

ST. JOHN'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

V. REV. MITRED ARCHPRIEST JOHN D. SOROCHKA, RECTOR

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SERVICES ON LIVESTREAM FROM WEBPAGE

SUNDAY RADIO LIVE BROADCAST –WTRW – 94.3 THE TALKER

APRIL 8/21, 2024

5TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – **COMMEMORATION OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT**

TONE 5

Holy Apostles of the Seventy: Herodion, Agabus, Asyncritus, Rufus, Phlegon, Hermes, and those who suffered with them.

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Wine and oil allowed.

EPISTLE: Heb. 9:11-14; Gal. 3:23-29

GOSPEL: Mark 10:32-45; Luke 7:36-50

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sun., April 21: **FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – ST. MARY OF EGYPT**

PRO-LITURGY – 8:00 AM

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL – 9:30 AM

LITIYA FOR:

Laura Markovich by John Shust & family (9th day)

Protodeacon Joseph Yarachuk (9th day)

Basil Telep by daughter, Barbara & family

Esther Telep by daughter, Barbara & family

Gregory Telep by sister, Barbara & family

Julie Telep by niece, Barbara & family

LENTEN VESPERS – following Litiya

Wed., April 24: **PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY – 8:00 AM**

AKATHIST TO CHRIST – 6:30 PM

Fri., April 26: **PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY – 8:00 AM**

MATINS FOR LAZARUS SATURDAY – 6:30 PM

Sat., April 27: **LAZARUS SATURDAY – DIVINE LITURGY – 8:00 AM**

CONFESSIONS – 3:30 PM

GREAT VESPERS – 4:00 PM

Sun., April 28: **THE ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM – PALM SUNDAY**

Blessing of Palms & Willows

PRO-LITURGY – 8:00 AM

DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 AM

BRIDEGROOM MATINS – 4:00 PM

ETERNAL LIGHT: IMO **DR. NICHOLAS PETROCHKO** by son, Protodeacon Gregory. **MEMORY ETERNAL!**

ALTAR VIGILS: God's blessings upon **FREDDIE & KATHY LUTZ** by Dolores Lutz. **MANY YEARS!**

TABLE OF OBLATION: IMO **EDWARD & EILEEN BRZUCHALSKI** by son, Gary. **MEMORY ETERNAL!**

HIGH PLACE: In thanksgiving for God's blessings upon **DCN. NATHANIEL** by his family. **MANY YEARS!**

ICONOSTAS VIGIL: Health and God's blessings upon **SANDY SUEY** by friends. **MANY YEARS!**

ICONOSTAS VIGIL: Health and God's blessings upon **LINDA BROWNELL ZEFRA** on her birthday by her mother. **MANY YEARS!**

VIGIL LIGHTS: Due to the increase in costs, our vigil light price is now **\$4.00**. We apologize for the price change; however, we have no control over our supplier's pricing. Please make note of the change when purchasing your vigil candles. Thank you.

CONFESSION SCHEDULE: Wed., April 24: **7:30 AM** Fri., April 26: **7:30 AM & 6 PM** Sat., April 27: **7:30 AM & 3:30 PM**

EVENTS:

Tue., April 23: **CHURCH CLEANING – 6:00 PM**

Wed., April 24: **CHOIR REHEARSAL – following LENTEN SERVICES**

Fri., April 26: **CHOIR REHEARSAL – following LENTEN SERVICES**

300 CLUB DRAWING 4/14/24: \$50 - #78 – MLRS; \$25 - # 101– Judy Hine; \$25 - #262–Michael Senyk

APRIL RADIO: IMO **ANNA PELACHYK** by Michael & Susanne Yankovich, Ann Novajovsky & Nina & Larry Hومان & family.

MEMORY ETERNAL!

"JULY" CASH DRAWING: Tickets for the annual **CASH DRAWING** in July are now available. The cost is **\$100** per ticket. Contact Mott, Joan Zaleski, Sasha Fedorchak or Tanya Sorochka to purchase your ticket or if you are willing to help sell them.

DONATIONS REQUESTED: Anyone willing to donate towards the following for Great Lent as an act of almsgiving may do so by

contacting Fr. John or the sextons: Altar Candles - **\$75** each; Wine - **\$50** case; Incense - **\$40** lb. Oil - **\$40**.

HOLY WEEK & PASCHAL PROCESSIONS: The schedules are once again being organized for Holy Week and the Feast of the Resurrection. We did not have the schedules for the years during Covid, but we are trying to reinstitute this system – it is so much easier for Bill when trying to organize the processions during this sacred time. If you would be willing to participate, please see Bill so we can have an idea of how to prepare for the processions. Bill's position is a voluntary one – please lighten the burden and stress of doing his work by volunteering instead of being asked to help. We realize that none of us are getting any younger, services can be lengthy, and aches and pains now exist where they didn't before; but please try to help us keep our traditions. It hasn't been easy since Covid, but we are getting back to a normal environment a little bit every day. We ask for your cooperation and support in helping to keep our traditions alive in our parish. Please see Billy today and offer him your help.

