



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Attached

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, February 09, 2025

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is

offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

### Members of our Parish Council are:

Carolyn Neiss- President      Greg Jankura -  
Vice President  
Boris Doph - Treasurer.      James Ifkovic -  
Secretary  
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large

Luba Martins - Member at Large  
Brett Malcolm - Member at Large

### **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 322-2906, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

### **Announcements**

Service schedule changes due to weather will be posted on the parish website, sent via email and announced on WFSB TV.

If you would like to see the all the slides from the presentation of Mother Olga, the complete presentation can be found at [here](https://archive.stalexischurch.org/presentati). (https://archive.stalexischurch.org/presentati Simply use the arrow keys on your keyboard to navigate through the presentation.

### **CT Deanery Clergy Retreat**

On Thursday, February 13th, the parish of St Alexis will be hosting the Deanery Clergy for our annual retreat.

### **Lenten Book Study**

I would like to begin a book study, based on the book, "Whispers of Mary: What Twelve Old Testament Women Teach Us About Mary," by Gayle Somers. While the book is available on Amazon etc. You actually won't have to purchase the book as we will be spending our time reviewing the scriptural references of the women mentioned. The book is by a catholic author, but this should not prohibit us from learning more about these Old Testament women.

### **Chili/Chowder Cookoff**

**I am postponing the cookoff regardless of whether we have service on Sunday. If we have service as scheduled, it will just be a "normal" coffee hour. I will provide the new date for the cookoff as soon as I can.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This year, it is Holy Trinity's turn to host the Lenten Retreat in Springfield VT, and you're in for a treat!

The topic is one that each of us wrestles with on a daily basis: Money and Salvation. Our Lord addressed money in the Gospels more than any other topic except that of the Kingdom of Heaven. Why would our interaction with money take precedence even over prayer and fasting?

Come to Holy Trinity on Saturday, March 22nd between 10am - 4:30pm, where Dr. Andrew Geleris, author of "Money and Salvation: An invitation to The Good Way", will lead a talk on becoming rich towards God.

See poster attached.

Rsvp at [htocvt@gmail.com](mailto:htocvt@gmail.com)

May God bless our efforts in the upcoming Lent and draw us closer to Him!

With love in Christ,  
Fr. Mircea

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many years! to Glenn and Stasia PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of their anniversary.

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows,

orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize, those who have no one to pray for them;

- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

*Please let Fr. Steven know via email if you have more names for which to pray.*

- Departed: Gail Galena, Leonore
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne,
- Catechumen: Kevin, James
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles, Victor, Susan, Gregory
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month:
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Keree, Steve and their unborn child, Katie and Aaron and their unborn child, Steven and Ashley and their unborn child Christopher, Valery and Jason and their unborn child.
- Traveling: Michael
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Remy, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Cathy, Joe, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Joan

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

**SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE — Tone 8. Beginning of the**

**Lenten Triodion. Leavetaking of the Meeting.** Martyr Nikephoros of Antioch in Syria (ca. 257). Uncovering of the Relics of St. Innocent, Bishop of Irkutsk (1805). Ven. Pankratii (Pancratius) of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). Ven. Nikifor (Nicephorus—1557) and Gennádii (Gennadius—ca. 1516), of Vazheozérsk. Hieromartyrs Marcellus, Bishop of Sicily, Philagrius, Bishop of Cyprus, and Pancratius, Bishop of Taoromina (1st c.).

- Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.
- Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East.
- Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

## Parish Calendar

### St Alexis Parish

February 9 to February 17, 2025

#### Sunday, February 9

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee:  
Triodion Begins Today  
Christine Schauble

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

11:30AM Postponed!!!

