

The Orthodox Christian Community of  
**St Anne and All Saints of Worcestershire**

meeting at

**St John the Baptist Chapel**

Chapel Lane, Bransford  
Worcestershire  
WR6 5JQ

**Come and See!**

**No 59**

**March 2024**



Most holy Theotokos, St Anne, all the Saints of Worcestershire, all the Saints of Britain, and all the Saints, pray to God for us!



March sees the beginning of Great Lent and our preparation for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As Great Lent approaches so do questions of fasting and what is fasting, what so I do if I cannot fast in the traditional way?

First and foremost remember: the purpose of a fasting journey is repentance, making small, permanent changes to our lives that bring us closer to God that last long after the fast ends.

Fasting in the strictest sense is refraining from all meat and dairy products i.e. a vegan diet. However, for various reasons it may not be possible for people to follow such a strict diet. This may be for physical, health reasons or because they live in circumstances where it is not possible to follow a different diet from those around them. Remember that we are meant to fast in secret. It should 'not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen...' Matthew 6:16-18

Should you live in circumstances where you cannot fast openly because not everyone is Orthodox, modifications to the fast are not only acceptable, but often necessary, or If you suffer from a condition that requires fasting modifications, speak with your priest. He can help you develop a plan that works for you, one that can help you continue to grow spiritually.

There are other circumstances in which the Church also “excuses” breaking the fast. For example if someone invites you to a meal. You should receive that meal with thanksgiving and humility, even if the food you receive technically breaks the fast. Additionally, the Church exempts pregnant and nursing mothers from fasting, as their focus should be on providing proper nutrition to themselves and their unborn child.

Regardless of your personal circumstances, make it a point to consult your priest. Together you can come up with a fasting plan that works for your situation. In summary, the Orthodox Church allows for plenty of flexibility when it comes to fasting, instituting several levels of engagement for the faithful depending on their unique situations.

### **Fasting beyond food**

Some options open to those who cannot fast traditionally, and some, as an example, that those who are fasting traditionally should consider adding to their practice are giving up:

- ◇ Watching too much television
- ◇ Playing too many video games
- ◇ Drinking too much alcohol
- ◇ Overeating
- ◇ Wasting time / being lazy
- ◇ Using foul language
- ◇ Being rude/condescending/hateful toward others

- ◇ Devoting more time to extra curricular activities than to church, Scripture reading, and prayer
- ◇ Making a show of our fasting
- ◇ Passing judgment on those who might not fast to the degree you are fasting

This last one is particularly important. Saint Paul reminds us in Romans 14:3-4: *“Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own Master that he stands or falls.”*

In short giving up behaviours and habits that are spiritually destructive, along with things that tend to take our time away from God, from prayer, and from spiritual growth. Added to which we should be generous with our time and material gifts towards others’ for their benefit. (With thanks in part to <https://www.saintjohnchurch.org/>)

### **Countdown to Great Lent**

On 25<sup>th</sup> February this year is the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, and we start preparing for Great Lent. The Triodion is the liturgical book that leads us through the pre-lenten season of the Church year. The Gospel reading for the first pre-lenten Sunday (Luke 18:10-14) contrasts the pharisee, a genuinely religious man, and the publican, an equally genuine sinner, a tax collector

known for cheating others. In his prayers, the pharisee boasts, and the publican asks forgiveness for his unworthiness. The pharisee's religious but boastful piety did not justify him, while the publican's humble repentance is revealed as the first step in our salvation.



On the second pre-lenten Sunday, the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) is read. In it, Our Lord reveals that

our heavenly Father offers us unconditional forgiveness and mercy if, like the prodigal son, we "come to our senses," see ourselves for who we really are, and turn away from the "hunger" of "riotous living" in a "far country."

We hear the Parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) on the third pre-lenten Sunday (Meatfare Sunday, the last day on which we eat meat before Pascha). Here, Our Lord reveals that, while it is important for us to desire Him, to repent and seek His mercy, to see ourselves for who we truly are, and to return to Him, we must also discern His presence in

everyone around us, in the "least of the brethren," and minister to them as if we were ministering to Christ Himself – and for the sake of Christ Himself.



