



Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church

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January 22, 2017 + 36th Sunday after Pentecost: Tone 3

Divine Liturgy
Confessions
Collection
Capital Campaign

Saturday, 5:30 PM · Sunday, 10:00 AM · Holy Days, 7:30 PM

Saturday, 4:30-5:00 PM · Sunday, 9:00-9:30 AM

Last week: **\$2,449.00**. God bless you for your generosity.

Pledged to Date: **\$13,912.00** · Received to Date: **\$12,712.00**



Thought for the Week...

*It is good to learn to pray without words,
with the breath and the beating of our hearts,
for silence is the perfect prayer.*

*Silence is the language of God. We learn his language
as we do other languages, through listening intently and
practicing what we hear.*

Eastern Christian Formation "Sunday School". Sunday school will resume next Sunday on **January 22, 2017** and run through March 26, 2017 with classes immediately following Divine Liturgy; there will not be a class on Sunday, February 19. If your children did not participate in the first semester, but you would like to have them participate this semester, please let Deacon James or Karen Madrigal know so that we may order the necessary educational materials.



Pew Books for Divine Liturgy. In order for us to more fully participate in the Divine Liturgy, the parish has purchased enough green pew books so that everyone has a copy to use. Deacon James will be conducting a learning session on **Sunday, February 5, 2017**, following the Divine Liturgy for all those who would like to better learn how to effectively use the pew book and the liturgical calendar. We are also working on ways to better communicate the proper tones with page numbers and hymns each Sunday. Let's all work together to join the heavenly choirs and raise our voices in joyous song to our God!

We Begin our Preparation for the Spiritual Struggle

The great feast of Pascha may seem just a twinkle in the eye of Old Man Winter right now, but in just two weeks, we as Eastern Christians will begin our pre-Lenten preparations. This is the time the Church has set aside for us to prepare for the Great Fast (also called the Great Lent): the *Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee*, the *Sunday of the Prodigal Son*, *Sunday of the Last Judgment* ("Meatfare") and *Sunday of Forgiveness* ("Cheesefare").

The Great Fast is the most important fast period of the Byzantine Church since it focuses on a change of heart, repentance and a return to God. We are called to enter into a spiritual warfare to recapture the Robe of Incorruptibility that we received in Baptism. This change of heart in each of us calls us to turn closer to God and away from the ways and the cares of the world. As we all know, our daily lives can consume a person's every waking moment. We need to take a break and re-focus on God through prayer, spiritual reading, meditations and reflections, the sacraments, and most importantly the nourishment of our souls by the reception of the Holy Eucharist.



During these weeks from Sunday, February 5 until Sunday, February 25, let us prepare ourselves through gradual diet modification and with the spiritual instructions and themes of humility, judgment, repentance and forgiveness. It is over these four Sundays that we can bring out our spiritual armor in order to begin our spiritual struggle, which has as its aim the attainment of Christian virtue. Let us willingly take into our hands the spiritual weapons for the great spiritual battle which leads us to salvation.



The Church invites us during these weeks of preparation and the season of the Great Fast to simplify our lives and to immerse ourselves in the "bright sadness" of repentance. The pastoral staff has arranged for many opportunities to assist us with our spiritual battle and journey. A schedule of all our Lenten activities will be published over the next two weeks. Let us willingly sacrifice our time and eagerly avail ourselves of these spiritual exercises as often as possible; let us respond with joy in our hearts in order to arrive refreshed, renewed and victorious at the greatest feast of the year, the glorious day of Pascha.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see- far, far away - the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of mankind!"

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann(†)

Together in the Holy Trinity ... One Faith, One Church, One Future!