

Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Rochester, New York

Great Lent Survival Kit

Let us begin the fast with joy!

Let us cleanse our soul and cleanse our flesh!

That we all may see the passion of Christ our God,
and rejoice at the holy Pascha!

To the Glory of God!

Prepared by Fr. Ken James Stavrevsky
Great Lent 2005

The Lenten Spiritual Triad

PRAYER

Attending the Worship Services
of the Church

Daily Personal Prayer

Meditation and Reflection
(time for silence of mind & heart)

Study of Scriptures

Reading Lives of the Saints,
Writings of the Fathers,
Books/Articles on our Faith

FASTING

Dietary Rules and Discipline

Abstaining from
Distracting Activities

Turning down the "noise"
of everyday living

Fasting from Sin while
Striving to Grow in Virtue

Creating "holy" time and
space where we live

CHARITY

Showing Patience, Kindness,
Forgiveness and Love
to those we Live with,
Work with, and
Encounter Daily
(even the "Stranger")

Giving of our Time, Talent,
and Treasure to our Parish,
to those in need. and all who
are in affliction of body,
mind or spirit

Feeding the Hungry,
Clothing the Naked,
Visiting the Lonely,

*Seeing the face of
Christ in others*

Introduction to Great Lent Father Alexander Schmemmann

When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Easter, "the Feast of Feasts." It is the preparation for the "fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Easter, for it reveals something very essential, very crucial about our Christian faith and life.

Is it necessary to explain that Easter is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory...

Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? ... We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and ultimately meaningless — a meaningless journey toward a meaningless end. ... We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

If we realize this, then we may understand what Easter is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. ... This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new." ... For each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!"

Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

“Forgiveness”

A Homily delivered to the community at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
on Forgiveness Sunday of 1983

As once more we are about to enter the Great Lent, I would like to remind us – myself first of all, and all of you my fathers, brothers, and sisters – of the verse that we just sang, one of the stichera, and that verse says: "Let us begin Lent, the Fast, with joy."

Only yesterday we were commemorating Adam crying, lamenting at the gates of Paradise, and now every second line of the Triodion and the liturgical books of Great Lent will speak of *repentance*, acknowledging what dark and helpless lives we live, in which we sometimes are immersed. And yet, no one will prove to me that the general tonality of Great Lent is not that of a tremendous joy! Not what we call "joy" in this world – not just something entertaining, interesting, or amusing – but the deepest definition of joy, that joy of which Christ says: "no one will take away from you" (Jn. 16:22). Why joy? What is that joy?

So many people under various influences have come to think of Lent as a kind of self-inflicted inconvenience. Very often in Lent we hear these conversations: "What do you give up for Lent?" – it goes from candy to, I don't know what. There is the idea that if we suffer enough, if we feel the hunger enough, if we try by all kinds of strong or light ascetical tools, mainly to "suffer" and be "tortured," so to speak, it would help us to "pay" for our absolution. But this is not our Orthodox faith. Lent is *not a punishment*. Lent is not a kind of painful medicine that helps only inasmuch as it is painful.

LENT IS A GIFT! Lent is a gift from God to us, a gift which is admirable, marvelous, one that we desire. Now, a gift of what? I would say that it is a gift of *the essential* – that which is essential and yet which suffers most in our life because we are living lives of confusion and fragmentation, lives which constantly conceal from us the eternal, the glorious, the divine meaning of life and take away from us that which should "push" and, thus, correct and fill our life with joy. And this essential is *thanksgiving*: the acceptance from God of that wonderful life, as St. Peter says, "...created out of nothing...", created exclusively by the love of God, for there is no other reason for us to exist; loved by Him even before we were born, we were taken into His marvelous light. Now we live and we forget. When was the last time I thought about it? But I do not forget so many little things and affairs that transform my whole life into empty noise, into a kind of traveling without knowing where.

Lent returns to me, gives back to me, this *essential* – the essential layer of life. Essential because it is coming from God; essential because it is revealing God. The essential time, because time again is a great, great area of sin. Because time is the time of what? Of *priorities*. And how often our priorities are not at all as they should be. Yet in Lent, waiting, listening, singing ... you will see, little by little that *time* – broken, deviated, taking us to death and nowhere else, without any meaning. You will see that time again becomes *expectation*, becomes something *precious*. You wouldn't take one minute of it away from its purpose of pleasing God, of accepting from Him

His life and returning that life to Him together with our gratitude, our wisdom, our joy, our fulfillment.

