

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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SUNDAY MARCH 17, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT - THE FEAST OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

Schedule of Divine Services

Sunday, Mar. 17: Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy
The Health & Welfare of Gerald Bacasa by Theresa Carr

Monday, Mar. 18: 6pm Daily Vespers Readers Service

Wednesday Mar. 20: 6pm Daily Vespers Readers Service

Friday, Mar. 22: 5pm Confessions - 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, Mar. 23: Lazarus Saturday

Noon Divine Liturgy followed by church cleaning
5pm Confessions – 6pm Great Vespers

Sunday, Mar. 24: Palm & Flowery Sunday

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy
The Health & Welfare of Anne Munizza by Theresa Carr

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.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: To help as we prepare for Holy Week with decorating and cleaning the church.

Saturday Church Cleaning: March 23rd at 1:30pm

GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY VIGIL MARCH 29: Please consider signing up for a shift between 8:30pm & Midnight (between Burial Vespers and Jerusalem Matins)

THE FINAL DEANERY PENITENTIAL VESPERS: Today, March 17 – St. John the Baptist, Lyndora, PA. at 4:00 p.m. preceded by The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation at 3:30 p.m. This is a great penitential practice of prayer & self-denial if you wish to take it upon yourselves.

FATHER MICHAEL WILL BE AWAY: Wed. March 20 and returning in the afternoon on Fri. March 22.

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.

FLEA MARKET DONATIONS: Our next flea market will be Saturday, April 27, we are currently accepting donations. Please note we cannot take books, clothes or electronic devices. Please see Mary Dzurichko with any questions.

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!

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY: As we approach the conclusion of our great fast journey, Saint Mary of Egypt becomes our penitential ideal, showing us how to prepare for our PARTICIPATION in the memorial of Jesus' redemptive acts. Like the apostles, we also accompany the Lord on His pilgrimage up to Jerusalem where, as the Hebrew Christians are told, the High Priest (Jesus) will offer His sacrifice upon the sacred wood of that desolate tree.

EPISTLE: Hebrews 9:11-14

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

~The message of today's holy epistle lesson centers about the sacrifice that Jesus performed as our "High Priest," and it is taken from the letter to the early Jewish Christians. God's plan for our eternal salvation came to fruition when Jesus, as the representative of the human race, served as our High Priest in effecting once and for all time THE perfect sacrifice: His life upon the tree of the holy cross in expiation for our sins. Already next week, we will commemorate solemnly all of the redemptive acts performed during the last days of Jesus' life. Throughout the Great Fast, we have striven to be worthy of and prepared for our own PARTICIPATION in this memorial of the passion of the Lord. We now ready ourselves spiritually to begin prayerfully and ascetically our total participation in all of these salvific events.

GOSPEL: Mark 10:32-45

They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went ahead of them. They were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him. "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and put him to death, but after three days he will rise." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish [me] to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

~The Holy Evangelist Mark relates for us how Jesus now prepares for His last journey that will take Him "UP TO" Jerusalem. Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and began to reveal to them exactly what was going to happen to Him. He told of His betrayal, condemnation, trial, passion, and finally His death. The third day, however, He foretold that He would rise from the dead. As Jesus predicted these happenings, Zebedee's sons, the apostles James and John, approached Him with an ill-timed request. They wanted to know if they could occupy "key positions" in Jesus' "new kingdom." They (with the other apostles) completely misunderstood what Jesus was saying and where His "kingdom" would be. We also follow the Lord **up to** Jerusalem now with "*wonderment and fear*" so that we could unite ourselves with Him and thus begin our own

PARTICIPATION in these salvific mysteries. Having participated in His acts for our redemption, we then can be worthy of “key positions” in His “heavenly kingdom,” into which we are seeking entrance.

TODAY IS THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FORTY-DAYS FAST: This is the fifth and final Sunday of the Holy Great Fast. All of the penitential efforts of this great fast season were performed in order to lead us to the cross and then to the resurrection. The theme emphasized today, therefore, seeks to ready ourselves for our complete participation in the mysteries of our redemption that are about to be reenacted. We also commemorate today Saint Mary the Egyptian, a fifth-century actress from Alexandria, Egypt, who lived a wicked and immoral life. When finally converted to Christianity, she became a sterling exemplar of repentance. She spent her entire life in prayer, fasting, and showing perpetual contrition for past sins. In observing her memorial, the Church emphasizes that anyone can become a saint—a holy person of God—despite anything that may have occurred in one’s past. Thus, Saint Mary of Egypt is presented as a model of a great penitent who had undergone a metanoia—a conversion experience—with a complete change of heart by which she rejected her former evil ways. During these last five days of the Great Fast, we too must strive to express our heartfelt contrition, great sorrow, and genuine repentance.

LAZARUS SATURDAY: The sixth and final week of the Great Fast is called Palm Week, and our liturgical services take us with Jesus to Bethany where His friend Lazarus had just died. On Palm Friday, the penitential season of the Great Forty-Days Fast officially comes to an end. On The Saturday of the Holy and Just Lazarus, the Church commemorates Jesus’ raising of Lazarus from the dead and emphasizes that this miraculous event is a prefiguration of His own resurrection and victory over death that will take place next weekend. As the Lord called forth His friend Lazarus from the tomb, so also shall He someday do the very same thing for each of us—His friends. Then on Palm (Blossom Sunday), we shall celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This weekend is thus a festive interlude that celebrates this unprecedented miracle on Saturday and then the proclamation of the kingship of Christ on Sunday. It is a transition leading from the end of the Great Fast into Passion Week, the most solemn week of the year.

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