

PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY



COMMUNITY BULLETIN

13 MARCH 2021

No. 19

*Weekly Worship, Events & Announcements —
Submissions Welcome!*

Upcoming Week

- ❖ Please pray for newly departed Kussay, Cyril, Elias, and for the sick Peter & Philip.
- ❖ Sunday service at home: [Typika Service](#) (click top left triple-bar menu, choose 'Sacraments & Services,' then 'Liturgy'), used with [Liturgy - Variable Parts](#)
- ❖ Archdiocesan [Sunday bulletin](#)
- ❖ Saints' days in [Greek](#) and [English](#)
- ❖ Online [9.30 Sunday Matins & Liturgy](#) at Holy Wisdom Cathedral, London
- ❖ Online [10.30 Sunday Liturgy](#) at St Nicholas Parish, Oxford

Events & Announcements

The Archbishop is again allowing confessions — contact Fr Ian (tel. 01865 200 717 or by [email](#)). Please continue to use the sign-up links for [Sunday Liturgies in March](#) and separately for the [Annunciation Liturgy & Doxology](#), 25 March at 6pm.

Sunday 14 March marks [Forgiveness Sunday](#). (The following week is a strict fast.) The [Ecumenical Patriarch's Catechetical Homily](#) at the Opening of Holy and Great Lent 2021 is offered to the faithful for encouragement as we begin Lent.

13–15 March, the Hellenic Centre in London is offering an [online family event](#) for the end of *Apokries* leading into Clean Monday (nominal cost).

From Forgiveness Sunday Vespers: *Let us cheerfully begin the season of Lent, and undergo the spiritual struggles. Let us purify and cleanse our souls and bodies. As we fast from foods, let us also abstain from giving in to any of the passions, and instead delight in the virtues of the Spirit. May we persevere in them with love, and then be counted worthy to see the solemn Passion of Christ our God, and to celebrate holy Pascha with spiritual joy.*

From Fr Ian

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this we will be on the threshold of the Great Fast – a time when, as I have often said, we try to simplify our lives so that there is more space in them for God and for other people. Traditionally this has been summed up under three headings: Prayer, Fasting and Charity. How can we make these a reality for ourselves this Lent?

1. Prayer. We can, of course, try to make more space in our day for conversation with God. We often think of prayer as something to do particularly in the morning and the evening, but perhaps this Lent we should take a broader view. If I wanted to have a proper conversation with a friend, I would be unwise to try to do this during the rush to get everything ready in the morning or when I was getting tired at the end of the day. Might not the same be true of our conversations with God? Could we try this Lent to find a time in our day (maybe in the middle of the day, for instance) to sit down and really talk with and listen to God? We can use prayers from the prayer books, the services of the Church and the Book of Psalms as starting points. Perhaps sometimes we will need only to sit in silence in the awareness of God's presence (friends don't have to talk constantly, after all!) But if we can make a habit of this, even for only five or ten minutes a day we will emerge from Lent with a deepened relationship with God which we can continue to build on as we go into the Easter period.

2. Fasting. The Fathers remind us that fasting from food doesn't bring us that much credit. After all, several of them point out, demons fast more strictly than we do, since they eat nothing at all, but this is of no spiritual benefit to them! If we are spending more time preparing or seeking out food than we would outside Lent then we have entirely missed the point. Simple food and simple preparation free up more of our time for prayer and for serving others. Towards the end of Lent, if we follow the Church's cycle of Scripture readings, we will be reminded in Isaiah 58:6-10 of the fast to which God calls us (Spoiler: it's much the same as we heard in last Sunday's Gospel: a fast from injustice, from selfishness, from closing ourselves off to those who need us and what we can offer them, including material things).

3. Charity. The relevance of this view of fasting to our charity should be fairly clear. If I have simplified my life I will have saved time and money. These are not mine to hoard, but God's to be shared with those in need. Something as simple as donating to the Food Bank collection every time I shop can be a real part of my Lenten devotion and practice. It is also our custom as a community to collect for an Orthodox charity involved in education during Lent. This year our two Parish councils have decided that our collection will be for the Shepherds' High School in Beit Sahour in Palestine (<https://beitsahour.ps/2018/08/11/shepherds-high-school/>; if you read Arabic their own website is at <http://shepherdshighschool.ps/ar/>) There will be a collection box on the candle desk at church for the contributions of those who are able to attend the services. If you aren't able to give in that way please contact our Treasurer for details of how to contribute. We cannot do everything that we are used to doing in Lent this year, but let us not lose sight of the fact that there is much that we can do. Above all let us keep the goal in view: closer to God, closer to others. May our Lent be blessed.

With my love to you all,
Fr Ian

Beginning Lent

The Sunday of Forgiveness, the last of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent, has two themes: it commemorates Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise, and it accentuates our need for forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of Great Lent. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But we are also preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from others, but should link us to them with ever-stronger bonds.

[Source](#)

From Forgiveness Vespers: *Your grace has shone forth, O Lord; the illumination of our souls has shone forth. Behold, this is the acceptable season; behold, this is the season of repentance. Let us put away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, so that we may navigate the immense ocean of Lent, and arrive at the third-day Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls.*



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**Please remember
Holy Trinity Parish
in your prayers!**

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