After this essential time comes the essential relationship that we have with everything in the world, a relationship which is expressed so well in our liturgical texts by the word *reverence*. So often, everything becomes for us an object of "utilizing," something which is "for grabs," something which "belongs" to me and to which I have a "right." Everything should be as *Communion* in my hands. This is the reverence of which I speak. It is the discovery that God, as Pasternak once said, was "...a great God of details," and that nothing in this world is outside of that divine reverence. God is reverent, but we so often are not.

So, we have the essential time, the essential relationship with matter filled with reverence, and last, but not least, the rediscovery of the essential *link among ourselves*: the rediscovery that we belong to each other, the rediscovery, that no one has entered my life or your life without the will of God. And with that rediscovery, there is everywhere an appeal, an offering to do something for God: to help, to comfort, to transform, to take with you, with each one of you, that brother and sister of Christ. This is that *essential relationship*.

Essential time, essential matter, essential thought: all that is so different from what the world offers us. In the world everything is accidental. If you don't know how to "kill" time, our society is absolutely ingenious in helping you to do that. We kill time, we kill reverence, we transform communications, relationships, words, divine words into jokes and blasphemies, and sometimes just pure nonsense. There is this thirst and hunger for nothing, but external success.

Don't we understand, don't we understand, brothers and sisters what power is given to us in the form of Lent. Lenten Spring! Lenten beginning! Lenten resurrection! And all this is given to us *free*. Come, listen to that prayer. Make it *yours*! Don't even try to think on your own; just join, just enter and rejoice! And that joy will start killing those old and painful and boring sins... And with that you will have that great joy which the angels heard, which the disciples experienced when they returned to Jerusalem after Christ's Ascension. It is that joy which was left with them that we nobly adopted. It is first of all the joy of knowing, the joy of having something in me which, whether I want it or not, will start transforming life in me and around me.

This last essential is the *essential return to each other*: this is where we begin tonight. This is what we are doing right now. For if we would think of the real sins we have committed, we would say that one of the most important is exactly the style and tonality which we maintain with each other: our complaining and criticizing. I don't think that there are cases of great and destructive hatred or assassination, or something similar. It is just that we exist as if we are completely out of each other's life, out of each other's interests, out of each other's love. Without having repaired this relationship, there is no possibility of entering into Lent. Sin – whether we call it "original" sin or "primordial" sin – has broken the unity of life in this world, it has broken *time*, and time has become that fragmented current which takes us into old age and death. It has broken our social relations, it has broken families. Everything is *diabolos* – divided and destroyed. But Christ has come into the world and said: "... and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (Jn. 12:32).

It is impossible to go to Christ without taking with me the *essential*. It is not the abandonment of everything as we go to Christ; it is finding in Him the power of that resurrection: of unity, of love, of trust, of joy, of all that which, even if it occupies some place in our life, is at the same time so minuscule. It is tragic to think that from churches, from seminaries, what comes to heaven are complaints ... being tired, always something not going right... You know, sitting in my office from time to time, I am admiring people for inventing new "tragedies" every half hour.

But we are Christ's and Christ is God's. And if we had – because we know – just a little bit of that which would bring us together, we would replace all my little offenses with even a little amount of that joy. That is the forgiveness we want and ask God to give us. Because if there is a strict commandment in the Gospel, it is that commandment: "if you forgive ... your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive ... neither will your Father forgive ... " (Mt. 6:14-15). So, of course it is a necessity. But the NOW of that, I repeat it once more, is to be horrified by the fragmentation of our own existence, by the pettiness in our relationships, by the destruction of words, and by the abandoning of this *reverence*.

Now we have to forgive each other whether or not we have any explicit sins or crimes against each other. That reconciliation is another *epiphany* of the Church as the Kingdom of God. We are saved because we are in the Body of Christ. We are saved because we accept from Christ the world and the essential order. And finally, we accept Christ when we accept each other. Everything else is a *lie* and *hypocrisy*.

