

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH
130 ST. FRANCIS CABRINI AVENUE ✕ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Joseph Daratony. Michael Abda. Marie Bar-
ron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne
Buckley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue.
Carol Downer. David Fairclough, Sr. Robert Fairclough, Sr.
Sara Gomez. William Lass, jr. Niko Mayashairo. Mary
McNeilly. Sue Solsman. Susan Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry
Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✕Rev. Charles Aboody. ✕
Rev. Michael Jolly. ✕Rev. Joseph Francavilla. ✕Rev. Frank
Milienewicz ✕Dn. John Karam. ✕Marie Abda. ✕Charlotte
Abda. ✕James Abda. ✕Marie Abda. ✕Nancy Abda. ✕A.J. Bo-
lus. ✕Nicholas Cianci. ✕Patricia Cimakosky. ✕Ann Coury. ✕
Mary Sue Betress. ✕Margaret Dillenburg ✕Eric Jolly. ✕
Joseph King ✕Blakely Landell. ✕Elaine Manuele. ✕Frank
Milewski, Sr. ✕Frank Milewski, Jr. ✕Mary Lou Mooty. ✕Karen
Murray. ✕Marie Patchoski. ✕Anthony Simon. ✕Bill Simon. ✕
Ruth Sirgany. ✕Mary Ann Walsh. ✕Genevieve Zaydon

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Wednesday :

Compline 7:30 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; follow-
ing any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Meetings as scheduled.

**SECOND SUNDAY OF
THE GREAT LENT
SUNDAY OF HOLY RELICS**

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

28 FEBRUARY 2021 ♦ TONE 06 EOTHINON 06 † SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT / SUNDAY OF THE RELICS

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD: Beatitudes

ENTRANCE HYMN: Resurrection

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 6)

Holy Relics

Saint Joseph the Betrothed

KONDAKION: Annunciation

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON: Psalm 11:7, 1

O Lord, save your people and bless Your inheritance.

Stichon: To you, O Lord, I have called ‘O my rock, be not deaf to me.’

EPISTLE:

You in the beginning, O Lord, did found the earth, and the heavens are works of your hands. They shall perish, but you shall continue; and they shall all grow old as does a garment, and as clothing shall you change them, and they shall be changed. But you are the same, and your years shall not fail. Now, to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool at your feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation? That is why we should all the more earnestly observe the things we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard it.

ALLELUIA: Psalm 88: 6; 1,2

I will sing of your mercies, O Lord, for ever. † For you have said: “Mercy shall be built up forever.”

GOSPEL:

At that time Jesus entered Caparnaum, and it was reported that he was at home. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even around the door. And he spoke the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four. And since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and, having made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the Paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” Now some of the Scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man blaspheme in this way? Who can forgive sins, beside God?” And at once Jesus, knowing in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, “Why are you arguing these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your pallet, and walk’? But that you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” — he said to the paralytic — “I say to you, arise, take up your pallet, and go to your house,” And immediately he arose and, taking up his pallet, went forth in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, “Never did we see anything like this!”

HIRMOS: In you O Full of grace...

LENTEN SERVICES

Monday: Pre-sanctified Gregory the Great 4:30 pm/ Tuesday: Pre-sanctified Gregory the Great 4:30 pm

Wednesday: Pre-sanctified Gregory the Great 4:30 pm / Thursday: Pre-sanctified Gregory the Great 4:30 pm

Friday: Akathist: Gregory the Great 3:00 pm / Pre-sanctified Gregory the Great Academy 4:30 pm

Saturday: Divine Liturgy St. Joseph 9:00 a.m.

Liturgy Book p. 1

Liturgy Book p. 11

Liturgy Book p. 11

Back of Liturgy Book

Liturgy Book p. 15

Liturgy Book p. 18

Lenten Supplement p. 2

Liturgy Book p. 20

Lenten Supplement p. 6

Liturgy Book p. 23

(Tone 6)

Hebrews 1:10-2:4

these aforementioned thematic elements. Indeed the lectionary for the Great Lent was already established by the 10th century with the almost chronological reading from the ‘Letter to the Hebrews’ for the epistles and similarly of St. Mark’s gospel.

Another curious feature of this Sunday is found in the Prokimenon and Alleluia verses which are sung. One would expect one of the eight rotating resurrection tropes. Rather we hear thematically psalm verses honoring the Saints. This is a relic of the ancient practice of the Great Church of the Hagia Sophia to commemorate saints or groups of saints special to them (even before the introduction of the present use of thematic “Sundays of ...”) e.g. First Sunday in Lent: Prophets Moses, Aaron and Samuel; Second: St. Polycarp; Fourth: S. Dometios and Fifth: St. Zenobios.