SPECIAL FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS/PASCHA: Donors are being sought for the Paschal Floral Arrangements needed to beautify our church for the Feast of the Resurrection. If interested in donating the "Special" Altar Flowers, Tetrapod Vases, Cross Flowers, Sprays for the Iconostasis, Baskets for the Baldachinos, Hand Cross. etc., please contact Malina (570)282-0101 or see her following church services.

BRIGHT MONDAY "OPEN HOUSE": A sign-up list is in the church vestibule for those willing to bring food items for the Annual "Open House." Please remember to bring your donations in throw away, aluminum pans for easy clean-up. Help us keep this wonderful day of fellowship and love alive! Everyone is invited to attend. Also, the annual egg hunt for the children will take place after everyone has something to eat!

WHY WE DO NOT VENERATE THE ICONS UPON RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION: Having just received the Body of Christ, one is filled with the grace of the Sacrament, and one is communing with the Divine Presence. It is therefore superfluous to this action of Grace and Communion to be thinking at this time of venerating the Saints who occupy a lesser place in the heavenly realm. So, it is not necessary to venerate the icons, which play no part in what one is participating in at that time. The communion of the Divine Body and Blood is the ultimate act of Orthodox worship and for the rest of the day one should constantly be aware of this fact and act appropriately. In that way, an Orthodox Christian is induced to perform Christian virtues and so progress in his/her spiritual life. It is, however, permissible to kiss the cross at the conclusion of the Liturgy because the cross depicts the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Who by this act of redemption has given us His Body and Blood and by the grace of receiving It brings us closer to Him. The cross is the instrument of our salvation, and we should venerate it. Please keep this in mind when partaking of the Blessed Sacrament.

RED EGG DYE: Packets of red dye are available in the church vestibule. The cost is \$2.00 each. These dyes are the ones we use for the red eggs which we give to the faithful on Pascha. Please purchase a packet or two and consider donating a dozen or two red, hard-cooked eggs for the Great Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection. Please bring your hard cooked, red eggs to the church before Resurrection Services on Holy Saturday, May 4th. Thank you.

HEARTFELT APPRECIATION: Many thanks to all the parents who organized and planned last week's art project and Lenten luncheon for the youth of our parish and their families! A great time was had by all in attendance! The art project was a huge hit with the kids, and the parents and grandparents loved getting together to socialize! We also thank all of you who helped bundle the pussy willows for Palm Sunday! Two projects accomplished in one day. The enthusiasm and eagerness to help displayed by all in attendance was certainly heartwarming! Thank you to all – we certainly know how to work as a team in this parish! May God continue to bless you all for your love of Him, our children, and our beloved St. John's!

READERS BY THE GRAVE schedule is now available. The purpose of having readers by the grave is to see that Christ's tomb is never left unattended. The Book of Acts is read. This is truly a beautiful custom, and we appreciate everyone who participates – your sacrifice of time keeps this tradition alive in our parish. If you would like to take part and your name is not on the list, please feel free to come and participate. All are welcome. Please contact Michele Yarnes if you would like to be added to the list. The schedule is in the church vestibule or on our church's Facebook page. We encourage adults to stand guard and read during the late evening and early morning hours. Thank you.

PARENTS, for over fifty years it has been a custom in our parish to have our sons and daughters read by Christ's Tomb on Holy Friday and Holy Saturday. This custom has stayed with many of our children as they have grown into adulthood. Until today, many of the youngsters who began reading by the grave when I first came to Mayfield are still found on Holy Friday and Holy Saturday standing watch over Christ's grave. This is very endearing to me as it is, I am sure, to the parents of these fine young men and women. It is my sincere hope that the younger generations of our children will feel the same devotion and dedication as do the older generations. I am asking you parents to help us keep our children close to their Faith. Parents, please bring your children to the church for their designated time so that the tomb will not be left unattended. Please encourage your children to participate in this beautiful custom practiced in our parish. We can organize programs, purchase materials, offer the best teachers; however, without your cooperation and commitment as parents, we cannot make your children participate, we cannot make them come to church services and church programs -- only you can do this. We implore you to bring your children to church services in what little time remains until Holy Week and Pascha. Encourage them to read by the grave on Holy Friday and Holy Saturday, teach them by example that they should partake of the Holy Sacraments on this Great Feast of Feasts. Remember, Pascha is not the Easter Bunny or egg hunts to Orthodox Christians – it is the Resurrection of Christ – the holiest day of the liturgical year. Bring your children to church with you – teach them that Christ and His Church should be the center of their lives. Parents, also feel free to stand guard at the tomb of Christ with your children – help them while they are reading with words that are difficult for them. It may be a moving experience for you, as well. We ask for your cooperation in getting your children involved in the life of their parish.

