

Bright Sadness



And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret.

Matthew 6:16-18

The season of the Great Fast is a journey that begins in exile and ends joining myself to the joy of Christ's resurrection. The spirit of the season is a profound acknowledgement of my separation from God by my own actions. I have prepared for the season through the five themes during the preparation period. I end the preparation in exile and expelled from paradise with Adam. I sit at the gates of paradise and cry:

"Woe is Me!...Formerly I was clothed in an immortal brightness; now, as a poor mortal, I am wrapped in the shroud of death. Alas! Whom shall I find to weep with me?"

Matins on Cheesefare Sunday

With this dark, sad theme I begin my journey. This somber mood permeates the hymnography of the Great Fast. But during the same matins service, just two hymns later I sing:

"You are truly most blessed, O virgin Mother of God. Through the One who was incarnate of you, Hades was chained, Adam revived, the curse wiped out, Eve set free, Death put to death, and we ourselves were brought back to life."

At the same time that I openly acknowledge my short comings and my separation from God, I see the bright light of Pascha shining with the hope of my

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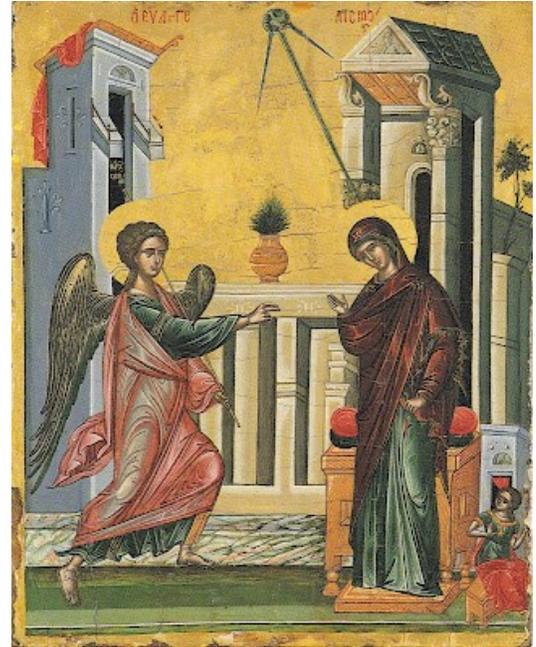


Experiences, Events & Exercises



House of Prayer - Mount Saint Macrina

Saints, Scriptures & Solemnities



BOOK DISCUSSION

March 10, 17, 24

10 - 11:30 a.m.

Presented by: Sr. Barbara Jean

Registration: Closed

Free Will Offering

6:00 pm Friday—4:00 pm

Sunday

Presented by: Marylyn Barone

Registration Due: March 28

Limit 20 persons

All supplies included. Offering: \$225.00

Commuters: \$200.00

LENTEN SATURDAY MORNING

March 15, 9:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Presented by: Sr. Carol Petrasovich

Registration Due: March 10

Offering: \$30. Includes Lunch

SCRIPTURE WEEKEND

RETREAT

April 25-27

7:30 p.m., Fri. – 1 p.m., Sun.

From Curiosity to Wonder: An Exploration of Old Testament Spirituality

Presented by: Fr. Daniel Forsythe

Registration Due: April 18

Offering: \$140. Commuters: \$115.

LENTEN SUNDAY AFTERNOON

March 16, 1:15 – 5 p.m.

Presented by: Rev. Athanasius Cherry, OSB

Registration Due: March 11

Offering: \$30. Includes Supper

Please note that all programs take place at the House of Prayer unless otherwise specified. To register, please call (724) 438-7149.

WEEKEND ICON WRITING RETREAT (Trinity Center)

