

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Sunday, April 10, 2022

Choir Director: Wash King

Glory Be Forever!

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – TONE 1
Troparion — Tone 8

The image of God was truly preserved in you, mother, / for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. / By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away, / but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. / Therefore, your spirit, holy mother Mary, Rejoices with the angels!

Kontakion — Tone 3

Having been a sinful woman, / you became through repentance a Bride of Christ. / Having attained angelic life, / you defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross. / Therefore, most glorious Mary, you are a Bride of the Kingdom!

Services:

Sunday, April 10 9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – St. Mary of Egypt & Coffee Hour
Wednesday, April 13 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal
Friday, April 15 5:00 PM – Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos, Confessions
Saturday, April 16 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Lazarus Saturday
Saturday, April 16 4:00 PM – Vespers, Confessions
Sunday, April 17 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Blessing of Palms & Pussy Willows & Coffee Hour

We WELCOME all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are **so glad** you came to pray with us.

Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the Church Hall for Coffee Hour.

If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our Church Family.

Please Note: Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

Prayer List:

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic,
Andrew Balliet, Michael Birosik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan, Evanna Jane Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Irene Davis, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Karen Harkins, Nancy King, John King, Michael Kulick, John & Olga Kushnir, MaryAnn & Paul Macenka, Mary Maholick, Mildred O'Shura, Melissa Schmitt, Lynn Sharpe, Althea Shellock, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, & Marie Yurchak.

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Candles (April 10)

7-Day Vigils/Altar... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Friends
Altar Candles... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Vigil Crosses... For the Health of **Dr. Ronald Berezniak** offered Ted Bogosh
7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... In memory of **David O'Shura** offered by Millie O'Shura & Family
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Theodore & Anna Bybel & Haspe Families** offered
by Family Members

April Birthdays:

4- Elizabeth Warcholak, 10- Jackie Babinetz, 14- Marie Yurchak, 16- Mary Evetushick,
17- Julie McHugh, 22- Martha Teno, 23- Britney Miller, 23- Anne Ostrosky,
24- Dennis Vavra

Financials 4/3/22:

Operating Acct:

Candles 86 - Offerings 444 - Holy Days 45 - Paska 85 - Donations 25
= Total \$685.00. Easter Flowers 125 - Building Fund 36.

Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

Please use Amazon Smile when ordering from Amazon.

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King

Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

Fellowship Hour Hosts

April 10	Weremedic's
April 17	Lena Marie Berezniak
April 24	Paska - Blessing of Baskets and Fellowship
May 1	John Evetushick
May 8	Helen King

There is a sign-up sheet for **Coffee Hour** in the vestibule if you would like to host.

During the conversation, this woman told her amazing story: "I was born in Egypt, and at the age of 12 left my father's house and ran off to Alexandria. For 17 years I led a shameful life. One day I saw people going to Jerusalem for the feast of the Holy Cross, so I boarded the boat."

"I went with the others to the church, but some strange power held me back. I cowered in shame and terror, realizing that my sins prevented my entry. I cried out to the Holy Virgin in desperation, and the silent barrier was gone . . . After kissing the Cross, I passed over the Jordan and sought peace in the desert."

"For 47 years I have lived here alone . . . How I had to struggle against the temptations of the flesh . . ." Zosimos, who had been proud of his monastic life, was now humbled to tears. He came back the following several years, bringing the Eucharist to her. But one time he went into the desert and he could not find the woman. After some searching, he saw her body lying in the sand. Her hands were crossed over her heart, her face was turned toward the East. As he recited the prayer of the dead over her, the monk noticed these words traced in the desert sand: "Bury here the body of the sinner, Mary."

Zosimos brought out of the desert a story of a truly penitent soul. Her story lives on to this day as the Church observes St. Mary of Egypt's memory.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

SAINT MARY OF EGYPT - A TREASURE HIDDEN IN THE WILDERNESS

It was the pious custom in one of the monasteries of the East in the 6th century to have the monks gather at the beginning of the Great Fast and then to disperse into the desert. The monk Zosimos went forth with the rest. There in the wilderness he came across a strange form. He then heard a voice: "I am an old and sinful woman."



DEATH

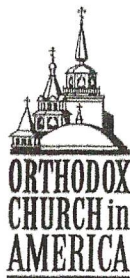


DEATH

We live in a death-denying culture. Death is something that happens to the next person. “It can’t happen to me.” The denial of death, however, is not universal—nor is it Christian. Many people in various cultures center their lives around death, and there exists a limitless range of attitudes and beliefs surrounding death and dying.

Three major approaches to death exist: the *philosophical*, the *secular*, and the *Christian*.

- ✧ Many **philosophies** attempt to address the presence of death. Life is often viewed as a “pathway” to death, and rationalization is sometimes used to explain its existence. For example, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato understood death as the soul’s release from captivity, comparing it to a butterfly being freed from its cocoon. In death, Plato reasoned, humanity is finally freed to become that which it was destined to be. Some religious philosophies regard death as something “willed” by God or as but one of many links in the chain of reincarnation.
- ✧ **Secularism**, on the other hand, attempts to explain death in terms of life. Secularism replaces any notion or concept of an “other” world with the idea that the only existence known to humanity is this one. People choose whether or not to make their lives meaningful, and they are responsible for their own destinies. Life is to be lived and enjoyed, while death is a natural, if inconvenient, intruder. Many of our society’s funeral practices—the “homey” décor with which we surround the deceased, the beautification of the departed, and the attempts often made to



display little pain or emotion—are secular by nature because they accept death as a natural occurrence.

