

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST



*Icon of the Call of Philip and Nathaniel*

## February 14, 2016: First Sunday of Great Lent

Epistle: Heb. 11: 24-26, 32 - 12:2

Gospel: Jn. 1: 43-51

**Mon., Feb. 15** 8:00 + Ronald Benio (Rosemarie Sember)

**Tues., Feb. 16** 8:00 + John Stevensky (Msgr. John Stevensky)

**Wed., Feb. 17** 8:00 Akathist to the Passion of Christ  
6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Thurs., Feb. 18** 8:00 + Andrew Benio (Rosemarie Sember)

**Fri., Feb. 19** 8:00 Akathist to the Passion of Christ  
6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Sat., Feb. 20** **No Morning Divine Liturgy.**  
10:30 Confessions  
2:00 pm Confessions  
4:00 pm + Mary Ann Cole (Brothers)

**Sun., Feb. 21** 9:00 For Our Parishioners  
11:30 + Robert Harris (Mary Ann Spryn)  
3:00 pm Sorokousty

## Pastoral Letter for the Great Fast

“Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

There is a story of a mother who was pleading with Napoleon Bonaparte for mercy on the life of her son, an army officer, who had been sentenced to death for treason. The emperor called the young officer’s crime an unforgivable betrayal of the nation, which it undoubtedly was, and that justice demanded his life.

“Not justice!” cried the mother, “Give him mercy!”

“He does not deserve mercy”, was Napoleon’s curt retort.

“But”, said the mother, “if he deserved it, it would not be mercy!” This mother’s wise reply immediately softened the heart of Napoleon who spared her son from the sentence of death.

As we know, this year our Lenten journey is taking place during the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, inaugurated by His Holiness Pope Francis last December in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

We are called to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. But before we are able show mercy to anyone else, we are called first to open our own hearts so that we can accept the gift of mercy freely given to us by the Father. This sounds easy enough in theory, but opening our hearts to God is, at times, not as straightforward as we may think. Because in order to accept this gift of mercy, we must first admit to ourselves and to God that we, abject and sinful human creatures, are indeed, in dire need of his mercy. We are called to acquire an attitude of sincere penitence and humility, which is not always easy for us who have grown up on a diet, served up by our modern society, of pride, entitlement, and self-sufficiency.

This is why the Church, in her great wisdom, has given us the great spiritual gift of this holy season of Great Lent. The unique and evocative prayers and services of Great Lent are such that they instill in us, firstly, a recognition of our own faults and failings and secondly, a desire for personal conversion and a return to the loving arms of God the Father and his mercy. And so, over and over again in the divine services we pray: “Lord, have mercy.”

One of the saints of the Byzantine church writes the following: “This expression – Lord, have mercy – is appropriate, since we should not ask for anything except for mercy. As sinners we cannot, nor dare not, say anything to our Loving Master except have mercy.”

Our limited human intellect cannot, of

course, even partially grasp the depth and breadth of the mercy of God for us. The word mercy in English is the translation of the Greek word *eleos*, which has the same root as the old Greek word for olive oil, a substance which was used in the ancient world as a soothing agent for bruises and minor wounds. The oil was poured onto the wound and gently massaged in, thus soothing, comforting and making whole the injured part. This should immediately bring to mind of course, the gospel parable of the Good Samaritan and the traveller who poured olive oil on the wounds of the man lying beaten and left for dead at the side of the road. (Luke 10:29-37)

So when we pray “Lord, have mercy”, we are praying in effect: “Lord, soothe me, comfort me, take away my pain, show me your steadfast love.” This mercy refers to the infinite loving kindness of God, his compassion for us his suffering children, his desire to lift us up from our pain and sorrow and sinfulness. It is in this profound sense that we pray “Lord, have mercy” with such great frequency and fervor throughout the divine services.

If we are called to embrace the mercy of God with open arms and hearts for ourselves, then how much more are we called to share this gift with others and to witness to this gift in the world? Like the traveler in the gospel parable we too are called to be a good Samaritan to those in our lives whom we meet, even accidentally, in our daily lives, who have need of the sooth-

ing balm of God's mercy to be rubbed into their wounds of body and soul, whether or not these wounds come from outside themselves or are self-inflicted.

