

**HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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**SUNDAY: SEPTEMBER 10, 2023**

**SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

**Schedule of Divine Services**

**Sunday, Sept. 10: Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

**PLEASE NOTE THE SHIFT BACK TO OUR WINTER SCHEDULE**

10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11:00am Divine Liturgy

**For the deceased Dolores Sodano, by Anne Petro**

**Monday, Sept. 11:** 11am Confessions through Campus Ministry

6pm Confessions, 7pm Daily Vespers

**Thursday, Sept. 14: The Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

6pm Divine Liturgy ~ Opening Liturgy for Campus Ministry, Reception to follow in the Hall.

*St. Pius X in Carrick will celebrate Divine Liturgy at 12 Noon.*

**Friday, Sept. 15:** *Father's day off due to the feast*

**Saturday, Sept. 16:** 6pm Confessions, 7pm Great Vespers

**Sunday, Sept. 17: Sunday After the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11:00am Divine Liturgy

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

**EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS ~ CAMPUS MINISTRY OPENING SERVICE ~ SEPT 14:** Thursday, 9/14 at 6pm we will host the opening service for this year of Campus Ministry. There will be a reception to follow, and the service will be live-streamed. In the past year, Campus Ministry events have led to an increase in our own registered parishioners, so please be sure to attend and show your support. All are welcome!

**PARISH FLEA MARKET CLEAN-UP:** We need to sort, package, and store the remaining flea market items before September 14. If you are able to help, please let Fr. Michael know your availability. Thank you!

**Current Clean-Up Times: Monday, Sept. 11 at 3pm ~ Wednesday, Sept. 13 at 3pm**

**GROUNDS CLEAN-UP:** As with the hall cleaning, we will plan to work on a fall grounds clean-up both weekends that were available for sign-up: Thurs-Sat Sept. 28-30 and Oct 5-7. Stay tuned for more details!

**HONORING ARCHDIOCESEAL MARRIAGE JUBILARIANS** ~ If you are celebrating a milestone anniversary and submitted your information, don't forget this event will take place **this Sunday**, Sept. 10 at 3pm, at St. Elias in Munhall.

**AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY.....** As we prepare to celebrate the discovery of Jesus' esteemed CROSS, we now focus our attention on this impressive instrument of our salvation. In being lifted-up upon the lowly tree of the praiseworthy cross, Jesus proclaimed that His outstretched arms would draw all people to Himself. Thus drawn to Christ, the Apostle Paul claims that his view of the world and his relationship to it are seen through the prism of the holy cross which gives purpose and direction to life.

**EPISTLE: Galatians 6:11-18 (Section 215)**

Brethren: See, I write to you in my own large handwriting! Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised are making a play for human approval – with an eye to escaping persecution for the cross of Christ. The very ones who accept circumcision do not follow the law themselves. They want you to be circumcised only that they may boast about your bodily observance.

May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through it, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. It means nothing whether one is circumcised or not. All that matters is that one is created anew. Peace and mercy on all who follow this rule of life, and on the Israel of God.

Henceforth, let no man trouble me, for I bear the brand marks of Jesus in my body. Brethren, may the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

~~~~~Today's holy epistle lesson comes from the last paragraph of the Holy Apostle Paul's letter addressed to the Church at Galatia. Paul emphasizes to the Galatians the meaning and the significance of the magnificent CROSS of Jesus in their everyday lives. As the Christian's honored symbol of victory, the august cross of our Lord signifies that the world and all of its transitory components are things that are "dead" to us; and similarly, we are "dead" to the illusionary material things of this fleeting world. We are in this present terrestrial world for a relatively short period of time, but through the power of Jesus' life-creating cross and the redemption

achieved through it, we have access to a New Life in the everlasting Kingdom of God. This eternal existence has been prepared by God the Father for all of us who share the burden of carrying the salutary cross of Jesus as we pass through this lifetime that has been given to us here on earth.

**GOSPEL: John 3:13-17 (Section 9)**

“No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn\* the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

~~~~~Our gospel message for this Sunday Before the Glorious Elevation of the Illustrious Cross is taken from that section of the Holy Evangelist John’s account where Jesus is being questioned by Nicodemus, a prominent Jewish leader. As Jesus explained God’s reason for sending His Son to earth, the theme of the salvific CROSS comes to the fore. The most perfect way by which God’s Son could demonstrate His immense love for us and secure our eternal salvation was for Him to offer His life for the world’s redemption. He had to be lifted-up on this sacred wood, so that through the perfect sacrifice upon the life-giving cross, salvation would be achieved, giving us access to everlasting life. We faithful followers of Christ, who have shared “our load” of His admirable cross and have borne vicariously the burden of His salutary passion by shouldering our own “little crosses” each day of our lives, are assured of an eternal reward as God passes us from this transitory life into the fullness of New Life with Him in His heavenly Kingdom.

