

On the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (Pokrova) in 1674, the Bishop of Lviv, Joseph Shumlyansky, along with the clergy and faithful, transferred the icon to the Cathedral of Saint George in Lviv. (This took place while he was still a hierarch of the Orthodox Church, he later joined the Uniate Catholics.) In 1704, when the Swedes surrounded Lviv and laid siege to it, the Mother of God, to whom the townspeople of Lviv prayed in front of the Terebovlya icon, saved the city from ruin by Swedish troops. Moreover, the city chronicler wrote that “the Mother of God in that icon cried, and with her tears urged the Swedish general to renounce the huge attack from the people of Lviv, not to seek it further and to leave the city alone.” The Terebovlya Icon of the Mother of God still is “in residence” in the Cathedral of St. George in Lviv. There, she continues to hear the prayers of those who come to her and will continue to protect Ukraine.



Among your daily prayers, please remember: Fr. Yakiw Norton, Fr. Oleh Hucut, Fr. Vasyl Dovgan, Fr. Dan Gurovich; Tanya Antoniewicz, Richard Antoniuk, Bohdan Baranczyk, John Chorney, Gloria Dunski, Joan Hepner, Peter Holowiak, Eva Lazor, Mary Maksymiak, Daniel Milinichuk, Michael Onushko, Rosalie Onushko, Mary Ellen Mackiewicz, Mary Radio, William Radio, Kathryn Solan, Michael and Elsie Moroz, Myroslav Kmet, Andriy Kmet, Dan Gulack, Rodney Townes, Karina Strashinsky; Katherine Cox



Announcements

- **MEETING WITH CONGRESSWOMAN WILD AND SENATOR CASEY:** TODAY at 4PM in our own parish Fellowship Hall, a meeting with questions and answers will be held with Rep. Susan Wild and Sen. Bob Casey will take place regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are urging all our parishioners to attend. This meeting is sponsored by the Ukrainian National Women’s League of America. Please come. UKRAINE NEEDS US NOW!
- **PRAY FOR UKRAINE!** - Hardly anyone can say they are not aware of the situation in our ancestral motherland Ukraine these days. Everyone is aware of the aggressive moves of Russia surrounding the borders of Ukraine with over 100,000 troops. International diplomatic efforts to de-escalate seem to have no effect. Clearly Ukraine is in need of our prayers. The Brotherhood of Ukrainian Clergy in the Lehigh Valley will be sponsoring weekly Moleben services for the peace and well-being of Ukraine. The third Moleben service will be this Wednesday; 23 February at 6:30 PM at Assumption of the Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church 1301 Newport Avenue, Northampton. We urge everyone to attend and PRAY FOR UKRAINE!
- **Pray for Ukraine Banner** - We wish to thank the Ukrainian National Women’s League, Branch #91 (Bethlehem) for their donation of the banner in front of our church urging all passers-by to PRAY FOR UKRAINE!. These ladies are making sure all our Ukrainian churches in the Lehigh Valley have one of these banners during this critical time for our ancestral motherland.
- **UOL Lenten Retreat Day** - The annual Lenten Retreat will be held as usual at the St. Francis Center for Renewal 395 Bridle Path Road Bethlehem on April 2, 2022. The guest speaker will be as usual, Fr. Anthony Perkins. The registration cost is \$40 for adults (\$50 after 03/22); \$30 for ages 13-18 (\$40 after 03/22); \$20 for ages 7-12 (\$30 after 03/22). For registration and more information call Oleh or Natalie Bilynski 610-892-7315 or nsufler@aol.com
- **Blessed Candles** - Candles were blessed Tuesday of last week on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. These candles come in pairs in a boxed set. They are available for you to take home for a donation. There is a limited supply, so please get yours today!
- **“Soup-er Bowl” Sunday/Stuffed Animals** - Due to current circumstances in Ukraine, we are still collecting for Soup Kitchens in Ukraine. The people of Ukraine will be relying on these soup kitchens more than ever. Please put it in an envelope marked for this purpose and drop it in the collection basket or see parish treasurer Vera Muzychka. In addition, the collection for stuffed animals for the children of Ukraine continues. Please deposit them in the breezeway.
- **Special Limited TV Raffle**- This is a special fundraising effort for our parish. One Grand Prize: a 70” Samsung HD Smart TV! Only 100 tickets will be sold @ \$20 each. The drawing date will be 01 May 2022. For tickets see: Brian Borsevich, Robin Bodnar, or Vera Muzychka.
- **“Sorokousty” - Memorial Saturdays** - Traditionally we remember beloved departed on the Saturday before Cheese-fare, the three middle Saturdays of Great Lent, and also the Saturday before Pentecost. (This year: February 26, March 19, 26, April 2 and June 11.) Please submit your names before 26 February with your contribution. Envelopes are available for this. If you need more room for names, please write them on a small piece of paper and insert it in the envelope with your gift.
- **Sunday of Orthodoxy:** St. Mary’s is very happy to be the site this year of the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood. This service is an annual tradition here in the Lehigh Valley (which was interrupted because of COVID). Please mark your calendar and make every effort to attend. Don’t forget - 13 MARCH! - 4 PM
- **NO MORE ALUMINUM CANS** - We are no longer collecting aluminum cans. Please do not bring them to the church anymore. Please do not leave them at the back door of the church.