Forgiveness Sunday (known as Cheesefare Sunday, as it is the last day on which we eat dairy products before Pascha) falls on the eve of the first day of

Great Lent. In Matthew 6:14-21 we hear Our Lord's teaching about forgiveness. Like Adam, exiled from Paradise, we lament our sins. Forgiveness and mercy are ours, but only if we fast from those passions that we can bring under control with Our Lord's help, even if we all too often allow them to control us.

The pre-lenten Sundays prepare us for our lenten journey, enabling us to enter the Fast with joy, to make the most of the time, for as we sing on the first day of Great Lent, "salvation is at the door."

A happy and blessed Great Lent to you all.



## Calendar for March in the year of our Lord 2024.



**25<sup>th</sup> February:**

**9:15am. Matins**

**10 am. Divine Liturgy**

Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican

**10<sup>th</sup> March:**

**11:15am. Divine Liturgy**

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meat Fare)

**24<sup>th</sup> March:**

**9:15am. Matins**

**10 am. Divine Liturgy**

First Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy). Remember to bring an icon to Church with you for the procession.

**Remember to bring a shared brunch after the service.**



Please always check the web page and Facebook for any changes to the schedule:

<http://stanneallsaintsworcester.org/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/StAnneOrthodoxCommunity/>

**For your Diary:**

**7<sup>th</sup> April 2024: 9:15am Matins and 10am Divine Liturgy. SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS.**

### Food banks:



As we approach Great Lent, it is time particularly to discern Christ's presence in everyone around us, and minister to them as if we were ministering to Christ Himself. So **many more** people are in financial crisis and in need of Food Banks; there is a continual need for good quality tinned, dried, and packeted foods.

**Be generous;** give of your bounty. Please bring whatever you can (and some "luxuries" too, as this certainly cheers people up).

**Leave donations on the pew by the entrance door.**





**A multi-ethnic community of the  
Greek Orthodox Christian Church**

**<http://stanneallsaintsworcs.org/>**

**[enquiries.stanneallsaintsworcs@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.stanneallsaintsworcs@gmail.com)**

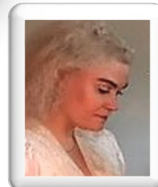
**<https://www.facebook.com/StAnneOrthodoxCommunity/>**

**Meeting at  
St John the Baptist Chapel  
Chapel Lane, Bransford, Worcestershire.**

**Priest: Fr. Theodore Hopkin**



**Newsletter Editor and  
Parish Coordinator:**  
Melangell Roe-  
Stevens Smith.



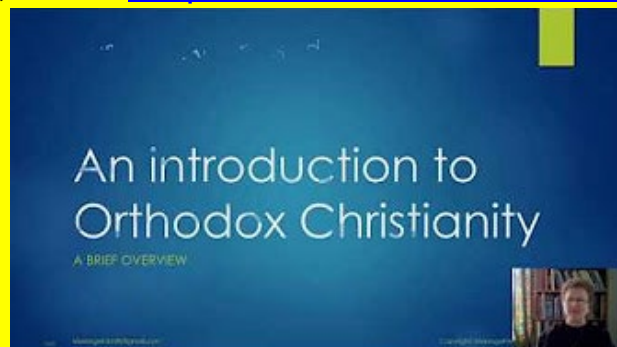
**Safeguarding  
Officer:**  
Xenia (Olivia)  
James

**An introduction to  
Orthodox Christianity**

is constantly available on YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMBT8ZVFv-Y\\_74SgbhykKefFnVw6e7TG2](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMBT8ZVFv-Y_74SgbhykKefFnVw6e7TG2)

Any questions, email: [Enquiries.StAnneAllSaintsWorcs@gmail.com](mailto:Enquiries.StAnneAllSaintsWorcs@gmail.com)





## For your prayers:

Our hierarchs.

