



SS. PETER & PAUL UKRAINIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH

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УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА
ЦЕРКВА СВ. ПЕТРА І ПАВЛА

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WELCOME All! Welcome to the God-Loving and God-Protected Parish of Saints Peter and Paul! A Parish of the UOC of the USA and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Our warmest greetings are extended to all visitors and guests, and to all of our beloved parishioners who are participating in today's Divine Liturgy. We are blessed to have you with us today! If you are with us for the first time, PLEASE introduce yourself to Father Yurii – he is looking forward to meeting you! Also, please feel free to email or call Father Yurii with any questions and let him know what is going on in your life, especially if you need spiritual guidance. We hope that you will find peace and comfort in Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church. You are very welcome to come every Sunday and on feast days, make yourself at home, and to become a part of our parish family. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents, and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and love.

CONTACT

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Parish Board President:

Maria Corbin

Choir Director:

Lydia Rudolf

MARCH 16TH 2025

Sunday, March 16

GREGORY PALAMAS,

Epistle Reading: Heb 1:10-2:3;

Gospel Reading: Mark 2: 1-12.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30

Wednesday, March 19

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

(St. Anthony)

6:30 pm

SUNDAY, March 23

CROSS VENERATION

Epistle Reading: Heb 1:10-2:3,

Gospel Reading: Mark 8:34-9:1

Divine Liturgy – 9:30

Tuesday, March 25

ANNUNCIATION

Vespers Divine Liturgy - 6:30pm

Sunday, March 30

St. John Climacus, Tone – 8

Epistle Reading: Heb 6:13-20;

Gospel Reading: Mark 9:17-31.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30

Wednesday, April 2

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts-6:30 pm

Sunday, April 6

St. Mary of Egypt- Tone 1

Wonderworker Titus;

Epistle Reading: Heb 9:11-14,

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:32-45

Divine Liturgy – 9:30

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX PARISH

SUNDAY, MARCH 16
GREGORY PALAMAS

The Divine Lityrgy Hymns and Readings

Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 8 Troparion (St. Gregory Palamas)

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace,// always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

Tone 4 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: "Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all,// so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!"

Tone 5 Prokeimenon

You, O Lord, shall protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.

(Ps. 11:7)

V. *Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!* (Ps. 11:1a)

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3



IN THE BEGINNING, Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

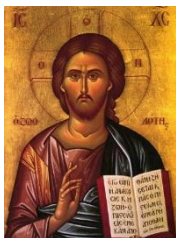
Tone 5

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. I will sing of Your mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Your truth from generation to generation. (Ps. 88:1-2)

V. For You have said: Mercy will be established forever; Your truth will be prepared in the heavens. (Ps. 88:3)

The Gospel According to Mark 2:1-12



At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins'-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! (Ps. 111:6)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

All the citizens and residents of Ukraine, Sherry, Barbara, Halyna, Patricia, Maria, Stanley, pani Lilia, Jean Markiw, Debbie, Wesly, Cindy, Christine, Denny Zymboly, Ruth Dally, Philip, Eric, Carl, Kayden, Rose, Dorothy Cygan, Helen, Fr. Vasyl, Mary-Ann, Payton, Anthony, Tina, Mykola, Stella, Maksymko, Fr. Yurii, Maria, Fr. Jakiw, Fr. George, Volodymyr, Alexandr, Vincent, John, Frank, Rowena, Carol.

PARISH NEWS AND UPDATES

Pascha/Easter Flower Donation

We are pleased to announce that once again, everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the **Pascha/Easter Flowers Fund**. These beautiful flowers will adorn our Church and the Lord's Grave, creating a fitting and reverent atmosphere for our Paschal celebration. Your generous donations help make this possible.

To contribute, please use your offering envelopes and indicate "**Pascha/Easter Flowers**" on the envelope or memo line. Donations can be placed in the collection basket or given directly to the church office. Thank you for your support in making our church a place of beauty and devotion during this most sacred season!

