

Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

كنيسة البشارة الإنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

Archdiocese of North America



Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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Newsletter for March 7, 2010

Most of us know something of Lent, whether or not we have participated in its activities. Lent has always been a season of spiritual preparation. It is known as a time of prayer, repentance, and re-commitment leading up to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter – the Feast of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This period is known as the 40 day fast. So, why is Lent so important to us as Orthodox Christians?

The focus of Lent can generally be looked at in 2 ways. The first being, it is time for long-standing Orthodox Christians to review their lives and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ our Savior. The second, it's time for the so called "backsliders" to be restored to the faith and to Jesus Christ. In both these situations, it is a time for serious discipline and self examination, a time spent to reflect inwards with prayer and repentance.

Traditionally when we fast we refrain from eating certain types of food such as meat, eggs, and milk. We teach our students in Church School to try and give up something that they really love for a period of time. Maybe giving up chocolate, TV, or video games in order to replace that time with perhaps a prayer, or at the very least, understand and reflect on how difficult it was for Jesus Christ to fast for 40 days in the desert while be tempted by the devil. The benefits of fasting is not limited by the abstinence of food alone, it also helps us fight negative thoughts and feelings; true fasting is the sacrifice we make to eliminate evil deeds so we can restore in ourselves the grace of God.

There are many questions we can ask to examine ourselves during Lent. Do I have a gracious and patient attitude with others? How is my devotional and prayer life progressing? Am I listening to God more and complaining less? What are the negative feelings or sins that still plague me? Am I as thoughtful and forgiving of family as others, or do I take my frustrations out on them? There are many more questions to ask ourselves but we need the time and patience from our very busy lives to do so – to undergo a spiritual self examination. Observing Lent provides us that perfect opportunity to put time aside to reflect and re-connect ourselves in finding the best approach to follow the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Remember that one has to fast for the sake of improving oneself and not be praised by others, The Lord explained in His Sermon on the Mount:

So that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:18).

Thought for the Day

"Cry out, O sinner, with all your might, for the Lord is merciful and loves those who repent. As soon as you repent, your Father will come out to meet you and rejoice with you." -- St. Ephraim the Syrian

We need to continue in the spirit and the theology of the Fast. It's not just about food, but about self-control, about healing myself from selfishness, about enduring every hardship in life without losing faith or hope.

I urge you now to give the people a living example of your commitment to Jesus Christ. Renew your spiritual lives through fasting and prayer.

Your Father in Christ,
+ Bishop JOSEPH

A Message from Abouna Ibrahim

الرعاية بين الراعي والرعية

الرعاية عمل الرعية بأكملها. ليس هناك من يرعى ومن يرعى. الكل يرعى الرعاية. كل يرعى سواه، وغيره يرعاه في حدود مواهب الجميع وطاقتهم على حمل أثقال بعضهم البعض، لأن القول الإلهي هو: "إحملوا بعضكم أثقال بعض وهكذا أتموا شريعة المسيح" (غلاطية 6: 2). لا سلبية في رعية المسيح. ليس فاعل ومنفعل بل الكل متفاعل. فقط الأموات في نفوسهم هم إخراج الصورة ويشوشون

أولاً الراعي، بامتياز، في الرعية، هو الأسقف، صورة المسيح، والكاهن منتدب منه. الأسقف هو المرجع والكاهن كلمته. على هذا يفترض بالكاهن أن يكون رجل الله والقُدوة والسالك في القداسة ومعلم القداسة. لا هو موظف ولا هو أجير بل خادم خراف المسيح الموكلة إليه للخلاص. خارج هذا السياق يكون الكاهن دخیلاً على خدمة كنيسة المسيح. وعلى هذا الأساس يُدان ويُقطع

A Message from Council

During time of Lent, we would like to remind all that we have prayers every Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7 PM (please refer to the important dates below). We hope to see all of you at our church services.

A membership drive for our church is well underway and many of you have given donations to our church that are very much needed. As we are all part of one family, one faith, we would like to promote the idea of Christian Stewardship (*taking responsibility and ownership of something we care about*) and tithing especially during time of Lent. Your donations insure that there are enough

resources available to keep our church and its programs running. We promise to utilize your Stewardship wisely and we would like to especially thank all those who have contributed their time and offerings; we look forward to your continued support in the future.

We are seeing more people and new faces coming to our church and we ask our congregation to reach out and welcome our newcomers to our family. We are also collecting emails for those who wish to get regular updates, newsletters, prayer schedules, or simply church news from our priest and council. In the coming months our goal is to create a sense of belonging for all of us by talking about being one church family, one faith, moving together forward in harmony with Christ.

