

Holy Transfiguration Cathedral Newsletter

349 E 47th Ave., Denver, Colorado, 80216

Grwat Lent & Holy Week, 2003

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Russian Program A Big Success!

On Sunday, 12 January, our Parish held the seventh annual "Old Rus Holiday Party" a joyful celebration of the part played by Russian, Ukrainian and Carpatho-Russian culture in the life of our Parish and a benefit for the little girls cared for by the nuns of the St. Nicholas' Monastery in Kaluga, Russia.

This year, we went back to our original tradition of asking various families in our parish to prepare ethnic dishes which are appropriate to the Christmas-Theophany Season.

Our Sunday School children presented a program and we enjoyed a special collection of musical arrangements presented by the, world renowned, "Planina Singers".

When the proceeds were tallied, we had collected over \$2,900 for the charity. Anatoly and Kyra Rubtsov are in Russia right now, and will personally present our contribution to the Nuns. Anatoly is both a PhD candidate in biology at the University of Colorado and a Candidate for the Master of Divinity Degree from the St. Tikhon's Academy in Moscow.

Slavonic Liturgies Continue

We continue to offer the Divine Liturgy in the Slavonic Language on the 7th of January each year and on the second Saturday of each other month of the year. About 60 persons, many of Russian, Ukrainian and Serbian descent, attended the 7 January service and most stayed for a festive potluck luncheon, which followed it.

Slava #105 Receives High Praise

The "afterglow" from our Annual St. Sava's Day event, continued well beyond the following week.

For several days after the celebration, the rectory was still receiving phone calls from parish members and guests, praising the atmosphere, the food and the music.

Singled out for particular mention were John and Magda Blagaila, whose "Sarma" received well deserved accolades. Magda was asked to make 400 cabbage rolls, so, of course, she made 600 which left us with a full roaster full to serve at the luncheon for Bishop Tikhon when His Grace visited a couple of weeks later. Also praised were Diana and Gary Seurer, Mike and Gloria Rogozik and their crew, who prepared the wonderful pork roast and the rest of the meal. Doug and Erin Busken were Kumovi (Hosts) for the day and had things well organized. Erin's Mom and sisters were in charge of set up and decorations.

A topic of special mention was the wonderful music provided by the "Tom Allan Variety Band" who kept the part moving and young and old alike, dancing all afternoon. The most often repeated comment was to the effect that, "It has been a long time since we have enjoyed ourselves that much at St. Sava's Day".

His Grace Visits His Denver Cathedral to Ordain a New Deacon for Calhan

Fr. Deacon James Brown is the newest Cleric in our Deanery and a splendid addition to the Staff of the *Holy Dormition of St. Mary*

Parish in Calhan Colorado. Having successfully completed the O.C.A.'s "Late Vocations Program" for older adult men who wish to study for the Holy Diaconate but who are prevented from matriculating to and Orthodox Seminary, Fr. Deacon James acquitted himself well on the standardized examination and was subsequently approved by His Grace, Bishop Tikhon and by the Holy Synod for ordination.

According to His Grace's policy, all ordinations in the Diocese take place in one of the four Diocesan Cathedrals. Accordingly, we were honored to have been asked to host this momentous event. The Parish Choir, augmented by some visitors, sang beautifully, as usual. Spirits were elevated by the joy and good cheer of the event. Our ladies capped off the day by serving a splendid luncheon to our members and about sixty guests.

"Many Years!" to Fr. Deacon James and to his Rector, Father Nicholas Dotson, who educated and trained him.

Home Blessings Progress

Since Holy Theophany, Fr. Joseph has made about 50 home visitations to bless the dwellings of our people. About 35 visits remain to be made and, perhaps, a dozen of these are scheduled. Fr. Joseph and Fr. Averky will be attempting to complete the home sanctifications following the Liturgies on Saturdays during March and Fr. Joseph and Matushka will continue on the weekdays of the pre-Lenten and early Lenten weeks. If you have not contacted Matushka to make an appointment, you are urged to do so.

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR DONATIONS TO THE HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA PALM AND FLOWER FUND!

Otherwise, we will simply have to try to fit you into a rotation. Also, while it is, by no means, expected that you provide food or meals at home blessings, please remember that **no meat should be served to the Clergy after Sunday, 2 March and no eggs or dairy products after Sunday, 9 March.**

Church school Painting Project

The Parish Council is planning a couple of work days following Holy Pascha. We will be repairing plaster, painting the walls and spraying the ceilings. Help is welcome. See Ben Hirsch to volunteer.

Katherine Milosovich to Work in Guatemala

Katie Milosovich who is a senior at Regis University, has volunteered to serve over her spring recess, as an assistant to the Orthodox Nuns who run an orphanage in Guatemala. According to Orthodox Christian Mission Center guidelines, she needed to raise all of her own expenses from donations.

Thanks to our people who contributed several hundreds of dollars for this project. We only had three weeks notice to raise funds so Katie may be a couple hundred dollars short. She can certainly use any further assistance she may receive.

Alex and Masha are Doing Well.

We have made several copies of a letter, which was sent to our Parish by our Seminary Couple, Alexander and Masha Vallens. Masha has a job now as a computer program analyst for a hospital. Alex had an A- grade point average after the first semester, quizzed out of Slavonic and is taking extra classes in Liturgical Greek and Choir Direction. We did not have a Seminarian Collection after Liturgy in February because of our fund raising for Katie Milosovich's mission, but we have pledged \$100 a month toward their support so, please remember our next "Second Collection" for

Seminarians at the end of Liturgy on Sunday, 2 March.

