

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

Sunday, March 27, 2022

Choir Director: Wash King

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – TONE 7

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

Services:

Sunday, March 27	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – Veneration Precious Cross & Coffee hour
Wednesday, March 30	5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal
Friday, April 1	5:00 PM – Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos
Saturday, April 2	4:00 PM – Great Vespers, Confessions
Sunday, April 3	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – St. John Climacus & Coffee Hour
Wednesday, April 6	5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal
Thursday, April 7	5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew
Friday, April 8	5:00 PM – Akathist to Jesus Christ, Our Savior
Saturday, April 9	4:00 PM – Vespers, Confessions
Sunday, April 10	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – St. Mary of Egypt & 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 (March 27)

Flowers around Cross... In memory of the deceased members of the **Herbert, Macalush, & O'Shura Families** offered by the Herbert Family

7-Day Vigils/Altar... In memory of **Kay & Paul Maliniak** offered by William Yelsh

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 **Claire Remington** offered Terri Bogosh & Gloria Bench

7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the Health of **Matushka Lisa Weremedic** offered by Terri Bogosh & Gloria Bench

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Theodore & Anna Bybel Family & Haspe Family**
offered by Family Members

March Birthdays:

1- Logan Leatherman, 6- Marie Kalavritinos, 16- Anthony Vavra, 21- Mildred O'Shura,
24- Tracy Skripnek, 24- Zachary King, 24- Olga Sidoriak (100), 29- Sandra Zuber

April Birthdays:

4- Elizabeth Warcholak, 10- Jackie Babinetz, 14- Marie Yurchak, 16- Mary Evetushick

Financials 3/20/22:

Operating Acct: Candles 59 - Altar Candles 0 - Offerings 395 - Non-Envelope 150

Holy Days 45 - Paska 200 - Donations 155 = Total \$1,004.00.

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

Fellowship Hour Hosts

March 27 John Evetushick

April 3 Michael Tatusko

April 10 Weremedic's

April 17 Lena Marie Berezniak

April 24 Paska - Blessing of Baskets and Fellowship

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

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

THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

Our focus on the Third Sunday of Great Lent is the CROSS, the greatest of Christian symbols. After being brought out in solemn procession today, the Cross will remain in the center of Orthodox churches everywhere, calling us to remember that we must all “take up our cross” and follow Christ if we are to attain salvation.

A popular place to visit on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem is the CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE. It was built by the Emperor Constantine in 335 A.D. as a means of enshrining the tomb of Jesus. Little emphasis was placed upon the spot of His Crucifixion, with a simple cross marking this sacred site. In the 12th century, the Crusaders fully integrated Calvary into the general structure of the reconstructed Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The hill of Calvary is a perfect example of the “SACRED MOUNTAIN”: the meeting of the three cosmic levels of the universe, namely, HEAVEN, EARTH and the UNDERWORLD. On the summit of Calvary, heaven and earth meet in the crucified Christ. The Divine Life which came from above was not intended to stop at this summit, but to descend the axis to its very depths. The form taken for this was the Living Blood of Christ, which, after being shed on the Cross, seeped down through the earthquake-opened cracks in the rocks. It brought salvation and life to those lost in the darkness of the world below.

The Cross is an everlasting reminder to us of the sacrifice made by Christ for our sake. Through the Cross, our Saviour has redeemed us!

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THE CROSS

OUR SYMBOL OF HOPE AND JOY



CONFESSIO



CONFESSIO

Confession is an essential element of the Christian life. In fact, without an acknowledgement and confession of our sins, there is no Christianity.

We confess our sins in order to

- ✧ reveal our lives to the judgment of God and those around us;
- ✧ beg for mercy and forgiveness;
- ✧ free ourselves from our sinful secrets;
- ✧ open ourselves to the Light of God and those around us;
- ✧ liberate ourselves from everything negative which binds and corrupts us; and
- ✧ be reconciled with God while being united to the Church—the People of God.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRIEST ALONE

Why, then, do we confess to God in the presence of the priest alone? Why, if confession is open and public, does it appear to be “private”?

