

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. 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.

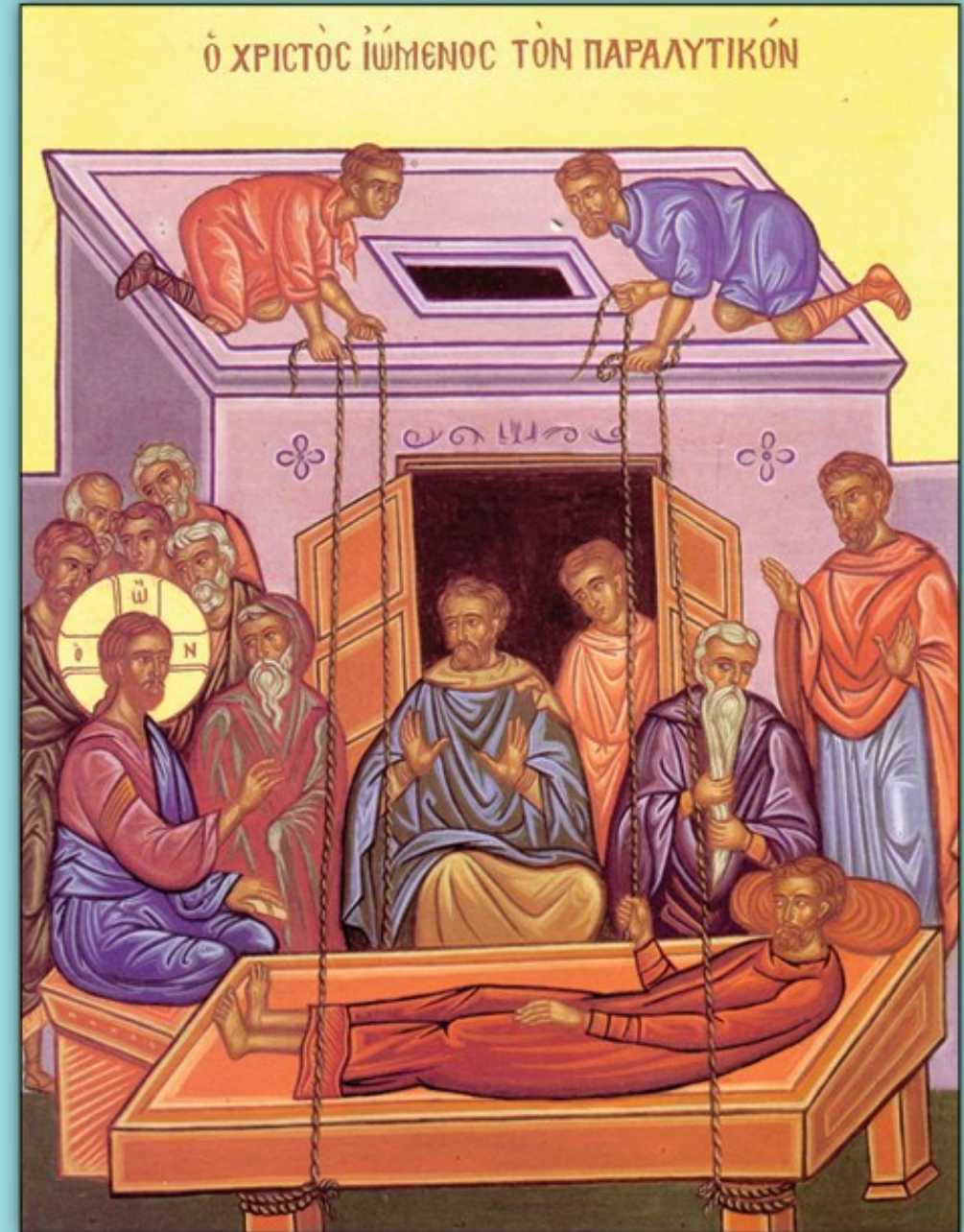
Holy Mystery of Crowning:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

Victim Assistance Coordinator:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS



Icon of Healing the Paralytic

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

18 FEBRUARY 2024 ♦ TONE 06 EOTHINON 06 † SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT / SUNDAY OF THE HOLY RELICS

