

Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church

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

On the Corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue

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

Boris Derow ~ Music Director/Cantor

Parish Office

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January 28, 2024
Sunday of Prodigal Son
February 4, 2024
Sunday of Meatfare

LITURGICAL SERVICES

Sunday, January 28

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

10:00 AM ~ Divine Liturgy
+Mary Vislocky
By Mary DiMatteo

**Christmas Decoration
Take-down
After Coffee Social**

Thursday, February 1

6:00 PM

Vigil Divine Liturgy
Feast of the Meeting
of Our Lord With Simeon
and Anna

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

Sunday, February 4

Sunday of Meat Fare

10:00 AM ~ Divine Liturgy
+Adam & +Anna Cassiak
by Diane Smertiuk

***Festal Anointing
and Blessing of Candles***

Followed By Panachida
and the

Reading of the Hramoty
for the

First All Souls Saturday

Fashengy!

Sunday, February 11
Mark Your Calendars.
More Details Soon.

If you would like to
Volunteer to help, see Fr. Ed.

Sunday, February 11

Sunday of Cheesefare

10:00 AM ~ Divine Liturgy
Deceased Members of the Sić
& Ruschak Families
by Margie Ruschak
and Baptism of
Jeremiah Joseph Howell
with Service of Forgiveness
to Begin the Great Fast.
Followed by Fashengy!

Monday, February 12

First Day

The Great Fast

A Day of Strict Fast

Tuesday, February 13

6:00 PM

Presanctified Liturgy
+Edward Zapala
by Mary Zapala
and Lenten Soup Meal

Wednesday, February 14

12:15 PM

Lenten Moleben
and Lenten Soup Meal

Sunday, February 18

10:00 AM

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
+Michael Rinkovsky
by Mary DiMatteo

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 welcome you are, whether you have come from another part of the country, from across the world, or simply from another parish. We hope you find our worship true and reverent and our people here friendly and cordial. If you seek a spiritual home, we would be honored by your presence in our family. For more information about becoming a parishioner, please see Fr. Ed.



Some Volunteer Opportunities At St. Mary’s

Office Help

Organizing – Ushers - Church Tour Docent

Greeters - Collection Counters - Social Events – Parties

Special Event Hospitality – Photography - Flower Care

Anything that you see that needs to be done!

Please see Fr. Ed to Volunteer.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS will be sent by January 15 to those who requested them in previous years. If you did not receive one and wished one to be sent, complete the form and drop it in the collection box or email Fr. Ed, and the statement will be sent to you.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT REQUEST

Name: _____

Address: _____

2023 Envelope Number: _____

(It is not necessary if all your gifts were made online)

The Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon and Anna



The Feast of the Encounter of our Lord is celebrated forty days after Christmas on February 2. The Church commemorates the event on this feast is described in the Gospel of St. Luke (2:22-28). From the words of this Gospel and the Liturgical texts pertaining to the feast, we can identify a threefold character: the purification of Mary, the dedication of Jesus as the first-born son, and the meeting with Simeon and the prophetess, Anna.

According to the Mosaic Law, a mother who had given birth to a boy was considered unclean for seven days and, for thirty-three days, was excluded from public worship. When the appointed forty days were past, she was expected to offer a sacrifice for her purification. Here, in the Gospel of St. Luke, the sacrifice offered by Mary, two young pigeons, is described. Mary, since she was not bound to this law, being the chaste spouse of the Holy Spirit, was yet still inspired by the Holy Spirit to comply with the law in fulfilling the will of God.

Secondly, the prescription of the Mosaic Law ordained that every first-born son was considered to belong to the Lord. This son was to be brought back to the temple as an offering to God. Jesus was presented in the temple according to the command of God, saying, "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord" (Lk. 2:23). The Mother of God brought our Lord to the temple to fulfill the command of the Word of God, her own child Jesus.

Simeon was an old man who lived in Jerusalem and longed to see the Messiah. He went to the Temple at the time that Mary and Joseph brought Jesus. Mary welcomed him through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who assured Simeon that he would see the Christ. The canticle, "Now you can dismiss your servant, O Lord,

according to your word in peace, because my eyes have seen your salvation..." sung at our Vespers service, echoes the word of Simeon about the truth of life. The prophetess, Anna, was there in the temple to meet our Lord, and she was not disappointed.

This feast was celebrated by the Church of Jerusalem in its early years and spread to the entire Church. Celebrated on different days of the year, finally, it was transferred to the second of February, the present date of the feast. On this day, candles were carried out in the procession. Beginning in the eleventh century, having the candles blessed on this day became a custom. Candles are significant as a symbol of Christ who is the light of the world. The candle is given to us at our Baptism with the words, "Receive the Light of Faith." We are to carry that faith throughout our lifetime and shine forth with the light of Christ in us to all People



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.

Sunday of The Prodigal Son



The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is the third Sunday, the period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. As with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the theme of this Sunday is repentance, and the focus on the parable of the Prodigal Son leads Eastern Christians to contemplate the necessity of repentance in our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance at its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, and hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the Father's house.

But repentance implies action: “I will rise up and go...” (v. 18). To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to decide and act upon it.

In the words of our Lord, we also learn of three things through this parable: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God’s compassion. The reading of this parable follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own sinful condition, we might come to our senses and return to God through repentance. For those who have fallen into great despair over their sins, thinking that there is no forgiveness, this parable offers hope. The Heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly waiting for our return. There is no sin that can overcome His love for us.

Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God’s divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, illusory strivings, craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world but a wasteland. This is why, in the Slavic tradition of the Eastern Church, the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: “By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land” (Psalm 137).

Here, we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day, the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

Prodigal Son Prayer

Let us behold the power of the mystery of salvation. When the Prodigal Son departed from sin and returned to his Father's house, his loving Father came out to meet him and kissed him. He restored to the Prodigal the signs of his former glory. Let our lives, then, be worthy of the loving Father Who has offered the Savior as a sacrifice to us. Let us pray to Him: As the Prodigal Son, I come to You, merciful God; I have scattered the wealth which You gave me. Receive me in repentance, O Father, and have mercy upon me. Amen.

Sunday of The Last Judgment

(Meatfare Sunday)

The Sunday of the Last Judgment is the third Sunday of three weeks before the commencement of Great Lent. During this time, the services of the Church 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 placed 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 of helping 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 in them 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.

ALL SOULS RETURN ENVELOPES – Please be aware that the All Souls List and Contribution return envelope has an incorrect address. If you are mailing in your list, please correct the address by changing 245 to 246. Thank you for your understanding. If you have mailed in your names, please call or email Fr. Ed, and he will let you know if it has been received.