Rite of Forgiveness

It is a sad fact that one of the most beautiful services of the entire Church Year: the Vespers of Forgiveness, which follows coffee hour on Cheese fare Sunday, is primarily attended by converts to Orthodox and pretty much ignored by those who were born and raised in the Church. Actually, the custom is to use the entire "Butter Week" (Mosilanitza) which falls from 3 to 9 March this year, as a time to visit our brothers and sisters in Christ and to ask their forgiveness before entering upon the Great Fast. At the Vespers on Forgiveness Sunday, we perform a solemn rite of asking and receiving mutual forgiveness and then enter into the First Week of Great Lent by singing the Paschal Verses,""Let God arise..." with which we will welcome the Lord's Resurrection Forty-eight days later. It would be a real joy and consolation for all or most of us to be able to enter upon the Great Fast together.

Pan Orthodox Vespers

You will see the pan Orthodox Sunday Vespers listed on the March and April Calendars. The first of these, as usual, will be held at Holy Assumption Cathedral on Orthodoxy Sunday, 16 March. The second Vespers in the Denver area will be at our Cathedral at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, 23 March. A Lenten reception will follow each week. We know that our ladies will, once more, rise to this challenge with their usual hospitality.

Shift to Bees Wax Contemplated

With a reliable supply of beeswax tapers and candles now available to us from Fr. Nicholas and Matushka Kedren Dotson of Calhan, we are anticipating a shift over to these traditional Orthodox offering candles in place of the plastic and petroleum based candles which we have been forced to use by issues of cost and

availability.

If all goes well, we will replace our white molded "40s" and "60s" with beeswax tapes at about \$1.00 a piece and our yellow "4s" and "6s" with eight inch fitted end candles at about \$2.50 a piece. Your comments are welcome. Among the reasons for considering this change are the facts that beeswax is a traditional offering in the Orthodox Church, it gives the Temple a beautiful honey smell, it is easy to clean up and it does not leave a petroleum film on Holy Icons, covers, carpets and brass fixtures.

Choir Practices During Lent

Our Choir has acquitted itself excellently on several occasions lately. When the Dean was in California, conducting a retreat in Santa Rosa, Fr. Lawrence Margetich, the Diocesan Music Director, commented most favorably upon their singing at the recent Diocesan Assembly. Last Saturday, His Grace expressed his pleasure with the music at the Hierarchical Liturgy and Ordination.

How did we get to this point? Practice, practice, practice! During Great Lent, we will be having short Choir practices each Wednesday evening, except for the first Wednesday, following the Presanctified Liturgies and Lenten potlucks. This way, we can have our singers present for the beautiful evening services without having to require them to give up another evening for practice or to make a choice.

It would be a big help if those who are attending the Lenten Potlucks after each Presanctified Liturgy and who are not singers would take it upon themselves to clean up the tables and kitchen and, thus, free those who need to practice, to get started at once. It is extremely important that those who know the music for Lent and Pascha make a point to be there for practices for the benefit of those who may not be as familiar as they are with the music.

Lenten Adult Study

We will hold two sets of adult classes during Great Lent. On Tuesday evenings, 1, 8 & 15 April from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m., we will examine the Lenten Triodion or cycle of Sacred Services for pre-Lent, Lent and Holy Week and lessons about Orthodox Theology which are revealed in these services.

On Wednesday afternoons, 19 & 26 March and 2, 9 & 16 April from 1:00 till 2:00 p.m. we will study the Bible Readings which form an important part of the Holy Saturday Vespers Liturgy.



Holy Transfiguration
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Archpriest Joseph Hirsch-Dean

Lent / Holy Week / Pascha, 2003

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

This newsletter is intended to facilitate our entrance upon the “Bright Sadness” which marks our “Feast of Fasting”, the Great Lent which culminates in the Passion Week and brings us to the joyful celebration of Our Lord’s Victory over sin and death.

This coming Sunday, 2 March, is Called the Sunday of the Last Judgment. On this day, we are reminded of the dreadful Last Day upon which each of us will see the sum total of his or her life reflected in the eyes of the Righteous Judge.

On the following Sunday, 9 March, this year, we will join our ancient parents outside of the Gates of Paradise where, like them, we will be called upon to repent our sins and to implore forgiveness. But, like them, we will be consoled in our lamentation by the echo of the promise that the Son of the Woman, Her Seed, will crush the head of the serpent, will abolish the dominion of Death by His Death and will vindicate and deliver the human race.

Far from being pious stories, legends, moralistic “Fairy tales” or pious fables, these events and the mystical representations in the Divine Worship of the Holy Orthodox Church are the only actual realities which exist in an otherwise broken and deceiving world.

What a joy it is to be privileged to participate in the only MEANING there is or can be in human existence! What a tragedy it is, to be an inheritor and initiate of these mysteries and, by our negligence in our stewardship of them, to seemingly, regard them lightly and trivialize their importance to our very BEING.

Praying that this Holy time will prove profitable to your spiritual edification and Salvation, I remain:

Sincerely Yours in Participation in the Mysteries of Christ Our True God,

Archpriest Joseph