

February 21, 2021
First Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of Orthodoxy



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na Viki!

Proprs for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 5: pg. 146, First Sunday of Lent: pp. 220 – 222
Typica: pp. 16-17, Beattitudes: pp. 23-24, St. Basil melodies: pg. 96

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., FEB. 21
8:30 A.M.

FIRST SUNDAY of the GREAT FAST, SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY
DIVINE LITURGY, Blessing of icons
For the parishioners

(At St. Mary: Wednesday, February 24, 6:00 P.M., Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts)

FRI., FEB. 26
6:00 P.M.

SECOND FRIDAY OF LENT
LITURGY of the PRE-SANCTIFIED GIFTS

SAT., FEB. 27
9:00 A.M.

SECOND ALL SOULS SATURDAY
DIVINE LITURGY, Panachida, Hramoty

Members of the family are **encouraged** to attend these services on the All Souls Saturdays for by their presence and by their personal prayers and receiving Holy Communion they strengthen the bond of love with their departed loved ones and indeed keep their memory everlasting!

SUN., FEB. 28
8:30 A.M.

SECOND SUNDAY of the GREAT FAST, St. Gregory Palamas
DIVINE LITURGY
Health and God's blessings for Susan

Lenten Banks are now available in the narthex.

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

February 22: Reaghan Cody, February 24: Elizabeth Bare, February 26: Christine Cody

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Mary Salamon, John Simunick

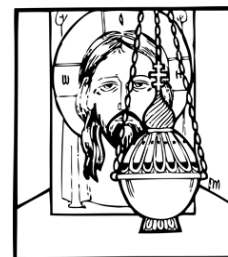
Hunter's Care Home (1916 Main St, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Mary Poiarkoff

Beaver Elder Care (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Josephine Maruhnich

Epistle Readers – Feb. 21: JoAnn Hersh – Feb. 28: Louisa Hersh

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Feb. 21: R. Mudron – Feb. 28: M. Bobanic



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

February 21 - 27, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Mary Popovich

(In loving memory, 37th anniversary of passing)

Offered By:

Daughters, Diane & Mary Ann

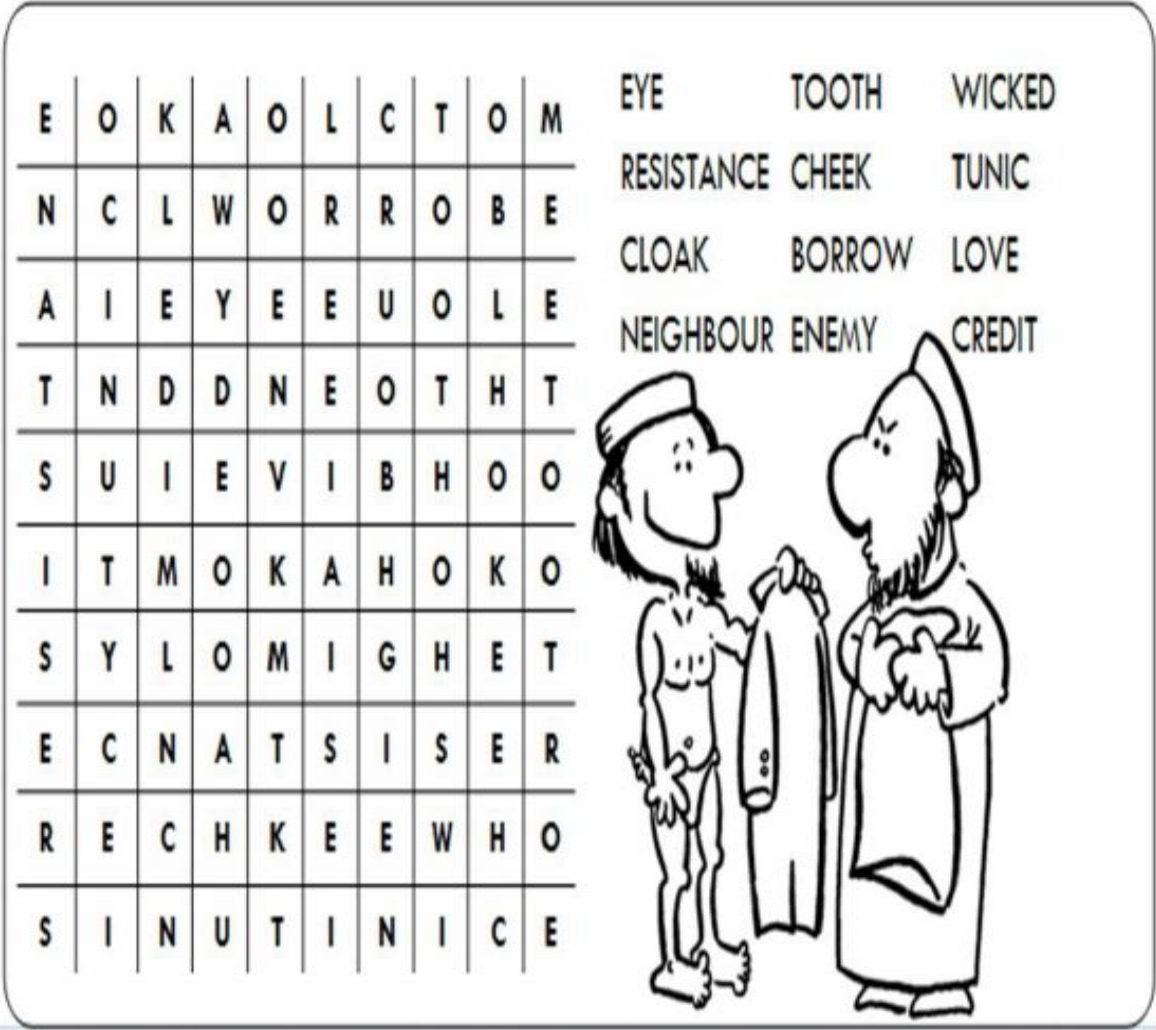
PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. *(Prostration)*

Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. *(Prostration)*

Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen. *(Prostration)*





Are you following the Lord? – “To every thoughtful man there is a benefit” (*Proverbs 14:23 LXX*) ... and Christ implied more than this when He said, “He that seeks finds.” (*Matthew 7:8*) This is why I no longer wonder how it was that Philip followed Christ. Andrew was persuaded when he heard from John, and Peter was persuaded when heard from Andrew. But Philip, not having learned anything from anyone but Christ who said to him only this, “Follow me,” immediately obeyed and did not go back. In fact, he even became a preacher to others. For he ran to Nathaniel and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Laws and the Prophets wrote.” Do you see what a thoughtful mind he had, how assiduously he meditated on the writings of Moses, expecting the advent? For the expression “we have found” belongs always to those who are in some way seeking. (*St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John*)

A Note from Father Geoff:

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Iconography has become very popular in the Western world over the last few decades. While icons have always been associated with Eastern Christians, Latin Catholics tended to prefer statuary and Protestants tended to avoid any images at all. But today, many a Roman Catholic parish has an icon or two and even evangelical pastors and theologians sometimes have icons in their homes or studies. I have even seen icons in the homes of unbelievers!

What's the big deal with images? Why did some Christians historically reject any images? And why do we insist that they should adorn our churches and homes?

For us, as we celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy, it comes down to an affirmation of the dogma of the Incarnation. That is, we believe that because God became truly human in the person of Jesus Christ, in doing so, he was like us in every way (except sin). Jesus Christ was a human being who could be talked with, touched, and - yes - depicted. In the Old Testament, no one had ever seen God. Moses came the closest, when he asked to see God's glory. God told him:

"I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, the LORD.... But you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." And the Lord said, "Behold there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33.18-23)

But in the fullness of time, when God became flesh in the womb of the most holy Theotokos, Jesus showed to us the face of God for the first time. As St. John the Theologian, wrote, *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (*John 1.14*) And St. Paul the Apostle explained that *"He is the image (literally "icon") of the invisible God."* (*Colossians 1.15*)

So today we see the "icon" of God, Jesus Christ - an image which we, too, make images/icons of. In venerating the image of the Son of God, we venerate the mystery of his Incarnation and we worship him who united our human nature with his divinity.