- **Thursday Work Group** - Anyone and everyone is welcome. ***Please come and help! Don’t wait to be asked! Just come!*** For more information, see Vera Muzychka.
- **Mark the Date:** The Annual General Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday; 27 March after Divine Liturgy. We urge all our parishioners to mark their calendars and make every effort to attend. Please make sure your obligations to the Parish are fulfilled by that date.
- **Bad Weather Alert:** Please note that in case of inclement weather, should we need to adjust the church schedule or even cancel Divine Services, announcement will be made on Facebook, our website and WFMZ - channel 69.

A Word Regarding Fasting and Abstinence from Foods as We Approach Great Lent.

Many times parishioners raise the question of their pastor: What the rules laws of the Orthodox Church for parishioners regarding fasting? As we approach Great Lent, it is a good idea we address this subject and try to answer this question.

The Orthodox Church approaches the rules of fasting a little different than the Catholic Church in that there are rules are which “applied to each individually,” as opposed to “making and enforcing” a general rule for all. We find the “standard” or “full” form of fasting in the *Typicon*, the book of liturgical directives and prescriptions. However, this what is followed in *monasteries*, where life is centered around prayer and lived communally. The circumstances of life of Orthodox Christians living outside monasteries is quite different, therefore, the Church is understanding and merciful and does not expect the same for non-monastics. Therefore, while encouraging all to strive for perfection and as strict an observance of fasting for parishioners as possible, the Church, instead allows mitigations of the “general rule,” and encourages individuals to work out a “personal practice” with one’s Father Confessor. In short, one should fast and abstain as strictly as one is able.

That being said, there are some general standards that in our parish we can all adopt. First, we need to address some terminology: *Abstinence* - means abstaining from certain foods, e.g. meat (including poultry), dairy products (including eggs), fish, shellfish, and even olive oil. Abstinence from ALL these foods, is what is prescribed in the *Typicon* and this is what would be followed in monasteries. No one expects that in the outside world. *Fasting* - means eating only one meal during the day, usually in the evening. In the monasteries, this would be the practice every day during Great Lent except Saturdays and Sundays. The term “*fasting*,” for those of us outside the monastery, can be interpreted as meaning *one full meal*, usually taken in the evening, and no “in between” snacking.

To be sure, there are those who fall into certain categories who are excused from fasting, and sometimes, even from abstinence. These would include:

- very young children (But even children should be taught by their parents gradually the importance of fasting and abstinence.)
- the elderly (However, even the elderly who are in good health can fast and abstain to a certain degree.)
- those who are gravely ill
- pregnant women
- post-partum mothers
- breast-feeding mothers
- travelers (if travel time exceeds 8 hours)
- those engaged in heavy labour
- those who eat from the table of others
- the poor who live from charity

In short. The general standard can be summed up as: If you can fast and abstain more strictly, then you should; if you cannot, then you shouldn’t. The best way to figure out your personal rule of fasting is through discussion with your spiritual father in confession.

This all being said, there are some general standards that we can adopt here in our own parish for Great Lent to be used as guidelines. In this we can use the practice used at St. Sophia Seminary can serve as a model.