We confess to God in the presence of the priest as if we were confessing in the presence of God’s People. In other words, we confess to all in the person of the priest.

The pastor of the parish community sees, hears, offers guidance, and proclaims God’s



forgiveness on behalf of the entire community—in the name of God and His People. He bears witness before all of the sincerity of our confession. If possible, he counsels and advises us in ways which will bring about spiritual growth. He proclaims the comforting words of divine forgiveness to us when we truly repent.

In the early Church, confession was literally open and public. It took place before the whole Christian community and society. The present practice, by which the priest represents the community, is merely a condescension to human frailty. It is not at all, in the Orthodox Christian understanding, a practice built upon a doctrine of priestly “power” and “authority” alone.

WHY THE CHURCH?

Why is the Church the means of confession? Cannot God forgive sins “directly”? Is He not present everywhere, always ready to show mercy to sinners?

Of course God is everywhere and is always ready to receive repentant sinners. However, this very same God revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, who founded His Church and has filled It with the power of His Holy Spirit.

Thus, in the same way that we have recourse to the Church for baptism and chrismation, for marriage and burial, to hear the proclamation of the Word of God and to receive Holy Communion, so we also go to confess our sins

and to receive the grace to be reunited, through Jesus Christ, with God the Father in the Holy Spirit. Since the Church is made up of people—God’s People, we likewise turn to the Church to find reconciliation with those around us as well.

If we turn to the Church to receive all that we know and all that we have from God—including even the Holy Bible and the divine revelation which was given by God to His People through Jesus Christ—how strange it would be if we did not come to the same Church to confess our sins and to receive divine forgiveness and mercy.

HOW TO COME TO CONFESSION

How should we come to confession? What should we do?

The first guideline for us to follow in approaching confession is to act according to the practices of our local parish. In addition to this, we must

- ✧ confess openly and fully, avoiding useless details and vain enumeration;
- ✧ be sincerely sorry for our sins;
- ✧ truly desire forgiveness and reconciliation with God and those around us;

- ✧ bear the spirit of true repentance and the desire to change our lives; and
- ✧ make amends for our wrongs and resolve to improve our lives.

These are the main elements of confession. Should the priest advise or instruct us to do certain things—to read, to pray, to perform certain acts of mercy—we should follow his advice cheerfully and carefully, knowing that God Himself speaks to us with every act of sacramental penance if we are sincere and open to His presence.

NOTHING IS SECRET

Finally, we should come to confession as we would come to the Last Judgment. We must recognize the significance of this point.

Christ is coming to us in the Church. He is coming specifically and concretely in the sacrament of Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy. He is coming either to accept us into loving communion with God or to judge and condemn us. We prepare ourselves to meet Him by opening our souls, confessing our sins, and seeking mercy and forgiveness.

For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. Take heed then how you hear...
(Luke 8:17,18).

In the Church we already live in the Light of God's Kingdom. Judgment is ever-present. Jesus Christ continually appears. We must meet Him with heartfelt confession of sins and genuine repentance so that our meeting with Him may be "not for judgment, nor for condemnation, but for the remission of sins and unto life everlasting."

Let no one be kept back either by his sins or by his years from coming to obtain salvation. To him who still remains in this world there is no repentance that is too late (Saint Cyprian of Carthage).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 7. Veneration of the Cross. Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius (304). Ven. John the Clairvoyant, Anchorite, of Egypt (394-395). The “GLYKOPHYLOUSA” and the “AKATHIST” Icons of the Mother of God on Mt. Athos.

Troparion — Tone 4 - O Lord, save Your people, / and bless Your inheritance. / Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians, / over their adversaries. / And by virtue of Your Cross / preserve Your habitation!

Kontakion — Tone 7 - Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; / it has mysteriously been quenched by the wood of the Cross! / The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished; / for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell: / “Enter again into paradise.”

Hebrews 4:14-5:6 (Epistle)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.

Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.

And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also, Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”

As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”;

Mark 8:34-9:1 (Gospel)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ’s redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. “He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Mt.10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both “the power of God and the wisdom of God” for those being saved (1 Cor.1:24).

