

THE WAY + ЈЕДИНИ ПУТ
MARCH 2015 BULLETIN

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Sunday of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of the great lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy in our Church or Sunday of the victory of the Orthodox Church. It is a day when we take a long and deep look at our Christian faith, the ancient faith of our fathers.

It is obvious, my dear brothers and sisters, that we live in a time of tremendous change. Life today is greatly different from what it was 50 years ago. Today there are millions of cars on the road, millions of TV's and other electronic gadgets, we can follow events around the world, we have satellites circling the globe and yes, unfortunately, we also have massive nuclear bombs that can destroy life in a flash. That is how irresponsible we are.

But, in all this world of change there is one thing that has not changed. The orthodox faith is one and the same today as it was a hundred and thousand years ago. On this day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we are proud to raise our heads and proclaim to the world of change that we hold the unchanged Christian faith, that we belong to the mother of all Christian churches.

Today we must remind ourselves of the religious heritage that is ours. In the 9th century, the Church proclaimed that this Sunday is to be observed in commemoration of the triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies. We live in a land of many religions. Among them is our own the faith of ancient Christianity, the faith of Apostles, the faith of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the faith of the undivided Christian Church. We can trace our religious heritage back through the ages, back to the first Church, back to the Lord himself.

Therefore, on this day of Orthodoxy, we must rededicate ourselves to Christ and to the Christian faith. It is not enough for us to glory in the past; we have the present to consider, and the future to be concerned about.

“**Come and follow me**”, said our Lord to the apostle Philip, as we heard in today's gospel lesson. In truth this call is extended to every Christian of every age. But, Christianity, my dear brothers and sisters, involves a way of living. In fact, in ancient times it was simply called the way. Today, as we proudly proclaim that we belong to the Orthodox Church, let us not forget that there is also an Orthodox way of life, one that glorifies Christ, and it is our task to live that life.

Beloved, from an historical standpoint, the institution of this Sunday of Orthodoxy evolved from a dispute about the use of icons in the Church. The glory of an Eastern Church today is the presence of beautiful icons and frescos throughout the temple. These sacred pictures not only provide a religious and mystical feeling to a church, but they are a wonderful visual aid and Scripture commentary that is of great educational value.

In the early eight century, however, an attempt was made to remove icons from churches and destroy them. Finally an Ecumenical Council of Bishops was called in Nicea in 787 and a final definition was made approving their use. The honor given to icons is relative, that is, it is not given to the wood and paint, but it reverts to the Person, the original image (Icon=Image) of Christ, Mother of God or different saints of the Church who are our intercessors before the Lord. When a mother hugs or kisses a photo of a lost child she does not express her love to a plastic but to her child. In same manner we approach and venerate holy icons asking from those saints depicted on them to help us, strengthen us, intercede for us and guide us in our journey towards heaven. On the first Sunday of Lent in 843 a great celebration of this practice was held in Constantinople, and has been held ever since as the triumph of Orthodoxy.



May we then, today, be fully aware of our religious treasure of faith, may we honor the memory of those who have handed down this heritage to us, and may we solemnly re-dedicate ourselves to believe in Christ and serve him as we promised the day we were baptized into God's family, the Church. Amen.

Недеља Православља (о икони)

Реч икона је грчког порекла и значи слика, лик, образ, а можда најбољу и најпрецизнију дефиницију појма иконе је дао један савремени богослов рекавши: „Икона је прозор у Вечност“. Већ из ових речи се да наслутити да циљ православне иконе није да прикаже ствари онаквима какве јесу, већ онаквима какве ће бити, тачније, она приказује једну потпуно другачију стварност, односно слику, образ или лик оне праве и једине стварности која ће се у потпуности открити у Царству Божијем. Према Светом Максиму Исповеднику овај свет је само икона, а Царство Божије је потпуна истина.

Једна од првих представа коју су хришћани користили како би приказали Христа био је цртеж рибе (грч. ΙΧΘΥΣ). Свако слово ове речи имало је значење које је указивало на Христа (Iesus Hristos Theu Ios Sotir – Исус Христос Син Божији Спаситељ). Представе су се умножавале и прве иконе су врло рано настале у катакомбама, у виду живописа на гробовима мученика. Наиме, хришћани су гледали како многи од њих страдају постајући мученици, али сахрањујући њихова тела нису их гледали као беживотне лешеве, већ су их очима вере видели као већ прослављене у Царству Божијем. Свест о Другом доласку Христовом и будућим стварима, односно Царству Божијем, била је од пресудног значаја за формирање хришћанске уметности, нарочито, иконе као њеног најистакнутијег обележја. Временом се тај израз развијао и, коначно, свој најсавршенији облик и богословску подлогу хришћанска уметност је добила у Византијској епохи.

