



ST. MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR MARCH 8, 2020

- **March is Women's Month throughout our Antiochian Archdiocese.** The women of our parish will be reading the Epistle, giving the sermon and passing the trays. Please remember that ALL of the women of our church are members of the Antiochian Women.

The Ladies welcome women from the ages of 19 to 99, and urge you to join in their ministry, remembering that EVERY woman in the Antiochian Archdiocese is an "Antiochian Woman"!

Our Ladies' President Anna Veniamin has 10 copies of the book "Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives", which is this year's recommendation for Antiochian Women reading groups. The books are available for purchase for only \$10 each (they retail at \$15). She will have the books for sale during Coffee Hour. Anyone who is interested is welcome to purchase a copy. Ladies should bring questions/ comments to pot luck dinner gatherings after Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays.

- *To those who like to follow along in the Service Books ...* we are celebrating the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great today and every Sunday during Lent.
- It is customary for the procession of the Holy Icons to take place immediately after the Prayer behind the Ambon. Please gather the children at the front of the Church after Communion (instead of going downstairs). Please see any one of the ushers if you have forgotten your icon and want to take part in the procession.
- The Parish Counsel meets today after Liturgy ... anyone interested in the business of the Counsel is welcome to attend.
- The Festival Committee meets next Sunday after Liturgy ... all members of the committee are asked to attend ... anyone interested in being involved is encouraged to attend as well !
- **Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers** will be held this afternoon at Holy Resurrection OCA Cathedral in Wilkes-Barre at 4 p.m. All are invited to attend.
- Once again for Great Lent, we have put out the **Food For Hungry People boxes**. Please take one of the boxes, fill it during Lent and return it to the Church during Holy Week.
- Lent is a natural and perfect time to reassess where we are in terms of our spiritual life. We realize we are "preaching to the choir" to those who are in Church However, those of us who are here have an obligation to be evangelists. Let's start with those whom we love first. Reach out to your families to bring them to Church!

- We have a full schedule of services this week. Please make an effort to attend as many as possible. If you plan on receiving Communion during the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday, we ask you fast from the time of your lunch time meal if possible.
- Please remember that ALL Orthodox Christians are to receive the Sacrament of Confession during Great Lent. Our preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ is not complete without this Sacrament. Father George hears Confessions from 4:30-5 p.m. each Saturday before Vespers and will also hear Confessions 1/2 hour prior to the Services of Great Lent. If you cannot make it during these times, please contact him and arrange another time for you to receive this Sacrament.
- Please remember minutes from all our Parish Council meetings are available and maintained for review in the Parish Library.
- The maintenance people at the Cemetery have started a general clean up. Please remove any Christmas or other decorations you want to keep today or risk having them collected and disposed of.
- A second collection will be taken on Sunday March 15. This collection is one of four collections mandated by the Archdiocese.

Food For Thought ...

For over 100 years, icons were banished from Christian worship by the Iconoclasts and either destroyed or desecrated. On this day we commemorate the triumph of Orthodoxy in the restoration of the holy icons to their proper veneration in the life of the Church. This restoration took place at the beginning of Great Lent in the year 843 AD.

At first glance, this Gospel passage appears to be little more than a historical account of Jesus meeting Nathanael, but when we look closer we see there are important lessons for each of us as we begin our Lenten journey. When Nathanael is curious about how Jesus knows him, Jesus responds, "I saw you." How important it is for us to remember that Jesus "sees" all of us. He does not just see us where we are but He sees into our hearts and knows where we stand with Him. Nathanael is overcome by Jesus' intimate knowledge of him and believes that He must be the Son of God. As we start the second week of the fast, let us remember that God knows us better than we know ourselves. He wants us to "come and see" so that we can know who He is—our everything, our Savior, our God.

WISDOM OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

"It is detestable and dangerous for a wrestler to be slack at the start of a contest, thereby giving proof of his impending defeat to everyone. Let us have a firm beginning to our religious life, for this will help us if a certain slackness comes later. A bold and eager soul will be spurred on by the memory of its first zeal and new wings can then be obtained." -- St. John Climacus

"The Savior began the work of our salvation with fasting. In the same way all those who follow in the footsteps of the Savior build on this foundation the beginning of their endeavor, since fasting is a weapon established by God." -- St. Isaac the Syrian