So, fathers, brothers, sisters: let us forgive one another. Let us not think about why. There is enough to think about. Let us do it. Right now, in a kind of deep breath, say: "Lord, help us to forgive. Lord, renew all these relationships." What a chance is given here for *love to triumph!* – for unity to reflect the Divine unity, and for everything essential to return as life itself. What a chance! Is the answer we give today *yes* or *no*? Are we going to that forgiveness? Are we gladly accepting it? Or is it something which we do just because it is on the calendar – today, you follow, forgiveness; tomorrow, let's do...? *No!* this is the *crucial* moment. This is the beginning of Lent. This is our spring "repair" because reconciliation is the powerful renewal of the ruin.

So, please, for the sake of Christ: let us forgive each other. The first thing I am asking all of you, my spiritual family, is to forgive me. Imagine how many temptations of laziness, of avoiding too much, and so on and so forth. What a constant defense of my own interests, health, or this or that... I know that I don't even have an ounce of this self-giving, self-sacrifice which is truly a true repentance, the true renewal of love.

Please forgive me and pray for me, so that what I am preaching I could first of all somehow, be it only a little bit, integrate and incarnate in my life.

Father Alexander Schmemmann

Fasting During Great Lent: A Practical Approach

If your health and circumstances are somewhat “normal” you may find these following recommendations helpful. Remember that fasting does not have to be an “all-or-nothing” endeavor. If fasting strictly is beyond your reach, don’t give up! Do something positive and enter the Lenten journey, as you are able. Certainly, you must not sacrifice your health and physical well-being in the process. But the effort you put forth ought to be a challenge to your “passions” for food and material satisfactions. You may have to be a little creative to adapt these suggestions to your unique situation. That’s all right. The goal must be remembered: to liberate ourselves from the **material** in order that the **spirit** may grow. It implies an increase in prayer life, spiritual reflection, and an attitude of repentance. Fasting is, in other words, part of the Lenten journey when properly tied to the other disciplines (attending worship, personal prayer, acts of charity, etc). Fasting alone, done as an act of fulfilling a law or regulation, will not bring forth the fruits we desire. The Church warns us not to approach fasting in a “legalistic” way, and Canon Law directs that in some cases -- pregnant women, the seriously ill, travelers -- fasting be excused entirely or modified appropriately. As with all matters of spiritual progress, consult with your pastor.

Here are some approaches to consider. Don’t forget -- the “strict, ascetic fast” is the definitive rule of the Church regarding fasting. These approaches do not change the rule of fasting nor do they create several “rules” of fasting. They are meant as practical building blocks toward fulfilling the goals of fasting. Using this guidance, you may prayerfully embrace and follow a “rule of fasting” for your spiritual growth and participation in the life of the Church. Read each approach presented here carefully – remember that each builds upon the previous one.

- 1) **“A HUMBLE BEGINNING”** For those who have never fasted before, or who find such efforts extremely difficult, **this is a good place to start**. First, be sure to set aside your meal time as a special moment of thanksgiving and communion with God. No television or radio! Begin, and end, with a short prayer. Use the time to communicate lovingly with family members or to quietly reflect on the presence of God in your life. Refrain from eating meat and meat products on Wednesdays and Fridays (note: this is the recommended discipline for Orthodox Christians throughout the year, but if you are not currently fasting this is a place to begin!) from the beginning of Lent until after the Easter Liturgy.
- 2) **“A BASIC FAST”** Refrain from eating meat & meat products for all (that is, every day) of Great Lent.
- 3) **“FASTING WITH GREATER DISCIPLINE”** Follow the “basic fast” but also refrain from animal/dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent. These items include: milk, cheese, eggs, butter, cream, yogurt, and so on.
- 4) **“FASTING WITH FERVOR”** Extend the effort and refrain from animal/dairy products for the duration of Great Lent. This can be modified by allowing dairy products on the weekends. Obviously, this type of fasting must be approached cautiously. Children need to be provided with a nutritionally balanced diet appropriate to their growth and development needs. Be reasonable. Consult some of the very fine cookbooks available on vegetarian eating. If in doubt, speak to your pastor, a physician, nutritional specialist, or others who may be of assistance.
- 5) **“FASTING WITH ASCETIC STRICTNESS”** This obviously requires much planning, commitment, and maturity. It includes everything in “fasting with fervor” and also refrains from fish, oil, wine/alcohol, and normally limits the number of “warm” meals to one a day.