Црква је преживела један веома тежак период за време „Иконоборачке јереси“, када су, нажалост, многе иконе и мошти светих уништене. Камен спотицања је управо била Друга заповест Декалога. Васељенски сабор одржан 787. г. у Цариграду, разрешио је објаснивши да се поштовањем икона не обожава материјал од којег је икона (подразумева се и фреска), већ личност која је ту приказана. Тако, када се клањамо Христовој икони, клањамо се самоме Христу, а не материјалу од којег је она направљена. Исто је са поштовањем икона и моштију светих, јер поштовањем светих, поштујемо Христа и клањамо се првенствено Христу, као Ономе из Кога произилази светост светих. Дакле, у светима се познаје Бог. То је и смисао речи 7. васељенског сабора: „Част указана икони ка прототипу се уздиже“. Коначно, прве недеље Часног поста 843.г. Црква је поразила Иконоборство и успоставила иконопоштовање. Од тада се ова недеља назива Недеља Православља.

Када стојимо испред православне иконе, прво што видимо јесте да ту не постоји сенка и да су сва бића и твар равномерно осветљени, јер у тој стварности Царства Божијег не постоји пролазност, не постоји смрт, а та светлост која обасјава све није нико други до сам Господ Исус Христос. Како ће који лик бити насликан највише зависи од односа какав је та особа имала према Христу, односно, да ли сада на земљи та особа пребива у благодати Божијој или је тера од себе. Због тога су демони увек сликани у тами, јер они својевољно не учествују у светлости Христовој. На икони је личност увек доминантна, тако да су Светитељи виши од планина, али ни природа није запостављена, јер је и она носилац Спасења. Посебно треба нагласити да се смисао православне иконе и уметности уопште, открива тек у њиховом правом контексту, односно само унутар храма и унутар Свете Литургије, дакле, унутар живе Цркве Христа Бога, где се приказују ствари онаквима какве ће бити, а не какве јесу, или какве су биле.

Православна икона, као и православна уметност уопште, представљају плод вере у долазак Царства Божијег, у којем ће све, и човек и природа, на један нов начин живети у заједници са Богом у Христу. Свако и све се гледа кроз призму будућег Царства Божијег.

Fast Guidelines

Days	The Holy Canons specify	
Weekdays Clean Monday to Pascha (incl. Great Saturday)	Abstinence Meat Eggs and Dairy Fish Olive Oil Wine	No Abstinence Shellfish Fruit Vegetables
Saturdays and Sundays (except Great Saturday)	Abstinence Meat Eggs and Dairy Fish	No Abstinence Shellfish Fruit Vegetables Olive Oil Wine
Annunciation (Mar 25) and Palm Sunday	Abstinence Meat Eggs and Dairy	No Abstinence Shellfish Fruit Vegetables Fish Olive Oil Wine

THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, is perhaps one of the greatest of all Liturgical Services. Unfortunately not many people have the opportunity to truly appreciate the depth, balance, and beauty of this Liturgy, because they rarely hear (or read) all the prayers. To contain all this beauty and depth, it is longer than the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, and therefore this Liturgy is not celebrated as often.

This Liturgy is very similar to the Liturgy we are accustomed to, except for the silent prayers, especially those in the anaphora. Many of us might be aware that we celebrate this Liturgy on Sundays during the Great Fast, on the Vigil of Christmas and Epiphany, on his feast day and on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday, but perhaps never really had the opportunity to read the text yourself.

Read the prayers, enjoy them, contemplate them, pray them!

Speaking of praying the Liturgy—sometimes it is said that the Divine Liturgy is a re-presentation, a re-playing, or re-praying of the great cosmic drama of God’s great Love and never-ending care for His creation, namely us. The drama of our sin and struggle against temptation and God freely giving us grace, strength, and ultimately His very Life, Body and Blood for our salvation.

But in speaking in terms of the drama—I do believe that most faithful have the ‘roles’ in this drama reversed. If we were to use theatrical terms, many believe that in the drama of the Liturgy that God is the director (directing our prayers) the priest is the actor (the one engaged in the ‘act’ of praying), and the people are there as the audience (the spectators that are there to be either passively entertained or edified by the drama, or sit as reviewers commenting on the skill of the choir, cantors, or homily).