FYI: On the Saturday before Holy Week, the Orthodox Church commemorates a major feast of the year, the miracle of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when he raised Lazarus from the dead after he had lain in the grave four days. Here, at the end of Great Lent and the forty days of fasting and penitence, the Church combines this celebration with that of Palm Sunday. In triumph and joy the Church bears witness to the power of Christ over death and exalts Him as King before entering the most solemn week of the year, one that leads the faithful in remembrance of His suffering and death and concludes with the great and glorious Feast of Pascha. If you have never attended the Liturgy on this day, try to do so this year. It truly is beautiful!

LAZARUS SATURDAY: Next Saturday, April 27, is referred to as **LAZARUS SATURDAY**. This day, along with Palm Sunday, occupies a special position between Lent and Holy Week. Following the forty days of penitence which have ended, and immediately before the days of darkness and mourning which are to follow in the week of the Passion, there comes two days of joy and triumph which the Church keeps. The *Saturday before the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) celebrates the rising of Lazarus at Bethany* (John 11:1-46). This miracle is performed by Christ as a reassurance to His disciples before the coming Passion: they are to understand that, though He suffers and dies, He is Lord and Victor over death! The resurrection of Lazarus is a prophecy in the form of an action. It foreshadows Christ's own Resurrection eight days later, and at the same time it anticipates the resurrection of all the righteous on the Last Day – Lazarus is *'the saving first-fruits of the regeneration of the world.'* As the liturgical texts emphasize, the miracle at Bethany reveals two natures of Christ the God-man. Christ asks where Lazarus is laid and weeps for him, and so He shows the fullness of His being a man, involving as it does human ignorance and genuine grief for a beloved friend. Then, disclosing the fullness of His divine power, Christ raises Lazarus from the dead, even though his corpse has already begun to decompose and smell. This double fullness of the Lord's divinity and His humanity is to be kept in view throughout Holy Week, and above all on Great Friday. On the Cross we see a genuine human agony, both physical and mental, but we see more than this – we see not only suffering man but *suffering God*.

LIFE OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

Our holy mother Mary was born in Egypt. She had left her parents at the age of twelve to go to Alexandria, where she spent the next seventeen years in debauchery and the greatest profligacy. Living on charity and linen-weaving, she nevertheless offered her body to any man, not being forced to it by dire necessity as were so many poor women, but as though she were consumed by the fire of a desire that nothing was able to appease.

One day, seeing a crowd of Lybians and Egyptians moving towards the port, she followed them and set sail with them for Jerusalem, offering her body to pay her fare. When they arrived in the Holy City, she followed the crowd that was thronging towards the Church of the Resurrection, it being the day of the Exaltation of the Cross. But, when she reached the threshold of the church, an invisible force prevented her entering despite repeated efforts on her part, although the other pilgrims were able to go in without hindrance. Left alone in a corner of the narthex, she began to realize that it was the impurity of her life that was preventing her approaching the holy Wood. She burst into tears and smote her breast and, seeing an icon of the Mother of God, made this prayer to her: "O Sovereign Lady, who didst bear God in the flesh, I know that I should not dare to look upon thine icon, thou who are pure in soul and body, because, debauched as I am, I must fill thee with disgust. But, as the God born of thee became man to call sinners to repentance, come to my aid! Allow me to go into the church and prostrate before His Cross. And, as soon as I have seen the Cross, I promise that I will renounce the world and all pleasures and follow the path of salvation that thou wilt show me."

She felt herself suddenly freed from the power that had held her and was able to enter the church. There she fervently venerated the Holy Cross and then, returning to the icon of the Mother of God, declared herself ready to follow the path that the Virgin would show her. A voice replied to her from on high: "If you cross the Jordan, you will find rest."

Leaving the church, she bought three loaves with the alms a pilgrim had given her, discovered which road led to the Jordan and arrived one evening at the Church of Saint John the Baptist. After having washed in the river, she received Communion in the Holy Mysteries, ate half of one of the loaves and went to sleep on the riverbank. The next morning, she crossed the river and lived from that time on in the desert, remaining there for forty-seven years without ever encountering either another human being or any animal.

During the first seventeen years, her clothes soon having fallen into rags, burning with heat by day and shivering with cold by night, she fed on herbs and wild roots. But more than the physical trials, she had to face violent assaults from the passions and the memory of her sins and, throwing herself on the ground, she implored the Mother of God to come to her aid. Protected by God, who desires nothing but that the sinner should turn to Him and live, she uprooted all the passions from her heart by means of this extraordinary asceticism, and was able to turn the fire of carnal desire into a flame of divine love that made it possible for her to endure the implacable desert with joy, as though she were not in the flesh.

