



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME A SINNER.

This week's Bulletin is donated by Sonia Buttino in memory of Frank and Mary Gromadzki.

April 21	Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am.	LENTEN RETREAT
April 24	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts 6:00 pm	with Bishop MICHAEL
April 26	Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Passion of Christ	6:00 pm
April 27	Saturday	Resurrection of Lazarus	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
	Saturday	Great Vespers, Blessing of Palms	4:00 pm
April 28	Entrance of Our Lord Into Jerusalem	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
May 1	HOLY WEDNESDAY	Holy Unction	6:00 pm
May 2	HOLY THURSDAY	Vespers and Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	HOLY THURSDAY	Matins of the Twelve Gospels	6:00 pm
May 3	HOLY FRIDAY	Vespers - Burial Service, Procession	6:00 pm
May 4	HOLY SATURDAY	Vespers and Divine Liturgy 9:30 am	Blessing baskets 4:00 pm
May 5	HOLY PASCHA	Midnight Service, Matins, Divine Liturgy 11:30 pm	Blessing baskets

Saints of the Day: Venerable Mary of Egypt. Saint Martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome (655). New Martyr Sergius (Trofimov) of Nizhni-Novgorod and one with him (1918). New Hieromartyr Priest Alexander Confessor, (1941). Martyrs Anthony, John and Eustathius of Vilnius (Lithuania) (1347). Martyr Ardalion the Actor, who suffered under Maximian (3 c.). Martyr Azat the Eunuch and 1,000 Martyrs in Persia (341). Monk-martyr Christopher of Mar Sabbas (797). Saint Cyriacus, Bishop of Jerusalem (4 c.). Apostles Aristarchus, Pudens, and Trophimus of the Seventy. New Martyr Demetrius of the Peloponnesus, who suffered at Tripoli (1803). Saint Euthymius the Wonderworker. Saint Ruadan of Lothra, Abbot (584). Saint Mundus of Argyle, Abbot (962). Saint Padarn of Vannes, Bishop (c. 500)

Please remember in your prayers: Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacon Philip. Mother Raphaela, Sister Deborah. Michael, Stephanie, Linda, Helen, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren,

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Priest John Soucek, Ed, Protodeacon Keith Russin, and Mark Nestor were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Priest Charles Salkeld and Joseph and Mary Udics were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Mary Gromadsky, Dimitri, Olena, Michael and Michael Alexczuk, and Paul and Kay Sokol were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: **Saint Mary of Egypt**, a sermon given 16 April 1989

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the gradual progression from glory to glory which Lent is and which must lead us step by step to face the supreme glory of the Divine Love crucified, the sacrificial love of the Holy Trinity, we keep today the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt.

Saint Mary of Egypt was a sinner, someone whose sin was known to everyone and not to God alone. Perhaps she was the only one who was least of all aware of it, because sin was her life. And yet, one day, she wanted to go and venerate an icon of the Mother of God in a church. The supreme beauty of womanhood in the Mother of God reached her heart, touched it. But when she came to the gate of this church, a power prevented her from crossing the threshold.

The Publican had been able to stand there because his heart was broken; Mary of Egypt had no broken heart, and the entrance of the church was forbidden to her. And she stood there, aware that what she was, was incompatible with the holiness of the Presence, the presence of God, the presence of the Mother of God, the presence of all that is holy on earth and in heaven.

And she was shaken so profoundly by this experience that she left all that had been her life, retired into the desert, and with a life which the service books define as 'extreme' -- fought to conquer her flesh, her soul, her memories - everything that was sin, but also everything that could lead her away from God. And we know how glorious her life was, what kind of person she became.

What lesson can we receive from her life? How often is it that we have knocked at the door of God in the way in which Mary tried to come into His presence? How often have we tried to pray, to be in His presence in

silence? How often has our longing been to God, and how often have we felt that between our prayer and Him, between our silence and Him, between our longing and Him there was a barrier which we could not pass. We were crying, praying into an empty sky, we were turning towards icons that were silent; all we could perceive was the Divine absence, and an absence so frightening, because not only could we not reach Him, but we perceived that unless we reached Him, our soul was laid waste, there was within us nothing but emptiness, an emptiness that if it continued, if it became our definitive condition, would mean more than death, - ultimate separation.

