

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

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

melkite.scranton@gmail.com ♣ www.melkitescranton.org
Contact office: 570.343.6092 † stjosephscranton@gmail.com

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: 7:00 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.

**SUNDAY OF
THE LAST JUDGEMENT
MEATFARE SUNDAY**

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

07 FEBRUARY 2021 ♦ TONE 03 EOTHINON 03 † SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT / MEATFARE SUNDAY

<u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 1</i>
<u>ANTIPHONS:</u>	
FIRST:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 11</i>
SECOND:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 11</i>
THIRD: <i>Beatitudes</i>	<i>Back of Liturgy Book</i>
<u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u> <i>Resurrection</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 15</i>
<u>APOLYTIKIA:</u>	
<i>Resurrection (Tone 3)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 17</i>
<i>Meeting the Temple</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 136</i>
<i>Meeting the Temple</i>	<i>Tone 4</i>
O God of our Fathers, who always deal with us according to Your Compassion, do not remove Your mercy from us; but through their intercession, direct our lives in peace.	
<i>Saint Joseph</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p 20</i>
<u>KONDAKION:</u> <i>Meatfare</i>	<i>Handout</i>
<u>TRISAGION:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 23</i>
<u>PROKIMENON:</u> <i>Psalms 117:14,18</i>	<i>(Tone 3)</i>

Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our God sing praise!
Stichon: All you people call your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness.

EPISTLE: *1 Corinthians 8:8-13, 9:1-2*

Brethren, food does not commend us to God. For neither shall we gain any advantage if we eat, nor suffer any loss if we do not. And yet, beware lest perhaps this right of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if a man sees you who “have knowledge” sitting at table in a place dedicated to idols, will not his conscience, weak as it is, be emboldened to eat idol offerings? And through your “knowledge” the weak one will perish, the brother for whom Christ died. Now, when you sin in this way against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if food scandalizes my brother, I will never again eat any more meat so as not to scandalize my brother. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? And if to others I am not an apostle, yet to you I am. For you are the seal set upon my apostleship in the Lord.

ALLELUIA: *Psalms 19:1,9* *(Tone 3)*

May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble.
O Lord, save the king, and hear us when we call upon you.

.GOSPEL: *St. Matthew 25:31-46*

The Lord said, “At that time when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory; and before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the just will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you to drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?’ And answering, the King will say to them, ‘Amen I say to you, every time you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left hand, ‘Go away from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his ministers. For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Amen I say to you as long as you did not do it for one of these least ones, you did not do it for me.’ And these will go into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting life.”

St Paul’s response to the elitism of the Gnostic Christians was to encourage them to put the welfare of the weaker brethren ahead of their own. Yes, Paul said in effect, it’s ok to eat the food at pagan festivals, but it’s not ok to scandalize brethren who don’t understand how this could be. And the reason for this is that we are all members of the one body of Christ: “But beware that somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. And because of your knowledge, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ” (vs. 9-12).

St Paul would make this principle a cornerstone of his directions to the new churches he would organize. Not only should the intellectuals look out for the ordinary believer, those able to put their faith into practice should care for those who do not. As he told the Galatians, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, he deceives himself” (Gal 6:1-3). Not only the intellectual elite, but also the spiritually adept, need an antidote to pride: caring for those less proficient than themselves, rather than looking down upon them.

A Matter of Conscience St Paul characterizes those who may be scandalized at pagan banquets as having “a weak conscience” (v. 9). In every man there is an understanding of right and wrong. Conscience has been described as “man’s most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths” (Vatican Council II). Deep within himself man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself, but which he must obey. When a person does this, he is said to be “following his conscience.”

Christians should feel obligated to form their conscience in accordance with the word of God rather than the dictates of the culture in which they live or their personal sentiments. Developing such a Christian conscience is one aspect of the believer’s interior life. A person who ignores self-reflection remains weak and susceptible to every changing fad. When faced with a moral dilemma, he is unable to make his decision based on clear principles –biblical or otherwise –and usually does just what “everyone else” is doing. Like their first-century forebears, they have a weak conscience.

