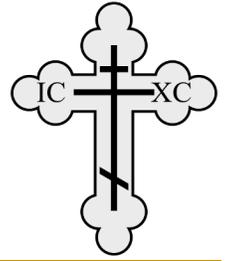




Agape



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH APR-2021

Some thoughts on Why-and How-Do We Fast?

By Fr. Meletios Webber

The Greek word askesis means “exercise”. It generally refers to the practice of prayer, fasting, making prostrations, and in other ways modifying our behavior to bring it in line with the spiritual life. Askesis is not, and cannot be, an attempt to please God with our pain, or even with our effort. If we do that, we reduce God to the role of manipulative overseer. We always have to guard against projecting onto God human characteristics that belong not to Him, but to us. Askesis is rather a matter of exercise, in the manner that an athlete exercises in order to prepare for a race. The athlete does not, in the end, resent his hard work, because he knows he is doing it for a good reason. We are all “in training” spiritually, and the rhythm of the feasts and fasts allows us to intersperse vigorous periods of training with other times that are more relaxed. Lent and Holy Week together constitute the training period par excellence, with its unique qualities and opportunities. Fasting is not, and never can be, a punishment. Rather, it is a therapeutic tool by which we are brought closer to where we need to be, both physically and spiritually. Nor should fasting be a demonstration to the world that pain and hardship can be borne. Christ condemns this type of fasting in Scripture. Nor should our fasting make everyone around us suffer. Is that really fasting after all?

Fasting is important in teaching us the value of relying on God. The basic fault in man might be expressed as his desire to take the place of God and set himself up in his own world as the one controlling factor. Fasting helps us to regain the essential awareness that we are creatures in God’s world, that we are a part of, not superior to, the rest of creation, and that ultimately, there is only place for one God, and that place has already been taken. Each one of us in this fallen world has a sense of self (the ego) which is driven by the human mind and the logismoi (the constant stream of thoughts and desires) it contains. In each case, this ego tries to take the place of God to a greater or lesser extent. The spiritual path encourages us to heal precisely in this area. Fasting is not the only contributing factor in this process, but it is an important one. Obviously, it is not easy to fast well, and we all need a little practice. Good fasting depends, more than anything else, on a good attitude. The Church makes fasting easier by stipulating when and how it happens. The Church calendar lets us know whether it is a fast day or not, and with that information we are then free to decide whether or not to comply. Each one of us can, with some spiritual advice, come up with a plan of action. Remember that fasting is not an end in and of itself, but rather a means to an end. We have to guard against thinking that fasting has any virtue in itself, or that it is unrelated to how we treat others. The Pharisees fasted, but it did not produce any growth in their spiritual lives. If we fasted but devoured our brother, something went very wrong with the way we fasted. Jesus asks us to be very careful when we fast and not boast in it. Even something good like fasting can result in pride and reveal one of those darker human qualities we want to avoid. Lastly, we should not be too fastidious in our fasting. There is room for give and take, and legalism is hardly in accordance with the spirit of the exercise. If our outer attitude is anything less than serene, cheerful and loving, then we need to practice more. What a better time than now?

Building a Stronger Orthodox Christian Community by: Spiritually growing together; Sharing the Orthodox Faith through fellowship, outreach, and philanthropy; Worshiping in a traditional Byzantine church; Supported through Stewardship

202 Hillview #1 Eugene, Oregon 97408
Phone: (541) 683-3519

Website: www.stgeorgeor.org
Email: frgerasimos@sntgrg.org

Parish Council

As members of the Parish council, we are always striving to take good care of the budget and building of our church. We are also trying to find ways to keep everyone in the parish excited about our beautiful faith.

During this Lenten period, we are all encouraged to not only increase our fasting and almsgiving, but our prayer time. One of the best places to do that, is at church!

Father is giving us multiple opportunities each week to meet together and pray – whether it's Compline, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, Salutations or regular Liturgy. All the seating has been arranged to keep everyone safe, the windows and doors are open and everyone is "masked up"! Some folks find sitting in the Fellowship Hall to be a safer space and we have new more comfortable chairs in there, as well. So, if you are still concerned about meeting together, please contact Father Jerry to discuss this.

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:24,25

Much love for you all on your Lenten journey,
Kathryn Becker for the Parish Council

Treasurer's Report

As of March 27, 2021, the balances in our accounts were:

- Dedicated Funds Balance - \$88,279.82
- Operations Balance - \$56,822.95

Fundraising:

No fundraisers are set yet, but we hope to be able to do some things this summer. In the meantime, we are raffling 2 baskets during Lent. Tickets are \$1.00 each. Proceeds will go to support Philia's philanthropic projects. Look for the baskets in the Narthex after services. Winning tickets will be pulled on Pascha!

