

**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 13, 2022**  
Choir Director: Wash King

## **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – TONE 5**

*Glory Be to Jesus Christ!*

*Glory Be Forever!*

### **Troparion — Tone 2**

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, / and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God. / Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / to deliver Your creatures from bondage to the enemy. / Therefore, with thanksgiving we cry aloud to You: / You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, / by coming to save the world.

### **Kontakion — Tone 8**

No one could describe the Word of the Father; / but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, / and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty. / We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images

### *Services:*

Sunday, March 13	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – Sunday of Orthodoxy & Coffee Hour
Wed., March 16	5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal.
Sunday, March 20	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – St. Gregory Palamas & Coffee Hour, followed by Parastas & Coffee Hour
Wed., March 23	5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal
Friday, March 25	9:30 AM – Vespereal Liturgy – Annunciation of Theotokos
Sunday, March 27	9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – Veneration Precious Cross & Coffee Hour
Wed., March 30	5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, please fast from the noon meal.

### **Prayer List:**

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic,  
Andrew Balliet, Michael Birocik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan,  
Evanna Jane Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Irene Davis, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Karen Harkins, John  
King, Michael Kulick, John & Olga Kushnir, Nancy Lorchak, 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.

### **CONFESSION**

Confessions have resumed with minor modifications. Please call the rectory at  
570-645-2772 and talk to Father James for a reservation. Call between 9:30 AM  
and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Individual schedule times will be spread out  
during the week. Husband and wife can be scheduled together. Anyone wanting to  
have a confession, but has concerns of COVID-19, should contact Father James to  
make the appropriate accommodations.

#### **Candles (March 13)**

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... In memory of **Mildred Bowski** offered Mimi Taylor  
7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the Health of **Julie McHugh** offered by Ted Bogosh  
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Rose (Winsko) Maliniak** offered by Friends

**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

#### **Financials 3/6/22:**

**Operating Acct:** Candles 18 - Offerings 260 - Holy Days 5 = Total \$283.00.

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.

## "WE VENERATE YOUR MOST-PURE IMAGE, O GOOD ONE"

**C**an you imagine walking into an Orthodox Church and **NOT** seeing any icons adorning the edifice? Can you visualize being told that icons could **NOT** be displayed in your own home? Indeed, there was a period in Church History when these preposterous suppositions were realities!

During the reign of Emperor Leo III (717 A.D. - 741 A.D.), the veneration of icons was deemed to be **IDOLATRY**. All such sacred images were ordered to be destroyed, and their defenders cast into prison. A bloody struggle broke out over this edict, and for over a century, the dispute raged, with both factions gaining control at various times. Finally, the iconoclasts were decisively defeated in 842 A.D. Through the efforts of the Empress Theodora and Patriarch Methodius I, the use and veneration of icons was restored. The day this blessed victory took place was the first Sunday of Lent, providing the basis for our annual liturgical celebration and procession with holy icons. We refer to this day as the **SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY**, reminding us that the focal point of our celebration is the triumph of a **TRUTH** and **DOGMA** of the undivided Church.

One of the hymns from Matins on the First Sunday of Great Lent beautifully captures the spirit of the Church's position on holy icons: "**Preserving the ancestral laws of the church, we depict images of Christ, His blessed mother and the saints. As we venerate them with our lips, we cry out from the depths of our hearts: Bless, O Lord, all the works of Your hands.**"

## OBSERVING GREAT LENT

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Most of us understand that prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the three basic Christian and Lenten necessities. However, we often realize that we cannot keep the strictest Lenten regulations of the Church which are, in fact, monastic rules. We know that we will not make the maximum effort, and so we sometimes feel frustrated, lost, and without guidance.

### DO WHAT YOU CAN

When seeking practical advice concerning Lenten practices, the only realistic guideline is to do what you can. You know that the essentials are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Intensify your prayer. Fast as fully as possible. Give to others—asking for nothing in return. Know as well that all of your fasting, praying, and almsgiving must be exercised in secret. The true purpose and goal of Great Lent is to enter into a deeper love for God and those around us.

Another concrete, yet traditional, suggestion is to keep certain Lenten weeks in a stricter and more devoted way than others. For example, the first and third weeks of Great



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Lent, in addition to Holy Week, can be set aside for a greater, more concentrated Lenten effort.