Food Offered to Idols Today A few years ago a group of Pentecostals in Australia mounted a campaign against Cadbury chocolates, claiming that the company was offering their candy to idols. Their “proof” was that the packages were imprinted with the halal insignia, evidence that the candy was offered to the “Muslim idol,” Allah. The insignia merely signified that there were no pork products or other prohibited substances in the candy (some cream fillings have gelatin stabilizers). As St Paul said, “... if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.”

We will may encounter groups in our multicultural societies today who actually offer food to idols. Hindus and hare Krishna devotees, for example, have the custom of prasadam (food transformed into the grace of God, as one writer expresses it). These would be vegetable offerings that are “acquired without pain or suffering on the part of any creature,” offered before an altar in a meditation rite, then mingled with other foods, once the god or goddess has had a chance to partake.

Could you accept such food in the spirit of friendship with which it was offered, without acknowledging the god or goddess to whom it was offered? What do you think St Paul would say?

How Will We Be Judged?

IN THE PAST ONE HUNDRED YEARS, meat consumption in the U.S. has risen dramatically. We now consume over 270 pounds per person per year. In contrast, a person in the countries of the former Roman Empire eats an average of from 167 pounds (Greece) to 49 (Syria) annually. What is a luxury in many parts of the world has become a necessity for many in our country.

In the Roman period, many ordinary people ate most of the meat they consumed at religious banquets. In both Judaism and the pagan religions, animals would be sacrificed to God (or a god) and the blood would be poured out as an offering to the divinity. Certain parts of the animal would be given to the priests and the rest returned to the person offering the sacrifice to be served in banquets to friends and neighbors.

This created the dilemma for the first Christians which St Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians. Should a Christian eat the meat that his neighbor had offered to Jupiter or any pagan divinity? Would doing so be an acknowledgement that there were many gods and goddesses, as the pagans claimed? Would they be “taking communion” with these gods?

St Paul presents two important principles in his response. First, he affirms that the idols which the pagans worshipped were nothing, and that the food offered to them was nothing special either. Christians would not sin by eating their fill. But there was a more important consideration: what would less-informed believers think if they saw their leaders eating at these festivals? They may be led to think that the pagan gods are real and that their faith in one God may be weakened. “Therefore,” Paul affirms, “if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat again, lest I make my brother stumble” (v. 13).

Ordinary Christians vs. Gnostics This controversy exposed a divide in the early Church between those educated in classical philosophy and ordinary believers. Some educated considered themselves to be “Gnostics,” these in the know, and sometimes looked down on the rest. St Paul had little sympathy for their attitudes and spoke with some derision, “For if anyone sees you who ‘have knowledge’ eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?” (v. 10)

St John Chrysostom spoke even more harshly: “Don’t tell me that such a man is only a shoemaker, another a dyer, another a brazier; but bear in mind that he is a believer and a brother. Whose disciples are we? –of fishermen, publicans and tentmakers! Are we not followers of Him who was brought up in the house of a carpenter; and who deigned to have the carpenter’s betrothed wife for a mother, and who was laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and who had nowhere to lay His head –of Him whose journeys were so long that His very journeying was enough to tire Him down; of Him who was supported by others?” (20th Homily on 1 Corinthians) Followers of an itinerant carpenter-preacher have no cause to look down on fellow believers because they do not know philosophy. By God’s grace, they know Christ.

Not a few groups of early gnostic Christians ended by devising their own belief systems, often denying that God was the source of the material creation, something they were too “spiritual to admit. One could rise above the material, some taught, by acquiring gnosis (superior knowledge) not obvious to the ordinary man. They found their salvation, not in their union with Christ, but in the acquisition of gnosis. Groups of Gnostics could be found in the East until the rise of Islam.

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 6th

Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy 4 p.m.

Sunday, February 7th

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Monday, February 1st – Sunday 7th

Meat fare Week:

Last week to eat meat products

Monday, February 8th – Sunday 14th

Cheese fare Week:

Last week to eat dairy products

Sunday February 14th

Ice cream Social after D. L.

Forgiveness Vespers 1:00 p.m.

