My Lenten Journey
Pre-Lent through Pentecost

This Book Belongs to:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Lent</th>
<th>Great Lent</th>
<th>Holy Week</th>
<th>Post-Lent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 14</td>
<td>Sunday, March 14th</td>
<td>Sunday, April 25th</td>
<td>Sunday, May 9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacchaeus Sunday</td>
<td>Forgiveness Sunday</td>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
<td>St. Thomas Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 21</td>
<td>Monday, March 15– Friday, March 19th</td>
<td>Monday, April 26th</td>
<td>Sunday, May 16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday of the Publican &amp; Pharisee</td>
<td>Clean Week</td>
<td>Bridegroom Matins</td>
<td>Sunday of the Myrrbearing Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canon of St. Andrew of Crete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 28th</td>
<td>Sunday, March 21st</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 27th</td>
<td>Sunday, May 23rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday of the Prodigal Son</td>
<td>Sunday of Orthodoxy</td>
<td>Bridegroom Matins</td>
<td>Sunday of the Paralytic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bring your Icons for a procession)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, Mary 7th</td>
<td>Saturday, March 27th</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 28th</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 26th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday of the Last Judgment</td>
<td>Soul Saturday, remembering our departed</td>
<td>Holy Unction</td>
<td>Mid-Pentecost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, March 28th</td>
<td>Thursday, April 29th</td>
<td>Sunday, May 30th</td>
<td>Sunday of the Samaritan Women (St. Photini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Gregory Palamas</td>
<td>Institution of the Eucharist Passions Gospels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 4th</td>
<td>Friday, April 30th</td>
<td>Sunday, June 6th</td>
<td>Sunday of the Blind Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday of the Cross</td>
<td>Unnailing Vespers Lamentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 11th</td>
<td>Saturday, May 1st</td>
<td>Thursday, June 10th</td>
<td>Holy Ascension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John the Ladder</td>
<td>Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and Old Testament Readings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nocturns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 18th</td>
<td>Sunday, May 2nd</td>
<td>Sunday, June 13th</td>
<td>Sunday of the Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary of Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, April 24th</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday, June 20th</td>
<td>Pentecost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazarus Saturday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pre-Lent
In the Orthodox Church before we even begin the season of Great Lent we know that Lent and Pascha are coming as we hear the Gospels the 5 Sundays before the start of the fast.

We will hear the Gospel about Zacchaeus the tax-collector. This tells us how Jesus brought salvation to a sinful man. Zacchaeus’ life was changed because he “sought to see who Jesus was” (Luke 9:3) This effort and desire of Zacchaeus shows us the entire movement through Lent toward Pascha.

The Next Sunday is of the Publican and the Pharisee. This Sunday we hear about two men in the temple who are praying. The Pharisee who was a good and righteous man and the Publican who was a sinful tax-collector. The Pharisee knowing of his good deeds was prideful so he was condemned according to Christ. The Publican knew he was sinful and begged for mercy and forgiveness and was given these things. We are taught that meekness and piety of repentance is the way we can be saved though God’s Mercy.

Then we hear about the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This is a parable that shows us God’s unconditional loving forgiveness. We are like the Prodigal Son who is far from our Father’s House and we want to return. We are assured that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness as we return to him though repentance.

The next Sunday is called Meatfare Sunday since it is officially the last day before Pascha for eating meat. We will now begin the fast. We hear of Christ’s parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25.31–46). This reminds us that we must see Christ in every man and serve our neighbors and be Christlike. Our salvation is to see Jesus like Zacchaeus, to see ourselves for who we are like the Publican and to come home to God like the Prodigal Son. Our salvation and final judgement will depend on our deeds and not just our intentions or even the mercies of God. (Matthew 25)

Finally, on the eve of Great Lent, the day called Cheesefare Sunday (as it is the last day to eat dairy before the fast) and Forgiveness Sunday, we sing of Adam’s exile from paradise. We see ourselves with Adam who has lost the beauty of man’s original creation. Adam is mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this Sunday, Jesus’ teaching about fasting and forgiveness. This is why we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another as God forgive us!

*If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses* (Mt 6.14–18).
ZACHEUS
IC XC

Icon courtesy of iconographics (www.theologic.com)
What do you want to do for others during Great Lent? Draw a picture and share your story!
Great Lent
The first week of Great Lent is called “Clean Week.” During this week we pray the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete and have our first Pre-Sanctified Liturgy.

The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is special for Great Lent. This helps Orthodox Christians during the fast by offering a weekday Liturgy and the Eucharist for those who are prepared for it. It is called a Pre-Sanctified Liturgy because the Gifts are Sanctified on Sunday and kept for the Liturgy during the week. We do not have Divine Liturgies during Great Lent except on Sundays and Feast Days. Great Lent is our preparation for Holy Pascha and we call it the bright sadness.

There are several things you can do to participate in the Church during Great Lent. Let’s talk about some of the things you can do.