As we know, it is not permitted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy during the weekdays of Great Lent. One of the reasons for a weekday Liturgy is to honor the martyrs on the day of their death (called their *nativity*, ‘birthday’ into eternal life.) being like a feast of the resurrection. Indeed, Canon 51 of the Council of Laodicea 345 AD states “*The nativities of Martyrs are not to be celebrated in Lent, but commemorations of the holy Martyrs are to be made on the Sabbaths and Lord’s days.*” And so it happened and it continues to happen today. Their memory is both a witness and an encouragement as we take up the ascetic struggle they so victoriously won.

A final distinctive and seemingly unusual feature can be found in the Orthros prayers of the First Canon which reflects upon the *parable of the prodigal son*. While we heard this gospel pericope a few Sundays ago, it plays a prominent theme for our contemplation today and throughout this week. [The second canon hymns St. Gregory Palamas.] Scholars avert to the fact that on this day in the Church of Jerusalem the parable of the prodigal son is read. Jerusalem, as the mother of all the Churches, historically exerted a definitive influence on the formation of the liturgical tradition of Byzantium, this theme remains dominant, even though “out-of-sequence.”

One might ask the question do all these things fit together? Indeed there is logic we can discover. In a word, they are multiple expressions of the mystery of our salvation (the how and the why we are saved) as first and properly shown forth in the Incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both God and man, His humanity is sacred because it is flesh of the Divine Person, the Word and Son of God. We honor the humanity of Christ with the same worship we give to His divinity. Indeed, the dignity of His humanity is so great because God the Father willed that our salvation be wrought through a real death on the Cross. The very body of Christ share in His Glory because of its unity in the person of His divinity and its victory over death upon the cross.

As it was with Christ, so it is with us. Our sanctification begins with the act of faith professed if we are initiated into Christ and His Church as adults or given to us in holy baptism if we are infants. We are no longer in bondage to the devil and slaves to sin. While we hold that mystery in earthen vessels (i.e. ourselves, the ‘body’ serves as the image of our ‘good works’) - fragile and earthly - we become temples of the Holy Spirit by divine grace so that we become truly righteous in word and in deed. By this we are made worthy to receive a reward for the good we do in the name of Christ: this is the glory of the saints. In other words, we become ‘holy as the Lord God is holy.’ This was the endeavor of both the Old and the New Covenant: the first, weakly and in shadow, and, the later, in truth and in power by the Holy Spirit.

God, indeed, loved the world. But love if it is true, it bestows or shares what is one’s own with another. God loves us by truly transforming us into something like Himself, like His Son, Jesus Christ – we always remain creatures but truly become lovable in ourselves (children of God and of the Light). We obtain this exalted state by the power of God (divine grace) and by our asceticism, our effort to love purely (through the holy Commandments).

All of the polemics and the urgency of St. Gregory was to defend this doctrine of Christian deification or salvation. This is the same teaching of Jesus highlighted in the dramatic cure of Paralytic: both body and soul are healed in the salve of God’s mercy (again, the ‘body’ here serves as a metaphor for our righteous/ good works). The example of the holy martyrs are the witness to the truth of the transforming grace and faith which comes through Jesus Christ, these witness- es to love Itself but the greatest act of love. The holy relics are residuals of the divine spirit which animated the souls of the Just: true temples - as saint Paul declares them to be – vessels of holiness, for God’s Spirit dwells in them. Like Christ’s own body won our salvation so with our bodies we work the same works of love.

In a word, this is the Christian life: the ascetic struggle of self-discipline by fasting, by love of neighbor through alms-giving and the love of God through prayer. And this process can only begin with we convert: turn our minds and hearts again to our heavenly Holy Father like the prodigal son.

† **Psalm 12** † **Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:4** † **Psalm 89** † **Gospel: Mark 2:1-12**

Sunday of the Holy Relics & Gregory Palamas

Today, like so many of the other Sundays of Great Lent, goes by so many different names, again showing forth how the Byzantine Tradition is a magnificent mosaic of cultural and religious traditions from around the Mediterranean and particularly the Levant, for which the Church of Antioch (Melkites) played a significant role.

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas. In 1368, a synodal decree established that in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, this Sunday be a commemoration of St. Gregory, which, in turn, spread throughout all the churches of the Byzantine world. The teaching of St. Gregory Palamas had been sanctioned by the Council of Blachernai, Constantinople, in 1351: the distinction in the Godhead between His essence and His energies; it is impossible to know God in his uncreated essence (i.e. God in himself), but possible to know God in his energies (i.e. to know what God does, and who he is in relation to the creation and to man), as God reveals Himself to us. This became the theological defense for the claim of the hesychastic monks that in their prayer it is possible to be granted to see the uncreated light of God with the help of repentance, spiritual discipline and contemplative prayer. As, St. Gregory asserted, the prophets of Old in fact had greater knowledge of God, because they had actually seen or heard God Himself. Moreover, when the holy Apostles Peter, James and John witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor, they were in fact seeing the uncreated light of God. Not that all of the Christian world (especially the West) holds to these theological distinctions as true and an accurate description; all do agree to the truth of a real transformation by divine grace into the likeness of God so that we might behold Him, ‘face to face.’