Our priests.

Our monastics.

Our prospective clergy.

Our catechumens.

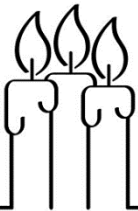
Our Church Committee and those who serve the church in any capacity.

Those who are ill or need our support.

If you would like your name, or someone else's, on the prayer list please email:

[enquiries.stanneallsaintsworcs@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.stanneallsaintsworcs@gmail.com)

Please indicate if you are happy to have your name listed in the newsletter.



### **Each day of Great Lent, as part of our daily prayers, we say the prayer of St Ephrem the Syrian:**

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

*Prostration.*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

*Prostration.*

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Prostration.*

*Then twelve "reverences" (bows from the waist with the sign of the Cross).*

*With each one we say: O God, cleanse me a sinner.*

*And then the entire prayer:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.

## The Prayer of St Ephrem explained...



The “Prayer of St Ephrem” is used in all weekday services, and in prayers at home.

Everyone should say this prayer daily during the week in Great

Lent. Because of the physical way in which we say this prayer (it is done with bows and prostrations), it has the remarkable ability to put the soul in the right frame of mind. The person who prays in this way will soon find the fruit of this practice.

The prayer of St Ephrem is said two different ways in church. The best way to say it at home is the “longer” way (laid out below), twice a day, in morning and evening prayers. If a person is not organized or motivated enough to say formal morning or evening prayers, at least this prayer can be said along with the Trisagion prayers.

A Prostration is a full bow to the ground with the knees touching the ground, and the head touching or near the ground, then immediately standing back up. As the bow to the ground is begun, the sign of the cross is made. Some people touch their knees to the ground first and then

bend their upper body down, and the more athletic or coordinated essentially “fall” forward to the ground with their knees and hands touching at essentially the same time. Those who are not physically able to do this, just do the best you can, that is all that is required.

A Bow, also known as a “reverence” is when the sign of the cross is made, while simultaneously bowing the head by bending at the waist. Some bow deeply and touch the ground with their right hand, and other make very shallow bows. It really does not matter as long as the movement is done with attention.

Something NOT TO DO: No “waving at the air”. Some do prostrations and bows quickly or carelessly, and the sign of the cross they make looks like they are shooing away a fly. “Let all things be done in good order”.

Parents: say this prayer with your children! I know, it is sometimes a “circus”, but where are they going to learn piety if not from you. Prayer is not always neat and pretty with children, but you will be glad you went to the trouble.

Here is the most important “take home” point:

**SAY THIS PRAYER EVERY WEEKDAY IN GREAT LENT!**

<https://www.orthodox.net/greatlent/o-lord-and-master-of-my-life-prayer-of-st-ephrem-01.html>



**Sunday of  
Orthodoxy**

**Sunday of  
St Gregory  
Palamas**

**Sunday of  
Veneration  
of the Holy  
Cross**

**Sunday of  
St John of  
the Ladder**

**Sunday of  
St Mary of  
Egypt**

## A tradition of Great Lent



### Lady Lent (Kyra Sarakosti) Tradition with Recipe

The Greek tradition of Kyra Sarakosti (“Lady Lent” in English) is a great activity for children to count down the weeks of Lent. This excerpt from *The Festive Fast Cookbook* explains the details of this custom:

...[W]hen there were no calendars and people wanted to have some sense of time during Great Lent (before Easter), they devised an easy method of doing this. They drew up an image of Sarakosti as a nun. They took a piece of paper and cut out a shape of a woman. Kyra Sarakosti does not have a mouth as she is fasting: her hands are crossed in prayer. She has seven feet

for the seven weeks of Great Lent [including Holy Week]. Every Saturday one of her feet is cut. The last foot to be cut on Holy Saturday is folded and placed in a dried fig or nut and whoever finds it is considered to be lucky. (G.A. Mega, *Greek Feasts*)



