

giveness of the other. The rite can take time, depending on the number in attendance. When it is complete, the long labors of Lent can begin. Fasting without forgiveness would be a hollow activity. This is a meditation I shared with my parish this week as the Sunday of Forgiveness approaches:

Perhaps the most generous words spoken by Christ are those we hear from the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Taken at face value, the words make little sense. Surely, those who crucified Christ knew that they were killing a man. Surely they were even aware that his execution was largely political and unjust. The centurion in charge of the crucifixion is said to have stated, “Surely this man was the Son of God.” So how could Christ say, “They do not know what they are doing?”

I believe this goes to the very heart of our lives and actions. We almost never know what we are doing. The greater context, the meaning of anything, is hidden from us. We have children, work at a job, and live our lives, hoping that these have been worthwhile actions. We know that much, even most of what we have done has been tainted with bad intentions and other less-than-worthy motivations. But we never actually grasp the full scope of our actions. Even those good things that we do have a hidden aspect. Did that kind word spoken earlier make a difference? Did that act of charity actually change anything?

This hidden aspect of our lives is an inherent part of the human condition. We simply don't know what we're doing. This makes it very hard for us to judge our actions or to weigh them for their value.

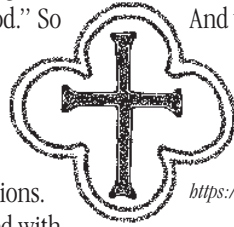
Christ's words are addressed to the Father on behalf of all of humanity. For it is not just the small number of people in Jerusalem who were consenting to His death. His death is “on behalf of all and for all.”

And this brings us to Forgiveness Sunday. “Why do I need to ask forgiveness of others if I have done them no wrong?”

The simple answer is: You don't know what you have or have not done. But it is commonly understood in Orthodoxy that “each person is responsible for the sins of the whole world.” Our lives are deeply connected—we are never uninvolved in the lives of others. What I have done and what I have not done effects the lives of the whole world. I may have had no direct hand, and yet I cannot excuse myself as if I have no share in what happens everywhere. The world is as we make it.

I once heard a monk say, “The person of prayer does not need to go any further than his own heart to find the source of all violence in the world.”

But none of this is to call us to a morbid guilt. It calls us to Christ and calls us to hear His words. On Forgiveness Sunday each of us asks forgiveness of the others around us. It is both a personal matter and a collective. I have failed and need forgiveness. We have failed and need forgiveness. And perhaps the even greater call comes to us to join ourselves with Christ who says: “Father, forgive them!”



“Forgive me,” we say. “God forgives us all,” comes the response. It sometimes feels awkward, even embarrassing. Some people begin to weep. Others begin to giggle. Both are part of the human condition within our shame.

But the actions of Forgiveness Sunday unite us necessarily to the actions of Christ. By submitting Himself to crucifixion, Christ put Himself in the place of the sinner, the one needing forgiveness. He was displayed naked, nailed on high for all the world to see, the shame of the whole world.

In the mild social embarrassment of saying, “Forgive me,” to another human being, we unite ourselves to the deep, profound healing shame of Christ. And with brazen boldness we confess, “God forgives us all!” uniting ourselves with the priestly cry of Christ Himself, “Father, forgive them!”

And having read this, and done all that, we still will not know what we have done. But we are not saved by knowing what we do. We are saved by doing what He does.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2015/02/20/forgiving-what-we-do-not-know/>

FROM A PODCAST BY FR. THOMAS HOPKO

...It is important that we understand what forgiveness is. The entire gospel, the entire Christian faith is essentially the conviction that God forgives us. That no matter what we do, however stupid, however silly, however ridiculous, however raunchy, however rebellious, God forgives us, God loves us. He relentlessly loves us, and the sign of his love is that he forgives us. He forgives us before we ask, he forgives us before he even created us—he created us, forgiving us. But what does that forgiveness mean? It does not mean that God simply says, “Everything is okay.” It does not mean that we have not done anything wicked and wrong. Indeed, forgiveness has no meaning whatsoever unless there is real wrongdoing. So forgiveness is necessary when there is real sin; if there is no real sin then there is no need for forgiveness, and that is very very important because some people think that to forgive means to say to the other person who has done evil—let us say if I am asked to forgive someone, that sometimes people think that that is, so to speak, letting them off the hook, or saying that, “It is okay what they did,” or, “I will not let it bother me,” or, “It really was nothing.”

