

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.: Mich. Abda. Jos. Bartnicki. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Lois Cianci. James Kane. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Charl. & Joe Prezgia. Johanna Simon. 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. Jos. Daratony. ✧Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Dn. John Karam.✧ Marie Abda.✧Charl. & James Abda.✧Marie Abda.✧Nancy Abda. ✧Janice Assaf.✧Thalia Assaf.✧Joe & Marie Barron.✧Paul & Mary Ann Bauman.✧A.J. Bolus. ✧Veronica Bolus.✧Jos. Bolus.✧Gary Bolus.✧Natey Cheffers.✧Nich. Cianci.✧Patricia Cimacosky.✧Ann & John Coury.✧Mary Sue Betress.✧Cecilia Davidson.✧Joe. & Margt. Dillenburg.✧Eric Jolly.✧Joe King.✧Blakely Landell.✧ 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.

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline0:00 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

MEATFARE SUNDAY



Icon of the Last Judgment

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

23 FEBRUARY 2025 ♦ TONE 07 EOTHINON 07 † SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUSDGEMENT ♦ MEATFARE SUNDAY

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

BEATTITUDES:

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 7)

Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Glory to the Father....

KONDAKION: Meatfare

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 8)

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:

KINONKON:

COMMUNION HYMN:

POST- COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 17

Liturgy Book p. 29

Liturgy Book p. 32

Liturgy Book p. 125

Liturgy Book p. 38

Liturgy Book p. 45

Liturgy Book p. 101

Handout

Liturgy Book p. 50

Liturgy Book p. 55

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

Liturgy Book p. 59

St. Matthew 25:31-46

Liturgy Book p.77

Liturgy Book p. 83

Liturgy Book p. 87

Liturgy Book p. 87

us, He will remain uncontaminated in His own nature” (Homily 14). The God rejected by many is one “contaminated” because of our actions. If anything we should pray for those who have rejected Christ as well as for those who have never known Him.

The Parable and Us

If feeding the hungry is so important that it saves people who never knew Christ, what can it do for us? Among other things, it can help free us from the grip of materialism so prevalent in our consumer society today. We “must” have the latest, the fastest, the most attractive – otherwise we have somehow failed. If nothing else, feeding others takes us out of ourselves and connects us with others in a very basic way. And, according to the Gospel, it joins us to Christ Himself.

The life of Christians who take this parable seriously is very different from that of those who are in the thrall of greed. Recently a New Orleans couple was thinking of adopting a disabled newborn. They told a local reporter, that the “reasons against” column was the longer; the “reasons for” were shorter. But it was topped, Royanne said, by the scriptural injunction in Matthew 25: “*Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.*”

Catherine Doherty, the late founder of the Madonna House communities was raised in Russia before the Communist takeover. She describes how this parable was lived in her home:

“My father was in the diplomatic service, so he entertained all the diplomatic corps at our home in Petrograd one evening. Big deal: tea and wonderful trays of cakes, and 250 people. Suddenly the butler opened the door and said, ‘Christ at the door, sir.’ Well, the French ambassador’s wife dropped her cup; she had never heard anything like that. “My father and mother excused themselves from the 250 VIPs and walked into the next room. There they found a wino at the door. My father bowed low to him and opened the door. My mother set the table with the best linen and served him herself with my father’s help.”

Catherine herself was about nine at the time and recalls asking, “Mommy, can I serve the gentleman?” Her mother replied, No, you were disobedient last week; you can’t serve Christ when you are disobedient.”

“Now that’s my background,” Catherine wrote in her autobiography. “That’s how we were taught.”

Acting in the spirit of this parable need not be so courageous. In his 57th homily on Matthew St John Chrysostom notes that we are not asked for much. “*Mark how easy are His injunctions. He did not say, ‘I was in prison, and you set me free; I was sick, and you raised me up again;’ but, ‘you visited me,’ and, ‘ye came unto me.’*” Making sandwiches for a homeless shelter or delivering meals to an elderly neighbor are not monumental or heroic actions, but they can number us among the blessed if done in the spirit of Christ.

Almsgiving along with prayer and fasting in a spirit of repentance are the mileposts on our Lenten journey to Pascha. The spirit in which we fulfill them shows us how close we are to living the life of Christ in our world... or how far.