This is not as it should be! As I said, this is reversed! The people are to be the actors, (the ones actively engaged in prayer), the priest is the director (he is the one who co-ordinates the prayers and directs them so that we are all acting together, not all of us 'doing our own thing'), and God—He is the audience, and we could not hope for a better one.

God is the one who is listening to our prayers and our singing. God is the only one who can judge the quality and sincerity of the homily, the singing and of our lives. And fortunately for us, God is never just a passive audience, He is actively interested in us, looking for ways into our lives. He is always granting us the grace and the strength we need. He is the one that never abandons us. He is the audience that gave His life for us.



So sing, pray, give this time to God! "I don't have a good voice" you say... that's OK, you're not singing for the person sitting next to you, they are not the audience—God is! And He is the one that gave you that voice—so let Him hear it! "I'm embarrassed" you say... Don't be—we could not ask for a more loving, understanding, forgiving and gracious audience.

Of course we realize that God is much more than an audience, He Is who Is, He is our Creator, He is the focus of our worship, none-the-less, take this opportunity to pray and sing this Liturgy. It is a little longer—but it is worth it! As with any Liturgy or anything important, you will only get out of it what you put into it.

БЛАГОСИЉАЊЕ ДОМОВА ОД БОГОЈАВЉЕЊА ДО ВАСКРСА

Благосиљање домова током богојављенског периода је дуга традиција наше Свете Православне Цркве, која у себи носи прелепо и садржајно значење. Након Ве- ликов водоосвећења на тај празник, обичај је да парохијски свештеник посети домове својих верника, доносећи са собом “благослов Јордана”. Свештеник про- износи свечане молитве, којима поново посвећујемо свој дом првобитној намени: да буде место у којем ће Исус Христос водити породицу по путу праведности. Будући да је ово време у нашој Цркви када се сећамо доласка Христовог и почетка Његовог служења када је сишао у Јордан да би Га крстио Св. Јован Претеча, пригодно је да Господ уђе у ово време и у наш дом и наше срце. Подсећа нас да се морамо “покајати, јер се приближило Царство Божије” (уп. Мт. 4, 17).

Православни хришћани морају запамтити да се све мора радити у славу Господњу. Зато наши домови, где проводимо велики део свог квалитетног времена са породицом, морају се редовно благосиљати и освећивати, оспо- собљујући нас да се боримо против сатанских искушења. Прописана молитва када се наши домови благосиљају на Богојављање дивно дочарава значај овог годишњег обреда: “Господе Спаситељу, истинита Свет- лости, Који си крштен у Јордану од Јована Крститеља, изволео си у кућу Зак- хејеву ући и спасење њему и целој кући његовој постати, Ти сам и сада оне који хоће овде да живе сачувај неповређене од ма каквог зла; благосиљајући њих и ово обиталиште, дајући им очишћење и телесно здравље, и испунивши њихове мо- литве које су на спасење и живот вечни.”



То освећење водике по домовима није само „пуки“ обичај, него насušна потреба самих верника, који осећају потребу да повремено буду освећени и очишћени кропљењем свете водике. Код православних Грка има доста породица које захтевају од својих свештеника, да неизоставно сваког месеца долазе и врше освећење воде по домовима. Наш народ је изгубио тај осећај светиње и потребе за светињом, те су стога многи престали да примају свештеника за водичу, а и они који га примају, често пута то нерадо чине.

Није добро да сва наша вера буде сведена само на обичај „свећења водике „, али није добро ни да тај благочестиви обичај одстранимо из нашег хришћанског живота. Свећење водике и њено коришћење, има свој пуни смисао и значај само уз држање и свих осталих прописа Цркве Православне о хришћанском духовном животу, као што су пост, молитва, милостиња, света Тајна покајања и исповести грехова, Прчешћа, и свега осталог, без чега нема спасења душе, ни остварења циља нашег постојања на земљи.

ЈАВИТЕ СЕ ОЦУ ПРЕДРАГУ НА (224) 388-2605 ДА ЗАКАЖЕТЕ БЛАГОСИЉАЊЕ ВАШЕГ ДОМА!

Why Do We Have Our Homes Blessed?