#### Monday, February 10

Hieromartyr Haralambos

#### Tuesday, February 11

Blaise the Hieromartyr of Sebastia

8:30AM Matins

#### Wednesday, February 12

Vera Martin

Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch

Robert Pavlik

#### Thursday, February 13

Martinian of Palestine

Lenten Clergy Retreat

8:30AM Matins

#### Friday, February 14

Holy Father Auxentius of the Mountain

#### Saturday, February 15

Alex Martins

Onesimus the Apostle of the 70

PenkoffLidbeck

5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, February 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Mission Sunday

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, February 17

Theodore the Tyro, Great Martyr

## Saints and Feasts

### February 09

## **Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today**

The Pharisees were an ancient and outstanding sect among the Jews known for their diligent observance of the outward matters of the Law. Although, according to the word of our Lord, they "did all their works to be seen of men" (Matt. 23:5), and were hypocrites (ibid. 23: 13, 14, 15, etc.), because of the apparent holiness of their lives they were thought by all to be righteous, and separate from others, which is what the name Pharisee means. On the other hand, Publicans, collectors of the royal taxes, committed many injustices and extortions for filthy lucre's sake, and all held them to be sinners and unjust. It was therefore according to common opinion that the Lord Jesus in His parable signified a virtuous person by a Pharisee, and a sinner by a Publican, to teach His disciples the harm of pride and the profit of humble-mindedness.

Since the chief weapon for virtue is humility, and the greatest hindrance to it is pride, the divine Fathers have set these three weeks before the Forty-day Fast as a preparation for the spiritual struggles of virtue. This present week they have called Harbinger, since it declares that the Fast is approaching; and they set humility as the foundation for all our spiritual labors by appointing that the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee be read today, even before the Fast begins, to teach, through the vaunting of the Pharisee, that the foul smoke of self-esteem and the stench of boasting drives away the grace of the Spirit,

strips man of all his virtue, and casts him into the pits of Hades; and, through the repentance and contrite prayer of the Publican, that humility confers upon the sinner forgiveness of all his wicked deeds and raises him up to the greatest heights.

All foods are allowed the week that follows this Sunday.

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## **February 11**

### **Blaise the Hieromartyr of Sebastia**

Saint Blaise was Bishop of Sebastia. Divine grace, through which he healed the diseases of men and beasts, and especially of infants, made his name famous. He contested for the Faith under Licinius in the year 316. Saint Blaise is invoked for the healing of throat ailments.

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## **February 14**

### **Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles & Teacher of the Slavs**

Saint Cyril was born in Thessaloniki in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century to pious parents. His family was one of only a few Byzantines in Thessaloniki at that time since it was largely populated by Slavs. Growing up in this situation, Cyril learned the Slavonic language, which later in life would serve him and the Church at large. He continued his education in Constantinople with his brother Methodios (see May 11<sup>th</sup>), each taking to their particular interests:

Methodios in politics, and Cyril in philosophy and teaching.

The two brothers were approached in 850 by Saint Photios the Great (see February 6<sup>th</sup>) to lead a diplomatic mission to the Khazars, the people who inhabited the western shore of the Caspian Sea. Cyril and Methodios accepted this mission and departed to the North. After the success of this trip, the brothers lived for a time in a monastery on Mount Olympus where Methodios became a monk. At this time the brothers utilized their childhood Slavonic education to develop a written alphabet for the Slavonic language, which to this time had never existed. This alphabet became known as the *Glagolitic Alphabet*. On their own instigation, the brothers began translating the Gospels and liturgical service books into Slavonic.

Providentially, Cyril and Methodios were again called upon for a mission, this time to travel to Moravia to spread the Christian faith to King Rostislav (see May 11<sup>th</sup>) and his people. The brothers departed in 862, bringing with them their Slavonic alphabet and service books. After five years of service, the brothers made their way to Rome in 867 to have members of their company ordained to the priesthood to aid in the missionary journey. The group of missionaries celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Rome in the Slavonic language for the very first time with members of their party being ordained as they intended. While in Rome, Cyril fell deathly ill. He was tonsured a monk and died. His brother Methodios continued their missionary work, utilizing the *Glagolitic Alphabet*. Cyril and his

brother Methodios are commemorated together on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

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## February 15

### Onesimus the Apostle of the 70

This Apostle, who was from Colossae, was a bond-servant of that Philemon to whom the Apostle Paul addressed his epistle. Onesimus escaped from Philemon and fled to Rome, where he became a disciple of Saint Paul. Saint Paul brought him to the Faith of Christ, and then sent him back to his master, who in turn gave him his freedom and sent him back to Rome again, where he ministered to Saint Paul. Later, he was seized because he was a Christian and was sent to Puteoli, where he was beaten to death with clubs. Saint Onesimus is also commemorated on November 22 with the holy Apostles Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus.