As we embark on our journey through Great Lent, it is imperative to prioritize participation in the Holy Mystery of Confession. Confession during Great Lent is not just encouraged, but **mandatory**. It paves the way to the most significant Christian celebration – the Resurrection of Christ. We must approach this occasion with hearts filled with joy, unburdened by any obstacles. Therefore, we urge you to prepare yourselves for confession, reflecting on your lives and any ways in which you may have drifted from Christ's love.

To assist you in this preparation, Fr. Yurii has provided a brochure titled "Preparation to Confession", you can request one if you do not have from last year. Additionally, our prayer books contain a section on Holy Confession, offering guidance for those preparing to confess. Let us embrace this opportunity for spiritual renewal and reconciliation as we journey towards the joyous celebration of Christ's Resurrection.

As Great Lent begins, we will have more Services than usual, especially during weekdays of Great Lent. These Services are founded by our Holy Orthodox Church for the benefit of faithful Christian to help in their spiritual life in uniting with God and understanding our dependence on Him! That's why it is important to come and participate in these services to

understand more deeply the meaning of Great Lent, the meaning of our Life, and come closer to our main goal in life - the Kingdom of God!

Bake Sale

We are excited to announce our annual Pascha-Easter Bake Sale, scheduled for baking on **March 24th and 25th**, with sales continuing on **March 26th**. We invite you to join us and contribute to the success of this event, which serves as a wonderful opportunity for fellowship while supporting the needs of our parish.

Pirohi Sale

A heartfelt thank you to all who helped with our last Pirohi Sale! Your hard work and dedication made it a great success, and we couldn't have done it without the effort from our volunteers. **We wish to announce that April 4th, we are going to have our next Pirohi Sale!** We look forward to seeing everyone back in the kitchen as we continue this beloved tradition!

Dear brothers and sisters, we are still gathering the contribution for help in Ukraine. If you would like to send your contribution, you could send the check to our parish of Ss. Peter and Paul and made it Payable to the Ss. Peter and Paul UOCOFUSA. Please, write on the check "Help Ukraine". Thank you all so much for your support and help! We encourage everyone to continue to give generously to our Capital Improvement Fund as we continue to work on different projects of maintaining and updating our Parish buildings.

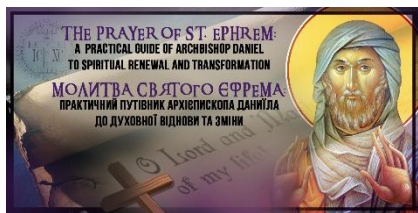
PARISH CELEBRATION

From the bottom of Ss. Peter and Paul parish family heart we wish **Jeff Heiger (March 1st)**, **Frank Hawryliak Junior (March 7th)**, **John McCarthy (March 23rd)**, **Lydia Rudolf (March 28th)**, **Rose Raith (March 31st)** Happy Birthday! May God's awesome blessings be upon you this day and for the Future years ahead for many happy and blessed years!

The Prayer of St. Ephrem: A Practical Guide of Archbishop Daniel to Spiritual Renewal and Transformation

Among the many prayers in Orthodox Christian tradition, few are as spiritually profound and transformative as the *Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian*. This prayer, recited frequently during Great Lent, is a roadmap to repentance, humility, and renewal, making it one of the most beloved and essential prayers of the Orthodox faith. Though short in length, it carries within it

a comprehensive guide for overcoming sin and acquiring virtue, serving as a mirror for self-examination and a ladder toward spiritual ascent.



Every year during Great Lent, Orthodox Christians prostrate themselves as they recite this prayer, embodying its words through physical humility. But this prayer is not meant to be limited to the Lenten season - it is a lifelong guide for the soul, challenging us to examine our hearts and turn toward Christ with sincerity and repentance.