Please contact anyone on the Interim Church Council at your convenience:

Abouna Ibrahim:	Church Priest	403-242-1250
Mike Moussallem:	Chairman	403-259-6132
Nahla Boury:	Vice Chair, Membership	403-241-3963
Wanda Magrowski:	Treasurer	403-819-4605
Jason Quiring:	Secretary	403-239-4456
George Kobrosly:	Church Ministry; Co-Treasurer	403-975-7844
Shakeeb Swaidan	Church Property; Co-Worship	403-278-3939

Important Upcoming Dates

Wednesdays: Great Compline or Presanctified Divine Lit - **7 PM**

Fridays: Akathist (Madayah) – **7 PM**

March 21: Feast of the Annunciation: Potluck Lenten lunch
Families are asked to bring a Lenten dish on Sunday.

March 24: Annunciation to the Theotokos – **7 PM**

March 28: Divine Liturgy & Procession of Palms – **10 AM**

March 29: The Bridgegroom Service – **7 PM**

March 31: Sacrament of Holy Unction (Healing) – **7 PM**

April 1: Holy Passion of our Lord (12 Gospels) – **7 PM**

April 2: The Lamentations – Procession of the Tomb – **7 PM**

April 3: Great & Holy Pascha (Saturday Evening – The Resurrection “Easter Sunday” – **10 PM**

April 4: Easter Monday service will be on this Sunday – **3 PM**

April 9 -11: Orthodox Men’s Retreat. See our website for more Information: www.antiochiancalgary.org

Church School Program

We would like to thank all teachers, parents, and children that have made church school possible. The students have enjoyed learning about stories from the bible and making crafts. Last month teachings about John the Baptist, Dealing with Temptation, the Sermon on the Mountain, and the Rich Young Ruler were all fun to learn about. Of course we are learning and talking every week about Lent and the importance of growing in faith with God. Grades 4 to 6 students have enjoyed similar topics and are very keen in helping the teachers with the younger crowd.

We have asked the kids to always think about giving and find ways to help out when they can by doing daily chores,

especially during this time of year. They are also encouraged in finding unique ways to collect spare change in their Lenten boxes where proceeds will go towards new church school bibles in the fall.

Teachings about God to our children will create a lifelong relationship between the child and God. Remember the Proverb “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*”.

To be placed on the email list for church school announcements, please send us a message to church-school@antiochiancalgary.org.

Youth Group - Grades 7 – 12

We are looking forward to connecting with the youth at the following events:

Saturday, March 13th - Movie Night 6:30pm - 9:30pm:
Please bring a Lenten snack to share. Location: Jason & Rachel's house (280 Tuscany Ridge Hts NW)

Sunday, April 18th - Gym Night 3:00 - 6:00:
Please bring \$5 to contribute to pizza supper.
Location: Meet at 3:00 at the gym at the Tuscany Club (212 Tuscany Way NW) - Afterwards we will be going to Jason & Rachel's house (280 Tuscany Ridge Hts NW) for supper and discussion. Please don't hesitate to call Rachel for directions - very easy to get to both locations.

May - Bowness Park Picnic - Exact Date and Time TBA
Each of these events will be followed by a discussion on a topic guided by the general theme of Truth,/Relativism/
Tolerance,/Appeasement.

If you have any questions please contact one of the youth leaders:

Abouna - 403.242.1250 / Sam Alein - 403.606.8877 / Jason Quiring & Rachel Huebert - 403.239.4456

Holy Bread and Church Cleaning:

We would like to remind everyone that every Sunday Holy Bread is needed for communion. A special thanks to those that have contributed in the past and we look forward to their continued support. We also like to encourage everyone to participate in bringing holy bread for Sunday services There are also CD's available that give step by step baking instructions of Holy Bread.

Everyone is encouraged to help keep our church clean. The church needs to be clean every week before Sunday services and Easter services.

We need your participation. Please contact George Kobrosly at (403-975-7844) to help make Sunday services possible.

Your Opinion Matters

There are many ways to communicate Father Ibrahim and council. We are easily approachable at Sunday church and we certainly will make the effort to reach out to all of you. We welcome all your opinions and comments to achieve this goal.

Father Ibrahim can be reached at abouna@live.ca (Phone: 403-242-1250).

You can also contact Mike Moussallem (Council Chairman) m.mouss@shaw.ca (Phone: 403-259-6132).