Jesus never compromised on his ideals, but he did beautifully describe and embody God's unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness for everyone: a beggar with leprosy, a Samaritan woman with five failed marriages, a traitor like Peter, a self-righteous human rights abuser like Saul of Tarsus, a prodigal son, an adulteress. The Gospel gives eloquent witness to this on many occasions. If Jesus showed a way of keeping

the highest standards, while at the same time offering Living Water – love, forgiveness, mercy, to the least deserving of it, can we then, act any differently?

St. Isaac, the Syrian once said, "Never say that God is just. If he were just, you would be in hell. Rely only on his injustice, which is forgiveness, love and mercy".

Our prayer today is that the Father's gifts of forgiveness, love and mercy may brighten the path of our Lenten journey upon which we are now embarking and lead us spiritually renewed and refreshed to the Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection!

+Stefan Soroka (Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians)  
Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+Richard Seminack (Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago)

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM (author: Eparch of Stamford)

+ Bohdan Danylo (Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma)

+John Bura (Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia)

## **From the Archbishop's Chancery... Spiritual Regulations for the Great Fast**

Although our Church traditionally prescribed abstention from meat and dairy products in days gone by for the entire duration of the Great Fast, the following are the minimal Lenten regulations today:

Abstinence from meat and all dairy products on the First Day of the Great Fast and on Good Friday.

Abstinence from meat only on all Fridays of the Great Fast as well as Holy Saturday. It is also traditional to abstain from meat on Wednesdays during the Great Fast.

Reception of the Holy Mysteries of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist during the period from the onset of Great Fast to

the Wednesday before Ascension Thursday.

The Fasting and Abstinence regulations are not binding on persons 60 or older, the very poor, sick, nursing or pregnant women, children below the age of 14, and those who engage in physically very hard labor. However, all are urged, if able to do so, to observe the fasting and abstinence regulations.

All the faithful are urged to attend the Lenten services such as the Presanctified Liturgy and the Commemoration of the Deceased (Sorokousty).

Such good deeds as almsgiving, visitation of the sick, Bible reading and praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life are most earnestly recommended to all the Faithful.

On Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast, **the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is to be celebrated.** Typika may be used the other days. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is to be celebrated for Sunday Liturgies during this time.

During Holy Week, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is to be celebrated Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On Holy Thursday evening, Vespers with Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great should be celebrated. On Good Friday, March 25, which is also the Feast of the Annunciation, special services which include the Divine Liturgy are to be celebrated. (Liturgical instructions and text will be provided.) On Holy Saturday evening, Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is to be celebrated.

## 2015 Tax Reports

Parishioners who want a 2015 end of year financial report for tax purposes are asked to contact the Parish Office at 570-489-2271. Also, please keep in mind that we

need to close the books on 2015. For this reason, any donations received after February 1, 2016, no matter the date on the envelope, will be credited for 2016.

## The Grace of God's Mercy

In January of 2016, Our Archbishop, the Most Rev. Stefan Soroka, issued a Pastoral Letter for the "Year of Mercy." In this Pastoral Letter, he designates several Parishes to make special opportunities for the faithful to receive the grace of God's mercy. Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church is one of these designated

Parishes.

His Grace encourages the faithful to make Pilgrimages and visit various Shrines throughout the Archeparchy of Philadelphia, including our Shrine of the Our Lady of Zhyrovtytsi. The text of this Pastoral Letter for the Year of Mercy can be found on our web site.

## **Ukrainian Easter Egg Workshop**

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church in Olyphant will again be offering Pysanky Classes. At this time there will be two dates, February 28, 2016 and March 13, 2016 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with possibly a third if needed. The beginner class is approximately two hours

long. The cost will be \$15 and includes the supplies needed to make your egg. For more information or to sign up for the class, please call Sonia Maslar at 570-489-9608 or Tammy Budnovitch at 570-766-1919 (after 5 pm).

## **Church Community Project for 2016**

Now is the time for our parishioners to get involved in our Community Project for 2016. We will be accepting non-perishable food and clothes for all seasons and accessories (shoes, hats, gloves, socks) of all sizes for men, ladies, kids, and babies. Clean and wearable!!! The collection will take place on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> starting at 3:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. Before and after the Divine Liturgy. On Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> the collection will start at 10:15 a.m -1:30 p.m. Before and after each Divine Liturgy. Items can be dropped off at the School Gym, 133 River Street, Olyphant.

