

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY: February 4, 2024

SUNDAY OF MEAT-FARE

Schedule of Divine Services

Sunday, Feb. 4: Sunday of Meat-Fare

10-10:45am Confessions, 10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

In Memory of Mykola & Maria Durkacz – by the Bacasa & Durkacz Families

Monday, Feb. 5: 5pm Confessions – 6pm Vespers

Friday, Feb. 9: 5pm Confessions - 6 pm Divine Liturgy

Saturday, Feb. 10: 5pm Confessions – 6pm Great Vespers

Please note the adjusted weekday times, as discussed at the parish meeting.

Sunday, Feb. 11: Sunday of Cheese-Fare

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy with Panachida

In memory of Msgr. Russell Duker, by Subdeacon Raffaele Ruggiero

Brunch Social to follow in hall

1pm lecture by Fr. Michael - “Journey Through the Desert”

2pm Forgiveness Vespers

Confessions are available before Divine Liturgy. All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out a request form in the back of the church and leave it in the sacristy.

THANK YOU! To everyone who participated in yesterday’s cleaning day! We hope to have more of these days in the future.

MEAT-FARE POT LUCK TODAY: We will be celebrating Fashcingy after today’s Liturgy.

“JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT”: Next Sunday, 2/11, the “Frassati Pittsburgh” Young Adults Group will be joining us for Divine Liturgy. Afterwards there will be a brunch social, a talk by Fr. Michael at 1pm, and **Forgiveness Vespers at 2pm.** All are welcome!

FIRST PENITENTIAL VESPERS: **Sun, Feb 18** we will hosting vespers at 4pm followed by a meager meal. We anticipate 80-90 attendees! For the meal, donations of soup and bread are needed. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

DONATION REQUEST FOR BASKET RAFFLE: at the meager meal we will have a basket raffle. Donations of baskets and/or items we can use to make them **are needed by Sun. Feb 11.** We appreciate everyone’s support of this fundraiser. See **Lynne W. or Mary D.** with any questions.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS: If you are interested in learning how to lead Matins as a Reader’s Service on Sunday mornings before Liturgy, please see Father Michael.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY: Will be Pure Monday (February 12) and Wednesdays & Fridays during lent at 6pm.

AS WE APPROACH THE LENTEN GREAT FAST: This is the Sunday of the Last Judgement, which continues our preparatory period for the Great Fast. While fasting looks different for everyone based on their station in life, physical needs, and spiritual growth, now is a good time to begin discerning what the Great Fast will look like for you. Discuss with Fr. Michael or your spiritual father / mother what would be appropriate. You may choose to reduce certain foods or technology use, add to your prayer rule.

EPISTLE: First Corinthians 8:8-9:2

Now food will not bring us closer to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, nor are we better off if we do. But make sure that this liberty of yours in no way becomes a stumbling block to the weak. If someone sees you, with your knowledge, reclining at table in the temple of an idol, may not his conscience too, weak as it is, be “built up” to eat the meat sacrificed to idols? Thus, through your knowledge, the weak person is brought to destruction, the brother for whom Christ died. When you sin in this way against your brothers and wound their consciences, weak as they are, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause my brother to sin.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? Although I may not be an apostle for others, certainly I am for you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

~In this section of his first letter addressed to the early community of Christians at Corinth, Greece, the Holy Apostle Paul warns about showing bad example to those whose faith may not be very strong. Paul tells the Corinthians to guard against causing scandal to weaker Christians who are not firmly rooted in the Faith. He raises the question of exactly what should be the motivation of one’s actions. Should we act because of our knowledge, the truth, and the correctness of our actions; or must we take into consideration a certain charity for our neighbor and a concern for the spiritual well-being of other people? According to the teachings of Jesus, we always must be motivated by LOVE, and our actions will be demonstrative of this proper intention. The model for such love comes from our Lord Himself. We must look to Jesus’ interactions with the various people whom He encountered during His lifetime. When we cause harm through our deeds, or if we damage the consciences of our brethren by our bad example, then we are sinning really against the Lord Jesus. God ultimately will judge each of us on how well we have exhibited this Christian love in our daily lives.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

