

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 6, 2022

Choir Director: Wash King

37th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 4

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

Services:

Sunday, March 6 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Forgiveness Sunday
Followed by Forgiveness Vespers, followed by Coffee hour

Monday, March 7 5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Tuesday, March 8 5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Wednesday, March 9 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

Thursday, March 10 5:00 PM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Sunday, March 13 9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – Orthodoxy Sunday & Coffee hour

Wednesday, March 16- 5:00 PM – Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

Sunday, March 20 9:30 AM – St. Basil Divine Liturgy – St. Gregory Palamas
Followed by Parastas & Coffee hour

Prayer List:

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic,
Andrew Balliet, Michael Birozik, 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 6)

7-Day Vigils/Altar... For the Health of **Millie O'Shura** offered by Ted Bogosh
Altar Candles... For the Health of **Dr. Ronald Berezniak** offered by Ted Bogosh
Eternal Lamp... In Memory of **Peter Wyshosky, Jr.** offered by Julia Forte
Vigil Crosses... For the Health of **Lena Marie Berezniak** offered Ted Bogosh
7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the Health of **Martha Teno** offered by Ted Bogosh
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel 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

Financials 2/27/22: *Operating Acct:* Candles 42 - Altar Candles 0 - Offerings 1,147 - Non-Envelope 150 - Holy Days 20 - Initial Env 0 - Donations 20 = Total \$1,379.00. - Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. - Thank you!

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."

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

FORTY HOLY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE


In today's bulletin, we highlight a group of 40 faithful souls who suffered martyrdom for their Lord. The story unfolds in the year 320 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Licinius. A garrison of Roman soldiers were stationed in a remote Armenian town. While they were courageous warriors, they were also devout Christians. Upon hearing of them, the infuriated Emperor issued an edict, stating that those throughout the Empire who would not worship pagan gods would be tortured and put to death. Additional soldiers were sent to Sebaste to see exactly where the loyalties of these 40 Christians stood.

We are told that they all refused to reject Christ. A cruel death was planned for them. It was bitterly cold in Sebaste at this time of the year. They were forced to remove their clothes and stand in the freezing lake, looking across the waters at the glowing fires of the pagans – where they could go if they would renounce the Lord. One of the group finally weakened and abandoned the contest. As death approached, a band of angels came down from heaven and placed crowns on their heads. It is said that one of the Roman guards was so moved by this glorious sight that he removed his own garments and rushed to die at the side of these Christian warriors. This retained their total at 40.

A prayer mentioning the 40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste is included in the Wedding Service. It is placed there to remind the bride and groom that crowns await them in Heaven also if they remain as faithful to Christ as these saints of long ago.



THE SUNDAYS OF GREAT LENT



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Each of the Sundays of Great Lent possesses special meaning for us as we journey through the Lenten season to Pascha, the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Through our awareness of these days and our participation in the liturgical services of the season, we are instructed and inspired to continue our journey with Christ to the cross and, ultimately, to victory over sin and death.

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

Great Lent begins on a Monday; the eve of this day is known as Forgiveness Sunday. The way to resurrection and life, the path to Christ's eternal victory over death, begins with forgiveness. God will not forgive us our sins and raise us from the dead unless we forgive the sins of others and work for their salvation as well as for our own.

In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Christ clearly teaches us the importance of forgiveness:

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew 6:14, 15).

THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

On the first Sunday of Great Lent, we celebrate the feast of the *Triumph of Orthodoxy*. This is a historical feast commemorating the restoration of icons, which had been banned for several decades, to their rightful liturgical use in the year 843 A.D.



The major emphasis of this feast is the victory of the true faith, the victory which always ultimately triumphs. Having completed the first week of our Lenten efforts, we are reminded that Christ, the perfect image of God the Father, calls us to personal victory by restoring within ourselves “the image and likeness of God” in which we were first created (Genesis 1:26).

The icons of Our Lord, the Theotokos, and all the saints are images of true humanity, signs of what our eternal calling and vocation really are. They tell us that we are all called to be living icons and imitators of Christ, bearing the likeness of God as gracious vessels of the Holy Spirit.

THE SUNDAY OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

The second Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to *Saint Gregory Palamas*. Once again we are reassured, as we contemplate this man and reflect on his teachings, that we can indeed attain salvation and behold the “Light of Wisdom” by becoming “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Saint Gregory clearly teaches that by cooperating with the God who makes all things possible, we can attain eternal life. Thus, our Lenten efforts are confirmed, our resolve is strengthened, our frustrations at the end of the second week are overcome, and we are filled once more with the light of hope.

THE SUNDAY OF THE CROSS

On the third Sunday of Great Lent, we venerate the *life-creating cross of Our Lord*. The Kingdom of God comes only through the cross and through suffering. Life follows death; resurrection follows Golgotha.

Saint Paul mentions that, in the worldly sense, the cross is a sign of foolishness, signifying death and sorrow. The faithful, however, look in faith and hope beyond the suffering brought about by the cross, discerning the loving victory which it truly proclaims. At Sunday matins we sing, “Behold! Through the cross joy has come into all the world.” The cross is a sign of victory and the landmark of paradise. It is inseparable from the resurrection. For this reason we sing on this Sunday: “Before Thy cross we bow down and worship, O Master, and Thy holy resurrection we glorify.”