After all these years, a holy elder called Zosimas, who, following the tradition instituted by Saint Euthymios, had gone into the desert across the Jordan for the period of the Great Fast, saw one day a human form with a body blackened by the sun and with hair white as bleached linen to its shoulders. He ran after this apparition that fled before him, begging it to give him its blessing and some saving words. When he came within earshot, Mary, calling by name him whom she had never seen, revealed to him that she was a woman and asked him to throw her his cloak that she might cover her nakedness.

At the urging of the monk, who was transported at having at last met a God-bearing being who had attained the perfection of monastic life, the Saint recounted to him with tears the story of her life and conversion. Then, having finished her account, she begged him to come the following year to the bank of the Jordan with Holy Communion.

When the day arrived, Zosimas saw Mary appearing on the further bank of the river. She made the sign of the Cross and crossed the Jordan, walking on the water. Having received Holy Communion weeping, she said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:29). She then took leave of Zosimas, asking him to meet her the following year in the place where they had first met.

When the year passed, Zosimas, going to the agreed spot, found the Saint's body stretched on the ground, her arms crossed and her face turned towards the East. His tearful emotion prevented him from noticing at once an inscription traced on the ground by the Saint, which read: "Abba Zosimas, bury here the body of the humble Mary; give what is of dust to dust, after having prayed for me. I died on the first day of April, the very night of the Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, after having partaken in the Holy Eucharist." Consoled in his grief by having learned the Saint's name, Zosimas was amazed to discover that she had, in several hours, covered more than twenty days' march.

After having vainly tried to break up the earth with a stick, he suddenly saw a lion approaching Mary's body and licking her feet. On the orders of the Elder, the beast dug a hole with its claws, in which Zosimas devoutly placed the Saint's body.

On his return to the monastery, he recounted the marvels that God had wrought for those who turn away from sin and move towards Him with all their hearts. From the hardened sinner that she had been, Mary has, for a great many souls crushed under the burden of sin, become a source of hope and a model of conversion. This is why the Holy Fathers have placed the celebration of her memory at the end of the Great Fast as an encouragement for all who have neglected their salvation, proclaiming that repentance can bring them back to God even at the eleventh hour.

WHY DO WE RECEIVE "LENTEN SELF-DENIAL CARDS"? Every year during the first week of Great Lent, our parish distributes Lenten self-denial cards. The purpose of these cards is to put a quarter in each of the 40 slots in the folder, one coin per day throughout Lent. If it's more convenient, save the quarters in a jar for 40 days and convert them to a \$10 bill or write a check for the amount.

We are taught that self-denial is an important part of Lent because it helps us to follow Jesus who gave His life for us because He loved us. In response to God's love, as shown through the self-giving of Jesus, we do something to symbolize our willingness to deny ourselves. Giving a little extra to do the work of the church is one way to accomplish this mission.

We are taught that personal piety is only part of a faithful response to God's love. Faithfulness also includes, fasting, prayer, reaching out to others, extending God's love, etc.

Self-denial leads us to that outward expression of faithfulness. We don't merely receive the gift of God's love and then rest in that assurance. We also share it with others in many ways, one of which is to share our coins to help continue God's work through the Church.

It should become a source of pride to all to fill your coin folders completely by Holy Pascha. The coin folder also represents participation in a larger community – you are doing something greater than one could do alone. You could make a difference because the church uses the coins to help others through its various outreach programs.

Please learn that sacrificial giving is a challenge with important religious meaning.

Looking back, I realize that the Lenten coin folder was one way the Church gave me a vision for a world beyond the horizon of the small town in which I lived. I was becoming aware that the world was bigger, and the needs of people were greater than what I could see before me with my own eyes. I was part of a larger group of people, a family of faith, who shared this value of an outward-bound expression of faithfulness. A commitment to God connected intimately with caring about others.

Through the Lenten coin folder, the church introduced me to a global vision that grew as I grew older. That vision has shaped me and given me a framework through which I can view the world. I understand I relate to others who share that vision, and together we can dare to speak of transforming a broken world because we apprehend the love of God as revealed in the self-giving act of Jesus on the cross.

My global awareness has grown with time and age. But it all began with a simple Lenten coin folder filled with quarters and the teaching that the sacrificial love of God that embraces me impels me to love others, no matter who or where they are because we are all included in this story of God's unbounded love for the whole world.

Please, do not forget to make this tiny sacrifice of \$.25 a day during the Lenten period. The feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction you will experience when you return it during Holy Week will enrich you spiritually.

In Christ's Love,

Fr. John