But how often also has God knocked at the door of our heart. You remember the word of the Book of Revelation: I stand at Thy door and I knock... How often has God, in the words of the Gospel, in the events of our life, in the weak promptings of our soul, in a whispering of the Holy Spirit, in all the ways in which God tries to reach us how often has He knocked at this door, and how often have we made sure that this door does not open. Either didn't we simply care to open it because we were busy with things that mattered to us at that moment more than His interrupting, disturbing presence; and how often did we refuse to open the door because the coming of the Lord to us would have meant the end of things which were precious to us, which mattered to us... And the Lord stood knocking, and the door was shut in His face: exactly in the same way in which every door was shut in the face of the Mother of God and Joseph on the night of the Nativity.

We may not be aware of it with the intensity which should be ours; and yet for each of us, simply, the proof of it is that we are here, and millions of other people at some moment have suddenly perceived the presence of God, have heard His knocking, have let perhaps the door ajar, have listened to what He was saying, had a moment of elation, a moment when suddenly we came to life; and then we shut the door again. We chose our aloneness, we chose to be without Him, and what we imagined to be 'free' from Him: we are never free; we are never free not because He enslaves us, not because He hunts us down. We are never free because He is ultimately in the end the only supreme longing of our whole being, because He is the fullness of life, the glory of life, the exultation of life for which we long and which we try to glean right and left in vain.

Mary of Egypt confronted with the Divine absence, with God's refusal to allow her into His presence, confronted with a shut door within herself, felt that unless the door opened, everything was vain. And she turned away from everything that stood between her and God, and life, and fullness, and exultation.

Isn't she for us an example, a call, an image of what could be the life of each of us? But we may say, Yes, this applied to her, she was a prospective saint. Each of us is called to commune with God in such a way, that God and each of us should become one, that each of us should become partaker of the Divine nature, a living member, a brother, a sister, a limb of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a son and a daughter of the Living God! This is our vocation; but can that be achieved by our own strength? No, it cannot! But it can be achieved by God in us if we only turn to Him with all our mind, all our heart, all our longing, determinately, yes: it is determination, and it is longing, a passionate, desperate longing... And then – and then all things become possible. I have said so often that when Saint Paul asked God for strength to fulfil his mission, the Lord said to him, My grace sufficeth unto thee, My power deploys itself in weakness... And at the end of his life, having fulfilled his vocation, Paul, who knew what he was saying, said, all things are possible unto me in the power of Christ Who sustains me... All things are possible, because God does not call us to more than can be achieved by Him with us and in us.

How much hope, how much inspiration can we find in each of the Saints of God, as frail as we are, and in whom the power, the glory, the victory, the life unfolded itself, deployed itself gloriously. Let us once more receive inspiration from what we hear, receive inspiration from what we meet face to face in the Gospel, in Holy Communion, in prayer, in the silence in the presence of God. And let us move one step more forward towards the vision of the love of God made manifest in Holy Week, in the last steps of the way of the Cross, in the final victory of crucified Love, and in the victory of the Resurrection of God. Amen.

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Concerning the Boston Marathon Bombing - PASTORAL LETTER OF METROPOLITAN TIKHON

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Once again, our nation and the entire world have been filled with deep sorrow and shock following the violent bombings at the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 15, 2013. Grief fills our hearts over the loss of innocent lives, and we are paralyzed with helplessness in the face of this tragedy and the unimaginable injuries and pain endured by so many. In addition, our minds are clouded with uncertainty and with fear as we consider our own safety and that of our children and loved ones.

I ask the clergy and the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to offer prayers for the souls of those who have lost their lives and for the healing of those who have been injured. Please pray as well for those brave police officers, firefighters, emergency responders and hospital workers who acted so quickly, and who continue to work to heal the injured and to secure of the safety of the inhabitants of Boston.

During this season of Great Lent, in which we struggle not simply to follow a physical and ascetical discipline, but also to control our passions and quiet the swirling thoughts of our minds, I ask all of us to enter deep into prayer for the world and for all mankind. Let us not become confused, frightened or judgmental in light of this tragedy. Let us not analyze or debate the causes of this horrific violence. Rather, may we have pity on those who have become so enslaved to their passions that they bring harm to their fellow man.

I especially encourage all Orthodox Christians to place their trust in God, from Whom alone the blessings of peace and consolation come. Let none among us have any fear. But let us remember the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel so that, in Him, we may find peace. "In this world you will have trouble," our Lord tells us. "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

May the Lord have mercy on all of us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada