

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
Reader Hours: Mat. Lisa Weremedic

Sunday, February 26, 2023
Choir Director: Wash King
Reader Epistle: Edward Pierson

37th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – FORGIVENESS SUNDAY - CHEESEFARE

Glory Be to Jesus Christ! Glory Be Forever!

Services:

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| Sunday, February 26 | 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Cheesefare (Forgiveness Sunday)
Followed by Forgiveness Vespers and Fellowship |
| Monday, February 27 | 5:00 PM - Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete |
| Tuesday, February 28 | 5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete |
| Wednesday, March 1 | 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (Fast from Noon) |
| Thursday, March 2 | 5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete |
| Saturday, March 4 | 4:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confessions |
| Sunday, March 5 | 9:30 AM – Liturgy of St. Basil, Archbishop Mark Celebrating (Orthodoxy Sunday)
Followed by Light Lenten Meal & Fellowship |
| Sunday, March 5 | 3:00 PM – Lenten Mission Service at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Lansford |
| Wednesday, March 8 | 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (Fast from Noon) |
| Friday, March 10 | 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (Fast from Noon) |
| Saturday, March 11 | 4:00 PM – Great Vespers, Memorial Saturday Service, & Confessions |
| Sunday, March 12 | 9:30 AM – Liturgy of St. Basil, (St. Gregory of Palamas) Fellowship
To Follow: Adult Class “Living with Grief as Orthodox Christians” Chapter 4 Session |
| Sunday, March 12 | 4:00 PM – Lenten Mission Service at Holy Ascension in Frackville |
| Saturday, March 18 | 4:00 PM – Great Vespers, Parastas, Memorial Saturday Service, & Confessions |

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:

Fr. James and Matushka Lisa Weremedic
Andrew Balliet, Michael Birocik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Danielle Bogosh, Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Nadine Fegley, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Michael Kulick, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Mildred O'Shura, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Joseph Tosca, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, George Yurchak, & 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 (February 26)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In memory of **Kay & Paul Maliniak** offered by William Yelsh
Altar Candles... In memory of **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members
Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **Brother, Nicholas King** offered by Russell & Geri King
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

The winner of the Super Bowl Basket in the church hall last week was Michael Ropitsky.

February Birthdays: 1- Michael Kulick, 3- Michael Tatusko, 7- Ira James, 9- Wendy Kulick,
15- Claire Remington, 22- Peter Harahus, 26- George Yurchak (98)

Financials 2/19/23: Operating Acct:

Weekly Envelopes \$1,002, Holy Days \$45, Candles \$49, Altar Candles \$20, Donations \$1,550
Spaghetti Dinner \$836.51 Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

February 26	Russell King	March 12	Lena Berezniak
March 5	Light Lenten Meal	March 19	OPEN

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

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.

St. Tikhon's Summer Camp – July 1-8 – See Flyers in the back of the church

Volunteers are needed – Contact: Michael Shepherd at 570-229-4829 or
Info@StTikhonsCamp.org

SAYING THANKS THROUGH PRAYER

Saint Paul writes in his first letter to the Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

The idea of giving thanks is woven throughout the fabric of our Church. There are many moving accounts of God's people thanking Him in the Old Testament. Many times it involved building altars as an OUTWARD sign of their INWARD gratitude. Plenty of the Psalms are beautiful songs of thanksgiving to God. As noted in the Gospels, Christ Himself thanks His Heavenly Father. The essence of the Divine Liturgy each Sunday is the Eucharist. Communion is celebrated each Sunday we gather in the House of God. We petition, thank and praise our Lord through this common partaking of His Body and Blood.

Yet another way of expressing thanks is through prayer. Our prayers can be classified into 3 unique types: asking, thanking and praising. All 3 are necessary for a full relationship with God. The beginning of our Christian experience is the asking for God's forgiveness. When this is sincerely done, we are guaranteed His forgiveness. The natural response is to thank God for all that He has given us. Food, clothing, shelter, health and wealth are simply the beginning of what God has bestowed upon us. A growing relationship with our Lord Almighty eventually leads to praising Him for His goodness, truth and love.