## Ingredients:

2-2 1/2 cups flour

1/2 cup salt

2-2 1/2 tsps cinnamon

water as needed

## Directions:



1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine flour, salt and cinnamon in medium size bowl.
3. Gradually add water (about a teaspoon at a time) to form a stiff but flexible dough.
4. On a floured surface, roll dough out to approximately 1/2 inch thickness.
5. Use the sharp point of a knife to shape your Kyra Sarakosti like the picture.  
A paper template is helpful — you can draw your own or use the one below.  
Cut two long narrow strips for arms and join them at shoulders (wet the shoulder area on the body to attach the arms).  
Make slits in dough for fingers.  
Mark closed eyelids and nose with pointed object. (Remember — Lady Lent has no mouth!)  
Carefully and patiently cut out the seven feet hanging out.

6. Wipe entire figure down with a lightly dampened cloth to make shiny, and decorate with peppercorns as shown in the photograph.

7. Bake until golden. Some may sort of bubble but will flatten out as they cool.

8. Cool on a baking rack

9. Break of a leg each Saturday through Holy Saturday.

Note: Do NOT eat!

This recipe is adapted from The Festive Fast Cookbook translated from the Greek by M. Kokkinou and G. Kofinas.

Lady Lent (Kyra Sarakosti) Template



# Great Lent begins 24<sup>th</sup> March

## OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

*Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannan (AICP00)*

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 25th</b>	 <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>MARCH 3rd</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>MARCH 10th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 17th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 24th</b>	 <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 31st</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 7th</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> HALF WAY TO PASCHAI Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 14th</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 21st</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 28th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>MAY 3rd</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>MAY 5th</b> NO FASTING!	 <b>HOLY PASCHAI (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

## Children's Space:

### Troparion — Tone 1

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind

### Kontakion — Tone 4

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee! And learn humility from the Publican's tears! Let us cry to our Saviour, have mercy on us, only merciful One!

### Icon colouring for February.



**Read:** Luke 18:10-14

### WHAT DO YOU THINK? (KS2)

1. Who went to the temple to pray?
2. Was the Pharisee proud or humble? How does his prayer tell you that?
3. What about the tax collector? Was he proud or humble? How do you know?
4. Who was forgiven — the Pharisee or the tax collector?
5. Our Lord Jesus wants us to learn the lesson in this story, too. We should not think we are better than anyone else. Like the tax collector, we need to be sorry for our sins and ask God for mercy. How do we talk to Jesus today?

### WHAT DO YOU THINK? (High School)

1. Where was the Pharisee standing?
2. What does this tell us about him?
3. What was his prayer?
4. How is the way he is standing related to his prayer?
5. Why would standing by himself to pray be a negative thing to do?
6. Where is the collector tax standing?
7. What does this tell us about him?
8. How is this related to his prayer?
9. Why is the way he is standing better than the way the Pharisee is standing?
10. What does this suggest about prayer? Is how or where we stand to pray important? Why or why not?



## March Puzzle

# The Pharisee & The Tax Collector

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Luke 18:14b (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 18:9-14 (NIV).



C J U S T I F I E D E L D W F  
F A F I N L E X A L T K O R Z  
T J I R I G H T E O U S X O R  
C C W C A D U L T E R E R S K  
S A O A Z H B C U D S K P V P  
E V I L D O E R S T E M P L E  
C W H O L I V M E C U T M P Y  
T R O B B E R S Z A N V M R F  
H E A V E N C I P E S K E A L  
S U B T H T H T D A I T R Y Y  
I E M P T T H I O J R F C K P  
N W D B W X F A G R F A Y B E  
N F T G L N F Z N C F D B K O  
E Q L A O E T W R K M J D L W  
R E T C X P H A R I S E E W E

TEMPLE	EXALT	TAX	PARABLE	LOOK
JUSTIFIED	HEAVEN	PHARISEE	RIGHTEOUS	HUMBLE
BREAST	COLLECTOR	ROBBERS	THANK	EVILDOERS
MERCY	PRAY	ADULTERERS	CONFIDENT	SINNER