

## HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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**SUNDAY: February 25, 2024**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – THE SUNDAY OF THE PALSIED MAN**

### Schedule of Divine Services

**Sunday, Feb. 25: Second Sunday of the Great Fast**

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

**In Memory Msgr. Russell Duker w/Panachida by Barbara Hanchin**

**Monday, Feb. 26:** 5pm Confessions – 6pm Daily Vespers

**Wednesday, Feb 28:** 5pm Confessions – 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Friday, Mar. 1:** 5pm Confessions - 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Saturday, Mar. 2:** 5pm Confessions – 6pm Divine Liturgy with Panachida **3rd All Souls Saturday**

**Sunday, Mar. 3: Third Sunday of the Great Fast**

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

**In Memory of Dr. Stephen Yovino by Stephanie Yovino & the Ellsworth Family**

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 EVERYONE!** Who helped host last week's Penitential Vespers & Basket Raffle. From set-up to clean up, making soup, donating bread or items for the basket raffle please know that your efforts were greatly appreciated.

**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.

**SCHEDULE OF THE DEANERY PENITENTIAL VESPERS:** The Great Fast Deanery Vespers are celebrated, each Sunday during The Great Fast Season at 4:00 p.m. preceded by The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation at 3:30 p.m. **This week February 25 – Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, PA;** March 3 – Saints Peter & Paul, Braddock PA; March 10 – St. John Chrysostom, Greenfield, PA; and March 17 – St. John the Baptist, Lyndora, PA. This is a great penitential practice of prayer & self-denial if you wish to take it upon yourselves.

**EPISTLE: Hebrews 1:10-2:3**

“At the beginning, O Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment. You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” But to which of the angels has he ever said: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore, we must attend all the more to what we have heard, so that we may not be carried away. For if the word announced through angels proved firm, and every transgression and disobedience received its just recompense, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? Announced originally through the Lord, it was confirmed for us by those who had heard.

~In this portion of the letter to the early Jewish Christians, we are shown that Jesus amply fulfills all of the highest expectations that the Jewish religion anticipated in the promised Messiah. As the true Son of God, Jesus had complete power and genuine authority over all creation. God's new covenant established with humanity through His Son Jesus is infinitely more important and definitely supersedes the old agreement which was made with Abraham and then confirmed through Moses. This new covenant, however, carries a greater responsibility with respect to serving God, keeping His commandments, and living in conformity with His teachings. The period of the Holy Great Fast gives us time to concentrate on securing our eternal salvation. We have the opportunity once again in this year of 2018 to demonstrate our sorrow and repentance for our sins and failures. Because He has complete power and authority, the Lord Jesus Himself can grant each of us, through the ministry of the Church, the FORGIVENESS OF SINS. How can we escape the judgment of God if we reject Jesus' invitation to salvation (especially now during the great fast season)?

**GOSPEL: Mark 2:1-12**

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are

forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?” Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth”— he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

~This gospel lesson, taken from the account of the Holy Evangelist Mark, carries the theme brought forth in today’s holy epistle and then shows that the fullness of Jesus’ power and authority can be seen in His ability to grant salvation through the FORGIVENESS OF SINS. Jesus’ healing power is a sign of the ultimate salvation that He will give us in the “New Life” that He attained by His redemptive acts. From this gospel passage, we learn that a large gathering collected at the house in Capernaum where Jesus was preaching. As our Lord gave His message, a group of people arrived, bringing a palsied paralytic man. They couldn’t get him close to Jesus because of the dense crowd. So, they climbed-up to the roof, removed some tiles, and then lowered the palsied man before Jesus. Impressed by their faith, the Lord addressed the sick man, saying: “My son, your sins are forgiven!” He then cured the man of his physical debilitation. Some criticized Jesus, maintaining that God alone can forgive sins. Jesus, however, retorted that He spoke and acted as He did in order to epitomize that “the Son of Man has full authority to forgive sins on earth.” The Son of God came to earth to cure the illnesses of our souls by freeing us from the clutches of sin and the power of evil.

**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE HOLY GREAT FAST:** The designation for this second Sunday of the Great Fast comes from our holy gospel account. It is called The Sunday of the Palsied Man. On this second great fast Sunday, our Byzantine Catholic Church presents the premise that the FORGIVENESS OF SINS comes from Jesus when we have strong faith and when we engender true repentance and sincere sorrow. If we desire forgiveness from the Lord Jesus, then we must repent for our sins, express sorrow for having committed them, and manifest that we wish to amend our life-styles in the future for having offended God, our loving Heavenly Father, by our many iniquities. As examples and models for our lives, the Church places before us today the many Christian martyrs—the witnesses who gave-up their very lives in the cause of the faith that they had in Christ. Through their pious works of prayer, fasting, and penance, these holy martyrs (witnesses) received the healing graces of the Lord in order that the weaknesses of their souls and the frailties of their bodies might be overcome. Jesus truly can save each of us as He healed the soul and cured the body of the palsied man of Capernaum. We, however, must exhibit a strong faith in Him and show an ardent desire for His healing powers. This attitude can be exemplified through our prayers; by our acts of fasting, mortification, and self-denial; and with sincere repentance for any and all of the sins that we have committed either voluntarily or involuntarily. In this way, we also, just like the palsied man of Capernaum, can experience the same healing power that comes from the Lord. Our spiritual weaknesses can be healed only by God’s graces, and the primary sources for such graces are the holy mysteries—the sacraments of the Church.

**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!

**WE SHALL OBSERVE THE THIRD ALL-SOULS SATURDAY THIS WEEK:** As part of our Great Fast preparation for the Feast of the Holy Resurrection, we call to memory all of our faithful departed and pray for their repose, for it is through Jesus’ victory over death that we have a “New Life.” Three of the five All-Souls Saturdays are observed during the Holy Forty-Days Fast. Not only should we offer our prayers and be mindful of all the departed of our human family and of all those who had been closest to us, but we should above all endeavor to pray especially for those “poor souls” who have not fully atoned for past transgressions and have no one to remember them or to pray for their eternal repose. The sacrifice to attend the requiem services in honor of our faithful departed and to pray for their immortal souls is an additional way of our observing the season of the Holy Great Fast.

**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