- ✧ **Christianity** approaches death in a uniquely different manner. Recognizing that everyone is destined to die, Orthodoxy understands the preparation for death as the very center of the spiritual life. That humanity should die is not the will of God.

God did not make death, and takes no pleasure in the destruction of any living thing; He created all things that they might have being (Wisdom of Solomon 1:13,14).

THE END RESULT

Death, in Christian teaching, is the result of sin. It is the final victory of the devil—the result of his destructive activity. If humanity had not sinned, death would not have entered into the world.

As such, death is in no way “natural” to humanity. Our “natural” existence, as God so willed at the time of creation, is found in the fact that we were not created to die, but rather to be in eternal communion with the God Who is Life Itself. Had it not been for sin, our bodies would not have been corrupted by losing power over the body and becoming its slave. This is the meaning of the sin of Adam—humanity, created in God’s image and enlivened by His Holy Spirit, chose death instead of life and evil instead of righteousness.

Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned (Romans 5:12).

LIVING TO DIE

In this sin-bound world, no one escapes death. Even Jesus Christ did not escape death; although, as the incarnate Son and Word of God, He did not need to die. He died to bring about the salvation of His People; His death was perfectly and purely voluntary, the ultimate revelation of God’s love.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

By His death, Jesus Christ liberates all who have been held captive by death’s power.

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again; this charge I have received from My Father (John 10:17,18).

Through His death and resurrection, however, humanity is raised from the dead; eternal life in the Kingdom of God is made possible. This is the very basis of Orthodox Christianity.

This is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day... I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (John 6:40; 11:25, 26).

The whole point of living a spiritual life is to die with Christ to the sins of this world and to pass through the experience of bodily death with Him in order to be raised up “on the last day” in His Kingdom.

If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:11,12).

RECOGNITION

By the power of the risen Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit, death is transformed into an act of life. Death remains a tragedy, yet our Faith in the risen Lord transforms it into the ultimate defeat of “the last enemy—death.”

In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

When confronted by death, we can only weep and mourn as Christ did when he confronted the death of His friend Lazarus; but death is not an end for those who have been made alive in Jesus Christ.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

In the Epistle reading proclaimed during the Orthodox funeral service, Saint Paul tells us that he does not wish us to be ignorant concerning death. Without an abiding faith in the risen Christ—and the anticipation of our own resurrection from the dead—Saint Paul notes that we are left hopeless. No amount of reason will “solve” the problem. Only in the risen Christ, who has trampled down death by death, can a solution be found.

If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His... If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (Romans 6:5,8).

For Orthodox Christians, then, Death

- ✧ is not something “willed” by God;
- ✧ is not the “ultimate end,” for those whose faith is in the risen Christ are promised eternal life; and
- ✧ becomes our joyous entrance into God’s Kingdom and our own personal sharing in Christ’s greatest victory, His resurrection.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 1. St Mary of Egypt. Martyrs Terence, Pompeius, Africanus, Maximus, Zeno, Alexander, Theodore, Macarius, and 33 others, beheaded at Carthage (3rd c.). Martyrs James (Jacob) the Presbyter, and Azadanus and Abdicius—Deacons, of Persia (ca. 380).

Hebrews 9:11-14 (Epistle)

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Galatians 3:23-29 (Epistle, Saint)

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Mark 10:32-45 (Gospel)

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed, they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him:

“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.”

And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They said to Him, “We are able.” So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Luke 7:36-50 (Gospel, Saint)

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.

But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Saint Mary of Egypt

In Saint Mary of Egypt's own words, she tells Abba Zosimus that she lived for debauchery. Every corruption and abuse were, in her former life, the source of her joy. There was no sin of fornication she did not commit. And these things were not even done for a profit—she did not charge a fee. But even when she followed young Christian men to tempt them and lead them into darkness, God did not abandon her. As she tells us, God was seeking her repentance and salvation even in her darkest, most despicable moments. Alone in the desert, God and the Theotokos became her teacher—delivering to her scripture and wisdom. And from the tutoring and warm embrace of the Theotokos, Saint Mary of Egypt was formed in the desert to be the greatest of repentants and the greatest of Christians.

In the life of Saint Mary of Egypt, we are given a small glimpse of what it looks like to draw near to "God's time." When the world looked at Mary the Egyptian, they saw a harlot, a prostitute, a grifter and a lowlife. Yet when God looked at her, he saw deep in the heart of Mary potential to become the greatest of saints. Mary was not the harlot to God, she was the great repentant who, despite all her former voluntary sin, attained a heart of virginity so pure that she was transfigured into a holy mother of virtue and miracles.

This is the message given to us today. That God's mercy turns harlots into saints, his forgiveness grants prostitutes' hearts of virginity, and that the Mother of God chooses the likes of Saint Mary of Egypt—the likes of those who hide from glory, fame, pride, exaltation. Those who are lowly, those who are cast away by the world, those are the ones chosen to be taught and nurtured by the Theotokos, as she did Christ, to prepare us for the judgement day when we shall meet God.

So, when we leave the doors of the Church, let us not be built up by the pride of our fasting or discouraged in our struggle to maintain it. Let us return into the world seeking repentance and a newness of life. Let us seek the virginity and innocence of the spiritual life in Christ. Let us look upon each other and even strangers, or those who we rank as our enemies, as saints being formed in the fire of struggle, who will one day intercede for us and help us reach the kingdom of God. Let us hide from the passions as Saint Mary hid from the world. Grab onto the coat tails of Saint Mary of Egypt, and let us all together reach the great humility and repentance that allows us to resist pride and embrace tears of repentance.