The Feast of Theophany (or Epiphany) commemorates the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We know from the troparion of the day that "the Trinity was made manifest" to us. But there's more to it than this. "When Jesus descends into the depths of the river, there occurs a profound upheaval. It is not the one baptized who is purified, for he is spotless; but it is the water that is transfigured and illumined. This water, which was believed to be transparent and purifying, is in fact polluted, inhabited by evil spirits, servants of the old gods. ... By purifying the elements, by sanctifying matter, Jesus frees the cosmos from the powers of evil."

The Great Blessing of Water takes place at the end of that day's Liturgy. Since our homes cannot be brought to the Church, the Church - through the priest and cantor - go to the homes. There the service of blessing, which began in the church, is finished with the sprinkling of water in the home. Traditionally, in most Orthodox parishes, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany (January 6/13). By sanctifying our living quarters, our private place, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings.

We also bring the blessed water to our homes to use throughout the year to bless our homes and to drink whether we are ill or as part of our daily prayer life. "There are many occasions in family life when a sip of holy water can help to remind us of the blessing that was given 'to bestow sanctification', 'unto healing of soul and body', 'to be a fountain welling forth unto life eternal', as the priest prayed in the litany of Epiphany day."

Weaving Christ into Our Lives

The blessing of homes by these holy waters maintains the spiritual association between the 'family church' and the parish, as well as again providing for the sharing of God's spiritual gifts. ... This annual blessing is not as elaborate as the blessing of the new dwelling, but because of this it should not be overlooked, for it is in this way that the grace of God is extended to individual dwellings."



If the priest comes to bless the home when the children are present, they have the opportunity to see the parish priest in a different and personal situation. If the priest permits, they can lead the way through the house, or hold a candle. They can show him their rooms or pets or favorite toys. They receive a blessing with water. For children, the house blessing shows the connection of the Church to the home. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. What a wonderful way to begin the New Year!

PLEASE CONTACT FATHER PREDRAG AT (224) 388-2605 TO SCHEDULE A BLESSING OF YOUR HOME!

LET US NEVER FORGET SERBIAN KOSOVO & METOHİJA - НИКАДА НЕ ЗАБОРАВИМО СРПСКО КОСОВО И МЕТОХИЈУ

Gracanica Monastery



The Gracanica Monastery one of King Milutin's last monumental endowments. It is situated in the village of Gracanica, 5 km. from Pristina, the administrative centre of Kosovo and Metohija region. The monastery is in the close vicinity of Lipljan, the ancient Roman town of Ulpiana, and the old residence of bishops. Gracanica was constructed on the ruins of an older 13th-century church of the Theotokos, which was built on the ruins of a 6th-century early Christian three-naved basilica.



In the charter inscribed on the south wall of the chapel, King Milutin says: "I saw the devastation and fall of the church of the Holy Theotokos of Gracanica, Bishopric of Lipljan, I had it built from the foundation stone, I had it inscribed and decorated from the inside and from the outside." All this happened in the year 6830, that is, in 1321 since the birth of Christ. Only the church remains from the original monastery complex. The vestibule with the dome was additionally built several decades later. This vestibule was ruined during Turkish assaults in 1379-1383, when the dome was lost in fire, as well as a rich collection of manuscripts. The vestibule is believed to have been restored in 1383 by Bishop Simeon of Gracanica.

(photo of the monastery from the 19th century)

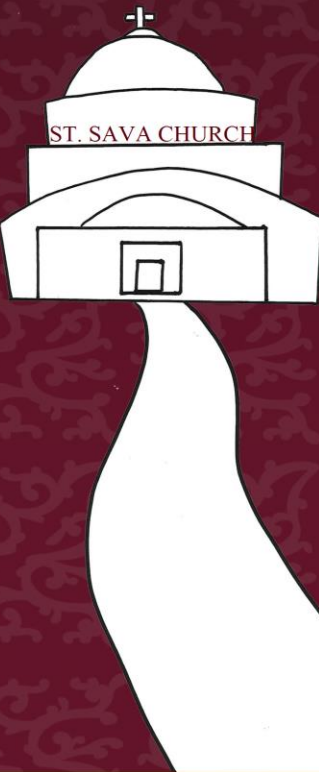
The monastery was damaged during the battle of Kosovo 1389, and when Novo Brdo was




conquered in 1455, Metropolitan Benedict Crepovic left Gracanica and was granted use of the monastery Vracevsnica by Despot Djuradj Brankovic. Better times for the monastery started during the incumbency of Metropolitan Nikanor (1528-1555), when a printing house, supervised by master-printer Dimitrije, was operating in Gracanica for a while.