**PREPARATORY SUNDAY FOR THE UNIVERSAL ELEVATION FEAST.....** Today is the Sunday Before the Victorious Elevation of the Splendorous Cross as well as the Sunday following the Sacred Nativity of the Most Holy Godbearer. We thus are continuing our celebration of last week’s solemn commemoration of the holy birth of the All-Glorious Virgin Mary, and we also are preparing for this Thursday’s observance of the discovery of the revered cross of our Lord. Because of the central role played by the meritorious cross of Christ in the plan for our redemption, our Byzantine Catholic Church gives added emphasis to this esteemed salvific symbol by focusing on its importance on both the Sunday preceding and the Sunday following the Holy Elevation Feast.

**HOLY DAY WEDNESDAY: EMINENT ELEVATION OF THE TRIUMPHANT CROSS.....** This Thursday, September 14th, we shall celebrate ceremoniously The Feast of the Universal Elevation of the Majestic Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On this most important holy day and liturgically significant feast, we commemorate the actual discovery of the sanctifying wood of the true cross of Jesus. The initiative to find Christ’s redemptive cross was begun by Empress Helen, the eighty-year-old mother of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine the Great. In the year 326 A.D., excavations were begun in Jerusalem near Golgotha, and eventually the three crosses of Great Friday were unearthed. Constantine and Helen, both of whom eventually became saints of the Church, had a magnificent basilica constructed over the holy sepulcher, which also was discovered nearby. This great church was dedicated on September 13, 335 A.D. Then on the following day, September 14th, Bishop Macarios, the Bishop of Jerusalem, triumphantly carried Christ’s distinguished cross through the Holy City; and before taking it into the new edifice, he ELEVATED it in all directions, symbolically displaying this estimable instrument of our salvation to the entire universe as the people fell to their knees in profound veneration. On the Holy Elevation Feast, the noble cross of the Lord is displayed solemnly on the tetrapod in the middle of the church where it remains for seven days. During this time, we make our way to the Golgotha of the tetrapod to venerate the exalted cross. We venerate the worthy cross of Christ by approaching the tetrapod; making two metanies (a deep bow, lowering the hand to touch the floor and then making the sign of the cross); kissing the sacred cross; and then again making another metany. Each time that we make these three metanies, we repeat silently to ourselves: “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” In visual commemoration of Christ’s victorious passion which is signified by His marvelous cross, red vestments are employed on the elevation holy day and throughout its postfestive period. The faithful should endeavor to wear something RED on the Honorable Elevation Feast and for the following Sunday in symbolic tribute to the Lord Whose praiseworthy Blood was shed willingly for our redemption upon the glorious wood of the miraculous cross. Traditionally, a strict fast is prescribed on this holy day. Put forth the sacrificial effort to fast in honor of Jesus’ supreme sacrifice made on this laudable wood in expiation for all of our sins. In this way, we thus unite ourselves with our Savior’s salutary sufferings as a gesture of our love for Him and out of profound respect for His vivifying cross, the venerable symbol of our salvation.

**THE BLESSED NATIVITY OF THE GODBEARER...**

On September 8th, we observed the Feast of the Noble Nativity of the Most Holy Godbearer. This holy day commemorates the first mystery of salvation to be observed in the new church calendar year. Joachim and Ann were an aged childless couple who lived in Jerusalem whom God had selected to become the parents of an infant girl. This child, who was named Mary, would be exceedingly special in God’s plan for the salvation of the human race. With this feast, the Byzantine Catholic Church glorifies the birth of the Virgin Mary, who was destined by God to become the compassionate mother of His beloved Son. She thus was the honored daughter selected by the benevolent Father to be the esteemed bride of the illuminating Holy Spirit. Because Mary was a descendant, although quite an obscure one, of the royal house of King David, the Child born to her, nonetheless, would be of kingly lineage. In celebrating the Most Pure Virgin Mary’s role in salvation history by giving birth to the Son of God – Jesus – Who will become the Savior of the world. This Marian feast marks the beginning of the work of redemption, for now all of those salvific acts will begin to unfold that will culminate with the birth of the long awaited Messiah – the Christ Child – the Redeemer of mankind. As we honor the All-Glorious Virgin Mary by celebrating her birthday, let us beseech our Heavenly Mother to lead us to Jesus, her divine Son and our God; to watch over each of us, her earthly children with her maternal protection; and to guide us all to our eternal homeland.