The author of this prayer, St. Ephraim the Syrian (c. 306–373 AD), was one of the most remarkable spiritual fathers of the early Church. Born in Nisibis (modern-day Turkey), St. Ephraim was a deacon, theologian, poet, and ascetic, known for his deep spiritual insight and eloquence. His writings, particularly his hymns and prayers, played a crucial role in shaping Christian spirituality.

Despite his vast influence, St. Ephraim remained deeply humble. He refused the priesthood and chose instead to serve as a deacon, dedicating his life to prayer, fasting, and instructing others in the faith. His writings were not only theological but also deeply poetic and filled with imagery, making them accessible to both the learned and the simple.

St. Ephraim's hymns and prayers often focus on the themes of *repentance, divine mercy, and the battle against sin*. His words continue to inspire Christians today, guiding them toward a life of holiness. The Prayer of St. Ephraim is perhaps his most well-known spiritual work, a powerful call to repentance that has been embraced by the Orthodox Church for over 1,600 years.

Why is this prayer so closely associated with Great Lent? Lent is a time of spiritual struggle, a period when the Church calls every believer to *self-examination, humility, and repentance*. This prayer perfectly encapsulates the **Lenten mindset** - not just sorrow for sin, but an active desire to be transformed by God's grace.

Each line of this prayer identifies key spiritual dangers - sloth, despair, lust for power, and idle talk - while also calling upon God to fill the soul with chastity, humility, patience, and love. It is a battle cry against the passions, a plea for healing, and an invitation to live a life of holiness.

But this prayer is not only relevant during Lent. **It is a daily challenge** - a call to constantly renew our hearts, to resist the forces that pull us away from God, and to actively cultivate the virtues that bring us closer to Him.

As we explore this prayer in detail, let us remember that its purpose is not just to be **recited** but to be **lived**. It is a prayer that, if taken seriously, can transform our thoughts, actions, and entire spiritual life.

Let us now break down each section, uncovering its meaning and how it can be practically applied in our journey toward holiness.

First Petition: Asking for Deliverance from Destructive Passions

"O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk."

Before we can grow in virtue, we must first be freed from the passions that hinder us. This section of the prayer is a plea for spiritual purification, asking God to remove four specific destructive attitudes.

1. Sloth – The Enemy of Spiritual Growth

Sloth, in a spiritual sense, is not merely laziness but a deep indifference toward God, prayer, and our own salvation. It manifests as procrastination in spiritual matters, avoidance of repentance, and lack of enthusiasm for worship.

How It Affects Us:

- Neglecting prayer, church services, and spiritual reading.
- Feeling no urgency to repent or improve spiritually.
- Seeking distractions instead of spending time with God.

Practical Steps to Overcome Sloth:

- **Create a prayer rule** and follow it daily, even if it's short.
- **Prioritize church attendance** - commit to going even when it feels inconvenient.
- **Set spiritual goals**, such as reading a portion of the Gospel daily.
- **Surround yourself with people who encourage your faith.**

When we fight against sloth, we **invite the fire of the Holy Spirit** into our hearts, awakening a true desire for God.

2. Despair – The Loss of Hope in God

Despair is one of the devil's greatest weapons. It convinces us that we are beyond redemption, that our sins are too great, or that God is distant and unconcerned.

How It Affects Us:

- Feeling unworthy of God's mercy.
- Losing motivation to repent because we believe we won't change.

- Becoming overwhelmed by guilt instead of turning to Christ.

Practical Steps to Overcome Despair:

- **Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son** - God is always ready to receive us.
- **Confess regularly** - this sacrament is a direct encounter with Christ's mercy.
- **Meditate on the Psalms, especially Psalm 50 (51)**, which expresses repentance and hope.
- **Practice gratitude** - recognizing God's blessings can renew your faith in His goodness.

No matter how many times we fall, we must always rise again. The Saints were not people who never sinned, but those who never gave up on God's mercy.

