

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family

Sub-Deacon: Raphael Ruggiero

March 23, 2025

3rd Sunday of the Great Fast – Veneration of the Cross

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday, Mar 23: 10:25 am Rosary, 11:00 am Divine Liturgy

IMO George Bacasa by Gerald & Alexandria Bacasa

Penitential Vespers 4:00 pm – St. Gregory – Upper St. Clair

Monday, Mar 24: 6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 pm Akathist to Our Lady of the Searcher for the Lost

Tuesday, Mar 25: Solemn Holy Day Annunciation of the Theotokos

8:00 am Festal Matins

6:00 pm Confessions, 7 pm Divine Liturgy

IHO Martin Golob Birthday by daughter, Janine Kunitz

ST. PIUS X HOLY DAY SERVICES: 11:00 am Confessions, 12:00 pm Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, Mar 26: 6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 pm **Presanctified Liturgy**

IMO 40th Day + Aleksander Ziarniak by Natalia Rudiak

Friday, Mar 28: 6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 pm **Presanctified Liturgy**

Saturday, Mar 29: 4th All Souls Saturday

11:00 am Divine Liturgy w/Panachida

5:00 pm Confessions 6:00 pm Great Vespers

Sunday, Mar 30: 4th Sunday of the Great Fast – John Climacus the Venerable

10:25am Rosary, 11:00 am Divine Liturgy

IMO Ruth Bacasa by Gerald & Alexandria Bacasa

Plenty of Divine Liturgies are open for intentions for this new year. If you would like to make an intention for a Liturgy, please call the office or fill out request form in the back of the church and give it to Fr. Michael.

OUR LADY SEARCHER FOR THE LOST: Please join us tomorrow **Monday, Mar 24** as we pray the **Akathist to Our Lady of the Searcher for the Lost** for all those who are searching, struggling and in need of God's mercy and help. **Candles are available for purchase at \$10 each.** These beautiful services will take place every Monday during Lent.

INDOOR CLEAN UP DAY – Saturday March 29: Help is needed as we prepare the church for Easter. We will start after the All Souls Divine Liturgy.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS: If you are interested in learning to lead Matins as a Reader's Service on Sunday before Liturgy, please see Father Michael. Matins is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month unless otherwise noted.

PALM CROSS FUNDRAISER: The Revilak Family will once again be taking orders for **palm crosses at \$10 each.** These beautiful handmade crosses have been a special fundraiser for our parish. We hope you will support this project.

SAVE THE DATES:

*In preparation for Easter our **parish cleanup day** of the OUTDOORS will be **Saturday, Apr 5**.

* **THREE RIVERS THEOSIS BYZANTINE CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT GROUP** next meeting will be **Saturday, Apr 5** the topic will **Holy Week & Pascha**. 5:00 pm Lecture, 6:00 pm Vespers followed by social hour. Everyone is welcome to join in these events.

DEANERY PENITENTIAL VESPERS: Every Sunday afternoon during the Great Fast, clergy and laity from all over the Deanery come together in a different parish to participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation at 3:30 pm and to pray the Vespers, the evening prayer for Sundays during this penitential season at 4:00 pm.

Each Vespers is followed by a meager meal of meatless soup. This is a wonderful opportunity for prayer, penance, self-denial, and fellowship. The schedule for this year is as follows:

Mar 23: St. Gregory Church, Upper St. Clair PA with Homilist Fr. Tyler Wisniewski

Mar 30: Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Duquesne PA with Homilist Fr. Frank Firko

Apr 6: St. Andrew Church, Gibsonia PA with Homilist Fr. Michael Kunitz

COFFEE SOCIAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: In addition to attending services together, it is important that we spend time in conversation with one another. To make it truly a time of sharing – we ask everyone to sign up to host a Sunday. We look forward to seeing you!

ICONS AVAILABLE: There are several blessed icons in the church hall, there is no charge to take these home, though a free will offering for the benefit of the parish is welcome.

