

Getting Ready for Great Lent

At the Divine Liturgy, we will hear the words of Christ in the Gospel Reading from Matthew 6:14-15 --

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

and Matthew 6:19-21 --

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Then after Vespers, which begins the Lenten season with the prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian, we ask forgiveness from each other. This is called the “Rite of Forgiveness and Reconciliation.”

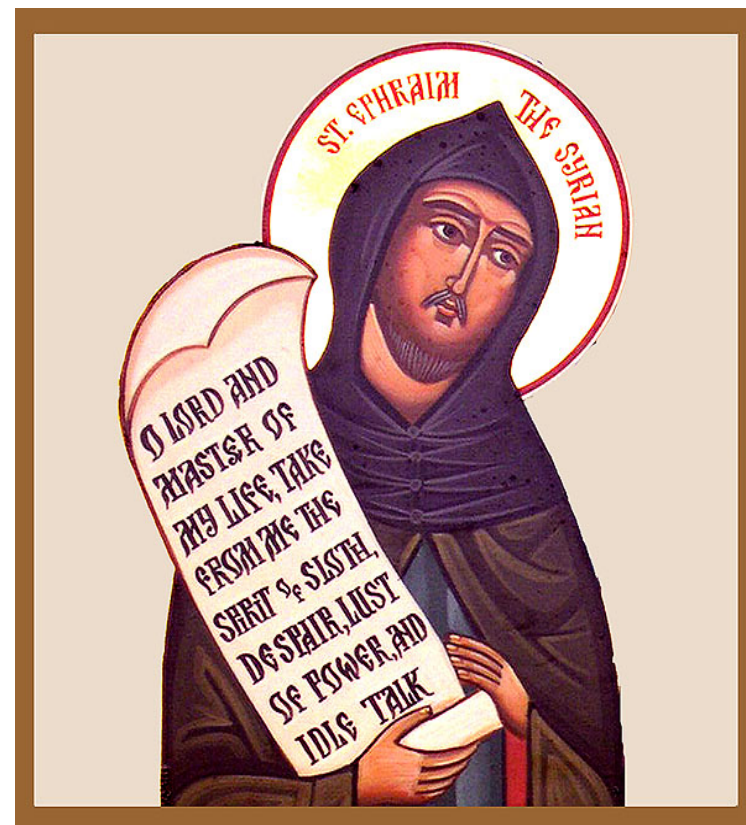
Prayer of Saint Ephraim

O Lord and Master of my life, Grant not unto me a spirit of idleness, of discouragement, of lust for power, and of idle talk.

But bestow upon me, Your servant, the spirit of chastity, meekness, patience, and love.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant that I may see my own faults and not the faults of others, for blessed are you unto ages of ages. Amen.

Forgiveness Sunday



Treasures in Heaven

Christ tells us to “lay up treasures in Heaven.” What are they? ...

GOOD DEEDS LAST FOREVER

God never forgets the good things we do.

We can think of our good deeds as our “treasure chest” in Heaven.

And if we continue to do good deeds with a loving heart we will continue to fill our treasure chest in Heaven.

Anything good that we do is remembered by God forever.

MISTAKES ARE FORGIVEN

When we make a mistake and do something wrong (sin) that hurts others, it's like throwing junk into our treasure chest.

When we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, it's like removing the junk.

God forgives all our sins.

God wants us to have the same kind of forgiveness and love toward everyone as He has for each of us.

Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know?

As I move towards another person, and as the other person comes toward me, God wants us both to know that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for both of us.

Forgiveness Sunday is the day on which we learn that the Fasting during Lent is not only fasting from foods (although that is important) but also “fasting” from bad habits toward other persons:

- * selfishness
- * thinking that we are “better” than others
- * criticizing others, calling them names, bullying them
- * not caring about others when they are sad or sick
- * not helping someone when we are able to help

FIND THE WORD: For each sentence, unscramble the word below it and fill in the blanks.

1. God asks us to _____ to others.
4 3

V E I G

2. Jesus Christ is the _____ of God.
5

O N S

3. The time before Pascha is called _____ Lent.
6 2

T E R A G

4. We make the _____ of the Cross to show our love for Christ. 1

G N I S

Some of the letters have numbers below them. Put them in the right order, and you will spell an important word in this sentence: Jesus Christ is our _____.

LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT: On Sundays of Great Lent, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. Here is something Saint Basil said -- “*The bread you do not use belongs to the hungry; the garment hanging in your closet and not worn is the clothing of the naked; the shoes you do not wear are the shoes of someone who is barefoot; the money you keep locked away is the money of the poor.*”

What is Saint Basil saying about the things we have and the things we actually need?

What things in your life are “extra” things that you could do without? How could you use the “extra” things to help others?