3. Lust of Power – The Desire to Control and Dominate

Lust for power is the desire to **control, manipulate, or dominate others**. It stems from pride and leads to selfish ambition, conflict, and oppression.

How It Affects Us:

- Wanting to be in control of everything.
- Seeking recognition or authority over others for self-glory.
- Manipulating others to get our way.

Practical Steps to Overcome Lust of Power:

- **Practice servant leadership** - Christ, the King of Kings, washed His disciples' feet.
- **Accept that God is in control, not us** - learning to trust Him brings peace.
- **Be willing to listen and take advice** rather than always wanting to lead.
- **Cultivate humility** - seek ways to serve rather than be served.

True greatness comes from serving others, not ruling over them. The Saints became great not through power but through humility and love.

4. Idle Talk – The Power of Words

Idle talk includes **gossip, slander, empty chatter, and meaningless distractions**. Words have power - they can bless or harm, build up or destroy.

How It Affects Us:

- Wasting time on useless conversations instead of edifying ones.

- Gossiping or speaking negatively about others.
- Speaking without thinking, causing unnecessary harm.

Practical Steps to Overcome Idle Talk:

- **Think before you speak:** *Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?*
- **Use words to encourage and bless others.**
- **Spend more time in prayer and silence** - listening to God rather than speaking.

The tongue is small, but it can set **entire lives on fire** (James 3:5). When we control our speech, we **become more Christ-like**.

Second Petition: Asking for Virtues to Replace Our Sins

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

Once we ask God to remove negative passions, we must **replace them with virtues**.

1. Chastity – Purity in Mind, Body, and Soul

Chastity is often thought of as sexual purity, but it is much more - it is **purity of heart, mind, and soul**. It means being fully devoted to God and resisting sinful distractions.

Practical Steps to Grow in Chastity:

- **Guard your heart and mind** - be mindful of what you watch, listen to, and read.
- **Practice self-discipline** in all areas, not just sexuality.
- **Focus on Christ as your greatest treasure** - the pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8).

A chaste heart is **free to love God without distractions**.

2. Humility – Seeing Ourselves Truthfully

Humility is knowing **who we are before God**—nothing without Him, but everything in His love.

Practical Steps to Grow in Humility:

- **Accept correction and criticism** without defensiveness.
- **Give credit to God** for your talents and achievements.
- **Serve others** without seeking recognition.

Christ humbled Himself unto death—when we are humble, we **reflect His image**.

3. Patience – Trusting in God's Timing

Patience means **accepting trials without losing faith**, knowing that **God is working all things for good**.

Practical Steps to Grow in Patience:

- **When suffering, remember:** *This is temporary, but God's love is eternal.*
- **Pray for those who test your patience.**
- **Trust in God's plan, even when you don't understand.**

Patience **brings peace**, even in suffering.

4. Love – The Highest Virtue

Love is **the core of Christianity**. Christ told us that **the greatest commandment is to love God and neighbor** (Matthew 22:37-39).

Practical Steps to Grow in Love:

- **Love even when it is difficult** - forgive and be kind.
- **Put others before yourself.**
- **See Christ in every person.**

Love **conquers all** and brings us closest to God.

Final Petition: The Key to True Repentance

"Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen."

This final part teaches us **self-examination** and **mercy**.

- **Stop judging others** - focus on your own repentance.
- **Be quick to forgive** - God forgives us as we forgive others.
- **Seek daily self-reflection** - examine your conscience each night.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian is far more than a set of words to be recited during Great Lent - it is a spiritual roadmap, a guide for overcoming sin, cultivating virtue, and drawing closer to God. Every phrase of this prayer invites us to self-examination, humility, and transformation, helping us to remove the obstacles that hinder our salvation and replace them with the light of Christ.