Blessed Lent to everyone

Presvytera Maria

STEWARDSHIP 2021

The primary purpose of stewardship is to promote the spiritual growth of the steward. It is a part of our parish life to help the steward develop his or her faith and to grow in grace. It is not there just to finance the local parish – that is a secondary purpose. Stewardship is directed toward the inner person. Stewardship is about our personal salvation.

Our goal as a parish in 2021 is for each of us to strengthen our personal faith and increase our commitment to that faith. Please be an active participant in all the ministries of our parish and grow with Saint George.

Have a blessed new year,

Your Stewardship Committee

CARE MINISTRY

God's beauty surrounds us! The blooms of spring - pretty, bright, pink, purple, blue, yellow, and red - are beginning to appear.

I have been the recipient of a special bouquets in the past few days and they have brought me such happiness! Perhaps you have flowers in your garden and could deliver a small bouquet to a fellow parishioner, a homebound person, or a lonely neighbor cheering their day. Flowers bring smiles to faces, joy to hearts, & hope to the discouraged,

What a delightful way to share your love!

Blessings,

Gloria Zezeas-Timmons-Care Ministry Coordinator

"God forgives everything with confession. We mustn't turn back and enmesh ourselves in despair. We need to be humble servants before God and have a sense of gratitude for the forgiveness of our sins."

from "Wounded by Love: The Life and the Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios" (1906-1991)

Greetings from the Bookstore!

On Prayer: In the Orthodox Church, it is said that we pray what we believe and we believe what we pray. The text of our written prayers not only help with our communion with God through words of praise, thanksgiving, repentance, supplication, and intercession, but also brings to remembrance the Gospel message of Christ, the Apostolic teachings, and our faith.

This month, the Bookstore highlights The Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim. Ephraim was born in Syria of poor parents during the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great. He spent his youth rather tempestuously, but suddenly a change took place in his soul, and he began to burn with love for the Lord Jesus. Due to the great grace of God, wisdom flowed from his tongue like a stream of honey, and ceaseless tears flowed from his eyes. Ephraim continually wrote books, orally taught the monks in the monastery and the people in the town of Edessa, and dedicated himself to prayer and contemplation. Numerous are his books and beautiful are his prayers, the most famous of which is his prayer recited during the season of Great Lent.

This beautiful prayer is read on the weekdays of Great Lent. It is a supplicatory prayer to our Lord and Savior to take away our passions and give us virtues. If a person is consistent in praying the prayer of Saint Ephraim, one can be grounded in the most important aspects of the way a Christian should conduct one's self during Great Lent.

O Lord and Master of my life!

Take me from 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.

I wish you many blessings and much peace as you continue your spiritual journey through this Lenten Season.

In Christ, Stella Kallianis

Missions and Evangelism

The Missions and Evangelism Ministry team still has not met since the Pandemic hit a year ago. However, we still have the same goals. We want to increase our outreach to each other and the greater Eugene community. We also want to encourage everyone to be friendly to any visitors that may enter our parish, especially during the Lenten period!

The "Blessing Bags" project is still ongoing, so please pick up some extra water or juice bottles, socks and protein packs for almsgiving. The collection container is in the fellowship hall.

Once Pascha is here, we will once again start the "Missions Possible" campaign, which is being retitled this year to "Missions to America". Start setting aside a little extra cash now, to contribute to this worthy cause between Pascha and Pentecost.

Thank you, Kathryn Becker

Pray: (5-5-5-1)

- Five things for which I am thankful
- Five people in need, for whom I choose to lift up in prayer.
- Five things I need today. (peace, patience, strength, etc)
- One person that God will place in my path today whom I can help.

PHILIA

I couldn't have asked for a better Sunday on February 28! The weather was fabulous, sunny, with nary a cloud in sight, and relatively warm for that time of the year. Nikki was dressed in pink and black and perched like a queen in her armchair-throne on the porch, happy to receive all the well-wishers. And with balloons, sodas, cards, special homemade gifts and even pizza, 33 grownups and kids, dressed in pink and black as well, came to her front yard to wish her a happy birthday. Thank you all so very much for your kindness! Nikki loves her birthday and despite the difficult circumstances, you all made it a special one for her. Philia's Augment Your Lent Event was another success. Thank you to everyone who cooked, ordered and, hopefully, enjoyed our takeout lenten foods. As well as to those who financially supported our fundraiser. You are all, as always, greatly appreciated!

