

# **Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church**

(Saint Mary's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, Inc.)

On the Corner of East 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue

Father Edward G. Cimbala, MAOL, D.Min. ~ Pastor

Boris Derow ~ Music Director/Cantor

Parish Office

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**February 23, 2025**

**Sunday of Meatfare**

**March 2, 2025**

**Sunday of Cheesefare**

# LITURGICAL SERVICES

**Sunday, March 2**

**10:00 AM**

**Sunday of Cheesefare  
Forgiveness Sunday**

For the Parish Families of  
St. Mary's and Holy Cross  
+Mikulas Beno by Mary Galus  
Celebration of Forgiveness  
Followed by Fashengy!

**Tuesday, March 4**

6:30 PM

Presanctified Liturgy  
+Helen and +Charles Gaydos  
By Patricia Dietz  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Wednesday, March 5**

12:15 PM

Lenten Moleben  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Sunday, March 9**

**10:00 AM**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Great Fast**

For the Parish Families of  
St. Mary's and Holy Cross  
+Vasil Vira  
By Debbie Sank

**Tuesday, March 11**

6:30 PM

Presanctified Liturgy  
+Edward Zapala  
By Mary Zapala  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Wednesday, March 12**

12:15 PM

Lenten Moleben  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Sunday, March 16**

**10:00 AM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Great Fast**

For the Parish Families of  
St. Mary's and Holy Cross  
+John and +Mary Malast  
+Kevin Guiteras  
By Debbie Sank  
Followed By Panachida  
and the Reading of the  
Hramoty for the  
Second All Souls Saturday

**Tuesday, March 18**

6:30 PM

Presanctified Liturgy  
+John Murphy  
By John Rossiello  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Wednesday, March 19**

12:15 PM

Lenten Moleben  
Lenten Soup Meal

**Sunday, March 23**

**10:00 AM**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Great Fast**

**Veneration of the Cross**  
For the Parish Families of  
St. Mary's and Holy Cross  
+Mike and +Mary Goda  
By Goda Family  
Followed By Panachida  
and the Reading of the  
Hramoty for the  
Third All Souls Saturday

**Tuesday, March 25**

6:30 PM

***Feast of the Annunciation***

For the Parish Families of  
St. Mary's and Holy Cross

# WELCOME VISITORS

**“MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER  
FOR ALL PEOPLES.” - Isaiah 56: 7**

If you are a visitor to St. Mary’s, we want you to know how deeply we appreciate your presence. Whether you have come from another part of the country, from across the world, or simply from another parish, we are grateful for your interest in our church. We warmly welcome you and hope you find our worship true and reverent. We consider you part of our family and would be more than honored by your presence in our spiritual home. For more information about becoming a parishioner, please see Fr. Ed.

## THANK YOU!

My Dear St. Mary’s Parish Family,



I am deeply grateful for the wonderful 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration on Sunday, February 16. Your kindness and good wishes mean so much to me. The presentation of the Good Shepherd Icon was a surprise and a beautiful blessing. Through your prayerful support, I strive to be a Good Shepherd” to you, my flock. Your prayers are my strength. Again, thank you so much, and please know that you are in my constant prayers.

*Fr. Ed*

## Mystery of Reconciliation

Fr. Ed is always available to celebrate the Mystery of Reconciliation before the Divine Liturgy and at any other time. If Fr. Ed is not in the confessional, please look for him; he will gladly help you.



# Fashengy!

The Feast Before the Fast!

Sunday, March 2  
Luncheon After  
Divine Liturgy

**\$15 for Adults by February 23**

**\$20.00 for Adults after February 23**

**Children FREE**

**Please pay Angie Hlinka**



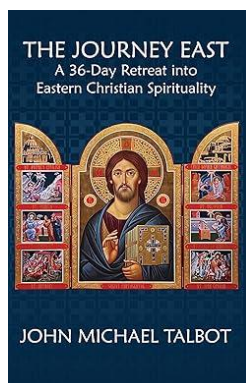
Instagram

St. Mary's is now on Instagram. You can find us at [@stmarynyc](https://www.instagram.com/stmarynyc)

## ST MARY'S LENTEN BOOK CLUB

Join Fr. Ed in reading the Journey East as we walk our Lenten Journey. We will read this book and discuss it on the Sundays of the Fast as we enjoy our coffee social. Please take a copy of the book and sign the sheet to let Fr. Ed know you are participating.

