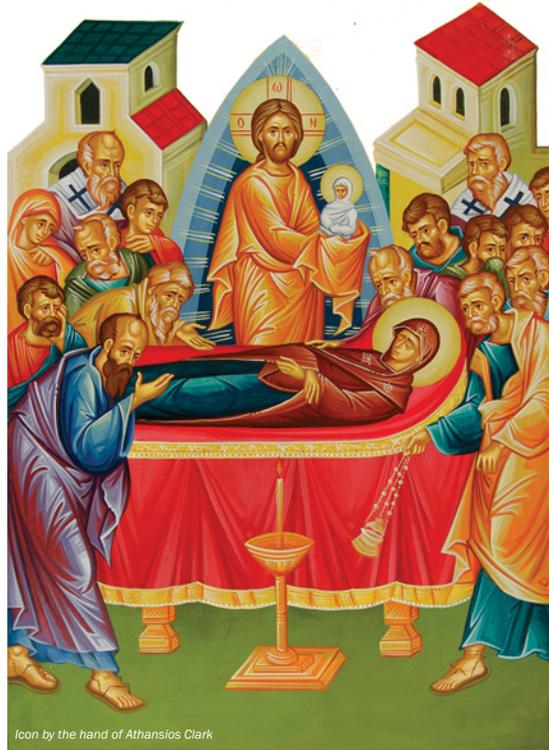


THE BRIDGE + Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ



DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD Greek Orthodox Church

600 South Willard Street • Burlington, Vermont

Hail, Bridge that truly leads from death
to life all who praise you... – *Akathist Hymn*

Χαιρε, η γεφυρα οντως η μεταγουσα εκ θανατου
παντας τους υμνουντας σε... – *Ακαθιστον Υμνον*

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Dormition of the Mother of God Greek Orthodox Church



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SPONSORS NEEDED! This newsletter is our main outreach ministry, sending the message of faith and community to all the members of our parish and others. As a sponsor, you become an important partner in this ministry. Donation: \$50 or more.

Please send the following information to Fr. Ephraim:

Yes! I will sponsor an issue of *THE BRIDGE* ✦ Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ.

Name _____

In honor or memory of / To celebrate _____

Great & Holy Lent

IS A 40-DAY SEASON OF FASTING, PRAYER & REPENTANCE

The fast continues through the Saturday of Lazarus, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week, culminating in the feast of feasts: Pascha. In the early Church, a time of fasting in preparation for the greatest feast was part of the preparation for adults seeking baptism. Pascha was a baptismal feast, and to this day we sing “All who have been baptized in Christ have taken on Christ” during the Paschal Divine Liturgy.

A candidate for Holy Baptism was first asked to fast during the week before Pascha, which we know as Holy Week. This time of fasting, worship, and study was later expanded to include the forty days before Palm Sunday as well. Before Great Lent began, the bishop laid his hands on prospects for baptism, officially declaring them *catechumens*, “those who are receiving instruction.” Over time, the catechumens’ fast expanded to include the whole Church, as other Christians chose to show solidarity with them.

Next to develop were various prescriptions and traditions for worship and liturgy. During Great and Holy Lent, we worship more often and more extensively—but we celebrate the full, joyous Divine Liturgy only on Saturdays and Sundays. However, the early Christians loved to worship so much that the Presanctified Liturgy was developed so that the faithful could receive Holy Communion in a more somber service suited to the season of repentance. With the Presanctified Liturgy, we can gather for worship and be sustained from Sunday to Sunday through union with Jesus Christ in both body and spirit, that is, Holy Communion.

Great Lent also brings us closer to God through fasting. We abstain from foods to tame the passions that are fed by the temptations of the world. This discipline helps us to repent, to change our minds and our ways. By cutting out temptations and increasing prayer, we create more room for God in our lives.