Practically speaking, everyone can keep certain weeks, or at least one week, in a very special way. If this is done, there is no doubt that the result will be very positive, and the time spent may prove to be the most inspiring and fruitful time of our entire life.

#### WHAT TO DO

Here are some concrete guidelines for making Great Lent more fulfilling and spiritually rewarding:

- ✧ Receive Holy Communion regularly.
- ✧ Confess your sins thoroughly and sincerely.
- ✧ Turn off the television, radio, and other media for the entire Lenten season, except for news and serious or educational programs.
- ✧ Do not visit or engage in outside activities for their own sake. Keep useless talking to a minimum. Do only necessary business, good works, and acts of charity.

- ✧ Examine and measure every aspect of your life—family, work, society, politics, economics, values, desires, etc.—against the model set forth by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
- ✧ Question yourself in regard to love, truth, honesty, purity, humility, peace, forgiveness, justice, mercy, hungering and thirsting for God, wisdom, and knowledge.
- ✧ In the name of Jesus Christ, forgive all who have offended you and seek forgiveness from those whom you have offended. If it will not be embarrassing or misinterpreted as an act of self-righteousness, express yourself as concretely as possible.
- ✧ Set aside and give a sizeable portion of your resources to others—the parish, the poor, a social or educational agency. Do not advertise or tell anyone what you have done. Ask no gratitude and forgo requesting a receipt.

- ✧ Fast strictly all the time. At a minimum, eat no meat. Suit your fast to your work, but avoid luxury. Again, tell no one. Do not discuss your fasting with anyone and avoid judging others who may not be fasting with you.
- ✧ Pray at home at least at one fixed time each day. Choose a brief rule of prayer, but keep it faithfully.
- ✧ Read the scriptures in the same brief yet regular way. You may wish to follow the Church's calendar, read a chapter of a given book on a daily basis, or simply read and reflect upon passages which you happen upon. In addition, meditate upon the following: 1 John; Romans 12-14; Matthew 5-7, and John 14-17.
- ✧ Be faithful to Christ's Gospel in every word, action, and thought—even the smallest or most insignificant.
- ✧ Participate in all the weekly Lenten services, especially the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Saturday evening Great Vespers, and the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

## PEACE AND JOY

If we do these things, not in a spirit of gloomy self-denial or irritated self-pity, we will gain an awareness of genuine peace and joy in communion with God and those around us. This is guaranteed—and our participation in and celebration of the feast of Our Lord's resurrection will be cherished forever.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 5. Sunday of Orthodoxy.** Translation of the relics of St. Nikēphóros, Patriarch of Constantinople (846). Martyr Sabinus (Abibus) of Egypt (287). Martyrs Africanus, Publius, and Terence, of Carthage (3rd c.). Martyr Alexander of Macedonia (305-311). Martyr Christina of Persia (4th c.). Ven. Aninas of the Euphrates.

### **Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 (*Epistle*)**

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **John 1:43-51 (*Gospel*)**

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons and the triumph of the Orthodox Faith against the terrible heresy of the Iconoclasts, i.e. those heretics who refused to honor the Holy Icons. For more than a hundred years the Church was disturbed by the evil doctrine of iconoclasm.

The first Emperor to persecute the Church was Leo the Isaurian, and the last was Theophilos, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established Orthodoxy in the time of Patriarch Methodios (June 14). Empress Theodora proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel.

Originally, the Holy Prophets Moses, Aaron, and Samuel were commemorated on this Sunday. The Alleluia verses appointed for today's Liturgy reflect this older usage.

### **Translation of the relics of Saint Nikēphóros, Patriarch of Constantinople**

Saint Nikēphóros was a dignitary at the court of the empress Irene (797-802), and then after receiving monastic tonsure, he became known for his piety. In the year 806 he was elevated to the patriarchal throne. The saint was a zealous defender of the holy Icons. When the Iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820) came to rule, the saint in 815 was exiled to Prokonnis, where he died in the year 828.

In the year 846 the holy relics of Patriarch Nikēphóros were opened, and were found incorrupt and fragrant. They transferred them from Prokonnis to Constantinople and placed them for one day in Hagia Sophia, and then transferred them to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The saint's hands are preserved in the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos.

The saint left behind three writings against Iconoclasm. The main Feast of Saint Nikēphóros is celebrated on June 2, but today we commemorate the finding and transfer of his holy relics.