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD:

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 6)

Holy Relics

St. Joseph the Betrothed

KONDAKION: *Annunciation*

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 5)

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 (Ps. 101: 26-28) 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” (Ps. 109: 1)? 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:

Your favor, O Lord, I will sing forever;
from generation to generation my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
For you have said, “My kindness is established forever.”
In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

GOSPEL:

At that time Jesus entered Capharnaum, and it was reported that he was at home. And immediately many gathered, 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:

KINONIKON:

POST- COMMUNION HYMN:

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. 44

Lenten Supplement p. 2

Liturgy Book p. 47

Lenten Supplement p. 6

Liturgy Book p. 50

Liturgy Book p. 58

Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-4

(Tone 6)

St. Mark 2:1-12

Lenten Supplement p. 17 / Liturgy Book p. 178

Liturgy Book p.83

Liturgy Book p. 89/p.90

incorrupt. They still lie in the Church of St Cecilia on the island of Trastevere in the Tiber, reputedly the site of her own home.

Sometimes these manifestations ceased once the Church took steps to glorify the saint. The body of St Charbel, the Lebanese hermit who died in 1898, was exhumed after a bright light was seen surrounding his grave for 45 nights after his burial. His body was found to be in perfect condition, although it was floating on mud in the rain-soaked grave. Examined again in 1927 and 1950, the body was found to be free of corruption. When he was beatified in 1965, the phenomenon was found to have ceased.

At other times, these signs would recur regularly over the years, perhaps on the saint’s feast. The tomb of St Nicholas of Myra, who died in 346, was said to emit a sweet smelling liquid with healing properties. With the Turkish seizure of Asia Minor in the eleventh century, the relics were taken to Bari and placed in a new marble tomb. The same phenomenon began to take place at this tomb and has continued to this day.

Healing through the relics of the saints is perhaps best illustrated in the case of St Nectarios of Aegina, a saintly hierarch who died of prostate cancer in an Athens charity hospital in 1920. In the next bed was a man who had been paralyzed for many years. As soon as the Metropolitan expired, a nurse and a nun who had cared for him began preparing his body for burial. They removed the old sweater he was wearing and placed it on the bed of the paralyzed man to get it out of the way. As they continued preparing the saint’s body, the paralyzed man began gaining strength and arose from his bed, healthy glorifying God who had healed him in this way, the first of countless healings attributed to the intercession of St Nectarios. The room where he died was filled with such a powerful fragrance that it could not be used for patients. It is now a shrine to the saint.

Relics in Our Church

Relics play an important role in our Church, because they point to one of the most basic beliefs mentioned in the Creed, the ultimate resurrection of all flesh in the age to come. Major relics, such as intact bodies, skulls or major body parts are often carried in procession for solemn veneration. Such relics, like noteworthy icons, are often sent from one local Church to another to increase people’s reverence for them and for what they represent. Thus, in 2017, relics of St Nicholas were sent from Bari in Italy to Moscow, with the blessing of Pope Francis. The relics remained in Russia for two months where over one million Orthodox Christians lined up to venerate them.

Many churches have fragments of relics from the bodies or garments of the saints. They may be encased in reliquaries or embedded in icons for veneration. Icons are also encased in the holy tables of consecrated churches, a reminder of the first centuries when the Liturgy was frequently served at martyrs’ graves. In the Byzantine Churches such relics are sewn into each antimension placed under the chalice and diskos during the Divine Liturgy. Thus, every Liturgy is served over the remains or belongings of a saint.

Reverence for relics, like our veneration of icons, is particularly timely during the Great Fast, as it reminds us of the divine life dwelling in those who truly live the Christian life. In the sanctified remains of the saints, we see that the state of deification which they attained during this life is prolonged in their bodies after death. The energy of their sanctification does not forsake the body after death; it remains, sometimes in a manifest way, in anticipation of the transfigured bodies of the saints in the life of the age to come.