- First Day of the Great Fast (Clean Monday)– Abstention from meat and dairy and foods that contain these ingredients should be followed. Fasting should also be followed.
- The Rest of the First Week of the Great Fast – Abstention from meat and foods that contain these ingredients should be followed. Abstention from dairy and foods that contain these ingredients is encouraged.
- All Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast – Abstention from meat and foods that contain these ingredients should be followed. Abstention from dairy and foods that contain these ingredients should also be followed. (N.B. Abstention from meat and dairy and foods that contain these ingredients is encouraged on Mondays during Lent as well.)

Saturdays and Sundays of the Great Fast - Fasting and Abstinence are always mitigated on Saturdays because this is the day of rest when God rested from His work of creation, the “first Sabbath,” and also the day that Christ “rested in the tomb,” from His work of salvation,” thus, observing the Sabbath. The same holds true on Sunday because of the Resurrection.

Great and Holy Week

This week is not considered a part of the Great Fast but is rather a separate period of prayer, fasting and abstinence in preparation for Pascha (Easter). Abstention from meat and dairy and foods that contain these ingredients should be followed for the entire week. Wednesday and Great Friday, and even Saturday, should be followed as days of fasting.

A further word about fasting and abstinence: Whenever we deny ourselves certain foods, we do so in order to “feed our soul.” Fasting and abstinence should be accompanied by an increase in prayer. If we do this, we fortify our soul and the increase in prayer actually makes our physical fasting and abstinence easier. In addition to our abstinence from certain foods, we should “fast” from sinful deeds and words. Our fasting is of no profit to us if we continue in gossip, hateful words of others and other sinful actions. If we approach fasting with a serious attempt and heartfelt conviction, we can find it to be quite rewarding and our celebration of Pascha all the more fulfilling.

UKRAINIAN DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Terebovlya Mother of God - Protectress from Siege (Fourth in a series)

The icon of the Most Holy Birth-Giver of God of Terebovlya originally appeared in the principality of Halychyna (Galicia) during the time of the Terebovlya princes, and the 13th, or perhaps as early as the 12th century. After the decline of the Halychyna principality and the 13th and 14th centuries, Roman Catholics tried many times to seize the icon and bring it to their own church.

The Orthodox believers of Terebovlya and all Halychyna always prayed fervently before the the icon, asking the Mother of God to protect them whenever their land was attacked by enemy forces.

In the Terebovlya Court book of 1663, it is written that for the first time “... The image of the Blessed Virgin wept on the Thursday Before Ukrainian Easter.” Again, for the second time this icon of the blessed virgin Mary “wept” on Easter Saturday. The story of the weeping of the Terebovlya icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary Is given in the work “New Heaven” by Ionikiy Halatovsky. It is the oldest recorded instance of a “weeping” icon of the Mother of God in Ukraine.

Captain Ivan Sulovsky, along with 100 Cossacks were eyewitnesses to the miracle. Many other people both of spiritual and noble status, burghers, and ordinary people also testified under oath of the miraculous event. Among the eyewitnesses were representatives of various church rites and denominations.

Later historical sources testify that in 1651, only due to a miracle through a prayer before the Terebovlya wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, the inhabitants of the region defended Terebovlya castle from the Turks and Tartars.

In the spring of 1672, a Turkish army of 300,000 and then took the town of Kamenets Podilsky. This same army was defeated at Terebovlya, and was forced to retreat. The holy icon of the Mother of God was taken from the Church of the Protection (Pokrova) in town, and moved to the church in the ancient castle. There the people of Terebovlya thanked God for their deliverance.

Thanks to God’s Providence and the intercession of the Mother of God, Terebovlya Castle withstood the siege of thousands of Turkish troops, which lasted from September 29 to October 6, 1673. During the siege, the Turks tried to blow up the castle walls with a large amount of explosives. Seeing what the Turks planned to do, the defenders of the castle had no hope of help from the outside troops and suffered heavy losses from the continuous attacks of the enemy. They turned to the Blessed Virgin with sincere prayers, faithfully begging the Heavenly Patroness for salvation. A great, unheard of miracle happened. Without damaging the castle walls, an explosion of enormous force hit the Turkish troops, as a result of which they suffered very heavy losses. At the time of the explosion, according to eyewitnesses on the castle walls, they saw the Blessed Virgin Mary in dazzling white clothes.