Oh no, no no, that is not it at all. Where there is real wickedness, real evil, real harm done, forgiveness comes in and says, “I will not let that wickedness triumph. I will not let wickedness win. I will not break communion, fellowship, relationship, no matter how sinful and weak and ugly they are. No matter how much they may have hurt me, or my children, or my land, or whatever. I will not allow that evil to be victorious.” So forgiveness is the killing of evil, it is the killing of the power of evil, but it is never saying that the evil was not there. No, no, the evil has to be acknowledged, it has to be admitted... .

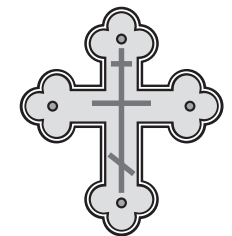
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/forgiveness_sunday_2_asking_for_forgiveness

SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

February 24, 2019



SECOND WEEK OF THE TRIODION



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PARISH LIFE

FEBRUARY 24, 2019: 34TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST:

PRODIGAL SON (TONE 6, MATINS GOSPEL 6)

8:40 am Matins

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 27:

6:15 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm “Heavenly Banquet” Study

SATURDAY, MARCH 2: SOUL SATURDAY

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and General Memorial

2:00 pm Mystery of Holy Baptism (Jugan family)

5:00 pm Mystery of Confession (by appointment, please)

6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)



PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND, AND THOSE EXPECTING CHILDREN, OF OUR PARISH:

Victor Cosgarea, Jay Hanko, Jamie Hohne (and unborn child), Jan Isham, Brigid Johns (and newborn child), Jennifer Lashbrook (and unborn child), Filomena Vraciu, Jillian Walsh (and unborn child), Zachary Waltz and Margaret Wey

AND FOR OUR CATECHUMENS:

Karli Canada and David Ryerson

LOOKING AHEAD...

Next Sunday's readings: (35th Sunday after Pentecost: Last Judgment/ Meatfare; Tone 7, Matins Gospel 7): 1 Corinthians 8:8– 9:2; Matthew 25:31-46.

Sunday, March 3: Sunday of the Last Judgment (Farewell to Meat)

Dairy Week: March 4-10

Friday, March 8:

6:30 pm Hagia Sophia Classical Academy Open House (see announcement)

Saturday, March 9:

11:00 am Moleben for Life (see announcement)

Sunday, March 10: Sunday of the Expulsion from Paradise (Farewell to Dairy)

12:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers (immediately after Liturgy)

March 11-16: Great Lent begins (Clean Week)

Sunday, March 17: Sunday of Orthodoxy

5:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers (Holy Trinity Greek Cathedral)

OPEN HOUSE FOR HSCA, MARCH 8

Come and join us! Our parish school, Hagia Sophia Classical Academy, invites you to an Open House on Cheesefare Friday, March 8th, from 6:30-

800 PM. Enjoy some yummy, free food prepared by a professional chef and a heartwarming presentation by faculty and students.

This is a great opportunity to meet our faculty and students and get a closer look at our school. Most know about HSCA from word of mouth or perusing our newsletters, but feedback we've received time and again indicates surprise at the environment and culture for learning they see taking place. Folks find that our kids are doing more than learning facts – they are learning how to think. They receive a rigorous academic education in the context of a prayerful Orthodox atmosphere. If you aren't familiar, really familiar, with this endeavor, please, take this opportunity to get to know HSCA better. Come and see! Please RSVP to fatherjazz.evans@gmail.com for food planning.

