

**Week of
February 19th
2017**

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Please leave a clear
message and include your
phone number

Next Divine Liturgy

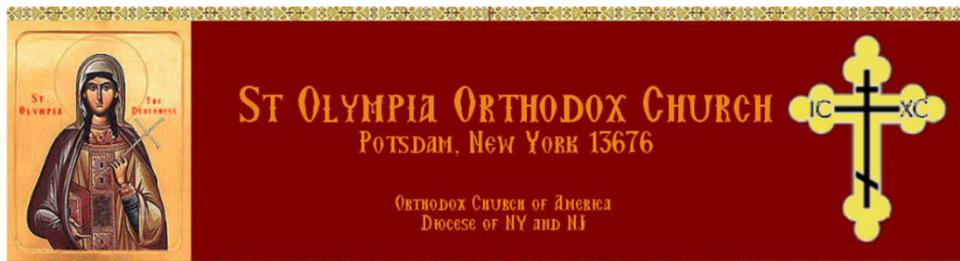
**February 26th
Sunday of Forgiveness
(Cheesefare Sunday)**

*Fast from meat until Pascha;
all dairy products are
allowed this week.*

**123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY
10:00 am**

**Lunch and fellowship
to follow**

**Icons of the
Last Judgement
and the
Expulsion from Paradise**



**Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church, a young and, God willing,
growing community of worshippers.**

**Join us for prayer and fellowship. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday
and are primarily in English.**

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Sunday of the Last Judgement and Sunday of Forgiveness

The Church, in its wisdom, places two important themes on the two Sundays that precede Great Lent: the *Parousia* or Second Coming of Christ and Forgiveness.

Of course, it is true that every Divine Liturgy has these two themes interwoven. For the Last Judgement, we need only to remember this line from the Nicene Creed: "And He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom shall have no end." Every Eucharist is a foretaste of the Kingdom for although we are in the here and now, the liturgy exists beyond time and space. However, as we prepare to enter Great Lent, the Church reminds us of the temporal road we are called to travel, both the dangers of the journey and hope that we are given in Love. In the concluding strophes (23 and 24) of the St. Romanos' Kontakion on the Second Coming, he hymns:

This is the character of Judgment Day;
But let us avoid eternal punishment; Let us despise temporal things,
And ponder those things which are eternal that we may find mercy.
Let us not think that if we have sinned we are entirely cast aside,
For indeed we shall cure the wound of sin quickly
By the remedy of repentance, if we are really willing.
And now let us all pray to the Savior, crying,
"Grant slumber to Thy servants, Lord, that we may find rest,
O most just Judge."

All-holy Savior of the world, since Thou appeared and raised up the nature
Which was lying in the midst of transgressions,
Invisibly reveal Thyself to me as Merciful, O Forbearing One
Raise me up, I pray, as I lie in much sin,
So that I do not have to guard what I say and advise others;
But I beseech Thee, grant me time for repentance,
And through the intercession of the Virgin, Mother of God, spare me,
And do not tear me from Thy sight, O most just Judge.

The road is impossible to travel without forgiveness: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." During the final hours before the actual Lenten journey begins, we are called upon not just to remember this but to enact it. In many parishes, there is a beautiful custom of each person asking each and every other member of worshipping family for forgiveness.

There is a second theme to this Sunday, one that is purposefully sobering: the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. In *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*, Alexander Schmemmann writes: "The name summarizes the entire preparation for Lent. By now we know that man was created for paradise, for knowledge of God and communion with Him. Man's sins have deprived him of that blessed life and his existence on earth is exile. Christ, the Savior of the world, opens the door of paradise to everyone who follows Him, and the Church, by revealing to us the beauty of the Kingdom, makes our life a pilgrimage toward our heavenly fatherland." Thus, as we begin our intensified prayer and fasting, we sing:

Adam was expelled from paradise through food;
Sitting, therefore, in front of it he cried:
"Woe to me...."

One commandment of God have I transgressed,
depriving myself of all that is good;
Paradise holy! Planted for me,
And now because of Eve closed to me;
Pray to thy Creator and mine
That I may be filled again by thy blossom."

Then answered the Savior to him: "I wish not my creation to perish;
I desire it to be saved and to know the Truth;
For I will not turn away him who comes to Me..."

Even as we take our first steps toward Pascha, we already see the light at our journey's end.

New to our Library

The Ways of Childhood by Metropolitan Georges Khodr (Vol. 6 of Orthodox Christian Profiles Series published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press).

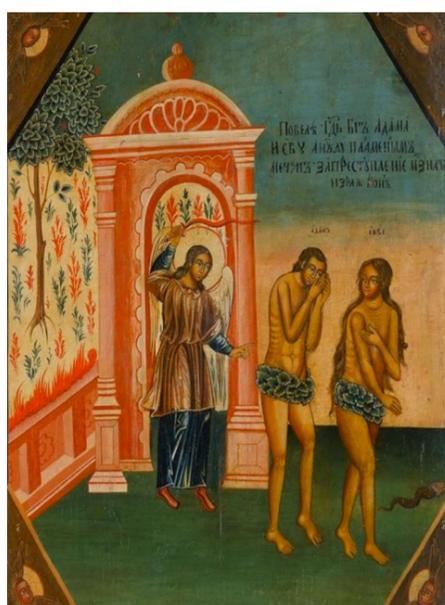
From the introduction:

It is extremely hard for anyone to introduce this specific book by Metropolitan Georges Khodr, since it does not comprise a sole subject, such as childhood, but tackles a wide variety of complicated topics. Nevertheless within this complexity is wonderfully expressed the inner life of a soul that believes in God while living in the midst of this turbulent world. Hence, it is important to point out to the great benefits that a reader can acquire from this unique book.

Save the Dates

Archbishop Michael's next visits to Potsdam will be:

- Wednesday, March 22, 2017, for Presanctified Liturgy
- Saturday-Sunday, September 9-10, 2017



Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord
and Master of my life,
take from me
the spirit of slothfulness,
faint-heartedness,
lust for power
and idle talk.

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

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

Amen.