

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH  
130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI 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

## MEATEARE SUNDAY -- JUDGMENT SUNDAY



*Icon of the Last Judgment*

# DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

02 FEBRUARY 2024 ♦ TONE 03 EOTHINON 03 † SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT / WEEK OF ABSTINENCE

## GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS: *Encounter of the Lord /Presentation of the Lord*

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD:

## ENTRANCE HYMN:

## APOLYTIKIA:

*Resurrection (Tone 3)*

*Encounter of the Lord*

*St. Joseph the Betrothed*

KONDAKION: *Prodigal Son /Encounter of the Lord*

## TRISAGION:

## PROKIMENON:

(Tone 2)

## EPISTLE:

*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:

(Tone 3)

The lord shall hear you on the day of distress; the name of the God of Jacob shall defend you.

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

## GOSPEL:

*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.”

HIRMOS: *Encounter of the Lord*

## KINONIKON:

## POST- COMMUNION HYMN:

*Liturgy Book p. 17*

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

*Liturgy Book p. 32*

*Liturgy Book p. 36/p.41*

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

*Liturgy Book p. 41*

*Liturgy Book p. 162*

*Liturgy Book p. 47*

*handout/Liturgy Book p. 163*

*Liturgy Book p. 50*

*Liturgy Book p. 54*

*1 Corinthians 8:8-13 & 9:1-2*

*Liturgy Book p. 59*

*St. Matthew 25:31-46*

*Liturgy Book p.164/p.77*

*Liturgy Book p.165/p.83*

*Liturgy Book p. 89/p.90*

## 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, the Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, wrote about witnessing this feast: “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 Simeon 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 Constantinople in 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 (as the Armenian Church still does today). The Hypapante was then kept on February 14. When the 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 this feast in the Byzantine Churches.

## From a Homily of Sophronios, Patriarch 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 Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, 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 Day-spring 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.*



# FEBRUARY 02: FEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER OF THE LORD

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE DOWN your Christmas tree? In our society some people throw theirs out on December 26! In the Christian East, however, many wait until today, the feast of the Infant Christ's Encounter (*Hypapante*) with His people in the persons of Simeon and Anna. This feast celebrates the event recorded in St Luke's Gospel: "*Now when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*" (Lk 2:22). While there they meet Simeon and Anna who recognize God's decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah's coming.

The passage brings several questions to mind:

### 1 –What is “her purification”?

Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that a **mother must be purified** after 40 days. According to the Torah, "*The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: “A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over”’*" (Lev 12:1-4).

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.

### 2 – Why is a child “presented to the Lord”?

Again according to the Torah, "*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 it 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. 3 – Why do we stress “the Encounter”?

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: a light 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 forty 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.

# SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday Evening, February 03

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 04

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT:

MEATARE SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Last week for Eating Dairy Products

Saturday Evening, February 10

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 11

SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS:

CHEESE FARE SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Potluck Brunch - Ice cream Social

Sunday Afternoon, February 11

FORGIVENESS VESPERS: 1:30 p.m.

Beginning of the Great Lent

Monday Evening, February 12

Pre-sanctified Liturgy: 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday Evening, February 13

Pre-sanctified Liturgy: 5:00 p.m.

Thursday Evening, February 15

Pre-sanctified Liturgy: 5:00 p.m.

Friday Evening, February 16

Akathist Hymn: 5:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 18

FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

## 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.

## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

- 03 February: Lois Cianci  
04 February: Paul & Kathleen Schiller  
from M/M Daniel Schiller Family  
10 February: Joanna Simon  
11 February: Russell & Kathleen Bateman  
from M/M Daniel Schiller Family  
17 February:  
18 February: Russell & Kathleen Bateman✕  
from M/M Zachary Bateman Family

## 2023 WEEKLY COLLECTION

January 28

Weekly Offering:	\$ 740.00
Monthly:	\$ 60.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 825.00

# FASTING FROM MEAT

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 (Greece), to 49 (Syria) pounds 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 would be given to the priests and the rest returned to the person offering the sacrifice to be served in a banquet to friends and neighbors.

This created the dilemma for the first Christians which St. Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians. Should a believer eat the meat that his neighbor had offered to Jupiter or any pagan divinity? Would that 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, so 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 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. The educated considered themselves to be “Gnostics,” those 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 tent-makers! 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 by acquiring gnosis (superior knowledge) not obvious to the ordinary man. They found their salvation, not in union with Christ but in the acquisition of gnosis. Groups of Gnostics could be found in the East until the

rise of Islam.

St Paul’s response to the elitism of the Gnostic Christians was to urge them to put the welfare of the weaker brethren ahead of their own. Yes, Paul said in effect, it’s ok to eat 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 lest 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, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*” (Gal. 6 1-3). Not only the intellectual elite but 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 obliged 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 just does what “everyone else” is doing. Like their first century forebears, they have a weak conscience.

## Food Offered to Idols Today?

Recently a group of Pentecostals in Australia mounted a campaign against Cadbury chocolates, claiming that the company was offering the candy to idols. Their “proof” was that packages were imprinted with the *Halal* insignia, evidence that the candy was offered to the “Muslim idol,” Allah! The insignia actually signified that there were no pork products 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 well may encounter groups in our multicultural societies today who 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 and 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 love with which it was offered without acknowledging the god or goddess to whom it was offered? What do you think St Paul would say?