

## HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

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

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

Email: FrMichaelKunitz@gmail.com

Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family

Sub-Deacon: Raphael Ruggiero

March 2, 2025

### Sunday of Cheesefare

#### SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

**Sunday, Mar 2: Sunday of Cheesefare**

10:00am Sunday Matins, 10:45am Rosary, 11:00 am Divine Liturgy

**IHO Fr. Michael's Birthday**

6:00pm Forgiveness Vespers

**Monday, Mar 3: FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST - 6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy**

**IHO Naomi Boaz by Casey Dudek**

**Wednesday, Mar 3: Pure Wednesday**

6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 Presanctified Liturgy

**IHO Fr. Rami Madanat by Casey Dudek**

**Friday, Mar 7: Pure Friday**

6:00 pm Confessions, 7:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

**IMO Lisa Doherty by the Revilak Family**

**Saturday, Mar 8: 5:00 pm Confessions, 6:00 pm Great Vespers**

**Sunday, Mar 9: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Great Fast – Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste**

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

**IHO the Stanich Family & all Pilgrims on the “Camino de Santiago” or “Way of St. James the Apostle” Pilgrimage by Casey Dudek**

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:** Starting **Monday, Mar 10** we will be hosting the **Akathist to Our Lady of the Searcher for the Lost** to pray for all those who are searching, struggling and in need of God's mercy and help. There will be candles available for purchase. These services will take place during Lent.

**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.

**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 9: St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Munhall PA with Homilist Fr. David Bosnich**

**Mar 16: Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Tarentum PA with Homilist Fr. Radko Blichar**

**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**

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES: May God grant our community many happy and blessed years!**

**Mar 2 - Fr. Michael Kunitz**

**SAVE THE DATES:**

\*In preparation for Easter - we will have **two parish clean up days** INDOORS: **Sat. Mar 29** and OUTDOORS: **Sat. Apr 5.**

\***Sat. Mar 22** there will be a joint parish meeting after the morning Liturgy at Holy Spirit.

**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: 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.

**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