

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4815 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 - Rectory Phone: 412-687-1220

Administrator: Reverend Michael D. Kunitz, M. Div.

Email: FrMichaelKunitz@gmail.com

Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family

Altar Servers: Sub-Deacon Raphael Ruggiero & Emanuel Revilak

Website: holyspiritbycath.com - Email: holyspiritinformation@gmail.com

SUNDAY MARCH 3, 2024

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – VENERATION OF THE CROSS

Schedule of Divine Services

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

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

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

Monday, Mar. 4: 5pm Confessions – 6pm Daily Vespers

Wednesday Mar. 6: 5pm Confessions – 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, Mar. 8: 5pm Confessions - 6pm Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, Mar. 9: 5pm Confessions – 6pm Great Vespers

Sunday, Mar. 10: Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

The Health & Welfare of Joseph Bacasa 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.

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 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.

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.

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 splendorous 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!

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