

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

Melkite Greek-Catholic Church

130 ST. FRANCIS CABRINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

Contact office: 570.343.6092 † 570.468.4854
stjosephscranton@gmail.com ♣ www.melkitescranton.org

PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki. Sue Solsman. Sus. Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk. ✱Rev. Frank Milienewicz. ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charlotte & James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia Assaf. ✱Paul Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann & John Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Margt. Dillenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Jos. King. ✱Blakely Lاندell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱Frank Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L. Mooty. ✱Karen Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱Char. Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon

Clergy:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

Divine Services:

Tuesday :

Compline 0:00 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.; following any service; or by appointment.

Holy Anointing of the Sick:

Following services /call the Rectory.

Holy Mystery of Crowning:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

Victim Assistance Coordinator:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



Icon of the Holy Images

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

18 FEBRUARY 2024 ♦ TONE 05 EOTHINON 05 † FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT / SUNDAY OF ORTHODAY

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHNS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD:

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 5)

Triumphant of Orthodoxy

St. Joseph the Betrothed

KONDAKION: *Annunciation*

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 5)

EPISTLE:

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, denied he was a son of Pharaoh’s daughter — choosing to be afflicted with God’s people rather than to have the enjoyment of sin for a time, estimating the indignities suffered by Christ to be of greater value than the Egyptians’ treasures: for he was considering the reward. By faith he left Egypt not fearing the king’s wrath: for he persevered as if he were seeing the One who cannot be seen. By faith, he celebrated the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the one who destroyed the first-born might not touch these. By faith, they passed through the Red Sea, as through dry land — whereas the Egyptians attempting it were swallowed up. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after people had gone around them for seven days. By faith, Rahab the prostitute who had received the spies in peace did not perish with the unbelievers. And what more shall I say? For time will be too short to speak of Gideon, of Barac, of Samson, of Jephthe, of David and of Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained the fulfillment of promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle routed foreign armies. Women had their dead restored to them through resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to yield for their release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others again suffered mockery and blows, even chains and jailing. They were stoned, cut to pieces, put to the question, killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, distressed, afflicted (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes in the ground. And none of these, despite the positive witnessing of faith, received what was promised, for God had something better in store for us, so that they were not to reach their final perfection without us.

ALLELUIA:

(Tone 5)

Moses and Aaron were among his priests and Samuel among those who called upon his name.

They called upon the Lord, and he answered them; from the pillar of cloud he spoke to them.

GOSPEL:

St. John 1:43-51

At that time Jesus was about to leave for Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found the one of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth.” And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said of him, “Look, a true Israelite in whom there is no guile!” Nathanael said to him, “Where do you know me from?” Jesus answered him and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him and said, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are King of Israel.” Answering, Jesus said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, you believe. Greater things than these shall you see.” And he said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

HIRMOS:

KINONIKON:

POST- COMMUNION HYMN:

Lenten Supplement p. 17 / Liturgy Book p. 178

Liturgy Book p.83

Liturgy Book p. 89/p.90

Liturgy Book p. 17

Liturgy Book p. 29

Liturgy Book p. 32

Liturgy Book p. 36/ p.43

Liturgy Book p. 38

Liturgy Book p. 43

Lenten Supplement p. 1

Liturgy Book p. 47

Lenten Supplement p. 6

Liturgy Book p. 50

Liturgy Book p. 58

Hebrews 11:24-12:2

the adult catechumenate. At every Divine Liturgy and every Presanctified Liturgy there are the prayers for and the dismissal of catechumens. In some local Churches these prayers are a part of every Liturgy; in others they are omitted unless there are actual catechumens present. In addition, during the last weeks of the Great Fast, prayers for those preparing for baptism at Pascha are added.

In fact there has never been a time when there have not been catechumens in one or another of the Byzantine Churches. The expansion of Eastern Christianity into the Balkans and the Slav lands brought whole new peoples to the font. In the second millennium the eastward expansion of the Russian Church into Asia and ultimately Alaska did the same. More recently the Christian Churches in Africa – Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant – have grown enormously. With the end of Communism, as with the end of the Roman persecutions, many came forward for baptism in those nations as well.