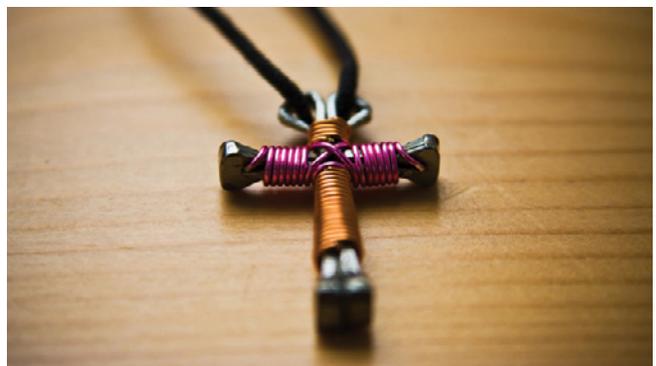
In this way, we allow the grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior to transform us into the persons we are truly meant to be. Through the participation in the

mysteries of the Church, we become new persons through the one perfect Man, Jesus Christ. He came to save the world through His passion and resurrection. Yet he does not simply release us from the bondage of sin and death; He also raises us up so that we might participate in His own perfected, glorious being. At Jesus’s second coming, this perfection will be realized in the final establishment of His eternal kingdom. This kingdom is not of a worldly character but eternal. What we do in this life matters. In the Last Judgment, we will be judged on how we have loved God above all else, and how, through that love of God, we have loved human beings. It is by our love and ability to forgive that we will be able to experience “heaven.” We will feel God’s eternal presence as either heaven or hell.

For this reason, we set aside forty days to abstain from certain foods and peel away our worldly cares. We can discipline our ways and establish a better routine. Just as we can become habitual sinners, we can also become habitual people of prayer and love. God’s love and mercy, however, is not an enabling love that tolerates or makes excuses for sin. We should challenge ourselves like athletes preparing for a marathon in our spiritual lives. Every step and every mile can bring us closer to the end of the race, closer to becoming persons glorified in Christ. Transformed by His grace, we become more Christ-like in our faith and life.

Great and Holy Lent is a period set aside by the Church to help us change our ways and grow closer to God by shedding the worries of this world. As we sing in the Cherubic Hymn during every Divine Liturgy, “Let us lay aside our worldly cares that we may receive the King of all...” Great Lent is the opportunity to realize this in fasting, prayer, and worship. Please make the effort to join me in this journey to Pascha. Together, we will seek to grow closer to God.

– Fr. Ephraim



Psalm 50 (51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the multitude of Your compassion, blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You may be found just when You speak, and victorious when You are judged. For behold, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

For behold, You have loved truth; You have made known to me the secret and hidden things of Your wisdom. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the afflicted bones may rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and establish me with Your governing Spirit.

I shall teach transgressors Your ways, and the ungodly shall turn back to You. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, my tongue shall joyfully declare Your righteousness.

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise. For if You had desired sacrifice, I would give it; you do not delight in burnt offerings. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God will not despise a broken and a humbled heart.

Do good in Your good pleasure to Sion; and let the walls of Jerusalem be built. Then You shall be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings. Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

(From The Akathist Hymn and Small Compline, N. Michael Vaporis and Evie Zachariades-Holmberg, trans., Holy Cross Orthodox Press)

CONFESSION



For those who desire to receive the Sacrament of Confession, Fr. Bob will be available to administer the Sacrament by appointment between now and Holy Tuesday, April 15. Please call Fr. Bob at (802) 865-4416 or e-mail him at Padrerta@aol.com to make an appointment.

Choir Rehearsals for Lent & Pascha



If you'd like to join the choir this Lenten season and Pascha, please come to our rehearsals:

Saturday, February 22, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

(after the Divine Liturgy on the first Psychosavato; bring a bag lunch if you'd like)

Rehearsal for Sundays of Lent and review translations of "Christ is Risen"

Saturday, March 15, 9:30 – noon

Palm Sunday, Holy Week & Easter

Saturday, April 5, 9:30 – noon

Engomia & Sundays after Pascha

Additional practice if needed:

Thursday, April 10, 7–9 pm

Parish Council News

The Parish Council met on February 9, 2014.

The Treasurer's report revealed a balance of \$25,415 in the checking account, \$76,441 in the money market account, \$4,971 in the festival account, and \$180,574 in the Cunavelis account. No reports were available from the Sentinel and community center funds.