What should I do for Great Lent?

an abbreviated checklist of possibilities

- [] Attend the worship services of the Church as fully as possible; prayerfully and with sincerity of heart. Plan your schedule intentionally to make this happen!
- [] Make time for regular and consistent prayer. Use mundane and habitual actions (brushing your teeth, shaving, showering, doing work around the house, commuting, etc.) as moments for prayer. Let prayer become a natural part of your life activities. Learn some prayers and an “attitude” of prayer so these may come to your remembrance during the day.
- [] Put “prayer time” – at least in the morning and evening -- as a priority item in your daily schedule (or “Daytimer”). Have a family plan to come together for prayer daily or at least weekly.
- [] Reconcile yourself to your loved ones, your neighbors, your coworkers (yes, even the annoying ones), and acquaintances. Be humble enough to say “I’m sorry” and to seek forgiveness, and give forgiveness even when it is not requested.
- [] Put a basket or jar on your kitchen/dining room table. Once a week plan a “super banquet meal” (include every tempting food you passionately crave and desire) and determine what such a meal would cost either in a good restaurant or to buy all of the ingredients. Then, in place of this extravagant meal, have something very simple, plain and “lenten.” Figure out the amount of money you have saved and place it (cash or check) into the basket. Decide how this money might help the less fortunate and send it to a charity or offer it in your Church offerings.
- [] Contact one local charity each week and learn about their work. See where God leads you!
- [] Consult your parish calendar and read the appointed scripture reading for each day.
- [] Read the lives of the saints remembered daily. Visit the webpage at <http://www.oca.org>
- [] Learn how to cry honestly and rejoice genuinely.
- [] Be thankful for simple blessings (like, for example, a boiled potato!)
- [] Consider eternity and the rapid passage of time in this life.
- [] Pray for others.
- [] Seek the prayers of others.
- [] When in doubt, LOVE!

Prayers at the Beginning of the Day

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You, our God! Glory to You!

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, the Comforter, and Spirit of Truth, You are present everywhere and You fill all things. You are the Treasury of Blessings and the Giver of Life. Come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

The Song of the Angels

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, wash away our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Come, let us worship God our King!

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ our King and our God!

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

As I arise from sleep, I worship You - O good and almighty Lord - and I sing praises to You with the song of the angels in heaven: "Holy! Holy! You are Holy, O God!" Through the prayers of the Theotokos and all the saints, have mercy on me.

Lord, you have allowed me to awake from sleep and have raised me from my bed; I pray that You will enlighten my mind and open my heart and my lips so I may praise You by saying: "O Holy Trinity! Holy! Holy! You are Holy, O God!" Through the prayers of the Theotokos and all the saints, have mercy on me.

As I arise from sleep, I thank You -- O Holy Trinity. Through Your great goodness and patience You were not angry with me, a sinner. You did not destroy me because of my sins, but You have shown me Your love by raising me up this morning so I may glorify Your power. Enlighten my mind and my heart so I may understand Your commandments, that I may do Your will, and praise Your holy name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers for the Living

Lord, grant the forgiveness of sins, peace, health, salvation, and all good things worthy of Your blessing to your servants _____. [*Here you should remember and pray for people, by name. Consider your Priest, members of your family, friends, and anyone else you wish to include. Don't forget to consider those who are sick, and those who you may have sinned against. The Lord also commands us to forgive and pray for those who have sinned against us or offended us.*] On behalf of those I have remembered, and for myself also, I cry out to You and say, "Lord, have mercy." Remember us in Your Kingdom.

Prayers for the Departed

Merciful Lord, grant forgiveness and eternal rest to those who have departed this life before me in faith and the hope of resurrection to eternal life. In Your Kingdom, O Lord, remember Your servants _____. [*Here you should remember people, who have fallen asleep in the Lord, by name. Consider the members of your family, friends, and anyone else you wish to include.*] For You - Christ our God -- are the resurrection, the life, and the repose of Your servants who have fallen asleep, and to You we send up glory, together with Your eternal Father and the all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. May their memory be eternal!