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

Our 2019 Parish Council is already hard at work, holding their first meeting this past Monday. Officers elected were: Kathryn Wilson, president; Ed Rensink, vice president; Brian Pletcher, secretary; Sharon Zimmerman, treasurer; John Geist and Olivia Napariu, epitrops. In addition, council members Olivia Napariu and Lili Peterson have agreed to serve also as our delegates to the Episcopate Congress for the next two years. (Olivia and Lili were each asked to be members of the Council – Olivia remaining a long-standing Council member, and Lili as a new Council member. As such neither are considered “ex officio” members of the Council in their capacity as Congress delegates, since each was requested separately to be Council members apart from their agreement to serve as delegates.)

As always, any member of the congregation is welcome to come to a council meeting, to observe how the business of the parish is administered. If anyone has an item of concern to bring, we ask that it be submitted to the council president at least a week ahead of the meeting, to have it placed on the agenda.

SHOWER FOR JENNIFER LASHBROOK

All ladies are invited to attend Jennifer Lashbrook's baby shower on Saturday March 2 at 10:30 am in our church hall. She is registered at Amazon. If you're able to attend, please RSVP by end of day today to Clara at clara.clemens@gmail.com.

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS STILL NEEDED

There are still openings for hosting coffee hour this year. The most pressing needs are for hosts in April: the 7th, 14th and 21st (which is Palm Sunday, a “fish” day). There are also openings in May, June, August and October. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the basement or contact Deacon Paul at deacon@saintsconstantineandelena.org. The updated list will be posted weekly. Thanks to all who have signed up to host already!

MOLEBEN FOR LIFE – MARCH 9

Orthodox Christians for Life Indianapolis invites all to pray the Moleben for Life service on Saturday, 11 am March 9, in front of Planned Parenthood, 8590 Georgetown Road. A silent vigil will be held beforehand beginning at 10:30 am. This event is in conjunction with the “40 Days for Life” Spring Campaign. Fr. Alexis Miller of Holy Transfiguration Church in Crawfordsville will preside.

AS WE LOOK TOWARD REALIZING THE NEW HALL

As a follow up to the General Assembly, there is serious interest in beginning the fellowship hall build as soon as possible. A committee has been formed to begin investigating possible ways to move the process along. Please remember that once we build, we will incur additional and ongoing expenses (every year), when factoring increased costs for cleaning, utilities, insurance, security, maintenance, etc. If this is to become a reality anytime soon, we must increase our pledges and offerings to offset these costs. Opportunities to intentionally pray, and to further contribute to the realization of this project will be announced soon!



HOUSE BLESSING SEASON 2019

The period after the Feast of the Theophany is house blessing time: a time to rededicate our homes and our lives to Christ, and ask God's blessing for the coming year. In preparation, a bowl of fresh, clean water, and icon and a candle should be arranged upon a clean cloth on the main table of the house.

There are a few more openings before Great Lent begins on March 11, 2019. Please see the sign up sheet for home blessings on the bulletin board in the church hall; Dn. Paul is assisting

with scheduling.

“HEAVENLY BANQUET” STUDY THIS WEEK

Our study of “The Heavenly Banquet” continues, an in-depth look at the service – and more importantly, the meaning – of our central worship service, the Divine Liturgy. In the two classes that remain before Great Lent, we will consider that part of the “Great Anaphora Prayer” which recounts the Lord's words and actions at the Supper. All are invited and encouraged to attend, and be edified in the discussion of the fullness of our Orthodox Faith.

FORGIVING WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

Fr. Stephen Freeman

The first service of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church is “Forgiveness Vespers,” served on the eve of Monday of the First Week. There is nothing unusual about the service itself – other than the “rite of forgiveness” appended to it. In this, the priest and the faithful ask forgiveness of one another. Often this is done with mutual prostrations. Each asks the for-

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