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## Hymns of the Day



You!

### Tone 8 Troparion (Resurrection)

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!  
You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!!!  
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to

### Tone 1 Troparion (Feast)

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace!  
From you shone the Sun of Righteousness,  
^Christ our God,  
enlightening those who sat in darkness.  
Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder,  
you accepted in your arms the ^Redeemer of  
our souls.//  
Who grants us the Resurrection!

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit*

**Tone 4 Kontakion (from the Lenten  
Triodion)**

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!  
Let us learn humility from the Publican's  
tears!  
Let us cry to our Savior:  
"Have mercy on us, //  
O only merciful One!"

*now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 1 Kontakion (Feast)**

By Your Nativity You sanctified the Virgin's  
womb  
and blessed Simeon's hands, ^O Christ God.  
Now You have come and saved us through  
love.  
Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, //  
O only Lover of Man!

**Gospel and Epistle Readings**

**Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. 8th Tone. Psalm 75.11,1.**

Make your vows to the Lord our God and  
perform them.

Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is  
great in Israel.

**The reading is from St. Paul's Second  
Letter to Timothy 3:10-15.**

TIMOTHY, my son, you have observed my  
teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my  
faith, my patience, my love, my  
steadfastness, my persecutions, my  
sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at  
Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I  
endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued  
me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life  
in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil  
men and impostors will go on from bad to  
worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for  
you, continue in what you have learned and  
have firmly believed, knowing from whom  
you learned it and how from childhood you  
have been acquainted with the sacred  
writings which are able to instruct you for  
salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

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**Gospel Reading**

**Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee:  
Triodion Begins Today  
The Reading is from Luke 18:10-14**

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went  
up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee  
and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee  
stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I  
thank you that I am not like other men,  
extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like  
this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give  
tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector,  
standing far off, would not even lift up his

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eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

If there is a moral quality almost completely disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification, and of self-righteousness ... Even our churches - are they not imbued with that same spirit of the Pharisee? Do we not want our every contribution, every 'good deed,' all the we do 'for the Church' to be acknowledged, praised, publicized? ... How does one become humble? The answer, for a Christian, is simple: by contemplating Christ..."

### *Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

*Great Lent, pp. 19-20., 20th Century*

It is possible for those who have come back again after repentance to shine with much lustre, and oftentimes more than those who have never fallen at all, I have demonstrated from the divine writings. Thus at least both the publicans and the harlots inherit the kingdom of Heaven, thus many of the last are placed before the first.

## St. John Chrysostom

*AN EXHORTATION TO THEODORE AFTER HIS FALL, 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



### **SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE**

#### **(TRIODION BEGINS)**

The Temple in Jerusalem was the center of worship in ancient Israel, where prayer times were observed in the morning and evening, coinciding with the

times of sacrifice. In this passage, we see two men — a Pharisee and a Publican — going to the Temple to pray. As such, they represent two opposites in the eyes of the world and two opposites in the eyes of God. A Pharisee and a Publican were on opposite sides of that society and were perceived by the people as such.

The Pharisees were one of the two influential religious groups in ancient Israel (the other being the Sadducees). They were known for being the strictest group regarding ritual purity in the Law of Moses, focusing on the letter of the Law. The Pharisees believed that they were clean from sin and that they were God's chosen



people. They loved showing their piety and sought recognition of their righteousness from the people.

On the other hand, the Publicans were the tax collectors and were perceived by the people as corrupt and dishonest men. They were Jewish people who worked as representatives of the Roman Empire, and they collected taxes for the Roman governors. The Roman government required them to collect a certain amount of taxes in each district, and if that quota was met, they were free to charge more for their keeping if they so desired. As a result, many of them had become extortioners, enriching themselves as they collected more taxes from the people than was necessary for their profit.