THE SON OF MAN WILL COME

“I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE; no one comes to the Father, except through me” (John 14:6). The incarnate Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only one through whom we have access to God, to live the divine life in this world and in the age to come. Many Christians take this to mean that, unless one is explicitly a believer in Christ, he cannot be saved. What, then, of those who have never heard of Christ? What is to become of them?

The Lord gives us the answer in His parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46). Here, we are told, that when the Son of Man comes in his glory “*all the nations will be gathered before Him*” (v.32). “The nations” here translates the Greek term *ta ethnē*, which in the Scriptures generally refers to the Gentiles, those who are not Jews. Jesus’ hearers would know that those being judged here are the Gentiles, the mass of peoples who were not believers in the God of Israel. The Lord’s teaching about true believers is recorded in Jn 5:24: “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*” Those who have put on Christ and live in communion with God through Him already share in the divine life. Those who maintain their union with Christ will continue in that life after death.

In Matthew’s parable Jesus is speaking about the judgment of nonbelievers. People are separated, some on the right and others on the left. Those on the right are described as righteous because they fed, clothed or welcomed Christ; those on the left are condemned because they did not. Neither group recognized Him, but those on the right simply did to the least what they thought was right. And for this they were proclaimed as “*blessed of my Father*” (v. 34).

In light of this parable the Church’s teaching has been that those who do not know Christ yet follow their conscience in doing good to their fellow-man are blessed. As the Fathers of Vatican II declared, “*For they who without their own fault do not know of the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but yet seek God with sincere heart, and try, under the influence of grace, to carry out His will in practice, known to them through the dictate of conscience, can attain eternal salvation*” (Lumen gentium #16).

People who seek to close heaven to nonbelievers often quote the risen Jesus’ words on sending forth the apostles: “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” (Mark 16:16). Those who hear the gospel preached to them have the opportunity to accept or reject it.

What about those who have rejected a distorted image of God, perhaps gained second-hand from a negative experience in the Church? Are they truly rejecting Christ? Today there are many baptized who have lost their faith. Some have even requested that their names be removed from the baptismal register, “the Book of Life” (Byzantine baptismal rite). Are they condemned?

Whatever their fate on the last day, it is not for us to condemn them! We may the reason they lost their faith! The anonymous author of the fifth-century Incomplete Commentary on Matthew writes, “*Just as someone who is wearing splendid clothing avoids every filthy object lest it by chance get dirty, so everyone who receives God in his heart and spirit ought to be careful so that he does not contaminate God, knowing that if God has been contaminated among*

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday Afternoon, February 22

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 23

SUNDAY OF LAST JUDGEMENT:

MEAT-FARE

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

CHEESE-FARE WEEK

Orthodox Lenten Fast:

last week for eating dairy products

EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Afternoon, March 01

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 02

SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS:

CHEESE-FARE

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

40th Day Memorial:

Marie Shehadi Barron

Religious Education: Church Hall

Potluck Brunch

Sunday Afternoon, March 02

Ice Cream Social: 1:00 p.m.

Forgiveness Vespers: 1:30 p.m.

Monday, March 03

GREAT LENT BEGINS

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

- 22 February: Marie Barron✱
from M/M Kenneth Woznicki
- 23 February: Marie Barron✱
from M/M Timothy Miyashiro
- 01 March: Marie Barron✱
from M/M Timothy Miyashiro
- 02 March: Marie Barron✱
from M/M John Echan
- 08 March: Aziz Simon✱
from M/M Hall
- 09 March: Aziz Simon✱
from M/M Hall
- 15 March: Aziz Simon✱
from M/M Hall

MEATFARE SUNDAY

SAY GOOD-BYE TO MEAT. In the fasting practice common to all Byzantine Churches Meatfare Sunday is the last day on which meat would be eaten until Pascha. This is the first step towards the fuller discipline of the Great Fast when dairy products would not be eaten as well. This is why next Sunday is called Cheesefare Sunday (good-bye to dairy products).

For the third week in a row the Church, through its selection of the Scriptures read at the Divine Liturgy, warns us against a false subjectivism or individualism in the coming Fast. First, in the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, we were warned to avoid self-righteous judging of others. In the story of the Prodigal Son we were confronted by the elder brother, whose faithfulness to his father was marred by his refusal to imitate the father's forgiving heart. We are faced with an attitude which, although the opposite in spirit to the view of the elder brother, has the same effect: casting a pall over others' attempts at repentance.