Icon of the Mother of God of Mount Athos, “Sweet Kissing”

Commemorated on March 27

Like the Panagia Portaitissa, the Glykophilousa Icon is one of those which were saved during the iconoclastic period and brought miraculously to Mount Athos. It originally belonged to Victoria, the devout wife of the senator Symeon. Victoria was one who venerated the holy icons, especially that of the Most Holy Theotokos, before which she prayed each day. Her husband was an iconoclast who found her piety offensive, for he, like Emperor Theophilos (r. 829-842), found the veneration of icons distasteful. Symeon told his wife to give him her icon so that he could burn it. In order to save the icon from being destroyed, she threw it into the sea, and it floated away standing upright on the waves. After a few years, the icon appeared on the shores of Mount Athos near the Monastery of Philotheou, where it was received with great honor and rejoicing by the Abbot and Fathers of the Monastery, who had been informed of its impending arrival through a revelation of the Theotokos.

A spring of holy water sprouted forth on the very spot where they placed the icon on the shore. Every year on Monday of Bright Week there is a procession and blessing of water. Numerous miracles have occurred.

Although there are many miracles of the Glykophilousa Icon, we will mention only a few. In 1713, the Mother of God answered the prayers of the devout Ecclesiarch Ioannikios, who complained about the poverty of the monastery. She assured him that she would provide for the material needs of the monastery.

Another miracle took place in 1801. A pilgrim, after seeing the precious offerings having from the icon, planned to steal them. He stayed in the Temple after the Ecclesiarch closed it. Then he stole the offerings and left for the port of Ivéron Monastery. There he found a boat that was leaving for Ierissos. After a while the ship sailed, but despite the excellent weather, it remained stationary in the sea. When the Ecclesiarch saw what had happened, the abbot sent monks out in various directions. Two went to the port of Ivéron and when they saw the immobile ship, they realized what happened. The guilty man who committed this fearful sacrilege asked for forgiveness. The monks were magnanimous and did not want the thief to be punished.

A pilgrim from Adrianopolis visited Philotheou Monastery in 1830. He listened attentively to a monk tell the story of the holy Icon and the miracles associated with it, but he regarded the account as a fictitious tale which only a child might believe. The monk was grieved at the man's unbelief, and tried to persuade him that everything he had said was absolutely true. The unfortunate pilgrim remained unconvinced.

That very day, as the pilgrim was walking on an upper balcony, he slipped and began to fall. He cried out, “Most Holy Theotokos, help me!” The Mother of God heard him and came to his assistance. The pilgrim landed on the ground completely unharmed.

The Glykophilousa Icon belongs to the Eleousa (the Virgin of Tenderness) category of icons, where the Mother accepts the affection shown by the Child Christ. The icon is commemorated by the Church on March 27 and also on Bright Monday. The icon depicts the Theotokos inclining toward Christ, Who embraces her. She seems to be embracing Him more tightly than in other icons, and her expression is more affectionate.

When we sing “Before Thy Cross”, we are recalling the death and the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the death and the resurrection of us. And so, on Sunday we will prostrate. Normally we don't prostrate at any Sunday of the year, with the exception being when the cross is celebrated on that day. There are only two possibilities - during Great Lent on the Third Sunday, and also the Exaltation of the Cross, which is celebrated in September and sometimes it falls on a Sunday. We sing: **“Before thy Cross we bow down in veneration O Master, and Thy Holy Resurrection we glorify”**. With our bodies, we are showing what we believe. We go down, which is burial, which is death, and we surely get up, which is resurrection. This is very meaningful, especially in the context of the long service, when we go out and everyone is before the Cross, and we sing together this Troparion, and then many more stichera about the cross. The way of the Cross is not the way of death, it is the way of resurrection. It is the way of knowing which things dead and which things are alive. The temporary things of the world are dead: pride is dead, envy, jealousy – all the passions – they are all dead, they all lead to death. There is nothing meaningful in Them at all. The only thing that is meaningful, that is alive, is Jesus Christ. And if we are members of His body then we also are alive.