EPISTLE: HEBREWS 4:14 thru 5:6

Brethren: Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession of faith. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need. Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with erring sinners, for he himself is beset by weakness and so must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. One does not take this honor on his own initiative, but only when called by God as Aaron was. Even Christ did not glorify himself with the office of high priest; he received it from the One who said to him, "You are my son; today I have begotten you"; just as he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

~As we arrive at the midpoint of the Great Fast, this epistle lesson taken from the letter to the Jewish Christians of antiquity, accentuates the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, is our divinely appointed and duly qualified High Priest. God the Father sent His Son to earth so that as a Man, the Son of God would be the Mediator to the Father in behalf of the entire human race. God's Son Himself then would offer The consummate sacrifice to His Father for the expiation of mankind's sins. As our great High Priest, Jesus knew the totality of our human condition. He was like us in every respect except sin. He became humanity's representative before God in making the ultimate sacrifice upon the sacred wood of the venerable Cross. Jesus is The High Priest, and only He could offer this definitive sacrifice. His very life upon that lonely and desolate tree – the true Cross on which reparation was made for the sins of the whole world.

GOSPEL: Mark 8:34 – 9:1

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for the sake of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in his faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

He also said to them, "Amen I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power."

~The theme for this third Great Fast Sunday is the doctrine of the life-giving Cross, and it will be amplified during this fourth week of the Great Forty Days. In today's gospel account, the Holy Evangelist Mark tells us how Jesus spoke of the cost of discipleship – of following after Him. "If anyone wants to follow in My footsteps, he must give up all right to himself; take up his cross, and follow Me!" It is readily evident that Jesus' true followers must have an actual cross; it must be carried willingly,

and it must be shouldered for the sake of Jesus, our Master. This is no easy task! This invitation is a most difficult challenge, and it is only with God's help that it can be done. The requisites as set forth by Jesus are stiff; but the rewards are magnificent! If we desire to be a committed follower of the Lord Jesus, then we cannot avoid carrying the honorable Cross as the Supreme Cross-bearer Himself willingly did in our behalf.

THE SUNDAY OF THE VICTORIOUS VENERATION OF THE GLORIOUS CROSS

We have reached today the midpoint in our observance of the Holy Forty Days Fast. Three weeks have passed and three weeks still remain. The third Great Fast Sunday acquires a special significance and is known as Cross Veneration Sunday. The Church is very cognizant of the fact that we often begin things with the best of intentions, but because of our lax human nature and the mundane distractions that we encounter daily, we are quick to weaken in our efforts and as time passes, we then tend to become disinterested and/or discouraged. Therefore, our Byzantine Catholic Church triumphantly displays the majestic cross of the Lord in the very middle of the Great Forty Days Fast as a glorious symbol of victory to weakening humanity in order that we might draw strength as we continue with our penitential practices and our ascetical efforts during the remainder of the Great Fast. Throughout Cross Veneration Week, each time that we enter or leave the Church, we always make our way to the Golgotha of the tetra pod to venerate the honored wood of the meritorious 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 holy cross; and then again making another metany. Each time that we make these three metanies, we repeat silently to ourselves: "O God, cleanse me, a sinner!" In visual commemoration of the passion of our Lord signified by His life creating cross and the divine Blood which Jesus poured forth during His redemptive sacrifice upon the salvific tree of His august cross, red vestments are used today as well as on all of the weekdays throughout the great fast season. The faithful should wear something red on Cross Veneration Sunday and during Cross Veneration Week in symbolic tribute to the praiseworthy cross, the laudable passion, and the sanctifying Blood of Jesus. The splendid cross is the esteemed emblem of our salvation and the sign of Christ's victory over Satan and human passions. It is precisely from this wondrous tree – Jesus' admirable cross – that we draw our spiritual strength. Christians must carry their own real crosses daily if they aspire to be genuine followers of the crucified Lord Jesus and thereby save their immortal souls!

SACRAMENTAL RECONCILIATION WITH GOD - GREAT FAST CONFESSIONS: In her wisdom, the Church requires all faithful to make a sacramental confession during the Great Fast, as we commemorate the redemptive acts of Christ. Let us all approach the loving Lord Jesus during this penitential great fast season, seeking His merciful forgiveness through sacramental confession. In the Holy Mystery of Penance, we unburden ourselves of sin, and we reconcile ourselves with God as we receive His true peace. During the Great Forty-Days, remember to make your confession!

ON-LINE GIVING IS HERE! If you wish to make a monetary donation to our parish – you can do so on our website or by using this QR code. Remember every dollar helps support the mission of our parish community. Thank you.



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