Plans for the future:

- Community Court Lunches - March 12 - Ann-Marie // April 16 - Heather // May 7 - Pres and Julie // June 11 - Helen and Larisa.

For info on wedding or baptismal items please contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimmons@gmail.com.

Next meetings: No meetings scheduled at this time. Just email updates.

For info on wedding or baptismal items please contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimmons@gmail.com.

Reminder: Philia is a philanthropic organization open to ALL women in the parish. Come and join us! We could always use helping hands and helpful minds.

Julie Lenkoff, Philia Coordinator
julielenkoff2@comcast.net

Prison Ministry

While we have all reached the year anniversary since the shut downs for Covid-19, there is no news yet when volunteers will be able to go back into the Oregon prisons for ministries or education. At this time around 69% of the total prison population has received at least the first vaccine. Everyone has been offered the opportunity, but not all have chosen to be recipients. There are no active cases at OSP, and only 16 throughout the entire prison system. Until the green light is given, we will continue to send a monthly reflection to our Bible Study group via the OSP Chaplain's office. This month the men will be reading the first part of Chapter Three "On Trusting Our Thoughts" from St. Paisios of Mt Athos Spiritual Counsels Vol. III: Spiritual Struggle. Thank you for continuing to keep those incarcerated and also this prison ministry in your prayers. Thomas Hopko said, per Dr. Albert Rossi in his book "All Is Well" (Ancient Faith Publishing, 2020, p. 123), "Every prayer changes the universe." Per Rossi, "That is, every prayer changes the color of a flower, the melody of a sound, the structure of atoms. Most of all, every prayer changes the person who prays, permanently." Please keep praying for the members of our present men's group, for the doors to be opened back up to meet in person, and also pray for women who are incarcerated. At this time there is one women's prison in Oregon, and no Orthodox Bible study for these women yet. But maybe through your prayers....

If you are interested in volunteering, please speak with Fr. Jerry.

Thank you-Joanna

From the Mission Churches

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

We have lots of good things happening at Holy Cross! First, join us in welcoming our newest member, Anna Rose Barry, born in February. Also please keep Catechumen John in your prayers as he prepares to join the Church by Baptism during this Paschal season. We're thankful to have 2 services every week now at Holy Cross, but it has highlighted that our current meeting space is too small to grow. We are starting the search for a new space that is large enough to accommodate all we do. Finally, we have been able to resume preparations for our first-ever Holy Week and Pascha at Holy Cross! We've found a temporary site to host us so that we can invite all our friends and family, and Fr. Martin Ritsi will be flying over to serve at this blessed event. Please keep us in your prayers, that we may be able to discern God's will for our parish and fulfill His plans with courage!

**In Christ ~ Lisa Buck
Holy Cross, Roseburg, OR**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's been so wonderful to be back in person on the Lenten journey this year. We're again starting to see more people coming to services who are new to us or inquiring into Orthodoxy. Some are returning that have been away for a while for various reasons. This season of repentance really bonds us together, and this experiential truth seems more obvious this year. Our general weekly schedule is Monday Great Compline, Wednesday the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Friday Salutations, Saturday Vespers all at 6 p.m.; Sundays Orthros and Divine Liturgy beginning at 9 a.m. Our prayers are with you for continuing each step of Great Lent this month and for great joy and blessings through Lazarus Saturday and Holy Week. We thank you for your prayers for us.

In Christ,

**Maria Hauser
Holy Resurrection Mission, Salem**

April Celebrations Birthdays

**April 3rd-Georgia Lallas, Daniel Jaquette
April 2nd-Alli Hughes
April 4th-Zephaniah Avalos
April 8th-Jeremy Mueller
April 9th-Demetre Markopoulos
April 11th-Panayiotis Katsoyannos
April 15th-Nektarios Kaelin, Melita Green
April 20th-Eliana Hauser**

Feast Days

**April 1st-St. Mary of Egypt
Melita Green, Janelle Williamson
April 22nd-St Nearchos
Neal Zoumboukos
April 23rd-St George
Georgia Lallas, Georgia Hensley**

Wedding Anniversaries

**April 3rd-Kaelin
April 4th-Zoumboukos
April 29th-Hall**

Baptized in Christ/Chrismated

**April 11th-Daniel, Aftasie & Omilie Doran
April 15th-Mark Lipson, Jason Taylor
April 30th-Bonnie Sollars**

Many Years! Chronia Polla!

News and Events

What's New!