As we have explored, this prayer addresses the deepest struggles of the human soul: sloth, despair, the lust for power, and idle talk - all of which pull us away from God and entangle us in spiritual darkness. Yet, rather than leaving us in despair over these weaknesses, the prayer leads us forward,

calling upon God to fill our hearts with chastity, humility, patience, and love - the virtues that reflect the very character of Christ Himself.

But the prayer does not stop there. It culminates in a plea for true spiritual sight - the ability to see our own sins rather than judging others. This final petition is the ultimate key to spiritual renewal because it shifts our focus from external distractions to internal transformation. When we stop obsessing over the faults of others and instead work on purifying our own hearts, we take the first step toward genuine holiness.

Though this prayer is central to Great Lent, it is beneficial for daily spiritual life. Consider incorporating it into your personal prayer rule, reciting it not as a mere habit, but as a serious commitment to inner change. Let each word sink into your soul, challenging you to live it out rather than merely saying it.

Here are some practical ways to make this prayer a reality in daily life:

1. Identify the passions you struggle with most - Do you battle spiritual laziness? Do you fall into despair easily? Are you tempted by pride or power? Use this prayer as a diagnostic tool to uncover areas where repentance is needed.
2. Seek to actively cultivate the virtues mentioned - Each day, make an effort to practice chastity in thought and action, humility in speech and attitude, patience in trials, and love in all things. Ask God for strength in these areas.
3. Commit to self-examination before judging others - When tempted to criticize or condemn someone, pause and reflect: *Have I looked at my own sins first? Have I repented today?* Keep a humble heart, always remembering that God alone is the judge.
4. Accompany the prayer with physical humility - During Orthodox services, this prayer is often accompanied by prostrations. Even in private prayer, consider bowing or making prostrations as an outward sign of the inner humility you are asking God to grant you.
5. Turn words into action - This prayer is not meant to remain just in our thoughts; it must translate into real-life change. If we pray for humility, we should actively seek to be humble. If we ask for patience, we should practice it in difficult moments. If we beg God to remove idle talk, we should control our tongues and speak only words that build up and encourage.

The goal of this prayer - and indeed, the goal of the entire Christian life - is freedom: not worldly freedom, but true spiritual liberation from sin. Many people mistakenly believe that Christianity is about restrictions and rules, but in reality, it is about freedom from the chains of sin and passions that enslave us.

When we allow sloth to rule our hearts, we become slaves to laziness and apathy. When we give in to despair, we become prisoners of hopelessness. When we seek power over others, we become trapped in pride and self-glory. When we indulge in idle talk, we lose control over our words and allow them to harm instead of heal.

But when we open our hearts to God through repentance and strive for chastity, humility, patience, and love, we experience true freedom - the freedom of a soul that is no longer weighed down by sin, but alive in Christ.

This is why the Church places this prayer at the heart of Great Lent. Lent is not just about fasting from food; it is about fasting from sin and replacing it with holiness. It is a time of spiritual warfare, a season in which we fight against the passions and strive toward Christ with renewed zeal.

But the struggle does not end with Lent. The battle for holiness continues every day of our lives. This prayer serves as a daily reminder of what truly matters - not wealth, power, or earthly success, but a pure heart that is pleasing to God.

As we conclude, let us take one final lesson from St. Ephraim the Syrian himself. Despite his immense wisdom and holiness, he never saw himself as righteous. He always approached God with deep humility, knowing that the spiritual life is a constant struggle and that only through God's grace can we truly change.

This is the same attitude we must have. We will stumble, we will fall, and we will fail at times. But we must never give up. Each time we pray this prayer, we are reminded that God is merciful, patient, and always ready to help us begin again.

So let us embrace this prayer not just with our lips, but with our hearts. Let us allow it to reshape our minds, transform our actions, and purify our souls. Let it be our daily guide as we journey toward Christ, who alone grants us true life, true love, and eternal salvation.

May God give us the strength to pray, to repent, and to be transformed. And may the words of this holy prayer lead us ever closer to the Kingdom of Heaven.