In our country the presence of catechumens in a parish is a kind of litmus test about the life of the parish. Are there catechumens or not? Are the only catechumens we receive those who will marry into one of the parish families? If there are no catechumens is it because our parish is more club than church? Are we content with the absence of catechumens – and the absence of vocations – in the parish as long as things are done our way? If so our celebration of Pascha will be missing something critical. The catechumens – and perhaps the angels – will have gone elsewhere.

The mystery of our salvation was once announced by the divinely-inspired prophets. They foretold this illumination for us who have arrived at the last days. By it, we receive knowledge of God, the one God and Lord, glorified in Three Persons; and we serve Him alone. Having one faith and one baptism, we have put on Christ. Wherefore, we confess our salvation in word and in deed, and we restore our likeness to God.

Sticheron at Vespers

“YOU WILL SEE ANGELS”

WHILE THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK is read at all other Liturgies during the Fast today the Church turns to the Gospel of John. We hear in detail of the Lord’s first encounter with this future disciple, but again the purpose of reading it today is in the punch line, the last verse of the passage: *“Most assuredly I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”* (Jn 1:51). Again we have the promise of “something better” to be fulfilled in the future.

A number of Fathers including St John Chrysostom said that the descending and ascending of the angels promised here was fulfilled in the Paschal mystery. As the Blessed Theophylact, eleventh-century Archbishop of Ochrid in Bulgaria, emphasized in his Explanation of the Gospel of St. John *“All these things did, in fact, take place at His Crucifixion and Ascension. As the time of His Passion approached, an angel from heaven strengthened Him; at His Tomb there was an angel, and again at His Ascension, as Luke relates.”*

Whether we are catechumens preparing for baptism or faithful preparing for Pascha, we are told today that, with faith, we will see the inauguration of the new age, the fulfillment of all promises, and the manifestation of the Kingdom, in Christ.

Catechumens will be joined to the company of the saints when they will be enlightened, taste the heavenly gift and be partakers of the Holy Spirit (see Heb 6:4). All of us will see heaven opened in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the empty tomb and on Mount Olivet as we enter into the celebration of Pascha. And finally we will hear another promise from the angels at Christ’s Ascension: *“This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). Those forty days don’t seem so long now, do they?

Catechumens in the Church Today

In the early centuries of the Church in the Mediterranean world the catechumens received at Pascha were adults. During the persecutions they were people who had been attracted by the unwavering faith of the martyrs. After the persecutions were ended it was often the recognition by the state that gave people the impetus they needed to join the Church. When the Church was firmly established as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire, the baptism of infants began to outnumber the baptism of adults.

The Byzantine Liturgy retains a number of features from the period of

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday Evening, February 17

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 18

FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Procession: Bring your Icons

Saturday Evening, February 24

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 25

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY RELICS

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Evening, March 02

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

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 the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

LENTEN SERVICES

GREGORY GREAT ACADEMY:

Monday, Wednesday: **Presanctified:** 5:00 p.m.

Friday: **Presanctified:** 11:00 a.m.

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED:

Tuesday: **Presanctified:** 6:00 p.m.

Thursday: **Presanctified:** 7:00 p.m.

Friday: **Akathist Hymn:** 6:00 p.m.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

17 February: Joseph Viola

18 February: Russell & Kathleen Bateman✱
from M/M Zachary Bateman Family

TRADITIONAL 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 PERFECT WITH US”

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE IMAGE of the eight-ounce glass containing four ounces of liquid. Is it half full or half empty? The way we see it reveals more about the viewers than about the glass.

The Church numbers the Sundays during the Great Fast in successive order. Thus today is the First Sunday, next week will mark the Second Sunday and so on. For many people the Fast is an endurance test and so this numbering may suggest something like, “Oh God, only one week is over. There’s another five weeks to go!” A more positive way of looking at things might number the Sundays in count-down fashion: Sixth Sunday before Pascha... Fifth... Fourth... it’s getting closer... we’re almost there!