As Christians, we use prayer to thank God for each blessing He has given us. Go forth and SHOW everyone what it means to be thankful.

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

Praise God

For the Grace and Love

He Has Bestowed Upon Us

Kontakion — Tone 6 - O Master, Guide to wisdom, / Bestower of prudence, / Instructor of the foolish, and Defender of the poor: / make firm my heart and grant it understanding. / O Word of the Father, / give me speech, for behold, I shall not restrain my lips from crying out to Thee: / "Have mercy, have mercy on me who have fallen."

Romans 13:11-14:4 (Epistle)

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Matthew 6:14-21 (Gospel)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Sunday of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...."

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE Tone 4 The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.
St. Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza (420). Ven. Sebastian of Poshekhónsk. Martyr Christodoulos.

Saint Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza

Saint Porphyrius, Archbishop of Gaza, was born about the year 346 at Thessalonica. His parents were people of substance, and this allowed Saint Porphyrius to receive a fine education. Having the inclination for monastic life, he left his native region at twenty-five years of age and set off for Egypt, where he lived in the Nitrian desert under the guidance of Saint Macarius the Great (January 19). There he also met Saint Jerome (June 15), who was then visiting the Egyptian monasteries. He went to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to the holy places, and to venerate the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord (September 14), then he moved into a cave in the Jordanian wilderness for prayer and ascetic deeds.

After five years, Saint Porphyrius was afflicted with a serious malady of the legs. He decided to go to the holy places of Jerusalem to pray for healing. As he lay half-conscious at the foot of Golgotha, Saint Porphyrius fell into a sort of trance. He beheld Jesus Christ descending from the Cross and saying to him, "Take this Wood and preserve it."

Coming out of his trance, he found himself healthy and free from pain. Then he gave away all his money to the poor and for the adornment of the churches of God. For a time he supported himself by working as a shoemaker. The words of the Savior were fulfilled when the saint was forty-five years old. The Patriarch of Jerusalem ordained Saint Porphyrius to the holy priesthood and appointed him custodian of the Venerable Wood of the Cross of the Lord.

In 395 the bishop of the city of Gaza (in Palestine) died. The local Christians went to Caesarea to ask Metropolitan John to send them a new bishop who would be able to contend against the pagans, which were predominant in their city and were harassing the Christians there. The Lord inspired the Metropolitan to summon the priest Porphyrius. With fear and trembling the ascetic accepted the office of bishop, and with tears he prostrated himself before the Life-Creating Wood and went to fulfill his new obedience.

In Gaza there were only three Christian churches, but there were a great many pagan temples and idols. During this time there had been a long spell without rain, causing a severe drought. The pagan priests brought offerings to their idols, but the woes did not cease. Saint Porphyrius imposed a fast for all the Christians; he then served an all-night Vigil, followed by a church procession around the city. Immediately the sky covered over with storm clouds, thunder boomed, and abundant rains poured down. Seeing this miracle, many pagans cried out, "Christ is indeed the only true God!" As a result of this, 127 men, thirty-five women and fourteen children were united to the Church through Holy Baptism, and another 110 men soon after this.

The pagans continued to harass the Christians. They passed them over for public office, and burdened them with taxes. Saint Porphyrius and Metropolitan John of Caesarea journeyed to Constantinople to seek redress from the emperor. Saint John Chrysostom (September 14, January 27 and 30) received them and assisted them.

Saints John and Porphyrius were presented to the empress Eudoxia who was expecting a child at that time. "Intercede for us," said the bishops to the empress, "and the Lord will send you a son, who shall reign during your lifetime". Eudoxia very much wanted a son, since she had given birth only to daughters. Through the prayer of the saints an heir was born to the imperial family. As a result of this, the emperor issued an edict in 401 ordering the destruction of pagan temples in Gaza and the restoration of privileges to Christians. Moreover, the emperor gave the saints money for the construction of a new church, which was to be built in Gaza on the site of the chief pagan temple.

Saint Porphyrius upheld Christianity in Gaza to the very end of his life, and guarded his flock from the vexatious pagans. Through the prayers of the saint numerous miracles and healings occurred. The holy archpastor guided his flock for twenty-five years, and reposed in 420 at an advanced age.