Following upon the decision of the holy synod in 1352, an augmented version of “Synodikon of Orthodoxy” to affirm the Palamite teaching and anathematizing its heretical opponents was read in the Churches [on the Sunday of Orthodoxy – First Sunday of Great Lent]. (‘Synodikon,’ being theological propositions of the Church’s teaching as articulated by an ecumenical council or synod in response to a heresy or movement which threatened the integrity of the Faith.) Thus it is was fitting to commemorate the great hesychast teacher on the Sunday following (i.e. 2nd Sunday of Lent). The importance here being that this teaching touches on the mystery of our sanctification unto salvation.

Sunday of the Holy Relics. On this day the church honors the holy relics with hymns, veneration and processions. Indeed, if one was able to hear the prayers of this day one would understand the Church’s teaching on relics. Relics of the greatest dignity are those “*instruments by which the human race was redeemed*” namely, the objects (nails, whips, crown of thorns) used during the passion of Christ, by Whom we are saved. [We have no ‘first class’ relics (today understood as the body, bones or flesh of the saints) of Jesus Christ, because He is alive and seats at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.] Second in dignity are the relics of the Holy Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, “*the refuge and protection of Christians*”, namely her mantle and cincture; for again she like her Son is in heaven body and soul. She bears this special privilege because “*time and nature are renewed in her.*” Finally the third precious relic is the head of the forerunner, John the Baptist, “*Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.*” (Luke 7:28)

The veneration of relics is a biblical truth, poetically expressed in that vision of John the Theologian recorded in the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) chapters 3– 8. For the glory of the saints are that they are enthroned in a glory *with* and of Christ (Apoc. 3: 19-22 & 4:3-4); under the altar of the lamb (J.C.) are “*the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne*” (Apoc. 6:9) as though pillars and a foundation; and “*(angel with golden censor) was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God.*” (Apoc. 8:3-4) Theologically speaking, we venerate the relics of Saints, “*for they were temples of the Holy Spirit*” paraphrasing St. Paul (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The body shares in the same holiness of the soul, which has and moves by spirit of God. We venerate them because they are “*alive with God, as judges in His kingdom*” for this is the very promise of Christ himself, “*that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Luke 22:30). Finally we venerate them because through them they have “*worked miracles for our salvation*”; for if God so honors His Saints – He only can work miracles – so then we ought to call upon them for help, as intercessors.

The Sunday of the Raising of the Paralytic. Our epistle and gospel were chosen centuries before the introduction of

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 27th

Divine Liturgy 4:15 p.m.

Sunday, February 28th

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 21st

Second Sunday of Lent

Religious Education after D. Liturgy

EVENTS IN MARCH

Sunday, March 21 st

Ladies’ Society St. Joseph Breakfast

Take out: \$8.00 adults

\$4.00 children

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

21 March 21 ✠ James Zaydon, Sr.
from Family

ST JOSEPH BREAKFAST SIGN-UP

in the back of the Church

2021 WEEKLY COLLECTION

February 21

Weekly Offering \$ 660.00

Monthly \$ 45.00

Candles \$ 25.00

Total: \$ 730.00

Thank you for your support!

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages.
Amen.

THE FAST OF GREAT LENT

† On weekdays of Great Lent, Monday through Friday, there are restrictions on both the number of meals taken daily and on the types of food permitted; but when a meal is permitted, there is no limitation to the quantity of food that may be eaten.

† On weekdays, fast is broken [the first meal of the day is taken] at/after the noon hour.

† Throughout Great Lent, the fast excludes the eating of meat and meat products, cheese, milk, butter, fish, olive oil, wine and alcoholic beverages.

† On the Feast of Palm Sunday the eating of fish is permitted.

† Olive oil, as well as wine, is permitted on various feastdays (consult the calendar), as well as on Saturdays and Sundays.

† While the above rules of fasting are to be encouraged, in all things the Christian is called to exercise moderation and charity. The elderly and those in poor health, especially, are urged to be prudent. If in doubt, speak with your spiritual father or confessor.

Made in His Image

Many people in the world believe in the one God. But so many of them find it impossible to imagine that God has become man in Jesus Christ. The very idea that God could come to earth and suffer all that we suffer in life is incomprehensible to them.