May we, who have been made in the image of God (Gen. 1.26-27) be ever given the grace to grow more and more into his likeness, until at last we come to the heavenly vision and see our Lord face to face:

"Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever." (*Revelation 22.4-5*)

In the Joy of this Holy Fast,
Fr. Geoff

Sunday of Orthodoxy Reflection

In the Epistle appointed for today we, hear the repetition of the word “faith. “ What is faith, and why is this virtue focused upon in the Divine liturgy today? In an attempt to define or explain what faith is, some might use the word “trust.” Faith, however, is something more than trust. Still others may explain what faith is by using the word “belief.” Again, however, the word belief, at least as it is commonly used today, falls short of a full explanation of what faith is.

First, it is important to realize that faith, as with trust and belief, is always directed at something or someone outside of ourselves. “I trust this person” or “I believe this statement.” Faith is an action which goes beyond the one who has faith, and takes hold of something or someone beyond ourselves.

So what is faith? Faith is, as some have described it, the total giving over of ourselves to the one in whom we believe. Faith is not the acceptance of the list of doctrines or ideas; faith is not the trust we place in people who are knowledgeable in a particular area or expertise. Faith is the acceptance in the entirety of the person in whom we believe, regardless of the verifiability of what they say or claim to know. Faith unites us totally to Jesus in our mind, in our heart, in our will, and in our spirit. Only then do we begin to see as Jesus sees, understand as Jesus understands, and live as Jesus lives.

Why is this important to understand today? As we stand now at the beginning of our Lenten journey (having begun the Fast this past week), we begin to realize how attached we are to the things of this world. Today Jesus calls us to place our trust, our belief, and yes, our faith, in Him. Soon Jesus will die on the cross, and be buried in a cave. And soon, very soon, Jesus will rise from the dead on the third day. Only those who have become totally detached from the things of this world and have placed their faith in Him, will rise with Him from the dead.

How can we verify what is on the other side of the cross, if we choose to willingly die with Jesus? How can we verify what will happen to us if we give up our whole life and give ourselves totally to the Lord? The simple answer is we cannot. Today we are called to have faith, to pray for increased faith. Then, if we have totally given ourselves over to the Lord, he promises us that we, with the Apostle Nathanael, “shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

On the first Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy [True Worship]. This is an historical feast commemorating the restoration of icons, which had been banned for several decades, to their rightful liturgical use in the year A.D. 843. The major emphasis of this feast is the victory of the true Faith, the Faith which always triumphs.



Repentance, Fasting, Prayer, Alms-giving

Great Lent

Let us ask the Lord to fill us with his love as we enhance our spiritual growth through commitment to prayer, reading Scripture, Reconciliation, receiving the Eucharist and trying to stay close to the Lord in our everyday lives. Here are a few things that will help make it a truly Holy and beautiful Lenten season.

Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts - During the Great Fast, attend the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts every Friday at 6:00 P.M. (*Other Pre-Sanctified Liturgies will be at St. Mary in Ambridge every Wednesday at 6:00 P.M.*). **The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts takes precedence over all other Lenten devotions.**

Church Library

Be prepared to have some quiet time without the TV, radio or computer and get some good books to read. Our Church Library is open every Sunday and on Saturday mornings. **We have books for you to borrow and free Lenten resources to take from our Church Library.** If you never have, stop in and see what is available.

Church Store - There are many Lenten and Pascha items available in our Church store located in the Church Center. You can shop following any Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Living with Christ, Great Lent at Home

A daily program made for families or individuals providing concepts and activities for each day of the Great Fast. These packets are available for you take home today.

Set aside some monies to give alms and charities

As difficult a time you may be having, there are those who are having it much worse and could use your help.

Rediscover prayer!

Make a daily practice of St. Ephrem’s Prayer. The prayer is not just for when you are in Church! Pray the Lord’s Prayer at least three times during the day. If you do this you will find that you will begin to pray more.

It’s never too late to participate in the Great Fast!

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, 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
- St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate



Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life...