The Building Committee reported that repairs to the parish house, including insulation, have been completed. Minor repairs remain and will be scheduled this spring.

Plans for the handicapped access were discussed. Following a recent meeting with our architect, there was agreement to hire an engineer to design the concrete and detail for pinning the access to the ledge that surrounds our church. The Council considered the possibility of phasing in construction, with the church access being the first priority and the community center access to follow.

Consideration is also given to constructing the community center access with wood, which could significantly cut the cost of that project. Cost reduction is a concern as two of the bids under consideration exceed \$200,000. The expectation is that research will be completed so that a proposal could be under consideration at the next General Assembly on March 16, 2014.

The Council agreed to purchase a half-page ad for \$325 to be included in a Faith edition of the Colchester and Essex local newspapers, for distribution prior to Holy Week.

The Council also agreed to move forward with purchasing new carpet to replace the burned carpet in front of the altar. It was decided to delay any plans for a hardwood floor at this time.

The Council had decided to purchase chairs from the Presbyterian church, but has been advised that all of them have been sold.

A plaque honoring the parents of George Cunavelis was revealed and will be placed alongside previous honorees in the church. The Council agreed that a similar plaque honoring the Ducas sisters should be

created and placed alongside those of the other honorees.

A Parish Council retreat is under consideration and has been tentatively scheduled to take place at the Metropolis camp in New Hampshire in May or June.

Father Ephraim announced that the Clergy-Laity Congress is scheduled for July in Philadelphia. In addition to Fr. Ephraim, it is anticipated that a member of the parish shall also represent the parish at that Congress.

The General Assembly date has been set for March 16, 2014. **[NOTE: MIGHT BE MOVED TO MARCH 23]**

Following the resignations of Connie Thomas and Betty Lambesis, the Council elected Eleni Churchill and Eric Jasinski to the Council.

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life!
Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-
heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk.

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

Yea, 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.



Photo © Agios Dionysios Acharon



Donations for HOLY WEEK & EASTER

The following items are needed for our Holy Week and Easter services. To make an offering toward any of the items listed below, please complete the form at the bottom of this page and either mail it or bring it to church along with your financial donation.

PLEASE NOTE

In order to avoid confusion or duplication, NO PARISHIONERS should order or purchase any item until they confirm the donation with Fr. Ephraim.

ALL SERVICES

- Candles
- Incense
- Charcoal
- Wine for Holy Communion

HOLY FRIDAY APOKATHELOSIS

- White sheet
- Rose petals

PALM SUNDAY

- Palms

HOLY FRIDAY ENGOMIA

- Rose water
- Flowers for the tomb

HOLY WEDNESDAY

- Holy Unction supplies
- Flowers

HOLY SATURDAY

- Laurel leaves
- Rose petals

HOLY THURSDAY

- Crown

EASTER SUNDAY

- Lilies
- Wreath

Thank you for your generous stewardship!

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ as an offering toward the purchase of _____ for the Holy Week & Easter services of our parish.

Please mail your donation to
Dormition Greek Orthodox Church
PO Box 8122
Burlington, VT 05402-8122

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____



Philoptochos News & Announcements

The Philoptochos Society is the official philanthropic organization of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Our new newsletter heading shows the icon of the patron saints of Philoptochos, Saints Cosmas & Damian the Unmercenary

Philoptochos means "friend of the poor."

All women of our parish are invited to become members.

Please mark your calendars:

- ♥ Our next regular meeting is **March 16** after coffee hour.
- ♥ **Friday March 14 – Saturday March 15: Metropolis of Boston Lenten Retreat for Women**
St. Methodios Faith & Heritage Center, Contoocook, NH
"Women's Health and Nutrition: How can the traditional Greek diet keep us healthy?" with Elizabeth Metallinos-Katsaras, PhD, RD, Dept. of Nutrition, Simmons College
 - ♥ Check-in Friday 4–6 pm, depart Saturday afternoon
 - ♥ Registration deadline March 5. Suggested donation \$50.
 - ♥ The flyer is available from Presvytera Anthe or Zoe Griffing, and online at www.boston.goarch.org/philoptochos/womens_lenten_retreat
- ♥ **Saturday, April 12: SPRING BAKE SALE**
 - ♥ Tuesday, April 8, 9:30 am: Baklava, crescents, and other baking
 - ♥ Friday, April 11, 10:00 am: Cupping and setup

Reminder: Membership dues of \$20 are "due" now through April.