The Father is my hope! The Son is my refuge! The Holy Spirit is my protector!
Holy Trinity, glory to You!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto
ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Jesus Christ, my God and Savior, have mercy on me and save me: through the
prayers of the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; through the protection of the
honorable and glorious angelic powers of heaven; through the prayers of the
honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner and baptizer of our Lord, John; by the
power of the precious and life-giving Cross; through the prayers of the all-praised
Apostles; through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and victorious Martyrs; through
the prayers of my fervent intercessor Saint _____ [*here remember the saint in whose
name you were baptized*]; through the prayers of the holy and righteous ancestors of
God, Joachim and Anna; and through the prayers of all the saints. Amen.

Psalms that may be added to the Morning Prayers

Psalm 3

Psalm 38

Psalm 63

Psalm 103

Psalm 143

The Praises

Psalm 148

Psalm 149

Psalm 150

Prayer before Meals

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise Him; their hearts shall live forever!

Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

O Christ our God, bless the food and drink of Your servants, for You are holy always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer after Meals

We thank You, O Christ our God, for You have satisfied us with Your earthly blessings and gifts. Do not deprive us also of Your Heavenly Kingdom, but as You came into the midst of Your disciples and gave them peace, so come to us and save us, O Savior!

Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

God is with us through His grace and love for us, always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayers at the End of the Day

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You, our God! Glory to You!

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, the Comforter, and Spirit of Truth, You are present everywhere and You fill all things. You are the Treasury of Blessings and the Giver of Life. Come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

The Song of the Angels

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.
Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.
Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, wash away our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Come, let us worship God our King!

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ our King and our God!

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

Prayers for the Living

Lord, grant the forgiveness of sins, peace, health, salvation, and all good things worthy of Your blessing to your servants _____. [*Here you should remember and pray for people, by name. Consider your Priest, members of your family, friends, and anyone else you wish to include. Don't forget to consider those who are sick, and those who you may have sinned against. The Lord also commands us to forgive and pray for those who have sinned against us or offended us.*] On behalf of those I have remembered, and for myself also, I cry out to You and say, "Lord, have mercy." Remember us in Your Kingdom.

Prayers for the Departed

Merciful Lord, grant forgiveness and eternal rest to those who have departed this life before me in faith and the hope of resurrection to eternal life. In Your Kingdom, O Lord, remember Your servants _____. [*Here you should remember people, who have fallen asleep in the Lord, by name. Consider the members of your family, friends, and anyone else you wish to include.*] For You - Christ our God -- are the resurrection, the life, and the repose of Your servants who have fallen asleep, and to You we send up glory, together with Your eternal Father and the all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. May their memory be eternal!

Guard and protect me, O Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of Your precious and life-giving Cross, and keep me from all evil. Into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, I commit my spirit and my body. Bless me, save me, and grant me eternal life. Amen.

Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me a sinner. [*This is "The Jesus Prayer," which you may repeat as many times as necessary to bring peace to your soul before going to sleep*].

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

As I prepare for sleep, O Master, grant rest to my body and soul. Keep me from the dark sleep of sin and from every dark and passionate pleasure of the night. Calm the impulses of evil thoughts and visions. Extinguish the flaming arrows of temptation which the Evil One directs against me. Calm the rebelliousness of my body and put to rest all of my earthly and material anxieties. O God, grant me an alert mind, pure thoughts, a thankful heart, and a peaceful sleep that is free from every fantasy of the devil. Raise me up in the morning, confirmed in Your commandments and mindful of Your will. Grant that I may glorify You throughout this night; that I may sing, bless, and glorify Your most honorable and majestic name: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Jesus Christ, my God and Savior, have mercy on me and save me: through the prayers of the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; through the protection of the honorable and glorious angelic powers of heaven; through the prayers of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner and baptizer of our Lord, John; by the power of the precious and life-giving Cross; through the prayers of the all-praised Apostles; through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and victorious Martyrs; through the prayers of my fervent intercessor Saint _____ [*here remember the saint in whose name you were baptized*]; through the prayers of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and through the prayers of all the saints. Amen.

Psalms that may be added to the Evening Prayers

Psalm 104
Psalm 141
Psalm 142
Psalm 23

AN ORDER OF EVENING PRAYER

**from the Service of Compline during the season of Great Lent
for a family or an individual.**

In advance, ensure a quiet and peaceful atmosphere.

Stand before icons of Our Lord and the Virgin Mary.

