



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, April 17, 2016

Fifth Sunday of Lent: Saint Mary of Egypt

- TROPARION OF ST. MARY, Tone Eight:

In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up the Cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul, since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mother Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

- KONTAKION OF ST. MARY, Tone Three:

Thou who once of old wast filled with all manner of fornication, art now seen today to be a bride of Christ by thy repentance. Thou didst live and emulate the life of the Angels. By the Cross, thou didst annihilate the hordes of demons; for this cause art thou a bride now in the Kingdom of the Heavens, O Mary, thou all-modest one.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, April 16: 10 AM, Extended Choir Rehearsal
3:30 PM, Catechism: *on Death and the Funeral*
4 PM, Children's Choir rehearsal
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
8 PM, *Sonoma Bach Consort performance in St Seraphim*
- Sunday, April 17: 8:45 AM, Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy / 11:45 Church School
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall
3 PM, *Sonoma Bach Consort performance in St Seraphim*
- Tues., April 19: 8 AM, Matins
- Wed. April 20: 8 AM, Matins
5 PM, Confessions
6:15 PM, Presanctified — Vladyka Benjamin to serve / Lenten Meal to follow service
- Thurs., April 21: 8 AM, Matins
- Friday, April 22: 8 AM, Matins (last Lenten Matins)
2 PM, Church Clean-up work party
6:15 PM, Matins for Lazarus Saturday
- Sat. April 23: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday, will be sung by the *Children's Choir*
2 PM, Church Clean-up work party
3 PM, Decorating Church for Palm Sunday
5 PM, *Vigil for Palm Sunday with the Blessing of Palms* (Confessions during the Service)

- TODAY'S USHERS:

George Barsi and Vladimir Baer.

- VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN:

Vladyka Benjamin will serve the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday, April 20, and then visit us again on Bright Monday, May 2, for the Paschal Matins and Liturgy. In particular, I expect that the Church will be filled on Wednesday, April 20 so all of us can benefit and receive the grace of God that comes when our Bishop visits. St Ignatius of Antioch, who was a disciple of St John the Theologian, and one of the great martyr-bishops of the Church (died 108), reminds: "See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery (priests) as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. [...] **Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be;** even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic [whole, true, universal] Church." —*St. Ignatius: Letter to the Smyrnaeans*.

- A REQUEST:

When you approach the Holy Chalice to receive the Mysteries, please **say your name** to the priest, open your mouth, slightly tilt your head back (bowing your head forward doesn't work, considering the nature of gravity), close your mouth around the spoon rather than "pulling away" with your lips or teeth, and allow the priest giving Holy Communion to remove the spoon. In the Russian tradition we gently kiss the chalice (not done in the Greek tradition). I apologize for the seeming crassness of the request, but when dealing with the All Holy Mysteries, we do not want to have an accident. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- DONATIONS FOR PASCHA FLOWERS:

A donation basket will be set out after the Liturgy on Sunday to collect funds for Holy Week and Pascha flower decorations.

- HOLY WEEK SIGN UP SHEETS Now Posted:

You are invited to sign up for reading the *Psalter* before the Tomb on Holy Friday night thru Saturday morning, and on Saturday afternoon until 11:30 PM, the *Book of the Acts of the Apostles*. Also, help will be needed each day of Holy Week to work at the Candle Desk in the evenings, to clean the church after the Presanctified, to help set up for the Paschal Agape Meal in the Hall and the Potluck BBQ on Pascha afternoon.

- SAINT MARY OF EGYPT (excerpt from a sermon by Fr Basil Rhodes):

1. Mary of Egypt was a sinful woman. Like the woman in the Gospel today, Mary was a sinner. She led a very wicked and hedonistic life. She spent all of her young adulthood catering to her fleshly passions. But we aren't supposed to look at Mary with disdain or disgust. Not at all. So how are we supposed to look at her? We are supposed to look at St. Mary of Egypt as representing ourselves. She is us. She is me. Don't I spend a lot of time indulging my own pleasures, my own comfort, my own entertainment? Mary's life is God's call to all of us. Make a change! Go a different direction!

2. She was unchurched. Did you know that? How do you think Mary ended up in such a depraved condition? Her parents made absolutely no effort to raise Mary in the Church. In fact, it appears that they never took her at all, or very seldom. The Church was not important to them. By their example, they taught the child Mary that the church was not important for her either. How do we know this? How do we know that her parents were even Christians? We know it from her own words: "I am only a sinful woman" she said to Zosimas, "though I am guarded by Holy Baptism." By this we know that Mary was at least baptized as a child. So, how do we know that her parents were negligent in her upbringing? Again, her own words tell the story. In her "Life" it says: "Hearing that she cited words of Scripture, from Moses and Job, Zosimas asked her: 'And so you have read the Psalms and the other books?' She smiled at this and said to the elder, 'I never learned from books. I have never even heard anyone who sang and read from them. But the Word of God, which is alive and active, by itself

teaches a man knowledge.” So Mary never heard the Scriptures read or chanted at church.

3. She is the image of Repentance. Like the woman in the Gospel today, Mary repented. Mary only had to show the slightest inclination toward God. She only had to want to enter the church, and God’s grace, along with the intercessions of the Mother of God, took care of the rest. That’s how it is for us too. If we just make a small effort, (like the lenten fast, for instance,) God will honor that effort with gushing rivers of grace, and His Most Holy Mother will be constantly by our side to guide us and help us. The fragrant ointment in today’s Gospel represents the sweet fragrance of grace, the sweet fragrance of Christ. This is what the virtues of repentance and humility produce – the precious perfume of Paradise.