The Joy of Forgiveness Psalm 32

¹Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

²Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

⁶Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you;

at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

⁷You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah*

⁸I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

¹⁰Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

¹¹Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

MARCH 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>+ 30</p> <p>8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy</p> <p>Coffee hour: Sponsor needed</p>	<p>+ 31</p>					<p>1</p> <p>8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy & Trisagion 10:30 am "What Is Christian Orthodoxy?" 5:00 pm Vespers</p> <p><i>2nd Saturday of Souls</i></p>
<p>+ 2</p> <p>8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy Vespers of Forgiveness</p> <p>Coffee hour: Nick & Sally Pitt</p> <p><i>Cheesefare Sunday</i></p>	<p>+ 3</p> <p>6:00 pm Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew</p> <p><i>Clean Monday (Great Lent begins)</i></p>	<p>+ 4</p> <p>6:00 pm Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew</p>	<p>+ 5</p> <p>5:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy; Potluck, book discussion & children's activity; followed by Compline & Canon of St. Andrew</p>	<p>+ 6</p> <p>7:00 am Orthros 2:00-5:00 pm Fr. Ephraim's office hours 6:00 pm Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew</p>	<p>+ 7</p> <p>9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm Supplications to the Virgin Mary</p>	<p>+ 8</p> <p>8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy & Trisagion 10:30 am "What Is Christian Orthodoxy?" 5:00 pm Vespers</p> <p><i>3rd Saturday of Souls</i></p>
<p>+ 9</p> <p>9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy & procession with icons</p> <p>Coffee hour: The Rorris Family</p> <p><i>Sunday of Orthodoxy</i></p>	<p>+ 10</p>	<p>+ 11</p>	<p>+ 12</p> <p>5:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy; Potluck, book discussion & children's activity</p>	<p>+ 13</p> <p>7:00 am Orthros 2:00-5:00 pm Fr. Ephraim's office hours</p>	<p>+ 14</p> <p>9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm Supplications to the Virgin Mary</p>	<p>+ 15</p> <p>9:30 am Orthros & Choir rehearsal (until noon) 10:00 am "What Is Christian Orthodoxy?" 5:00 pm Vespers</p>
<p>+ 16</p> <p>9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy Philoptochos mtg.</p> <p>Coffee hour: Voula Zontanos & Prez. Anthe</p> <p><i>Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas</i></p>	<p>+ 17</p>	<p>+ 18</p>	<p>+ 19</p> <p>5:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy; Potluck, book discussion & children's activity</p>	<p>+ 20</p> <p>7:00 am Orthros 2:00-5:00 pm Fr. Ephraim's office hours</p>	<p>+ 21</p> <p>9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm Supplications to the Virgin Mary</p>	<p>+ 22</p> <p>9:30 am Orthros 10:00 am "What Is Christian Orthodoxy?" 5:00 pm Vespers</p>
<p>+ 23</p> <p>9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy</p> <p>General Assembly & potluck luncheon</p> <p><i>Sunday of the Holy Cross</i></p>	<p>+ 24</p> <p>5:00 pm Great Vespers (Annunciation)</p>	<p>+ 25</p> <p>8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy</p> <p><i>Annunciation of the Theotokos</i></p>	<p>+ 26</p> <p>5:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy; Potluck, book discussion & children's activity</p>	<p>+ 27</p> <p>7:00 am Orthros 2:00-5:00 pm Fr. Ephraim's office hours</p>	<p>+ 28</p> <p>9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm Supplications to the Virgin Mary</p>	<p>+ 29</p> <p>9:30 am Orthros 10:00 am "What Is Christian Orthodoxy?" 5:00 pm Vespers</p>

continued from back cover... the joys and struggles of the journey toward the Resurrection. Create a Lenten family plan to help you properly prepare for Pascha. As you begin, check with your parish priest for guidance.