Why is meat targeted in the Fast? Certainly in most places meat is a special festive dish. We think of the fatted calf which the father ordered slain to welcome his prodigal son back home. In some disciplines other festive items like wine and oil are avoided as well. As Christ said when pressed by the Pharisees about His disciples' behavior, *"Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast"* (Mt 9:15).

In many cultures to this very day meat is a luxury. Numerous people regularly get their protein from beans or pulses, not meat. It's too expensive. One of the reasons why American fast food has become so popular throughout the world is that it makes meat affordable to more people than ever before.

There is another reason why we avoid meat on fast days. During the Lenten season we seek to focus on restoring the likeness to God within us, to stress the quality bestowed on us at the beginning and lost at the fall. During the Fast we seek to return to the Garden of Eden, as it were, to return to Paradise, and no one ate meat in the Garden.

According to the Book of Genesis, *"God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food'; and it was so"* (Gen 1:29-30). We were all vegetarians in Eden. By avoiding meat we are symbolizing our desire to return to Eden, to recover our nature as God meant it to be.

The Book of Genesis paints a picture of human history in a downward spiral to the time of Noah and the flood. According to Genesis, after that catastrophe, God began restoring humanity on the earth. Part of that restoration included the addition of meat to our diet. God said to Noah, *"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as [I gave] the green herbs"* (Gen 9:15). Our fasting from meat, then, is not to avoid something bad but to express our desire for something better. In this kind of fasting we glorify God in the body by limiting ourselves to what has been called the "food of paradise." In this way we are saying that we value above all things the communion with God that our first parents had.

As the Jewish people developed, the meat of certain animals, fish and other sea creatures was considered as "unclean," unfit for God's Chosen People. This served in part to stress their particular relationship to God and distinguish them from others. In the New Testament we see that this distinction is abolished; there would be no separation between Jews and Gentiles and no unclean foods. This is expressed in the Acts of the Apostles which records St. Peter's vision of a sheet lowered from the heavens containing all kinds of animals. Peter was told to eat but he refuses on the ground that these animals were unclean. Then a voice from heaven told him, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common"* (Gen 10:15). Gentiles and all foods were acceptable to the Creator and were to be received by the followers of Christ.

Food Offered to Idols (1 Corinthians 8:8 – 9:2)

One of the issues facing the early Church was the question of food offered to idols, as described in the Epistles of St Paul. As the Church moved into Europe it encountered groups that observed religious meals in which food offered to deities, or even the spirits of the dead, was consumed. Consuming the sacrifice was an important part of the ritual and people would invite their relatives and friends to these meals, particularly when a large animal had been sacrificed. St Paul's converts might have been frequent guests at such meals before their baptism.

Strictly speaking, sharing in such a meal might be a sign that the participants believed in these pagan gods, which would have been unthinkable for a Christian. Eating sacrificed meat at an idol feast was equivalent to practicing idolatry and therefore could never be condoned. In Acts 15 we read how the apostles explicitly determined that Gentile converts to Christ were to *"abstain from things polluted by idols"* (v. 20).

St Paul went further and declared, *"... the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons"* (1 Cor 8:20). Some believers were scandalized to see other Christians sharing in these meals. Paul begins his response to this question by saying, *"Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge"* (1 Cor 8:1) By this he meant that we know that this means nothing because idols are nothing: *"We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one"* (v.4). In essence, then, eating this food didn't matter because all the idols in the world couldn't make food anything other than God's creation.

There was another side to the question which Paul finds even more important. Some new believers didn't understand this principle and so were shocked to see other – presumably more mature – Christians eating food sacrificed to an idol as though the idol must be real after all. So Paul recasts the question: it's not about eating food but about the effect on new believers. *"Knowledge puffs up,"* he writes, *"but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. ... for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled"* (v. 1-2,7). So don't eat, not because of the idols, but because harming the faith of the weak is more unchristian than eating this food.

As he became more acquainted with pagan practices in Asia Minor, St Paul came to make a distinction. He found that not all food sacrificed to idols was consumed in idolatrous feasts. Some was given to the poor, some was given back to the donors, and some was even sold in the marketplace. As a result, eating food offered to idols but not in an explicitly idolatrous feast was not itself idolatrous; it was the inevitable consequence of living in a pagan world.