April 4-6

March 2

Sunday of Cheesefare

Rom 13:11-14:4 Mt 6:14-21

March 23

3rd Sunday of the Great

Fast Veneration of the Cross

Heb 4:14-5:6; Mk 8:34-9:1

March 3

First Day of the Great Fast

Eutropius & Others -

Martyrs of Sebaste

Gen 1:1-13

Prov 1:1-20

March 25

Annunciation of the

Theotokos

Heb 2:11-18

Lk 1:24-38

March 9

1st Sunday of the Great Fast

Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste

Heb 11:24-26.32-12:2

Jn 1:43-51

March 26

Mid-Lent

Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel

Gen 9:18-10:1; Prov 12:23-13:9

March 16

2nd Sunday of the Great Fast

Heb 1:10-2:3

Mk 2:1-12

March 30

4th Sunday of Great Fast John Climacus-

Venerable

Heb 6:13-20; Mk 9:17-31



Bright Sadness *(Continued from page 1)*

salvation. This mixed message is found in every service throughout the Great Fast. Bright Sadness is the term coined by Father Schmemmann for this spirit of our Great Fast services. We experience the sadness of our human situation, in both words and the minor key of our music for the season. But, at the same time, I cannot forget that our salvation has already been achieved. Christ is risen, I am still saved. But I cannot become proud or settled in my salvation. I must experience the real sadness of exile every year. I have accepted my savior but I

have not become perfect yet. I have my shortcomings, I exile myself by my daily sins. Once a year I accept this exile and resolve to change my life anew, to consciously journey back to the Resurrection and join Christ on that road during Holy Week.

I can join Jesus on this pilgrimage during Holy Week by filling my spirit with this Bright Sadness during the season of the Great Fast. The daily hymns of the Church will take me step by step through my spiritual inventory for the journey.

Forgiveness

Mt. 5:43-48 "... love your enemies ... You must set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his."

Lk 23:33-43 ... they crucified him ... Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing."

1Jn 2:3-11 "Whoever claims to be in light but hates his brother is still in darkness ... not knowing where he is going."

Mt 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers..."

1 Pet 3:8-12 ...love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never repay one wrong with another...

Lk 11:1-4 "... when you pray, this is what to say ... 'and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.'"

Mt 18:21-35 Peter said, "Lord, how often must I forgive my brother ...? Jesus answered ... "seventy-seven times."

The Triodion:

The Guide for the Journey of the Fast

The Triodion is the Byzantine liturgical book that contains special prayers and hymns for every day of the Great Fast. Its texts were collected or composed in the late 8th century by two great poets and saints: Theodore and Joseph, brothers in the flesh and monks at the urban monastery called the Studion in Constantinople.

The great themes of the Triodion include the original beauty of God's creation and the devastation created by the first human sin; the struggle to return to paradise, the great examples of repentance from the Bible; the example of the Holy Martyrs; the fast as an athletic competition; the fast as therapy for our souls; the fast as a new Exodus; the fast as a journey toward participation in the Resurrection of Christ. The hymns of the Triodion

often invite us to speak directly to our own souls and to take stock of our lives. The hymns of the Triodion often invite us to speak directly to our own souls and to take stock of our lives. Portions of the Triodion are sung at the Liturgy of the Presanctified and as the troparion and kontakion at Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Along with these poetic hymns, the Triodion assigns portions of the biblical books of Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs to be read each day of the fast.

The Triodion is available online at www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/prayers/triodion/triodion.html and www.anastasis.org.uk/trikodion.htm.

Scripture Weekend Retreat - Mount St. Macrina House of Prayer

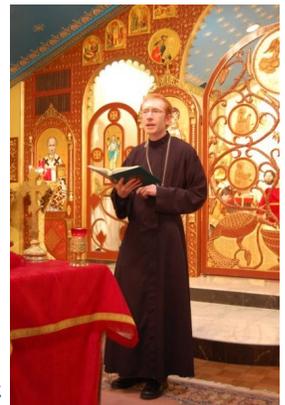
Date Change:

April 25-27, 2014

Father Daniel Forsythe will present: *From Curiosity to Wonder: An Exploration of Old Testament Spirituality.*

The program is a weekend retreat beginning on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and concluding on Sunday at 1 p.m.

The offering for this program is \$140 or \$115 for commuters. Registration is due on April 18. To register, please contact the House of Prayer at 724-438-7149.





The Lord calls. Will you answer?

By Sister Elaine Kisinko OSBM



Our Holy Father Francis has designated the year of 2015 as the Year for Consecrated Life. We Sisters welcome this designation with the realization and hope that in focusing on the value and importance of consecrated life, others may discern that they too are called to walk this way.