THE PHYSICAL FAST

Fasting from food is an important facet of our Lenten discipline. Jesus Christ prepared for the rigors of His ministry by fasting from food for forty days and resisting Satan's temptations. And after casting out a demon that inhabited a child, His disciples wondered why they were not able to perform the exorcism. After rebuking the disciples for their lack of faith, He said, "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21), thereby extolling the virtues of proper fasting. Abstinence from rich and heavy foods—as well as monitoring our portions—is cathartic for the body and refocuses our hunger and desire for God. As nutritional requirements vary from one family member to another, the decision for a meal plan covering Great Lent should be discussed by parents and other heads of households with guidance from your parish priest. Medical or physical conditions may override strict adherence to a fasting diet.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

Just as Jesus prayed during periods of great temptation and troubles, so are we to turn to God in prayer to guide us through the 40-day period. This Lenten period affords numerous services which help to strengthen the faithful in preparation for the Resurrection. Services such as the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete,

Saturday of Souls, Great Compline, Presanctified Liturgy, Salutations to the Theotokos, as well as the five special designations for each Sunday in Lent serve to strengthen our resolve. And although liturgical participation and prayer are year-round necessities of our lives as Orthodox Christians, these tools are to be especially honed during Great Lent—a time when the great deceiver, Satan, will tempt us endlessly with diversions to take our focus away from God. Private prayer, in addition to corporate prayer, should be increased. Families should gather at the home icon corner with more frequency. Focus on quality and concentration of your prayer and not necessarily duration. Speak with your parish priest for further guidance in developing a Lenten rule of prayer for your family.

ALMSGIVING

Almsgiving is often completely ignored during the Lenten season. Many times, it seems that Christian philanthropy is limited to a food drive at Thanksgiving or charitable gift-giving at Christmas. As wonderful as this generosity is, how can we neglect our duty to help others as we prepare to celebrate the feast of feasts and crux of our faith—the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? There is no particular season for human need and suffering. How much more should we address the needs of humanity at this blessed time! Jesus Christ Himself said, "I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch

as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:35–40).

As a family, get creative in devising ways to be charitable during Great Lent. Donate unused clothing hanging in the closet. Grab a few extra canned goods in the grocery store to drop in the donation box. Visit a sick member of the parish family at home or in the hospital. Lend a sympathetic ear to a friend who has hit hard times. Include a Bright Week visit to a nursing home to sing "Christos Anesti/Christ is Risen" to share the joy of the Resurrection with our Orthodox Christian brethren. Almsgiving goes far beyond the giving of tangible gifts. It is also the giving of our hearts and minds to the ailing, disheartened, and lonely.

Above all, abide in love. As a family, choose your words wisely when addressing others. Be patient and considerate. Forgive past grudges and seek understanding. If you are not regularly going to the Sacrament of Confession, this is a most-blessed time to seek the Church's forgiveness and sanctification before receiving Holy Communion and Holy Unction. We should be aware these sacraments are administered in love and bestow upon us God's ever-abundant grace.

Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving—like the tripod, we need all three supports to keep our balance during Lent. When in balance, we can fully experience the resplendence of the Resurrection and proclaim: Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

George Tsongranis, MDiv, is Special Projects Coordinator for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Center for Family Care.



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The Bridge + Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ

March 2014

Balancing Great Lent

GEORGE TSONGRANIS

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye, and the feet, and the hands and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful. Let the ears by not listening to evil talk and gossip. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

– St. John Chrysostom

Think for a moment about a tripod. By definition, it is a stand that provides three-legged support to steady an object placed on it. It might serve to secure a video

camera for recording a granddaughter's graduation from preschool or perhaps to stabilize a telescope for an astronomer gazing into the wondrous night sky. But what would happen if one of the legs were different lengths?

Like the tripod, our approach to Great Lent should include three equal supports to give us the balance we need to steadily focus on the Lord: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. From the earliest days of the Church, the Great Fast was not solely about food. The physical fast was always accompanied by increased prayer and almsgiving. As families, we should look at all three of these elements for a more fulfilling approach to Great Lent. Regardless of varying ages and levels of spiritual maturity, the entire family can share ...continued on page 9