SOME ADVICE ABOUT CONFESSION

However small may be the sins of your confession, you must always feel a deep and sincere sorrow for committing them. Still further, you must make a firm resolution never to commit them in the future.

Many people confess their sins merely out of custom and for the sake of order. In this way, they really continue their whole lifetime under the power and guilt of these sins, and thus lose many spiritual benefits and advantages.

Thus if you confess that you have told a lie, even though a harmless one, or that you have spoken some improper words, or that you have given way to excessive pleasure and recreation, then you must truly repent and form a determined resolution to amend your ways. It is an abuse to confess any kind of sin without a sincere will to be delivered from it.

In your confession, do not be content with making general accusations such as these: I have not loved God as much as I should have; I have not prayed with as much attention and devotion as I should have; I have not loved my neighbor as I should have; I have not received the sacraments as often as I should have; and other similar things.

The reason is that saying such things, you do not penetrate the depth of your sinfulness but remain on the surface. All the saints in heaven and all men on earth might say the same thing. You must discover the particular reasons behind your sinful actions. You must search your

heart to find out why it is that you do not love God and your neighbor as you should. When you have discovered it, accuse yourself sincerely of the distinct sinful fault.

For example: You accuse yourself of not loving your neighbor as you should have. Perhaps this is so because you saw some person in distress, whom you could have assisted but you ignored him. If so, then confess this particular sin by saying, "Having seen a poor man in need, I did not help him as I could have because of my own negligence and contempt", or because of whatever else you may discover to be the reason of your sin.

Do not be satisfied with confessing your sins merely in fact. Confess also the motives which induced you to commit them. For example: Do not simply say that you have told a lie. But also declare whether the lie was motivated by vainglory or selfish gain; or to praise or excuse yourself. So examine all of your sins.

Confess also how long you have continued in your sin. For the length of time greatly increases the sin. There is a big difference between a passing vanity that has slipped into the soul for a few minutes and one that has lodged in the heart for many days.

When confessing our sins, we must confess the fact, the motive and the duration of our sins.

From
Introduction to the Devout Life
by St. Francis de Sales

SIN AND CONFESSION

*"All men, both Jews and Greeks.
are under the power of sin." Romans 3*

Without a doubt, no human person is completely free of the power of sin. In fact, we are full of sin; we are all chronic sinners.

We sin daily in word, deed and thought: We sin with our mouths by indulging in immoral talk and gossip. We sin with our eyes by looking at things with envy and jealousy. We sin with our ears by listening to indecent stories and slander. We sin with our minds through lustful imagination and thought. We sin with our hearts through feelings of avarice and pride.

The bad thing, however, is that many of us rarely if ever recognize our sins. It is not unusual to meet people who are quite convinced that they have no sins. They may acknowledge that they have a few weaknesses, but they are absolutely sure that they are free of sin.

Such Christians live without a sense of sin. They are really sinners and commit sin every day. But they go throughout life without a consciousness of personal sin. They fail to see their evil actions and inclinations; they don't recognize their selfishness and pride.

This failure is very bad. For without knowing our specific sins,

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and he will forgive our sins

And cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 3

we can't make a true confession. We can only make a vague affirmation of general sinfulness. But confession means acknowledging concrete acts and experiences of sin. It is based on the awareness of definite transgressions and offenses.

The awareness of personal sin can only be experienced by making a regular examination of ourselves and our lives. Therefore, let us take a close look inside ourselves and search out the evil that lurks in our hearts. Let us thoroughly evaluate our actions and determine the sins we have committed. Let us honestly analyze our behavior in all its forms.

Then we will see ourselves as we really are: We will see the dark and vile side of our nature; we will see the specific shape of sin and evil in our lives. Only by clearly seeing our own particular sins can we experience that *godly grief* or penitence that is necessary for making a true confession.

There is one thing worse than committing a sin, and that is not being aware that one has sinned. For if we are not aware of our sins, we cannot confess them. And if we do not confess our sins, we cannot receive forgiveness.

G.T.