Not only is the cross a victory for Christ, “the captain of salvation made perfect through suffering” (Hebrews 2:10), but for us as well. As we approach Pascha, it stands as a reminder to us to take up our cross and worthily follow Christ in His suffering and, ultimately, in His eternal victory (Matthew 10:38).

THE SUNDAY OF SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS

On the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate *Saint John Climacus*, author of

The Ladder of Divine Ascent. In this work Saint John outlines the steps essential for attaining communion with God—steps which remind us that the way to the Kingdom constantly challenges us to engage in spiritual warfare.

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness...the hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:10-13).

THE SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT

The fifth Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to *Saint Mary of Egypt*. Saint Mary was a harlot who, having recognized her sinfulness, sought to bring about an essential change in her life. She ran from her sinfulness and devoted the remainder of her life to placing God's will above her own. In her person we recall Christ's words:

Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you (Matthew 21:31).

The end is drawing near, yet repentance is still possible, even for the greatest of sinners. We see how the harlot repents and is forgiven. There is no sin so great that God will not forgive it; there is no amount of sinfulness

which can condemn you if you are willing to repent and to merge your vision with that of Our Lord.

PALM SUNDAY

Great Lent ends on the Friday following the Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt. The next day is Lazarus Saturday which is followed by Palm Sunday—these are the days of the festal interlude. On Palm Sunday we hold branches in our hands as we sing, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" At the same time we look ahead to the road to Golgotha upon which Christ invites us to join Him. While we sing praises with our lips, our lives must not cry out with the angry mob: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

With this in our minds and in our hearts, we enter the days of the Passover of the Cross—the great and holy Pascha of the Lord—the Resurrection!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE — Tone 4. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The 42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia, including: Constantine, Aetitus, Theophilus, Theodore, Melissenus, Callistus, Basoës and others (ca. 845). The Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by Empress St. Helen (Elena) in Jerusalem (326). Monastic Martyrs Conon and his son, Conon, of Iconium (270-275). Ven. Arcadius of Cyprus (4th c.).

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...."

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.

Monastic Martyrs Conon and his son, Conon, of Iconium

The Holy Hieromartyr Conon lived in Iconium (Asia Minor). After he became a widower, he went to a monastery with his son. Because of his devout life the saint was granted help from above. He cast out devils, he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and preached Christ among the pagans, converting many.

Reports of him reached the governor Dometian, a persecutor of Christians. Saint Conon was brought to trial and they ordered him to offer sacrifice to idols, but since he would not, he was handed over for torture. The seventeen-year-old son of the martyr, Deacon Conon, was also brought to trial.

After persuasion failed to make him renounce the True Faith, both father and son were subjected to cruel tortures. They were stripped and laid on a red-hot cot, they were drenched with hot oil, they were thrown into a cauldron with boiling tin, sulfur and tar, they were suspended upside down and scorched with a choking smoke. Preserved by God, the martyrs remained unharmed.

The irate torturers then resorted to a horrible way to destroy the preachers: sawing them in two with a wooden saw. Learning of this sentence, the saints asked time to pray and they cried out to the Lord, "We give thanks to You, O Lord, for permitting us to suffer for Your Name! We beseech You to grant peace to Your Church, put its persecutors to shame, strengthen and increase those who believe in You, grant us to come to You, and give peace unto our souls."

The Voice of God was heard from above, calling the holy sufferers. Having signed themselves with the Sign of the Cross, the holy martyrs gave up their souls to the Lord. At once, there was an earthquake, and all the pagan temples in the city collapsed.

Monks secretly buried the bodies of the martyrs at the monastery where the saints had labored in asceticism during life. This occurred during the reign of Aurelian in the years 270-275. The relics of the holy martyrs were later transferred to Italy, to the city of Acerno (Campania).

Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by Empress Saint Helen in Jerusalem

The Holy Empress Helen uncovered the Precious Cross and Nails of the Lord at Jerusalem in 326. At the beginning of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (306-337), the first Roman emperor to recognize Christianity, he and his pious mother Saint Helen decided to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. They also planned to build a church on the site of the Lord's suffering and Resurrection, in order to reconsecrate and purify the places connected with the Savior's death and Resurrection from the foul taint of paganism.

The empress Helen journeyed to Jerusalem with a large quantity of gold. Saint Constantine wrote a letter to Patriarch Macarius I (313-323), requesting him to assist her in every possible way with her task of the restoring the Christian holy places.

After her arrival in Jerusalem, the holy empress Helen began to destroy all the pagan temples and reconsecrate the places which had been defiled by the pagans.

In her quest for the Life-Creating Cross, she questioned several Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful. Finally, an elderly Hebrew named Jude told her that the Cross was buried beneath the temple of Venus. Saint Helen ordered that the pagan temple be demolished, and for the site to be excavated. Soon they found Golgotha and the Lord's Sepulchre. Not far from the spot were three crosses, a board with the inscription written by Pilate (John 19:19), and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body.

Now the task was to determine on which of the three crosses the Savior had been crucified. Patriarch Macarius saw a dead person being carried to his grave, then he ordered that the dead man be placed upon each cross in turn. When the corpse was placed on the Cross of Christ, he was immediately restored to life. After seeing the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross had been found. With great joy the empress Helen and Patriarch Macarius lifted the Life-Creating Cross and displayed it to all the people standing about.