The Journey East is a rich and practical resource, drawing upon the deep wells of the spirituality of the Christian East by one rooted in the monastic life of the Christian West, showing how to breathe with both lungs of the Christian tradition. Arranged as a thirty-six-day itinerary with meditations on different aspects of the spiritual journey, each ending with questions inviting further reflection so that what is offered is made part of our own life and practice, we are led deeper into the mystery of hesychia, the stillness in which we come to know God and ourselves.



# Church Cleanup



## Mark Your Calendars!!!

All Hands of Deck!

Church, Rectory and Social Hall  
Organizing and Clean-up Day

**Saturday, April 5**

9:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Lunch Included

The Akathist will be celebrated  
at 8:30 AM

*Come and start the day with prayer and stay and help  
clean the church.*

## Sunday of The Last Judgment

(Meatfare Sunday)

The Sunday of the Last Judgment is the third Sunday, three weeks before Great Lent's commencement. During this time, the Church's services began to include hymns from the Triodion, a liturgical book that contains the services from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the tenth before Pascha (Easter), through Great and Holy Saturday. On this day, focus is placed on the future judgment of all persons who will stand before the throne of God when Christ returns in His glory.



On the past two Sundays of this pre-Lenten period, the focus was on God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our Judge. Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes.

This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come, a theme that is also the focus of the first three days of Holy Week. But the judgment is not only in the future.

Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts toward others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given to help them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

Another theme of this Sunday is that of love. When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable of the Last Judgment answers: love—not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous “poor,” but concrete and personal love for the human person—the specific persons we encounter daily.

Christian love is the “possible impossibility” to see Christ in another person, whoever he or she is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a “good deed” or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself.

The parable of the Last Judgment is about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work for “humanity,” yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ’s love. We know that all persons ultimately need this personal love—the recognition of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that people are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because that personal love has been denied them. And, finally, we know that however narrow and limited the framework of our personal existence, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God, made responsible by that very gift of Christ’s love. Thus, we shall be judged on whether we have accepted this responsibility or whether we have loved or refused to love.

## **FORGIVENESS SUNDAY**

In the Eastern Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent is known by many titles: the Sunday of the Casting out of Adam from Paradise, Cheesefare Sunday, and Forgiveness Sunday. The last title comes from the Rite of Forgiveness, which takes place at the end of the Great Vespers held on this day. This exquisite rite is for the faithful to beseech forgiveness of the sins, known and unknown, committed against



each other.

During this time, each of the faithful bow (or prostrate) before each other to ask forgiveness for their sins. The person bowed to greets the person bowing with a bestowal of forgiveness. This moving experience allows the faithful to enter the Lenten period with a cleaner heart and conscience, a greater sense of humble-mindedness, and more awareness of their sinfulness.

***Below is an article by the late Priest Alexander Schmemmann explaining the purpose of Forgiveness Sunday as it is practiced in the Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches.***

In the Eastern Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent, the day on which - at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated - is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (St. Matthew 6:14-15)

Then after Vespers - after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: "Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations - we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why does the Church want us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because, for too many people, Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet and compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end, as a "good deed" required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

***In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul! For you abstain from food,  
but from passions, you are not purified.  
If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.***

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity, we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

One may ask, however, why I should perform this rite when I have no “enemies?” Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life. However, if we experience them, it may be easier to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals that there are many subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, or any real concern for them -- in short, that wall we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly,” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize, be it only for one minute, that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere, Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance toward the other, as the other comes to me, we begin to realize that Christ brings us together through His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists - we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, “opens to us the doors of Paradise.” We know why we shall fast and pray what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting true fasting, our effort, true effort, our reconciliation with God true reconciliation.