❖ Most importantly... COME TO CHURCH! Attend as many services as possible!
❖ Make sure to say your morning and evening prayers every night.
❖ Bring your Icons to Sunday of Orthodoxy. We will do a procession around the church to celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy.
❖ For Soul Saturday, make sure you turn in the names of departed family and friends so that they can be prayed for.
❖ For St. Gregory of Palamas bring your prayer rope to church and use it to say the Jesus prayer each day of this week.
❖ For the Sunday of the Cross, wear your Baptismal Cross to Church and start each morning by doing a prostration and kissing the cross in your prayer corner.
❖ For Sunday of St. John the Ladder, remember every time you go up or down stairs to ask St. John for his intercession and to help you reach paradise.
❖ For the Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, ask the Theotokos for her intercession and to help you have pure thoughts this week.
❖ For Lazarus Saturday, bring a list of your living and departed family for the priest to read during the Proskomedia Prayers.
❖ For Palm Sunday, Hold your palms up high as we celebrate Christ’s entry into Jerusalem. Learn to fold a palm cross and place it in your prayer corner for the year.
Enter Clean Week
Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
"Have mercy on me, OH GOD!
Have mercy on me!"
The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian

“O Lord and Master of my Life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.  
(prostration)
But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant.  
(prostration)
Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages.  
Amen”  
(prostration)
RESTORATION OF THE ICONS:
Memory Eternal!
To those who respect and worship Him, and who love and keep His commands, He promises and gives the heavenly kingdom and perpetual and painless life, and life immortal, and unsetting light to enjoy.
ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

DIVINE LIGHT
MOTHER MARY OF EGYPT
RAISING OF LAZARUS
ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM
Palm Leaf Cross Directions

Supplies: One palm leaf strip about 24-26" in length, 1/2" in width, tapering to the end.

STEP: 1
Fold the palm leaf down, about 5-6" from the bottom.

STEP: 2

STEP: 3

STEP: 4

STEP: 5

STEP: 6

STEP: 7

STEP: 8

STEP: 9

STEP: 10
Tuck in the tapered end of the palm leaf and pull it through.

STEP: 11

STEP: 12
Turn the cross over. This is the front view.
What question do you have for Fr. Gabriel? Draw a picture and share your story!
Holy Week
During Holy Week we walk with Christ through His Passion and onto His Resurrection.

We hear about Jesus washing the feet of His disciples

We hear about Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper as we celebrate the institution of the Eucharist.

We hear about Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He hear about Jesus being arrested, His trial and His Passion before the Crucifixion.

We hear about Christ being crucified.

We hear about Jesus’ body being taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb.

We hear about Jesus descending into hades to free the captives.

We hear the angel tell the myrrhbearing women that “CHRIST IS RISEN!”

We hear about Jesus being resurrected from the dead and defeating death!
Jesus’ Prayer in the Garden

After eating a Passover meal with His friends (a meal which was the first holy eucharist,) Jesus went out in the garden to pray. The place was called Gethsemane. Jesus had spoken many times about how he would be arrested and have to die. His followers were very confused and tired. They did not understand what was happening with their Lord.

See St. Matthew 26:26-36
The icons in our churches show Jesus in different ways. We see Him at different times in His life, as our teacher and our Savior. During Great and Holy Week, we see another icon, called the Extreme Humility. This shows us the overwhelming love Christ has for His people and the Church -- love so great, that He will even die for us.
THE RESURRECTION
Christ is risen!
indeed he is risen!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. John 1:1
What was your favorite part of Pascha? Draw a picture and share your story!
The week after Pascha is called Bright Week. We have several Liturgies this week as we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. For the 50 days following Pascha we follow a special Liturgical Book called the Pentecostarion. This guides us from Pascha to Pentecost.

The first Sunday after Pascha is called St. Thomas Sunday. This is when we remember Christ appearing to Thomas the Apostle. This is also the traditional day in the Orthodox Church for the priest to go and bless the graves of the departed.

The following Sunday is the Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women. These are the women who cared and prepared the body of Jesus for his burial and were the first witnesses to His Resurrection. St. Mary Magdalene was one of the Myrrhbearing Women.

The next Sunday is dedicated to Jesus healing the Paralytic. This man was healed by Jesus as he was waiting to be put into a pool of water. This teaches us that though baptism in the church we too will be saved and healed by Christ in eternal life.

The Feast of Mid-Pentecost happens in the middle of the week. This literally means in the middle of the feast when Christ teaches us of His mission and offers to everyone “the waters of immortality” (John 7:14)

The next Sunday is that of the Samaritan Woman or St. Photini and our parish’s Altar Feast. This reenforces the idea of “living water” and the understanding of Jesus as God’s Messiah. We are reminded to tell the world of Christ’s salvation.

The Blind Man is next. This Sunday we hear of the healing of the blind man from birth. Jesus heals the blind man on the Sabbath on which spitting, clay-making and washing were forbidden. By breaking these rules Jesus showed he was the Lord of the Sabbath. The Church follows the blind man knowing that those who do not see Jesus as the Lord are really blind and still in sin.

Mid-week we come to the Feast of the Holy Ascension. On the fortieth day after His passover, Jesus ascended into heaven to be glorified on the right hand of God (The ascension of Christ is His final physical departure from this world after the resurrection.

The next Sunday we remember the Father’s of the first ecumenical council. These Holy Fathers are remembered because they set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings and order of the Church.
THE MYRRHBearers

Holy Saturday Morning
HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC
THE SAMARITAN WOMAN
THE HOLY FATHERS
Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Holy Pentecost officially marks the end of the Paschal season. This will be the first time we kneel in prayer since Great and Holy Friday. Pentecost is also know as the birth of the Church, it is when God sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles of Jesus. All of the Apostles were in one place when a sound came from heaven like a mighty wind and filled the house where they were. It appeared to them as tongues of fire and rested upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. This is also why Pentecost is called “Trinity Day” because it shows us the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one to fulfill the Godhead. The day following Pentecost is knowns as the feast of the Holy Spirt.

Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to his discipled and the apostles received the “power from on high”. They then began to preach and bear witness of Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and Lord.

You will notice different Hymns during this Liturgy as well as special prayers. We also all participate in the kneeling prayers for the Vespers of Pentecost. This is when we kneel for the first time in 50 days. These are long prayers that the faithful pray together.
The Descent of the Holy Spirit—Pentecost
What was your favorite part of your Lenten Journey? Draw a picture and share your story!

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