Monday, February 15th

Beginning of Great Lent

Presanctified D. Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

EVENTS IN MARCH

Sunday, March 21 st

Ladies’ Society St. Joseph Breakfast

Take out: \$8.00 adults

2021 WEEKLY COLLECTION

January 31

Weekly Offering \$ 830.00

Monthly \$ 235.00

Candles \$ 25.00

Divine Liturgy \$ 5.00

Total: \$ 1,085.00

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.

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.

Come to Expel the Darkness

EASTERN CHRISTIANS LOVE TO THINK in terms of forty days. The Great Fast and its echo, the forty days between the feasts of the Transfiguration and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the churching of an infant forty days after birth and the memorial service forty-days after death are the most obvious examples. This pattern is ultimately drawn from the Scriptures where significant events are regularly placed in this time frame. In the Old Testament, the great flood lasted for 40 days and 40 nights (Gen7). Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights when he received the Ten Commandments (Ex24). In Deuteronomy 9 we read that Moses interceded on Israel's behalf for 40 days and 40 nights. The Israelite spies took 40 days to spy out Canaan (Num13). Goliath taunted Saul's army for 40 days before David arrived to slay him (1Sam17). When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights to Mt. Horeb (1Kings19). It was after a 40-day fast that the Tempter came to test Jesus (Mt 4: 1-11).

There is another 40-day period mentioned in the New Testament, and also observed in the life of our Church: the 40 days between Christ's nativity and the day when His parents brought Him to the temple, "to do for Him according to the custom of the Law" (Lk 2:27). While there the Lord encountered the elderly Simeon and Anna, who recognized God's decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah's coming. We celebrate this event on February 2 (the 40th day after Christmas) as the Hypapante, or Encounter, of the Messiah with His people, personified by Simeon and Anna.

What Did the Law Prescribe?

Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that a mother must be purified after 40 days. "She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over" (Lev 12:4). In Jewish law any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood –the carrier of life –makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways.

There was an additional prescription according to the Torah: **the redemption of the firstborn son**. "Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem" (Ex 13:13). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that everything comes from Him and is His. Children could be "redeemed" by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God's saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, "it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26). He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Canticle of Simeon: "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: alight to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Lk 2:29-32). We repeat this canticle at the end of every day (vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy as well as when any child is presented in church 40 days after its birth.

Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment "and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38).

This Encounter celebrated the coming of the One for whom the Jews longed, the Messiah, and recognized that the Gentiles too would be enlightened through Him.

Our Celebration of This Feast

As might be expected, this feast originated in Jerusalem where the event it remembers took place. It likely began in the era of St Constantine the Great who sponsored the development of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Sermons on this Feast by the bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407) have come down to us. Egeria, a Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, described what she saw: "The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honor, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter. All the priests, and after them the bishop, preach, always taking for their subject that part of the Gospel where Joseph and Mary brought the Lord into the Temple on the fortieth day, and Symeon and Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, saw him, treating of the words which they spoke when they saw the Lord, and of that offering which his parents made. When everything that is customary has been done in order, the sacrament is celebrated, and the dismissal takes place."

The feast soon spread to Antioch and then, to Constantinople and the whole empire. It became particularly important in the capital during the sixth century when a plague threatened the city. After a solemn procession on this feast, the plague ceased. When this feast was instituted, the birth of Christ and His baptism at the Jordan were observed on the same day, January 6. The Hypapante was kept 40 days later, on February 14. When a separate feast of the Nativity on December 25 became common, the Hypapante was moved accordingly.

Light to the Gentiles

In the Western Church candles are blessed on this feast and a candlelight procession held in honor of the "Light to enlighten the Gentiles." This practice actually began in Jerusalem, as Egeria attests. When the feast was instituted in Constantinople, the procession was introduced there as well. Today some Slavic Churches bless candles on this day, but the procession has disappeared from the Byzantine feast.

St Sophronios of Jerusalem (c. 636 AD) In honor of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light. Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the One who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of His eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ. The most-pure Virgin Theotokos carried the True Light in her arms and brought Him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the True Light as we hasten to meet Him. The Light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the Light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through Him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this Light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness.