




Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 6—12 April 2025

SUNDAY 6 APRIL	5TH SUNDAY OF LENT, St Mary of Egypt, Mark 10: 32-45 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 6.30pm Service of Lenten Vespers Holy Monastery Axion Esti, Northcote
2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
MONDAY 7 APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline
TUESDAY 8 APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline
WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline• 6.30pm Service of Pre-sanctified Liturgy IN ENGLISH
THURSDAY 10 APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline• 8.00—9.00pm  TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2025 ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * In downstairs classroom behind the Church building
FRIDAY 11 APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Small Compline and Canon of Lazarus
SATURDAY 12 APRIL <i>Saturday of Lazarus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 13 APRIL	GOSPEL READING: John 12: 1-18 EPISTLE READING: Philippians 4: 4-9

Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

If there were no
tribulation,
there would be no rest;
if there were no winter,
there would be no
summer.



Saint John Chrysostom

VOICE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS ...

Repentance

The Lord does not will the death of a sinner but rather that he should change and live.

There is a time of long-suffering, a time of healing, a time of correction.

Have you stumbled? Arise. Have you sinned? Cease.

Do not stand in the way of sinners, but spring away. Out of labour comes health, out of sweat salvation.

Beware lest, from your wish to keep certain obligations, you break your obligations to God.

Do not sink back. There is salvation, there is amendment. The doors are not yet shut; the Bridegroom hears; make the effort, Jesus is merciful, the Kingdom is at hand.

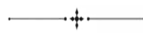
St. Basil the Great

LAZARUS SATURDAY

The Beginning of the Cross: Saturday of Lazarus

"Having fulfilled Forty Days... we ask to see the Holy Week of Thy Passion." With these words sung at Vespers of Friday, Lent comes to its end and we enter into the annual commemoration of Christ's suffering, death and Resurrection. It begins on the Saturday of Lazarus. The double feast of Lazarus' resurrection and the Entrance of the Lord to Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) is described in liturgical texts as the "beginning of the Cross" and is to be understood therefore, within the context of the Holy Week. The common Troparion of these days explicitly affirms that by raising Lazarus from the dead Christ confirmed the truth of general resurrection. It is highly significant that we are led into the darkness of the Cross by one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. Light and joy shine not only at the end of Holy Week but also at its beginning; they illumine darkness itself, reveal its ultimate meaning.

All those familiar with Orthodox worship know the peculiar, almost paradoxical character of Lazarus Saturday services. It is a Sunday, i.e., a Resurrection, service on a Saturday, a day usually devoted to the liturgical commemoration of the dead. And the joy which permeates these services stresses one central theme: the forthcoming victory of Christ over Hades. Hades is the Biblical term for Death in its universal power, for that unescapable darkness and destruction that swallows all life and poisons with its shadow the whole world. But now --with Lazarus' resurrection --"death begins to tremble." For there the decisive duel between Life and Death begins and it gives us the key to the entire liturgical mystery of Pascha. In the early church Lazarus Saturday was called "announcement of Pascha", it announces and anticipates, indeed, the wonderful light and peace of the next Saturday -the Great and Holy Saturday, the day of the Lifegiving Tomb.



Saint Mary the Egyptian (5th Sunday in Lent) *Saint Justin Popovich*

The 5th Sunday in Great Lent, the Sunday which is the week of great vigils, and ascetic struggles, the week of lamentations and sighs, is also the Sunday of the greatest among the women saints, our holy mother Mary the Egyptian.

She spent forty-seven years in the desert and the Lord gave her something which He gives only rarely to one of the saints. For years on end, she tasted neither bread nor water. When she was asked about this by Abba Zosimas, she answered: 'We do not live by bread alone' (Matth. 4, 4). The Lord fed her in a particular way and introduced her to the life of a hermit, to the struggles of an ascetic. And the result? The saint transformed her hell into paradise!

She overcame the devil and ascended to God on high. How? Through what? Through prayer and fasting, through prayer and fasting. Because fasting, fasting combined with prayer, is a power that overcomes everything. One wonderful hymn from Great Lent says: "Let us follow the Saviour of our souls, Who has shown us victory over the devil through fasting". There's no other weapon, no other means. Fasting! This is the way to defeat the devil, every devil. An example of this victory is Saint Mary the Egyptian.

What divine power fasting is! It's nothing less than crucifying the body, crucifying your very self. As long as there's a cross, victory is assured. The body of Mary, a former harlot from Alexandria, surrendered to enslavement to the devil. But when she embraced the Cross of Christ, when she took this weapon into her hands, she overcame the devil.

Fasting is the resurrection of the soul from the dead. Fasting and prayer open our eyes so that we see and understand our true self, as we really are. We then realize that every sin in our soul is our grave, our tomb, our death. We understand that sin within our soul does nothing other than turn everything that belongs to our soul into corpses: our thoughts, our feelings, our intentions. They're a succession of graves. And then the cry of lamentation pours out from the soul: 'Before I am lost at the end, save me'.

This is our cry during this holy week: 'Lord, before I'm lost completely, save me'. This is how we prayed to the Lord during 5th week. We cried aloud in prayers given to us in the Great Canon by our holy father Saint Andrew of Crete: 'Lord, before I am lost at the end, save me'. This cry affects all of us, all those who carry sins. And who doesn't?

It's impossible to examine yourself and not find somewhere, in some corner of your soul, in some cranny, a sin that perhaps you've forgotten. Every sin you haven't repented over is your grave, your death. And if you want to be saved and to raise yourself from your tomb, cry out in the prayers of lamentation of Great Lent: 'Lord, before I am lost at the end, save me'. Let's not fool ourselves; let's not be deceived. If there's even one sin left in your soul that you haven't repented over, that sin will bring you into the kingdom of hell. There's no place for sin in the kingdom of heaven.

If you want to gain the kingdom of heaven, take care to cast off all sin. Root out all sin through repentance. Because nothing escapes our repentance. Christ gave such power to holy repentance. Look. Since repentance was able to save such a promiscuous woman as Saint Mary the Egyptian once was, how can it not save other sinners, every sinner, even the greatest sinner and criminal? Yes, Great Lent is the battle-ground where, through prayer and fasting, we Christians defeat the devil, overcome all sins, conquer the passions and guarantee immortality and eternal life for ourselves.

In the lives of the saints and true Christians there are innumerable examples that show us that it really is only through prayer and fasting that we Christians can overcome the demons, all those who torment us and want to drag us down into the kingdom of evil, of hell. Ah, this holy fast! It's the fast of our holy virtues. Every holy virtue raises your soul and mine from the dead.

Source: pemptousia.com