There is no doubt that the Lord is calling women just as He called us, each Sister of Saint Basil. Perhaps it was different for us because it was a different time. Though it was not an easy decision to leave family, interests and life as we knew it, each of us in some way believed that this was what God wanted us to do – to follow Him as a vowed religious nun. Most of us had the support of our loved ones and of our parish communities.

Now it seems that as families have become so much smaller, parents are reluctant to see their daughter, who is their only child or is one of two children, set aside all that the world appears to

offer. Education and professional careers have become paramount. Opportunities for women beckon in fields that were before unknown to them. Many times vocation awareness is not mentioned or encouraged in parish activities because it is considered a topic which fosters no interest. Sadly, in America today, as we see church populations shrink and parishes close, even young people who have been brought up in the Church do not continue practicing their faith. Criticism and disapproval of Catholic teaching is evident in subtle ways and in obvious ways as well.

But our God is eternal and unchanging. The world and everyone and everything in it remains His despite constant and rapid change in every place and way imaginable. As we see laws and morality crumbling, society seems intent in trying to make His reality fade and become more and more obscure.

So it remains the task of the Church and of all of the good, faithful and wonderful people in it to keep living and reflecting Jesus and His Gospel way of life. Our hierarchs, priests, deacons, monastics, brothers sisters, laity and you who are reading this have been called and all continue to be called to do this. Every vocation and state in life, whether it be married, single, ordained or religious, is of the greatest value.

But if ever you have had even a tiny fleeting thought of wanting to do more for God and His Church, please bring that thought back into your mind and heart and ask our Lord to help you discern what He is calling you to do. Talk about it to those whose guidance you trust.

I have been blessed, honored and grateful to be a Sister of Saint Basil for a very long time. I have witnessed the changes in the world and absorbed the changes of religious life. It is clear that both will continue to change. Though the vision for our Church can appear dire, it can also become exciting and life giving as seminaries and monasteries grow with new members who have much to offer. To respond to God's call to the Consecrated Life can be challenging, but it is not a giving up but a receiving more.

**When the Lord said, “You have not chosen me but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16),
He is gently confirming and beckoning. How will you respond?**



Communing of Saint Mary of Egypt By Holy Father Zossima

At age 12, Saint Mary of Egypt left her parents, and for 17 years gave herself to any and all to satisfy her insatiable lustful desires. One day she joined others hurrying to Jerusalem for the Elevation of the Cross, paying her boat passage with her body. On the holy day of the Elevation, an unseen power kept her from entering the church.

Realizing her impure life obstructed her entrance, she began to weep and groan, praying to the Most Holy Mother of God, "O my loneliness...I call upon you to be my guarantor of hope before God, Your Son, that never again shall I defile this body."

Entering the church, Saint Mary knelt before the icon of the Ever Virgin Mother of God. A voice said, "If you cross the Jordan River, you will find glorious peace."

For the next 47 years, Saint Mary lived in the desert, totally alone. After her clothing rotted off her body, she was naked, turning black in the burning desert sun or shivering in winter's cold.

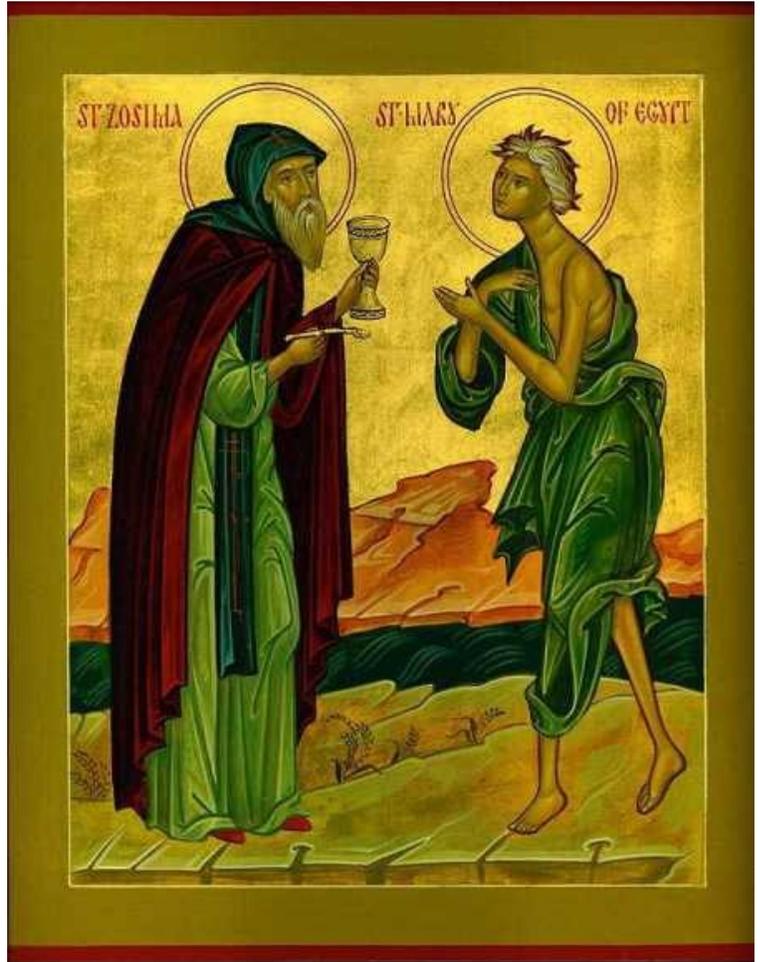
Saint Mary fought her frenzied desires for 17 years, gaining the strength from the icon of the Mother of God. At last she saw a shining light surrounding her.