From a human standpoint, the Pharisee is contrasted with the tax collector — the Pharisee is righteous, and the tax collector is a sinner. However, God saw things differently. The Lord teaches through parables; that is, He teaches us with stories from the everyday life of His time that we can apply to our lives in our time. He shows us how to live, and how not to live. He teaches us how to love, and how to pray. In this parable, the Lord teaches us one of our faith's most essential and fundamental principles: God sees the heart, not merely external appearances. It is with our hearts that we choose either pride or humility. Here, we learn the value of humility and repentance and how they open the door to God's mercy and love. It is so important that the Church brings this parable to our attention right before we enter this period of preparation for our journey to Pascha (Easter).

As both men went into the Temple to pray, the Pharisee stood and boasted to God about his own righteousness, listing the bad things he did not do. He says, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." He also listed the good things he did, saying, "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get." The irony in the passage is that fasting and giving alms are not only good things but necessary to our spiritual growth, and we emphasize these practices during this Lenten season. However, the Pharisee thought he was better than others and practiced those things only externally, as a show. As a result, his asceticism and his charity were of no profit to him because they were done to receive admiration from people — not out of his love for God and his neighbor. In this way, he was fasting from food but feeding his pride and giving alms to receive honor from people.

The tax collector, in contrast, stood far off and, in humility and repentance, did not even lift his eyes to heaven. He beat his chest, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" Unlike the Pharisee, the tax collector asks God for mercy for his own failures. These are opposite approaches because they reflect hearts in opposite states, that is, of pride and humility. The results, of course, are also opposite. Jesus tells us that the tax collector, a repentant sinner, went home justified, for "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." The term "justified" means that the repentant man entered an honest relationship with God, left the path of sin, and turned to God.

It means that by his humility before God and by repenting from his sins and asking for God's mercy, the tax collector was restored, and his life was reoriented to the path of eternal life.

The Pharisee, on the other hand, did not profit from his external righteousness through fasting and giving alms because pride kept him from being justified, that is, from communion with God, who "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). The lesson of this parable is humility and repentance, and it teaches us that God sees the heart, not external appearances. It teaches us that humility makes us see others as better than ourselves, which is what God values. As Saint Basil the Great says, "Never place yourself above anyone, not even great sinners. Humility often saves a sinner who has committed many terrible transgressions." From an external perspective, the right faith, outward righteousness, and piety, alone do not make us automatically better than others. Humility justifies us before God, and repentance is the door through which we enter the Triodion, the pre-Lenten period, — the starting point of our journey to Pascha. The Pharisee had no desire to change his heart because he was pleased only with himself, thinking he was fulfilling the Law — but, as Saint Gregory Palamas says, "Humility is the chariot by which we ascend to God." Jesus taught us to be the opposite of the Pharisees, that is, to understand the spirit of the Law, to have it inscribed in our hearts, to love, and to live a modest spiritual life — a life of genuine virtue, not pride.

Today marks the beginning of the Triodion (in Greek, Τριώδιον), which always begins on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee — to remind us about the importance of humility and true repentance. Our clergy and chanters use a liturgical book called "The Triodion" in church services throughout the Triodion (pre-Lenten period), Great Lent, Holy Week, and up to Holy Saturday night. "The Triodion" book contains hymns, prayers, and readings specific to the various Church services during this entire period. Our preparation for Great Lent begins with humility, the beginning of true repentance. In this way, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness, and so He blesses us by guiding us to greater spiritual heights. God is patient, God is kind, and He loves the humble heart. Let us humble ourselves before God and imitate Him who "humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Let us extend humility to others as well, being merciful to one another.



# Money & Salvation

*Why does Jesus mention money so often in the Gospels?*



JOIN US FOR A TALK BY  
DR. ANDREW GELERIS

Saturday

**22 March 2025**

**10:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.**

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH  
90 Park St, Springfield, VT

**No Cost to Attend. Please consider donating a canned good to our food distribution program.**

Lunch Provided

RSVP: [htocvt@gmail.com](mailto:htocvt@gmail.com)

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2025

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 9th</b>	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> <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>FEBRUARY 16th</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>FEBRUARY 23rd</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 2nd</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> 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 9th</b>	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <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 16th</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>MARCH 23rd</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> 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>MARCH 30th</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 6th</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 13th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <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>APRIL 18th</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>APRIL 20th</b> NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (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!