This system may be more in keeping with the vision expressed in the Scriptures read at this Sunday’s Liturgy. Scholars tell us that this selection comes to us from the days when catechumens were intensifying their preparation for baptism at Pascha. The readings suggest promise, blessing and the joy of being part of God’s plan at its most critical moment.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, read every Saturday and Sunday during the Fast, is addressed to Jewish believers in Christ. It includes a number of references to Jewish history and practice, some recorded in the Old Testament and others taken from Jewish tradition. The passage read today, from chapter 11, is actually the conclusion of a longer praise of Old Testament notables renowned for their faith, from Abel onward. It is faith that sanctified all these elders in Jewish history because “...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6). Catechumens, who would be asked to profess their faith during this season, are thus reminded to place their trust in the Person of God and in the wisdom of His divine plan for mankind.

The punch line of this chapter, however, is its last verse. Despite their faith, the heroes and heroines of the Old Testament “... *did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not have been made perfect apart from us.*” The entire course of God’s providential care for the Jewish peoples is depicted as a kind of preparation for something more. That “something better” is, of course, the life in Christ which the catechumens will receive at baptism and the assurance of eternal life which we all will receive as witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.

Who Are the Witnesses?

In chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Hebrews the witnesses held up are some of the great figures of the Old Testament. In the earlier part of this chapter the following heroes of the Israelites’ pre-history were cited: Abel (Gen 4), Enoch (Gen 5), Noah (Gen 6-9), Abraham and Sarah (Gen 11-25). These figures lived centuries before there was a Hebrew people, but they were all, according to their time, godly people, people of faith: “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*” (Heb 11:12, 13).

The “promises seen afar off” begin with the pledge of God’s favor made to Cain and

Abel, “*If you do well, will you not be accepted?*” and culminates in the assurance of the Promised Land which God gave to Abraham, “*To your descendants I will give this land*” (Gen 12:7). The list of witnesses continues with Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the descendants of Abraham, whose lives are recorded in Genesis 17-50. It was in the time of Joseph, the son of Jacob (also called Israel) that the clan of Abraham goes to Egypt. It would only be with Moses, the first witness in the passage we read today (Heb 11:24-1:2), that this clan, the Israelites, would return to the Promised Land.

In today’s passage the figures come from the Israelites’ Golden Age, beginning with the Exodus and continuing through the era of the judges: clan chiefs who held power after Moses from the fourteenth to the eleventh century BC. According to the Book of Judges Israel’s enemies defeated them whenever they ignored the precepts of the Law. God’s promise to the judges was that they would defeat Israel’s enemies and regain Israel’s freedom. The leaders mentioned in this passage thus defeated the Midianites (Gideon), the Canaanites (Barak), the Philistines (Samson) and the Ammonites (Jephthah).

The era of the judges was followed by the united kingdom of Israel (c. 1050-931 BC). The second king, David, and his mentor, the prophet Samuel are mentioned next. 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1 are devoted to the story of King David. God’s promise to David came by way of the prophet Nathan, as we read in 2 Sam 7:12-16. “*When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom ... And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.*”

The promise of a lasting kingdom did not happen in the years that followed. After the Golden Age the united kingdom was divided, invaded and conquered. The descendants of Abraham were exiled and scattered. Their lands fell to the conquering Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans in succession.

We are told that the cloud of Old Testament witnesses “*did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us*” (Heb 11:39, 40). The promised kingdom of David would not be ushered in until the Incarnation, and then it would be a kingdom “*not of this world*” (Jn 18:6). That “something better” would be the eternal life of union with God which the Old Testament saints only achieved in light of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Our icon of the resurrection depicts the perfecting of these Old Testament witnesses. It shows them being led out of Hades, grasping the hands of Christ, whom St Paul calls the first-born from among the dead. Thus the our ancestors would be fulfilled only in our day, the day of the Church.

The Lord Jesus, we are told, is “*the originator and perfecter of our faith*” (Heb 12:2). He is the Originator of our faith: the One who, creating us in the image and likeness of God, first offered us the eternal life of communion with Himself. And He is the Perfecter of our faith: the One who, when our ancestors strayed from the path of life, took on our humanity in order to unite us with Himself. And He is the Leader of believers along the narrow road of perfection, where He crosses with them from glory to glory, guiding them to the Father through their unity with Him.