

**HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
4815 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 - Rectory Phone: 412-687-1220

**Administrator: Reverend Michael D. Kunitz, M. Div.**  
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**Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family**  
**Altar Servers: Sub-Deacon Raphael Ruggiero & Emanuel Revilak**

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**SUNDAY: February 11, 2024**  
**SUNDAY OF CHEESE-FARE**

**Schedule of Divine Services**

**Sunday, Feb. 11: Sunday of Cheese-Fare**

10-10:45am Confessions, 10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy  
**In Memory Msgr. Russell Duker w/Panachida by Sub-Deacon Raphael Ruggiero**  
1pm Lecture "Journey Through the Desert" presented by Fr. Michael  
2pm Forgiveness Vespers

**Monday, Feb. 12: First Day of Great Fast**

**Wednesday, Feb 14:** 5pm Confessions – 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Friday, Feb. 16:** 5pm Confessions - 6pm Presanctified Liturgy  
**In Honor of Michelangelo Revilak's Birthday by his family**

**Saturday, Feb. 17:** 5pm Confessions – 6pm Great Vespers

**Sunday, Feb. 18: First Sunday of the Great Fast**  
10-10:45am Confessions, 10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy  
**In Honor of Martina Revilak's Birthday by her family**  
  
4pm Penitential Vespers

**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 church and leave it in the sacristy.**

**WELCOME:** "Frassati Pittsburgh" Young Adults Group who are joining us today for Liturgy, and the Journey Through the Desert lecture. We are so happy to have you with us! All are welcome to join us for brunch after Liturgy, and stay for the lecture and vespers.

**FIRST PENITENTIAL VESPERS:** Next Sun, Feb 18 we will be hosting vespers at 4pm followed by a meager meal. We anticipate 80-90 attendees! For the meal, donations of soup and bread are still needed. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

**DONATION REQUEST FOR BASKET RAFFLE:** at the meager meal we will have a basket raffle. Donations of baskets and/or items we can use to make them **are needed by Sun. Feb 11. We appreciate everyone's support of this fundraiser. See Lynne W. or Mary D. with any questions.**

**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.

**PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY:** Will be Wednesdays & Fridays during lent at 6pm.

**EPISTLE: Romans 13:11-14:4**

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!

## **THE FINAL PRE-GREATFAST SUNDAY – CHEESEFARE SUNDAY**

Cheese-fare 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 great fast 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 Cheese-fare 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 great fast 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-great-fast 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 Cheese-fare Sunday, FASTING and FORGIVENESS are the final two elements presented to us as being necessary for repentance.

**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