- **First Saturday Breakfast:** As of the printing of this edition of the AGAPE there was no news regarding the resuming of the First Saturday Breakfast.
 - **Live-streaming:** Live-streaming of the Divine Services will continue into the new year.. We invite you to tune in to our YouTube Channel (Saint George GOC), and pray the services with us. You can access the link by visiting our website www.stgeorgeor.org.
 - **Additional Services:** In addition to Saturday Great Vespers and Sunday Orthros & Liturgy, we will be continuing with Great Lent this month and that means additional opportunities for worship. The service of Great Compline takes place at 6 pm on the Mondays of Great Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts takes place at 6 pm, on the Wednesdays of Great Lent, and the Salutations service takes place at 7 pm on the Fridays of Great Lent. Please check your weekly bulletin for schedule updates and changes.
 - **Parish Assembly:** Our Spring Parish Assembly will take place virtually, on Sunday, April 11th, following Divine Liturgy. This assembly is mostly informational and should not take more than one hour. It will also provide us an opportunity to fellowship virtually and converse with one another face to face and heart to heart.
 - **Onion Skins:** We ask that you collect onion skins over the course of Great Lent that we can use to dye eggs for Pascha.
 - **Great Canon of St. Andrew:** The service of the Great Canon of St Andrew will take place on Thursday, April 15th, beginning at 6 pm. This is a unique Lenten service which includes a reading of the life of St. Mary of Egypt. All are welcome!
 - **Akathist Hymn:** The very beautiful and profound Akathist Hymn will take place on Friday, April 16th, beginning at 7 pm. Come let us say to the Mother of God, "Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded", and thank her for being with us on our Lenten journey.
 - **Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly:** This year's Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly will be virtual and takes place on Friday and Saturday, April 16th & 17th. Please be in prayer that the Assembly will bear abundant fruit for our holy Metropolis.
 - **Lazarus Saturday:** Lazarus Saturday falls on Saturday, April 24th, this year, and as of now, we are planning to gather for Orthros & Liturgy, beginning at 9 am, followed by palm tying and church cleaning. More information will be emailed out as that date approaches, but please mark it on your calendar. Lazarus Arise!
 - **Men's Fellowship:** Our Men's Fellowship gatherings will take place on the first and third Saturdays of each month at noon. All men of the parish are invited.
 - **Prayer Team:** Did you know that there is a team of parishioners devoted to praying for you, and for those you know who are in need of prayer? These faithful brothers and sisters comprise our Prayer Team and are ever ready to take on requests for prayer. At this time, Elizabeth Sumstine is the contact person for the Prayer Team. If you would like to contact her please email her at sumstine@gmail.com
 - **Cleaning Help:** We are updating the cleaning schedule for the coming year. If you would like to be added or removed from the available families to clean the church, please email Kathryn Becker at beckerettes@msn.com. As far as March goes we thank the following parishioners for giving of their time and helping keep the church looking beautiful!
- First week: Bill & Lisa Lilles
 - Second week: Markopoulos
 - Third week: Hutanu & Mueller
 - Fourth Week: Parish-wide

KOINONIA

	4/4	4/11	4/18	4/25	
FELLOWSHIP					
GREETER					
PROSFORON	Creech	Lilles	Kaelin	Markopoulos	Freezer
FLOWERS	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
READERS	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas
CLEANING CREW	Bill & Lisa	Markopoulos	Hutanu & Mueller	Parish-wide	

GET INVOLVED!!!

Look through this list of organizations, programs, and ministries at our parish, then call the contact person and get involved!!!

PARISH COUNCIL	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
SAFETY COMMITTEE	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
BOOKSTORE	Stella Kallianis 541-274-9110
PHILIA WOMEN'S GROUP	Julie Lenkoff 541-345-2107
CHURCH SCHOOL	Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
CHANTER/CHANT GROUP	Brad Thomas 541-689-9690, Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
FAMILY WELLNESS	Ashli Mueller 541-731-3319
FELLOWSHIP	
STEWARDSHIP	Neal Zoumboukos 541-344-4485
GREETERS	Larisa Lilles 541-484-7525
CARE MINISTRY	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
PRAYER CIRCLE	Bonnie Sollars 541-852-9496
MISSIONS & EVANGELISM	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
FUNDRAISERS	Presbytera Maria 971-678-5112

Saint George Greek Orthodox Church
202 Hillview 1
Eugene, OR 97408-5018

A Good Word...

O Lord and Master of my life;
Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust for power and
idle talk;

But grant rather, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience
and love, to Your servant;

Yeah O Lord and King,
Help me to see my own sins and not judge others;
For You are holy, now and forever and to the ages of ages,
Amen!