

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Emanuel Revilak

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2023 FORGIVENESS SUNDAY (CHEESE-FARE)

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday, February 19: 10:20am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11:00am Divine Liturgy
for the deceased Dr. Stephen Yovino, by Stephanie Yovino and the Ellsworth Family
4pm Confessions and 5pm Divine Liturgy through Campus Ministry

Monday, February 20: 10am Confessions through Campus Ministry
4:30pm Confessions, 5:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
for Martina Revilak and her birthday, by her family

Wednesday, February 22: 3pm Confessions through Campus Ministry
5:30pm Presanctified Liturgy for the healing of Zaki Murad, by the Revilak Family

Saturday, February 25: 4:30pm Confession, 5:30pm Great Vespers

Sunday, February 26: 10:20am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11:00am Divine Liturgy
4pm Confessions and 5pm Divine Liturgy through Campus Ministry

Lenten Vespers begin 2/26. The first service will be at 4pm at St. Pius X in Carrick, with confessions at 3:30pm, and a simple meal to follow.

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.

Please note: During Great Lent, weekday Liturgies are on Wednesday evening.

Community Members and Students Are Invited to the College Ministry “Come and See” Event Sun. 2/19

Please join us for an introduction (or refresher!) on the beauty of the Eastern Catholic Church. Short videos will be provided as a primer, and there will be dinner and a Q&A session in the hall after the evening Divine Liturgy. All are welcome! RSVP's are not required, but they are appreciated if possible via Facebook or byzcatholicpgh@gmail.com

HOUSE BLESSINGS FOR THE THEOPHANY SEASON: Fr. Michael will be blessing homes as part of our Theophany Season tradition. Please sign up in the back of the church (narthex). This blessing can be done every year!

Blessed Candles from the Feast of the Presentation on 2/2 are available. There are tapers and glass vigil lights. A donation is suggested based on the type of candle.

AS WE APPROACH THE LENTEN GREAT FAST... This is the last Sunday before the Great Fast, which continues our preparatory period. 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, or something else.

EPISTLE: Romans 13:11-14:4 (Section 140)

And do this because you know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but not for disputes over opinions. One person believes that one may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. The one who eats must not despise the one who abstains, and the one who abstains must not pass judgment on the one who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? Before his own master he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

~~~~~In this epistle pericope, the keynote for the beginning of the Great Fast is set as the Holy Apostle Paul tells us about the Christian use of time. The Holy Great Fast is to be a time for sincere repentance and true spiritual renewal, a period for reassessing our spiritual lives. We must utilize this time properly. Paul tells these Romans that they should not condemn each other over practices concerning abstinence from certain foods; rather, cultivate the practice of showing FORGIVENESS. By means of our personal good examples, we should attempt to influence others who might be in error and avoid criticizing them. Through the ascetical practice of FASTING, we can set the example of abnegation for others. And we practice such abnegation precisely for the spiritual purpose of having a greater degree of self-control. Others who observe us might well be influenced by our own example of such effective spiritual and ascetical practices.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 6:14-21**

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

~~~~~The Great Forty-Days Fast represents a time of spiritual freedom from our enslavement to sin. Today's holy gospel passage from the Holy Evangelist Matthew's account sets the two conditions necessary for this spiritual liberation to take place. The first one is FASTING, and the other is FORGIVENESS. We must accumulate a “treasure” in heaven where it really counts. One of the essential requisites for Christian living is *forgiveness* of one's fellow human being. Jesus Himself said that if we forgive others their failures, God will likewise grant forgiveness to us. Conversely, if we refuse to forgive others who have wronged us through their human deficiencies, then God, Whom we have wronged through our sins, will never grant us divine forgiveness. Our Lord additionally tells us that *fasting*, which is done in order to bring us closer to God by gaining better self-control of ourselves, must always be happy and joyful. Don't be hypocritical when fasting, for God knows all secrets, and He is cognizant of our true intentions and actual purposes. Our acts of fasting are to be done because of a great love for and a devotion to Him alone. We thus put our values in the proper place—with God our Father—and we accumulate a genuine “treasure” where it really counts: in heaven!

Important note regarding Liturgy intentions: If you are requesting a Divine Liturgy for the deceased, please note if the date requested is the anniversary of their death. If for the living, please specify if it is for a birthday, anniversary, etc. This will help schedule the Liturgy as accurately as possible, and will let Father know which setting to use. Thank you.

THE FINAL PRE-GREATFAST SUNDAY – CHEESEFARE SUNDAY.....

Cheesefare Sunday is the fifth and last of the preparatory Sundays for the Holy Forty-Days Fast. In the Christian Church of antiquity, after this day the faithful abstained from dairy products for the entire holy greatfast season, and this day was therefore a true “farewell to cheese” and to all such milk-related products. This Sunday is also termed Forgiveness Sunday, a designation that is derived from today’s scriptural passages at the Divine Liturgy. The liturgical offices for Cheesefare Sunday develop the theme of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from their paradise of bliss, the Garden of Eden. This theme so aptly summarizes the entire preparation for the holy greatfast season. God created humans for paradise, for knowledge of and communion with Him. But the Ancestral Sin of our protoparents Adam and Eve deprived us of that blessed life, and our existence on earth is seen as “an exile.” Jesus—our Savior—opens the doors of paradise to everyone who follows Him and His Church during this earthly life—a pilgrimage toward the heavenly fatherland. Thus at the beginning of the Holy Fast, we are like Adam and Eve—expelled from paradise and God, awaiting our liberation from the “prison” of this world as we now proceed through the “desert” of this Great Fast of 2023. We have been prepared for the past four Sundays for this penitential period. The themes presented on these pre-greatfast Sundays have shown us that in order to exhibit repentance, we must have the proper desire; we have to be humble and feel our alienation from God, while showing sincere sorrow for the sins committed. We must demonstrate our love for God and for our fellow human being (our neighbor) as we engage in fasting practices and offer forgiveness to others, while seeking forgiveness for ourselves from God and from our fellowman. On Cheesefare Sunday, FASTING and FORGIVENESS are the final two elements presented to us as being necessary for repentance.

Please pray for the causes of our four Sainly 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 Ave., 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