(note: icon of our Lord to your right, the Theotokos to your left)

Prepare two prayer lists: those living and those departed.

A candle may be lighted.

Glory to You, our God! Glory to You!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; everywhere present and filling all things. Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life. Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us! (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship God, our King! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

Psalm 70

Hasten, O God, to save me; O LORD, come quickly to help me. May those who seek my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace. May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame. But may all who seek you rejoice and be

glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, "Let God be exalted!" Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

Psalm 31

In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth. I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends-- those who see me on the street flee from me. I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave. Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous. How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues. Praise be to the LORD, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city. In my alarm I said, "I am cut off from your sight!" Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help. Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

The day has passed; I thank You, O Lord! Grant me, I pray, that this evening and this night I will not fall into sin, and save me, O Savior.

O Master, grant that this evening and this night I may be without deceit, and save me, O Savior.

O Holy One, grant that this evening and this night I may be assailed by no temptation, and save me, O Savior.

Intercessions

O all-holy Lady, Theotokos (Birth-Giver of God), and ever-virgin Mary, pray for us sinners! (*the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist*)

O Hosts of Angels and Archangels, and all the bodiless powers of heaven, pray for us sinners! (*the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist*)

O holy John -- Prophet, Forerunner and Baptizer of our Lord -- pray for us sinners! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

O holy and glorious Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs all Saints of our Lord, pray for us sinners! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

All of you, our righteous and holy Fathers and Mothers, Pastors and Ecumenical Teachers, pray for us sinners! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

O invincible and divine power of the honorable and life-giving Cross, do not forsake us sinners! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

O God, cleanse me a sinner! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

O God, cleanse me a sinner! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

O God, cleanse me a sinner, and have mercy on me! *(the sign of the cross is made with a small bow from the waist)*

Prayer before the icon of the Theotokos

O Virgin, pure, spotless, incorrupt, undefiled, and all-pure; O Bride of God and Sovereign Lady, who united the Word of God with humanity through your most glorious birth-giving and has set free the sinful nature of our race that it might be yoked to that which is heavenly. You are the sole hope of the hopeless, the helper of those who are assailed, a speedy defender of those who flee to you and the refuge of all Christians. Do not despise me, a sinner polluted by shameful thoughts, words, and deeds. Look upon me as one who has, through laziness of soul and mind, become a slave of sin and the worldly cares of life. But, since you are the Mother of the God who loves mankind, mercifully have compassion on me -- a sinner and a prodigal. Accept my prayer offered from impure lips. And exercising your maternal boldness, intercede with your Son and our God - our Master and Lord - that He will open to me the compassionate loving-kindness of His goodness and disregard my sinfulness while turning me to repentance. Pray that He will show me to be a well-skilled doer of His commandments. And be ever present with me; for you are a fervent intercessor and helper who, in this present life, repels the assaults of adversaries while leading me to salvation and, at the hour of death, cares diligently for my soul. May I be delivered from eternal judgement and be manifested as an heir of the glorious kingdom of your Son and our God. All of which I shall obtain, O Lady and Theotokos, by your help; through the mercy and love toward mankind of your only-begotten Son - our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ - to whom is due all glory, honor and worship, together with His Father from everlasting, and His all-holy, good, and life-giving Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer before the icon of our Lord

And grant to me, O Master, as I prepare for sleep, repose both of body and soul. Preserve me from the gloomy slumber of sin, and from every dark and impure temptation. Calm the impulses of carnal desires and quench the fiery darts of the Evil One craftily directed against me. Ease the

rebellions of my flesh. Still my earthly and material anxieties. And grant to me, O Lord, a watchful mind, a pure reasoning, a sober heart and sleep free from every vision of evil. Raise me up again in the morning, strengthened in Your precepts and holding steadfastly within me the memory of Your commandments. Grant that through this night I may sing praises to You, and that I may hymn, bless, and glorify Your all-holy and majestic name - Lord Jesus Christ - together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

A final Prayer before the icon of the Theotokos

O exceedingly glorious, ever-virgin Mother of Christ our God, bear our petitions unto Your Son and our God, and implore Him to save our souls.