The Food and Clothes Collection for the Church Community Project was very successful when we did this in March 2015. The food will be delivered to the Jessup Food Pantry at St. Michael's Church, 316 First Ave., Jessup, the old Convent building. (570-489-9963). The Jessup Bread Basket of NEPA for the Mid-Valley area

and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Food is accepted in Jessup every Wednesday from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. all year round at the Jessup Food Pantry. In 2015 one truck load of food was delivered to Jessup from our Church.

Clothes will be delivered to the United Neighborhood Centers (UNC) of Northeastern Penna. 410 Olive Street, Scranton, Pa. 570-343-8835 They accept clothes, household items every day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. throughout the year at the UNC. In March 2015, we dropped off 50 bags of clothing.

Volunteers are needed during the collection on Saturday and Sunday and then the deliveries. The clothes will be delivered on Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> to Scranton, and the Food will be delivered on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> to Jessup. Volunteers and cars/truck will start loading the vehicles at noon. We need your help for the Church's

Community Project.

Contact Lauren Telep at 570-383-0319 or Father Nestor at 570-489-2271 for any further information about donating or vol-

unteering at the School Gym. If anyone in the parish needs help regarding clothes or food, in private please contact Father Nestor, only.

### **Spaghetti Dinner**

The Annual ALL YOU CAN EAT Spaghetti Dinner sponsored by Eureka Hose Company No.4 will be held on Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> at the fire station 717 East Grant St. Olyphant. Dinner includes pasta, salad, bread

and butter, dessert and beverage. Take outs will be from 3:00 to 5:00 pm and serving sit down dinners from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Donation is \$10.00. Tickets can be obtained from any member or at the door.

### **Baked Fish Dinner**

Our Parish will once again be sponsoring a “BAKED HADDOCK” FISH DINNER on FRIDAY MARCH 18, 2016 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the REGAL ROOM (Ballroom/side entrance), 216 Lackawanna Avenue. Sit Down or Take Out!! Tickets are: \$13.00 per ticket/dinner: Baked

haddock, potato, vegetable, cole slaw, roll and dessert. Call 570-383-9487 for Reservations. \*Deadline for pre-sold Tickets is Monday, March 14, 2016. \*LIMITED amount of Dinners will be available a the Door \$15.00

### **Collection Processing Team...**

The Collection Processing Team for the month of February 2016 is Team #2:

Eugene Zinsky, John Turko, Jr., Leonard Mitchko, and Michael Shumek.

### **Sunday Collection for February 6 & 7, 2016: \$**

### **Altar Boy and Lector Schedule for February 20 & 21, 2016**

	<b>Altar Boys</b>	<b>Lectors</b>
4:00 pm	Nicholas Chylak -- Joseph Chylak	Michael Shumek
9:00 am	John Nasevich -- Patrick Marcinko	Pat Marcinko
11:30 am	Thomas Radle -- David Slachtish	Frank Lesnefsky

## Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

### *Forgiveness and Generosity*

Let us flee to the mercy of God, everywhere present, so that the holy Passover of the Lord may be celebrated with a worthy observance. Let the hearts of all the faithful sanctify themselves. Let harshness be softened, let wrath be calmed, let all forgive faults one to another, and let those who seek forgiveness not exact vengeance. When we say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive those in debt to us," we bind ourselves with the most unyielding chains unless we fulfill what we profess. If the sacred pact of this prayer is not yet observed in its totality, now at least all know their own consciences. By forgiving others' faults, people can obtain the forgiveness for their own sins. For the Lord says, "If you forgive others their failings, your Father who is in heaven will forgive you yours." What He demands from all does not lie far from them, since the sentence of the Judge depends on the kindness of the sup-

pliants themselves. He who is merciful and just in hearing the prayers of humanity has ordained His justice according to our kindness, so that the law of severity would not hold for us, whom he had found not greedy for vengeance.

Generosity also is proper to merciful and gentle souls. There is nothing more worthy of human beings than to be the imitators of their Creator, and, according to the measure of their own faculties, to be executors of divine work. When the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, the sick cared for, does not the help of God fill full the hands of the minister, and is not the kindness of the servant a gift of the Lord? Although He has no need of help in applying His mercy, He so regulates His power that He supports the sufferings of human beings through human beings.

*St. Leo the Great*

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