When the good Father Zossima found her during his annual Lenten pilgrimage into the desert, he gave her his monastic cloak. Blessing her, he asked her blessing. Amazed, he watched her rise from the ground and stand praying in the air!

Saint Mary asked Father Zossima to meet her at the Jordan River the next year and bring her the Mystical Supper. At the appointed time, she appeared on the opposite bank and walked over the waves.

The following year Father Zossima prayed, "Show me, O Lord, Your pure treasure which You have hidden in the desert." He found her lying dead. Unable to dig a grave in the baked earth, he saw a great lion licking the Saint's feet. Trembling, he spoke to the lion, "I am old and have not the strength to dig out her grave. You do the work with your claws" - and the lion did!

Saint Mary of Egypt died in the year 530. Her life was a triumph over sin and self. She said, "Blessed is God Who cares for the salvation of people and of their souls."



Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great

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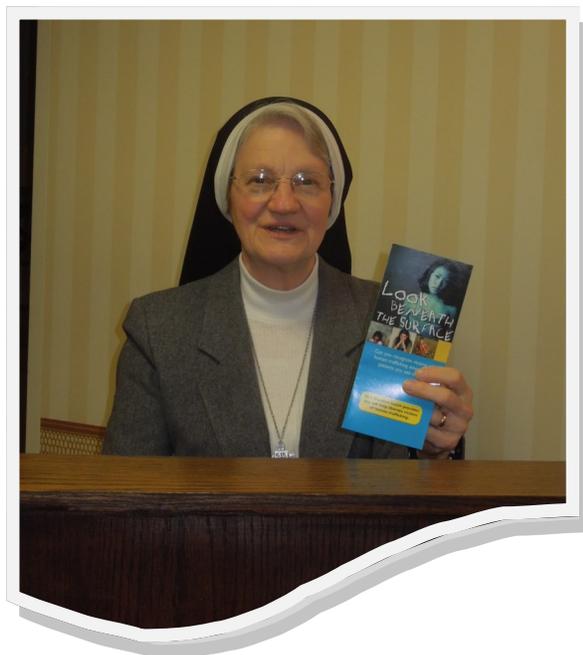
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Sr. Barbara to give Lenten Conferences

Come and Meet Her!



St. Barbara Byzantine Catholic Church, Dayton, OH, March 8

St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church, Columbus, OH, March 9

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Solon, OH, March 30

Join our mailing list and
subscribe to LifeQuesters
on the Web:

Contact

Sister Barbara Jean

vocations@sistersofstbasil.org

Upcoming Events in the Metropolia

Helping Hands Day at Mount St. Macrina - June 7

National Byzantine Catholic Youth Rally - Emmitsburg, MD, July 10-13

Pilgrimage Preparation Day at Mount St. Macrina - August 16

80th Annual Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help - August 30-31

Check your Eparchy's website for additional events in your area. Watch the Sisters' website for updates on upcoming events: www.sistersofstbasil.org.