lee Gedremenc, Diane Mallios, Evangeline Prifti, Virginia Daka, Dhimiter Ndrecka, Pandeli, Jorgaq, Lefteri, and the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

**Our 2021 Stewardship/Pledge Drive has begun:** Please make you pledge today click [2021 PLEDGE](#) Please help us achieve our budgeted goal of \$55,000.00. If you have any questions contact our Treasurer, Zach Smith [treasurer@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:treasurer@stjohnsphila.org) Thank you to those who have made their 2021 Pledge!