“HEALING FROM MERE BONES”

WHEN THE AVERAGE AMERICAN sees a skull or skeleton displayed, it is probably Halloween. When the Eastern Christian sees a skull or other bones put forth for veneration in church, it is the deification of our nature that that comes to mind. It is particularly appropriate that we venerate the relics of the saints during the Great Fast, as the ultimate transformation of our nature, theosis, is the basis for what we do in the Fast. Created in God’s image, we are meant to reflect His divine goodness in us as in a mirror.

Because of the Fall, however, we need to be recreated in order for us to reflect God. When we strive to grow in prayer, fasting, almsgiving and other expressions of devotion, we express concretely our hope for the ultimate re-creation of our nature in Christ.

That re-creation begins at our baptism where we are ontologically united to God in Christ and become by adoption what Christ is by nature. To cherish and preserve this union takes the effort of what has been called “spiritual warfare” or “the ascetic struggle,” the effort on our part to live out in our daily lives what we have become in baptism.

In some of the saints, we see visible manifestations of the likeness of God which has developed in them. They display gifts of knowledge or discernment, their intercession may effect healings or preserve from danger. They become icons of the love of God on earth. The Church recognizes their holiness by glorifying them and making icons to suggest graphically their likeness to God.

Theosis Reflected in Holy Relics

Since the early days of the Church, Christians have celebrated the holiness of those who have gone before them by honoring their relics: their remains or objects associated with them during their lives. During times of persecution, Christians treasured these mementos secretly in their homes; when circumstances allowed, they erected shrines to house these relics and celebrate the memory of these saints whose lives reflected the divine presence within them.

Moderns, used to the highly sanitized treatment of death and burial in our day, might be shocked at the idea of kissing skulls and other body parts. Even in our churches, where the last kiss is a traditional part of the funeral service, we find people put off by the idea of kissing a dead body. In earlier periods, where death was not considered something to be hidden away behind cosmetics and canned music, such contact was a normal consequence of the relationship one has with deceased family or friends.

In that context, reverence for the physical remains of the martyrs and other saints may be considered an act of faith that the entire physical creation does have the potential for being transfigured and that the human body in particular participates in the restoration of humanity.

Incorrupt and Healing Remains

The bodies of some saints remain, at least for a time, without any of the usual signs of decay, even though they have not been chemically preserved in any way. Their bodies were so sanctified by divine grace during their lives that, even after death, they were preserved from decomposing. In many cases these relics would even exude myrrh or emit a sweet fragrance, physically witnessing to the saint’s holiness. As St John of Damascus attested, “The Lord Christ granted us the relics of the saints to be fountains of salvation for us, pouring forth manifold blessings and abounding in sweetly fragrant oil.”

The second-century martyr, St Cecilia, is perhaps the first to manifest this gift of incorruptibility. When her body was exhumed at the end of the sixteenth century, it was found to be

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

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.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 03

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Procession following

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

24 February: Joseph Viola

25 February: Joseph Viola

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: 7:00 p.m.**

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

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

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.

“WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS”

THERE ARE MANY DESCRIPTIVE TITLES ascribed to Christ in Scripture and the Tradition of the ancient Churches. He is portrayed as the Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, the Great High Priest, the Bread of life and so much more. Perhaps the most frequently heard of these depictions in Byzantine churches is the one which ends most liturgical services: “He is gracious and the Lover of mankind.”

Possibly the most important characteristic in Christ’s love for mankind is portrayed in St Mark’s description of the healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12). He assures the sick man, “*Son, your sins are forgiven you*” (v. 5). The reaction of the scribes was unspoken but clear: “*Why does this man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?*” (v. 7).

Feeding the hungry, helping the downtrodden are acts of love which anyone can perform, believer or unbeliever. God, however, has the monopoly on forgiving sins! That Christ proclaims the forgiveness of sins seems to equate Him with God, which the Jewish leaders saw as blasphemy.

