



St. Nicholas Family Connection

MARCH 2024



An Orthodox Family Practice for Saturday Evening

Anthony M. Coniaris

Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home

It has been said that the Divine Liturgy begins when we wake up on Sunday morning and begin washing and dressing in preparation for going to Church. These are the first liturgical acts. But they are not. The Liturgy begins even before this. It begins on Saturday evening. It begins not only with attendance at the Vespers service; it begins also with an ancient family practice suggested by St. John Chrysostom that needs to be revived today in Orthodox Christian families. It is the practice of reading and discussing at home the Scripture lessons that are to be read in the Liturgy on the following morning. The Scripture references for each Sunday and major feast day are usually listed on parish calendars.

Since it is Christ Who speaks to us through the Scripture readings, it is a good practice to read these lessons (Epistle and Gospel) to your family before an icon of our Lord Jesus to show that it is He Who is speaking to us. A votive light may be lit before the icon before each reading to give expression to our faith that Jesus is the light of the world. The two lessons may be read by the parents. When the children are old enough, they should be allowed to participate in the readings and to ask questions on their meaning in a family discussion.

If practiced faithfully, this family practice will make our participation in the Liturgy more meaningful. We shall come to Church with a greater thirst to hear the word of God and how it is interpreted to us by the priest.

We should remember that in every Liturgy we commune with Christ twice. We commune with Him as the BREAD OF LIFE through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We commune also with Him as the WORD OF GOD when He comes to speak to us in the Scripture readings and the sermon. Just as we prepare ourselves



for Holy Communion through fasting and repentance, so through this family practice, we can prepare ourselves for receiving Christ when He comes to us as the Word of God. "... from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

How to Listen

When a rich member of a family died, all the relatives were called together by the lawyer for the reading of the will. As the will was being read, each person listened intently, eagerly waiting to hear his or her name mentioned.

This is a picture of how intently we should listen when God speaks in the Scriptures. Everything He says is directed personally to us. Everything He promises has our name in it. We should try to teach our children the personal love of God for each one of them by personalizing the verses we read from Scripture. For example, in John 3:16, change "God so loved the world ..." to "God so love (my name), so that (my name) who believe in Him might not perish but have life everlasting."

Why Connection Counts: Parenting From the Heart

George Papageorge, M.A., LMFT



Love is a Four Letter Word

In the most basic terms, our kids spell love: T - I - M - E; and if your kids are as active as mine, love can also be spelled: P - L - A - Y. Building on this foundation, we find that our best conversations with our kids occur in their frame of reference not ours.

In our willingness and mindfulness to tune in to their world of emotions, we can cultivate a connection from the heart. Parenting from the heart guards us from being fear driven, ego driven or power driven, allowing us to stay connected through all their ages and stages. The profound story of God intersects with the story of mankind with His loving desire to be connected to His people, reminding us why connection counts.

Upcoming Events for March

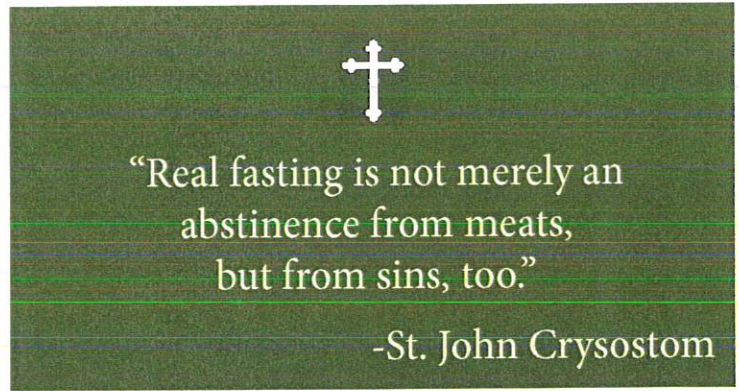
March 10th - St. Nicholas General Assembly
Jr. GOYA at Main Event
Meatfare Sunday Luncheon Sale
to benefit St. Nicholas Prison Ministry

March 17th - Forgiveness (Cheesefare)
& Mission Sunday
OCMC Coin Boxes will be sent home

March 24th - Sunday of Orthodoxy











March 25th - Greek Independence Day

Adapted from St. Nicholas 4/726477030



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 25th	 Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week MARCH 3rd	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare MARCH 10th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare MARCH 17th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 24th	 SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32:12-2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 31st	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent APRIL 7th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bowl!
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 14th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 21st	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 28th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 GREAT AND HOLY WEEK ENTRY of OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY MAY 3rd	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 5th NO FASTING!	 BRIGHT WEEK HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



St. Nicholas Vacation Bible School

We Magnify You!

Mary helps us come closer to God

July 29-August 2, 2024 - 9 am to Noon

St. Nicholas Family Life Center
12550 South Forty Drive
St. Louis, MO 63141

\$25 Fee - Questions? Call your church office 314.361.6924