People who balk at the idea of the incarnation often believe in something which may seem more incredible yet. They embrace the teaching that “God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

How could human beings like us be in God’s image? We know ourselves and our weaknesses. Surely the author of Genesis knew human nature also. How could this author make such a claim? And how could the Spirit of God, who inspires the Scriptures, speak to us through these words?

Yet we know that all creation reflects something of God who is the Source of its being. It is God’s presence which upholds everything that is, so that in some way everything mirrors its Creator. The great forces of nature – the galaxies and planets, the mountains and oceans – suggest to many the power and majesty of God, “charged with the grandeur of God” in the words of poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. Others find the wisdom of God evident in the precise arrangement of even the tiniest organism or of the ecosystem. From ancient Greeks to 21st century scientists people have marveled at the “golden ratio” (1.618 or ϕ), which reflects an order underlying things as diverse as atoms, brainwaves, the graphic arts and music. People of all ages have seen this order as pointing to God who has brought together everything in an otherwise unrivalled precision. Yet in mankind there is something which mirrors God in a way that distinguishes us from the rest of creation.

While the rest of creation reflects God’s wisdom and power, mankind reflects God at the heart of His very being. God is love, we read in the New Testament, and we are the creature that can love and so reflect the love of God. To be human, then, is to be a lover in the image of the One who is love itself.

IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Seeing God as the Holy Trinity, Christians believe that the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is at the core of God’s very being. God is a communion of love and this communion is not closed in upon itself but is extended to embrace all creation. In a similar way relationship is at the heart of our being. We are made for communion with one another and most importantly for communion with our Creator, God. Not only are human beings created by God, but we are created in God and for Him. In the broadest sense we are made for worship.

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26)

These words introduce the story of our creation in the book of Genesis. Many Church Fathers, like St. Irenaeus, saw in them a distinction between what we already are and what we have the chance to become. From our creation in God’s image we have the innate ability to love. We can know what is good and choose to embrace it. As God’s love is extended freely to His creation, mankind in His image is given the freedom to extend our love or to withhold it.

To be created after God’s likeness means something more. It means that we were created with the fullest possibility of relating to God and to one another already in view. The fully developed human being would be one fully resembling the One who made us.

At mankind’s creation, St Irenaeus wrote, man was a child. Just as infants are born with the potential to develop into adults, mankind was created as a spiritual infant. That he was to develop

was clear; the certainty that he would mature fully was not.

WOUNDING THE LIKENESS

The book of Genesis teaches that the relationship of men and women with their Creator was quickly ruptured. Adam and Eve are tempted to become “like God” on their own, despite the warning that they “would surely die” if they did not follow the directions of their Maker. Striking out on their own, they showed a mistrust of God which altered their relationship forever. The image of God in humanity would remain; the likeness was so scarred that it became impossible for men and women to fulfill their potential as God intended. The only One who could perfectly realize human nature was the eternal image of the Father, His only-begotten Son: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, for by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible... All things were created through him and for Him... For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell” (Colossians 1:15-19).

And so the Word of God, the icon of the Father, would become human to completely fulfill human nature in Himself. As a Sufi poet once wrote, “When God wanted to see His face He sent Jesus to the world.” And because He had become one with us, the Son of God could restore the likeness of God in us as well. Created in God’s image, we could re-embark on the journey of fellowship with God in Christ, our “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Only the Lord Jesus truly reflects for us the love of God. But those who have put on Christ in baptism and who sustain their union with Him will be transformed into “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), sharers in His likeness. This transformation, which the Fathers called theosis (deification), is the goal of our life as Christians; but it is also the journey to that goal. What begins here is meant to be completed in the age to come.

RESTORING THE LIKENESS

Theosis as a process begins with baptism. We begin allowing the gift of our baptism to impact our life when we make a godly life the main goal of our existence. We try to keep the commandments, to observe the Lord’s precepts on prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and to live the life of the Church. Theosis will grow in us as we become more aware of God’s presence within us and in our life at every moment: an awareness cultivated perhaps by the Jesus Prayer. We discover the meaning of St Gregory of Sinai’s words: “Become what you are. Find Him who is already yours. Listen to Him who never ceases speaking to you. Own Him who already owns you.”

As we begin entrusting our entire life to Christ God, we may understand Christ’s words, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” (Matthew 5:48) in terms of what we do: “If I am accomplishing all this, I am becoming perfect in God’s sight.” A deeper sign that we are growing in the journey of theosis is when we seek to become more like Jesus the Servant. As St Paul urged, “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who – though he was in the form of God – did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness and found in human appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).

As Christ’s attitudes of humility, obedience and mutual service become more ingrained in us, we reflect ever more the life of God. Our love for others and for all creation grows as we reflect the mind of Christ in us. We become what we are: people who live by God’s divine life in us and partake in His divine nature.