4. Mary is a symbol of Exile, or fleeing from sin. In step three of *The Ladder*, St John Climacus says that “exile means that we leave, forever, everything in our own country that prevents us from reaching the goal of piety.” Mary didn’t return to Egypt, she went into voluntary exile. She left behind her former life, her former associations, so that she wouldn’t fall back into her old sins. As St. John goes on to say, “Run from places of sin as from the plague. For when the fruit is not present, we have no constant temptation to eat it.” The Mother of God guided Mary into the Palestinian desert, across the Jordan and away from the cities and towns. This teaches us also to be careful about where we go, what we do, and with whom we associate, not only during Great Lent, but always.



5. Mary is an encouragement for Confession and Communion. A huge portion of the text of Mary’s life is taken up with her confession of her sins. She feared that her words would defile and pollute the very air, but Fr. Zosimas insisted that she tell all, omitting nothing. This is something that all of us should do during the Great Fast or during Holy Week—make a deep and sincere confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance. Mary also told Abba Zosimas that she longed for Holy Communion. She said to him: “I thirst for (the Holy Mysteries) with irrepressible love and longing.” Confession and Communion are a big part of Great Lent, and the traditional preparation for participation in the Lord’s Pascha. St. John Chrysostom says to us: “The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away. Enjoy ye all the feast of faith.” What do we suppose he is talking about? Is he talking about all the luxurious food we have waiting to be blessed in our baskets? Is he talking about the groaning table we have waiting for us at home? No, not at all. He is talking about the Feast of Faith – which is the Body and Blood of Christ. This is the true Paschal meal. Even in our church’s service books there are very specific texts that say “only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha.”

• LENTEN RETREAT AT GEARY BLVD. CATHEDRAL:

Sunday, April 17, 2016. Speakers: Khouria Krista West on *Envisioning the Kingdom: the Why and How of Beauty in the Church*. Khouria Krista is an accomplished and acclaimed vestment maker, and has a popular podcast on Ancient Faith Radio. Priest Andrew Cuneo, whom you all know, will also be speaking. His talk is entitled *Can We Think About Paradise Too Much? The Beautiful Perils of Modern Life*. Schedule: 7:30 AM, Hours and Divine Liturgy (in English); 9:45, Registration; 10 AM Breakfast; 10:30, Session I: Khouria Krista West; 11:30 AM, Q & A; 12 PM, Lunch; 1 PM Session II: Priest Andrew Cuneo; 2 PM Q & A with Priest Andrew Cuneo; 2:30 PM Informal fellowship; 4 PM, Tour of Holy Virgin Cathedral, 5 PM, Vespers (in English).

- LAZARUS SATURDAY/PALM SUNDAY:

2 PM: On the last day of Great Lent, *Friday, April 22*, we will be cleaning up inside and outside the Church to prepare for Holy Week: sweeping, polishing brass, dusting, etc.

6:15 PM: Friday evening we serve Matins of Lazarus Saturday (a unique and beautiful resurrectional service, runs about one hour).

9:30 AM: Saturday, April 23, is the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Raising of Lazarus. Liturgy will be sung by our new Children's Choir.

2 PM: Saturday afternoon we will continue to clean in and around St. Seraphim. Decorations for Palm Sunday will begin at 3 PM. See Patricia Krueger or Katherine Crawford if you'd like to help decorate.

5 PM: Vigil for Palm Sunday, with the blessing of palms. There will be an opportunity for confession during Matins, after the Holy Gospel is chanted.

- CONFESSIONS

For those **over the age of seven** who wish to receive Holy Communion during Holy Week and Pascha, it is required to make a confession at least once in the three weeks before Holy Week. No Confessions will be heard after Holy Wednesday. Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of repentance (2 Cor. 6:2). —*Fr. Lawrence*

- THANK YOU:

A big thank you to Zosimas and Cosmos for mowing the vineyard and mound. No small task. The two boys have also been assisting Ray Basch with work at the Protection Church—we are grateful for their help. The members of the Senior/Retired Lunch Fellowship are grateful to Esther Carr for the delicious lunch she recently prepared. Many thanks to those who have been preparing the Lenten meals after Presanctified, and for those who stay to clean.

- HOLY SATURDAY:

Please keep Kathleen Rhodes (Spencer Seraphim's mother) in your prayers as she prepares for Baptism on Holy Saturday.

- WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED:

A man asked a priest: "If God is everywhere, what do I go to Church for?" To which the priest replied: "The whole atmosphere is filled with water; but when you want to drink you have to go to a fountain or a well."

- PARISH TO-DO LIST and NEEDS:

- the Ride Ministry needs volunteers (see Deanna Panages)
- someone to clean offices and library weekly
- ~~- move the pile of parking stops and bricks~~
- repair playground equipment (scrub stains off plastic slide, tighten bolts, fill in gravel, etc.)
- weekly tasks: clean up playground and porch of all garbage, dump the outside trash-barrels, pick up plates and cups in play area after Sunday lunch
- basketball needed for the court
- set up parking lot lights for Holy Week and Pascha (see Tom Pellizzer)
- gardening (see Matushka Ann)