For the bishops of the Orthodox Church, priests, deacons, monastics and all of the faithful, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For the good estate and strengthening of the Holy Orthodox Church in our land and everywhere, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For civil authorities, those who serve in the government and in the armed forces, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For those who love us and those who hate us, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For those who are kind to us and help us, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For those who have asked us to pray for them, although we are unworthy, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For our departed fathers, mothers, loved ones and friends who lie asleep in the Lord, especially (*names*), that they may be granted rest eternal in blessed repose, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For peace, health, assistance, and furtherance in all good things for the servants of God (*names*), and for their salvation, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For those who are in sickness, suffering or affliction of body, mind or spirit, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

For peaceful times and the abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us say: Lord, have mercy.

Also, I pray unto God for my salvation and say: Lord, have mercy!

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust of power, and idle talk! *(a bow from the waist or full prostration is made)*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Your servant! *(a bow from the waist or full prostration is made)*

O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brothers and sisters, for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. *(a bow from the waist or full prostration is made)*

Forgive, O Lord, those who hate us and those who have wronged us. Do well unto those who do well. Grant those things leading unto salvation and eternal life. Visit the afflicted and the sick with Your healing of soul and body. Guide those who travel. Remember in Your loving-kindness those who have asked us to pray for them. Remember our departed brethren. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Remember those who labor and offer gifts in Your holy churches. Remember those in need of material or spiritual blessings. Grant them, and all of us, the petitions that lead unto salvation. Remember me also, O Lord, Your humble and unworthy servant. Illumine my mind with the light of Your wisdom, and guide me in the way of Your commandments. Through the prayers of the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; through the prayers of Saint _____ *(the name of the saint whose name you bear in baptism)*; and through the prayers of all Your saints, for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

The end, to the Glory of God.

The “Jesus Prayer”

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner!

(This prayer should be repeated many times, slowly, in meditation.

Some people use a “prayer rope” as they recite this prayer;

you may ask your priest about obtaining a prayer rope for the ascetical practice of saying the “Jesus Prayer”)

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life!

Take from me the spirit of laziness,
despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

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

Yes, O Lord and King! Grant me to see
my own transgressions,
and not to judge my brothers and sisters,
for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

The Father is my Hope!
The Son is my Refuge!
The Holy Spirit is my Protector!
Most Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!

The Polyelaion (“Many Mercies”) from Psalm 135 and 136

Praise the name of the Lord; praise Him all you servants of the Lord! *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise Him, you who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

O Lord, Your name endures forever. Your glory, O Lord, is remembered from generation to generation. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Praise be to the Lord from Zion, to Him who dwells in Jerusalem. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*
Alleluia!

Give thanks to the God of gods. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

To Him who alone does great wonders. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*
Alleluia!

To Him who made the heavens. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

To Him who spread out the earth upon the waters. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

To Him who made the great lights. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*
Alleluia!

To Him who made the sun to rule the day. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

To Him who made the moon and stars to rule the night. His mercy never fails.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

To the One who remembered our low estate. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

To the One who freed us from our enemies. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

To the One who gives food to every creature. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give thanks to the God of heaven. His mercy never fails. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*
Alleluia!

The Great Doxology (Song of Glory)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among all people. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King, and **Father** almighty!

O Lord, the only-begotten **Son**, Jesus Christ, and the **Holy Spirit**!

O Lord God, Lamb of God and Son of the Father; Who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. You take away the sins of the world; receive our prayer. You sit at the right hand of the Father; have mercy on us. For You only are holy, You only are the Lord - Jesus Christ - in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day I will bless You, and praise Your name forever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. You are blessed, O Lord, God of our fathers; praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen. May Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us for we have put our trust in You.

Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your commandments.

Blessed are You, O Master; let me understand Your commandments.

Blessed are You, O Holy One; enlighten me with Your commandments.

Lord, You have been our helper from generation to generation. I said, "Lord have mercy on me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."

Lord, I run to You. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; with You is the source of life, and in Your light we shall see light. Continue Your mercy to those who know You.

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us!

The Song of the Theotokos
(The ever-virgin Mary, and Mother of our God)

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

For He has regarded the humility of His handmaiden. Behold, from this time all generations will call me blessed.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

For He who is mighty has done great wonders for me; and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

He has taken Israel as His child in remembrance of His mercy, as He promised to our fathers -- to Abraham and his children forever.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!