The architectural composition of Gracanica represents the peak of Serbian architecture in the spirit of Byzantine tradition. Unfortunately the rich Gracanica treasury was lost in fires between 1379 and 1383. The present treasury stores a number of valuable icons from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, as well as several significant manuscripts and liturgical objects. After the Second World War it was renewed by nuns and has been serving as a convent since. Today there are 24 sisters in the monastery who are active in icon painting, agriculture, sewing and other monastic obediences.

**BECOME A STEWARD OF OUR PARISH ! БУДИТЕ СТАРАТЕЉ
НАШЕ ПАРОХИЈЕ!**




ST. SAVA CHURCH



СВЯТА ПРЪВЪС ЦРКВИ

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"A RICH MAN IS NOT ONE WHO HAS MUCH...
...BUT ONE WHO GIVES MUCH FOR WHAT HE GIVES AWAY REMAINS HIS FOREVER."
SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (served on Wednesday evenings during the Great Lent)

Saturdays and Sundays of Great Lent are not considered fasting days. This is not because non-fasting foods are allowed on these days. (Non-fasting food is prohibited until Pascha for the physically healthy.) Rather, it is because on Saturdays and Sundays the full, real Liturgy is served. The Liturgy is the cornerstone of the Church, and whether or not it is celebrated determines whether it is a feast day or a day of mourning.

If during all of Great Lent you go to church only on Sundays you will not sense that it is Lent, regardless of abstention from food. One also needs to attend the special Lenten services to experience the contrast between these days and the other days of the year and to breathe in deeply the healthful spirit of the Forty Day Fast. The most important of these special services is the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. It differs from the traditional Liturgy in that the Bloodless Sacrifice is not offered to God in it. The Sacrifice is offered and the Gifts are consecrated in advance, and one can Commune of these. The entire service is a preparation for Communing of the Gifts prepared in advance.

The main idea that should arise from a consideration of the present topic is the yearning for Communion and the sorrow of separation. It is the reluctance to remain even for a single week without the Holy Gifts – even if one is not to feast, but rather to humble oneself and weep. Nonetheless, one cannot go without Communion, which means that one should at least Commune of the Gifts prepared in advance. It is impossible to understand the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts – its ritual, origin, and necessity – without love for the Mysteries and for the practice of frequent Communion. Say what you will and think what you will, but if the tradition of the Early Church had been to Commune five or six times a year, then the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts would never have arisen. The very need for it would not have arisen. The need, however, is that one cannot be without Christ and without Communion. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

If one Communes rarely, then the Liturgy need only be served rarely, and the remaining days can be filled with the reading of the Typika, psalmody, akathists, teaching, and preaching. But this is an honest path to nowhere, which even a blind man should understand. The Liturgy cannot be abandoned. It is our only wealth. Rather, one should so love the Liturgy that one understands all of church life through it. Khomiakov was perfectly correct when he said: “Christianity is understood only by those who understand the Liturgy.”

Mary of Egypt did not go into the desert for many years without first Communing. Not yet cleansed of the passions, she received Communion and grace as a pledge for the future, so that she could receive Divine help in the desert.

We, too, in the words of Andrew of Crete, should settle “in the desert of repentance for the passions.”

During Lent the passions are awoken, tormenting and disturbing the soul. At times they do not simply trouble us, but burn and scorch us. The need for Divine help becomes more urgent and palpable. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was established for just the sort of people who labor in pious fasting, people who perceive their weakness with special keenness.

Great Lent flies by quickly. And having flown by, it often leaves behind a residue of dissatisfaction. People say: the fast has gone by again, and I did not manage either to labor or to change myself. The planets dance around the Sun. Our Sun is Christ. “But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings”, says the Prophet Malachi (4:2).

Thus in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts we touch the Lamb with fear and we ring the bell so that people would fall to their knees; we make prostrations; we sing many hymns of repentance and praise. And the heavenly powers serve the King of Glory with us invisibly. As a result this gives us such a prayerful feeling and disposition, such a thirst to appear before Christ, that it should be enough to last for a long time.

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MARCH 2015
MONTHLY BULLETIN



“For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst.” Matthew 18:20

*“Где су два или три сабрана у моје име
Тамо сам и ја међу њима.” Матеј 18:20*