Not only does Christ proclaim the forgiveness of sin: He does so by His word alone! In Jewish practice one had to submit to some sort of ritual in order to convey the need to be cleansed of sin. Before the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, the Jews had a complex system of sacrifices expressing repentance and atonement for anything which they saw as rendering them unfit to stand in worship before the Lord. Depending on their status or ability, people would offer unblemished animals or birds to be killed and burned upon the altar, at least in part, their blood sprinkled before the holy place as a plea for mercy. On the annual Day of Atonement a bull and a goat would be sacrificed by the High Priest for his sins and the offences of the entire nation.

John the Forerunner also practiced a rite to express repentance. As he described it, “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance*” (Mt 3:11). Christ stands in stark contrast to the priests and prophets of Israel: by His word alone He forgives sin. Nothing is needed other than faith in Him!

With His Own Blood

The forgiveness which Christ accorded to the paralytic, to the sinful woman who wept at His feet (see Lk 7:36-50) and to others during His earthy ministry is made available to the whole world by His death and resurrection. Throughout the New Testament we see the imagery of the temple sacrifices used to explain Christ as the One who forgives. St John the Forerunner proclaims Him to his own followers as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). St Paul calls Christ’s death “propitiation by His blood” (Rom 3:25). “*We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,*” Paul teaches (Rom 5:10). God, Paul tells us, “*... made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor 5:21).

The most developed expression of Christ as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There, after a lengthy description of the temple and its priesthood, we read, “*Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having attained eternal redemption*” (Heb 9:11-12). He is both the High Priest and the sacrifice who, once for all, restores mankind as fitting priests of God on earth.

Forgiveness in the Body of Christ

When the disciples marveled at the healings and miracles wrought by Christ during His earthly ministry, He promised them, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father*” (Jn 14:12). Among other things, Christ has empowered the Church as His Body to continue proclaiming the remission of sins in His name. This ministry is exercised in a number of expressions by which we can experience God’s forgiveness in our life. To the degree that we enter into them we will find our lives centering on God to a greater degree. In our Tradition the following are emphasized:

Daily Prayer for Repentance, particularly the Jesus Prayer – The morning and evening prayers prescribed by the Church include prayers of repentance. The most basic of these is the Jesus Prayer: “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.*” God surely hears these prayers when offered from a contrite heart.

Regular Self-Reflection – Periodic, even daily, self-examination helps us to see the direction of our lives. Our entire existence should be lived in the light of the Holy Spirit. Honest self-examination helps us see the degree in which our lives are conformed to Christ’s.

A Relationship with a Confessor/Spiritual Father – Each person is in a different place in his or her journey. We may on occasion find thoughts in the Scriptures or the Fathers that touch our hearts but finding someone who knows you and knows the ways of Holy Tradition is like taking a giant step in the Christian life. The fullest dimension of spiritual guidance involves sharing our thoughts and yearnings, not just our sins, with this spiritual guide. **The Eucharist and the Remission of Sins** – Several times during the Divine Liturgy we are reminded that the Eucharist is given to us “for the remission of sins.” To receive this gift we must approach “*discerning the Body,*” as St Paul says: sensing the depth of this Mystery and our unworthiness to take part in it. And so before receiving we say the prayer “I believe, Lord, and profess” specifically asking for the pardon of our offences – the deliberate and the indeliberate, whether committed knowingly or inadvertently – so that we may receive the remission of sins and eternal life in this mystery.

Observing the Church’s Fasts – The Fasts are another liturgical expression of repentance. Rearranging our lives in obedience to the Church’s weekly and seasonal fasts is a most practical way of affirming our commitment to life in Christ, a daily reminder that “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Mt 4:4).

The Mystery of Confession – This is the sacramental expression of repentance. This mystery appears in Christian history when people first realized that they had reneged on their baptismal commitment in a serious way. Confession was thus considered a “second baptism,” a starting over in the Christian life. Over the centuries it became more widely used and is considered appropriate today whenever a person feels the need for it, particularly:

- When a serious sin has been committed;
- When a habitual sin has overwhelmed the Christian;
- When a Christian has stopped growing spiritually and needs a reorientation of priorities.

Forgive Others to be Forgiven

Perhaps the most difficult part of seeking forgiveness is the one mandated by the Lord: “*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses*” (Mk 11:25). God’s forgiveness is for all; but it is only possible to those who forgive others in turn.