

September 13, 2020

Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The Feast of the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na V'iki!

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., SEPT. 13

SUNDAY before the EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS

The Feast of the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem

8:30 A.M.

DIVINE LITURGY

+ Carole Panella, requested by Prudy Peya

(At St. Mary: Monday, September 14, 6:00 P.M. Divine Liturgy for Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

SUN., SEPT. 20

SUNDAY after the EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS

8:30 A.M.

DIVINE LITURGY

+ Margaret Klacik, requested by Erik Fetkovich

Are You a Sheep or a Goat?

Many of the more careless sort, using the loving kindness of God towards men to increase the magnitude of their sins and the excess of their disregard, speak in this way saying: "There is no hell, no future punishment. God forgives all our sins...." But let us remember that there are two advents of Christ, one past, the other still to come. The first was not to judge us but to pardon us. The second will not be to pardon us but to judge us. It is of the first that He says: "I have not come to judge the world but to save the world." But of the second He says: "When the Son shall come in the glory of His father, He will set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left." (Mt 25:31) And the sheep will go into life and the goats into eternal punishment. *(St. John Chrysostom)*

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

None for the week

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Natalie Jugan-Diaz, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Josephine Maruhnich, Mary Salamon, John Simunick, Bonnie Taylor

Hunter's Care Home (1916 Main St, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Mary Poiarkoff

West Hills Health & Rehab Center (951 Brodhead Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108) – Alice Haber

Epistle Readers –Sept. 13: Reagan Cody – Sept. 20: Louisa Hersh

Ushers – Sept. 13: R. Dzumba/F. Hersh – Sept. 20: R. Mudron/J. Yurosky

Troica Holders – Sept. 13: R. Mudron – Sept. 20: R. Dzumba



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

September 13 - 19, 2020

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Joseph Klacik

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

JoAnn & Francis Hersh family



Your regular attendance and sacrificial offerings benefit the overall welfare of our Parish



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel:

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

September ECF Reflection

The Tree of Life & the Holy Eucharist: By Fr. Hezekias Carnazzo

What does the Bible teach regarding the Holy Eucharist? Why is it that Jesus teaches us that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood in order to have eternal life?

In order to understand our Lord's words in the Gospel of John, that we must "eat [his] flesh and drink [his] blood," it is necessary that we reflect on the plan of God in the beginning, the plan of God for man as he placed him in the Garden of Eden (Jn. 6:53). What was this plan? Recall, that God planted two trees in the midst of the Garden, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life (cf. Gen 2:9). God instructed Adam and Eve not eat from the Tree of Knowledge, for in the day that they ate of it, God warned, they would surely die (cf. Gen 2:17), but of the Tree of Life, man could freely eat, and through eating of it, man would receive "eternal life," that is, the life of God (cf. Gen. 2:16, 3:22).

It was God's plan to share his own life with his creation, and in the Tree of Life, God offered to man a communication, a participation, in the fullness of divinity. It was God's plan in the Garden of Eden for man to eat the Life of God by way of a created material tree. But Adam and Eve traded life for death and forsook the great gift of the Tree of Life. They ate from the Tree of Knowledge in disobedience to God's command and discovered, to their misery, the curse of death. The Sacred Scriptures tell us that man was cast forth from the Garden of Eden for one reason, "lest he put forth his hand and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and **live forever**" (Gen 3: 22).

Saint Ephrem the Syrian explains, 'If man had eaten from the tree of life in the state of fallen human nature, it would have made that state eternal, and man would have lived eternally in death, separated from his God.' Thus, God in his mercy separated man from his source of salvation, the Tree of Life, because what was made good for man had, through disobedience, become his downfall. But God does not change, and thus his plan remains for mankind to share in his own eternal life, through the tree of life.

In the fullness of time, God sent his only Son to save the world and restore man to his original state. It is to be expected, therefore, that we find on the lips of the One who was sent to reverse the curse of the Fall the words of our salvation 'eat, and you will live forever' (cf. Jn 6:48-59). On the mountain of Calvary, God devised a way to replant the Tree of Life and hanging upon that tree, the tree of the cross, we behold the fruit of our salvation, the flesh of the Son of God. In the Orthodox Catholic Church, the "Tree of Life" is planted in the midst of the Garden of the Faithful and each Divine Liturgy the people of God eat from this tree for their eternal salvation.

Let us approach with fear of God, with faith and with love and come to the Giver the Life and receive the fruit of the Tree of Life and eat our salvation in the Garden of the Most High.

A Note from Fr. Geoff

This Sunday is the Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This year it also happens to be the day before Holy Cross, which is celebrated in our church as the Commemoration of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem.

This Church, also known as the "Church of the Holy Sepulcher" is important not only because it was built on the site of the Crucifixion and Burial of our Lord. But also because many of our Byzantine liturgical traditions - especially those for Holy Week - find their origins at this church.

But this feast and this Sunday are also important to me for very personal reasons. It was on Sunday, September 13, eleven years ago, that I was received into the Byzantine Catholic Church by the Mystery of Holy Chrismation. Today, in our Apostolic Reading from Galatians, St. Paul writes: *May I never boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.* (Gal. 6.14)

How fitting! All of us who have been baptized into Christ and sealed by anointing with Holy Myron (the oil of Chrism), have been buried with Christ in his death and raised to new life in his Resurrection. To be in the household of the Faith is to live a life of citizenship in the Kingdom of God. It's like the words of the old country-western song put it: "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passin' through."

As those who have been clothed in Christ (Galatians 3.27), let us pray to have the humility to never boast in anything - not our virtues, our accomplishments, our successes. Let us only boast and glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to us and us to the world.

In the Cross of our Lord and Savior,

Fr. Geoff

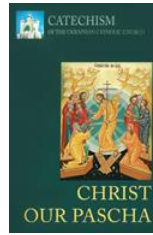
He did it for You!

When He had drunk the wine mingled with myrrh and vinegar, He said, "It is finished." For the mystery has been fulfilled. The things that are written have been accomplished. Sins are forgiven.

(St. Cyril of Jerusalem)

Excerpt from Christ Our Pascha

The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ: At the Mystical Supper (Last Supper), Jesus Christ reveals the unfathomable mystery of his Body: in the Incarnation he received a body from the Virgin Mary, and in the Eucharist he offers it to his disciples as nourishment, so that in the Church all humanity and all creation may become his Body. Saint John Chrysostom explains the gift of Christ at the Mystical Supper, re-phrasing, as it were, the words of Christ: “I have willed to become your brother. For your sake I shared in flesh and blood, and in turn I give to you the flesh and blood by which I became your kinsman.” (#434)



The Legend of the Tree of the Cross

The Tree of the Holy Cross and the site where it grew are sanctified in ecclesiastical sources. In legends and ancient tradition they are linked back to the biblical patriarch Abraham or earlier still to Seth, the son of Adam, planting a twig by his father's tomb.

The legend recounts that the three Angels who visited Abraham (Genesis 18) left him their staffs before proceeding to Sodom. After Lot sinned with his daughters at Sodom, he confessed to Abraham who instructed him to plant the staffs in the environs of Jerusalem and give them water from the Jordan River – their blossoming would signify that God accepted his penance.



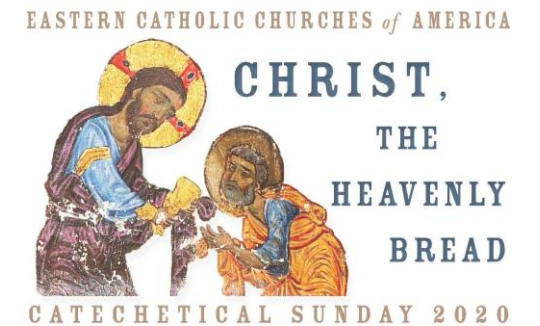
Lot planted the staffs in the valley outside Jerusalem where the Monastery of the Cross stands today. His unceasing attempts to haul water from the Jordan were stymied by Satan for 40 years before he finally managed to water the staffs, and they immediately blossomed and grew into a triplet pine/cypress/cedar Tree. During King Solomon's reign, the Tree was felled for timber in the building of the Judaic Temple, however, the beams would fit nowhere and were cast aside as cursed – the very ones that would make Jesus Christ's Cross in later times.

"Far be it for me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). Truly this symbol is a despicable thought; but it is only so in the world's reckoning and among men; in Heaven and among the faithful it is the highest glory. That Christ for my sake took on Himself the form of a slave, and bore His sufferings for me the slave, the enemy, the unfeeling one; yes, He so loved me as to give Himself up to a curse for me. What can be comparable to this?"

Saint John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians

Eastern Christian Formation FOR ALL!

In the tradition of our Church, children and youth receive the Holy Eucharist along with Baptism and Chrismation. What a treasure! In the new 2020 *Directory for Catechesis* published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) we are reminded, “*The Catholic Church holds in high esteem the institutions, liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions and the established standards of the Christian Life of the Eastern Churches, for in them, distinguished as they are for their venerable antiquity, there remains conspicuous the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers and that forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church. These treasures have always contributed to evangelization. The Catholic Church affirms repeatedly that the members of the Eastern Churches have the **right** and the **duty** to preserve them, to **know** them, and to **live** them, doing all they can to avoid losing their identity.*” (2. The Eastern Churches #290)



Eastern Christian Formation is for EVERYONE!

Children will meet on Sundays following Divine Liturgy for ECF classes. There will be monthly reflections on the Holy Eucharist published in our Victory Bearer bulletin. Our Church Library is available FOR ALL to help in your on-going formation. And there will be First Friday Fellowship events each month.

We began the new catechetical year on September 4, 2020 with our **First Friday Fellowship**. Youth ECF classes will begin on **October 4**. Let us take time to meditate on the monthly reflections, attend First Friday Fellowship, and have our children attend ECF classes so we may all grow in our love and gratitude for the gift of the Holy Eucharist and the knowledge and love of our Lord. May we ALL **Faith-fully** navigate through these times knowing and trusting that God is With Us.

“Tradition ... Tradition ... Yes, the religious traditions of our people have very deep spiritual meaning, but we MUST be acquainted with them and try to preserve them!”

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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**Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, David Klacik,
Louisa Hersh**

**E.C.F. coordinator: Jo Ann Hersh
Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff**

- Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
- Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
- Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
- Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
- Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
- Pirohi Sales 2nd Friday of each month, Sept. through May
- St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate



The cross: God's way of uniting suffering with love.