~Our holy gospel lesson for today is the account of the last judgment as described by the Holy Evangelist Matthew. All nations will be assembled before Christ at this “Awesome Judgment,” and He will divide people from each other as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep (representing the righteous) will be placed at His right hand, while the goats (indicative of evildoers) will be relegated to His left. Ultimately, the wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment, but Jesus’ true followers will be rewarded with eternal life in the fullness of His kingdom. We are told that the law of LOVE is the basic criterion by which justice will be meted out by Jesus when He returns as the divine Judge at

the end of time. This “love” is not simply the hypothetical and philosophical solicitude for one’s fellowman; rather it is a real practical awareness of the dignity, worth, and needs of “the other person” any human being. Christian love provides the ability to see Jesus in others and then enables us to transform this perception into deeds whereby we aid, comfort, and concern ourselves with our neighbor—every person. When we act with Christian love toward others, then we can be assured that God our Father will respond to our own needs with this same kind of love.

THE FOURTH OF THE PRE-GREATFAST PREPARATORY SUNDAYS:

Today we are observing The Sunday of Meat-fare. This is the fourth of the five Sundays of preparation that our Byzantine Catholic Church provides for us as we progressively move toward the season of the Holy Great Fast. This fourth pre-great fast Sunday is termed “Meat-fare” because in the early Church, the faithful already began to abstain from meat products from this day forward. The fast from meat began early as a prelude in order to adjust mentally and to acclimate physically for the full ascetical efforts of prayer, fasting, and self-denial that then would be required one week later. In fact, when the Holy Forty-Days Fast actually would begin, meat would not be eaten for the entire great fast period. Thus Meat-fare Sunday literally indicated a true “farewell to meat.” This particular Sunday is also known as Judgment Sunday, a name derived from the gospel account of Christ’s final reckoning with humanity which is called the Awesome Judgment. The Church once again instructs us about the necessary elements required for repentance. Three Sundays ago, the account of Zacchaeus was given, emphasizing his desire. Then we compared the prayers of the publican and the pharisee, observing the necessity of humility. Last Sunday we were shown the sorrow of the prodigal son and his metanoia (conversion of heart) as he recognized his sinfulness and demonstrated his contrition. Today the scriptural lessons, in a somewhat negative inducement toward repentance, accentuate the lot of sinners in torment and damnation in hell as we are presented with the next requisite for repentance. The theme for Meat-fare Sunday is the Christian concept of LOVE, and how we as Jesus’ followers must manifest it in our daily lives.

PRAYER FOR OUR FOUR SAINTLY BISHOPS: Please pray for the causes of our four Saintly Bishops and ask them to intercede for your specific intentions: O Almighty God, our Lord, we bless You, we praise You, and we thank you for all the graces which You, in Your infinite mercy have bestowed upon us. We are especially grateful for giving us four saintly and heroic Bishops: **Bishop Theodore G. Romzha, Bishop Paul P. Gojdich OBSM, Bishop Basil Hopko, and Bishop Alexander Chira**, who, by their courage, charity, and intrepid faith, inspired our Ruthenian people in the darkest moments of their history. By their great sufferings, humiliating imprisonment, and violent death they gave living witness to their Catholic faith and glorified Your exalted name. Therefore, O Gracious Lord, glorify them in return by Your divine power and inscribe their names in the book of Your Saints. For you are holy, our God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen. With Ecclesiastical Approbation Acknowledgment of answered prayers: Postulator’s office, 54 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214, U.S.A.

PRAYER FOR SEMINARIANS: **Saints Cyril and Methodius**, Venerable Apostles of the Slavs and Patrons of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we place our Seminarians in your loving care. Help them to grow in humility, meekness and prudence. Enkindle in them a burning zeal for souls. May their hearts be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and may they learn to know and love the church so that they may always and everywhere think, speak and act with Her, the Glorious Spouse of Christ. May they become exemplars of generosity and detachment from the things of this world. But above all, O Venerable Patrons, help them to truly know, love and serve the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose priests they aspire to be. Amen. St. Michael the Archangel, Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, By the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen