



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Have Mercy on Me O God, Have Mercy on Me.

April 6, 2014	Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
April 9	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
April 11	Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Passion of Christ	6:00 pm
April 12	Saturday	Resurrection of Lazarus	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
	Saturday	Great Vespers, Blessing of Palms	4:00 pm
April 13	Entrance of Our Lord Into Jerusalem	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
April 16	HOLY WEDNESDAY	Holy Unction	6:00 pm
April 17	HOLY THURSDAY	Vespers and Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	HOLY THURSDAY	Matins of the Twelve Gospels	6:00 pm
April 18	HOLY FRIDAY	Vespers - Burial Service, Procession	6:00 pm
April 19	HOLY SATURDAY	Vespers and Divine Liturgy	9:30 am Blessing Baskets 4:00 pm
April 20	HOLY PASCHA	Midnight Service	11:30 pm
	HOLY PASCHA	Matins, Divine Liturgy, Blessing Baskets	midnight
April 20	HOLY PASCHA	Vespers	1:00 pm

Saints of the Day: Saint Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople (582). New Hieromartyr Priest John (1934). New Hieromartyr Priest James (1943). Saint Sebastian, Elder of Optina and Karaganda (1966). Saint Methodius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Enlightener of the Slavs (885). Venerable Platonida (Platonis) of Nisibis (308). 120 Martyrs of Persia (345). Martyrs Jeremiah and Archilias the Presbyter. Venerable Gregory of Saint Athanasius Monastery on Mount Athos, Instructor of Saint Gregory Palamas (1308). Venerable Gregory the Sinaite (1346). 2 Martyrs from Ascalon. New Martyr Nicholas of Lesbos (1463). New Monk-martyr Gennadius of Dionysiou, Mount Athos, who suffered at Constantinople (1818). New Martyrs Manuel, Theodore, George, Michael, and another George, of Samothrace (1835).

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and the Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Jacobus, Leonid, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela and all Myrrhbearers, Shirley, Emil, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, 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, Archpriest Leonid, Diane, Peter, Adam, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Noah Takahashi and Matushka Mary Geeza were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Lisa Welle, Claire Saverino, Archbishop JOHN (Garklavs) and Anna McCartney were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Anna and Wasil Prawlocki, Harry and Anna Homyk and Peter Mezick were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

REMINDERS:

The Altar Society are making Pascha Breads. Anyone interested in ordering bread please either call Nancy Richards at 315-865-5382 and/or look for the order sheet that is posted on the wall outside the kitchen.

There's only a week before Holy Week. Very few people have come forward for **Confession** during Lent. If you wish to conform to the Bylaws of your parish and the Statute of the OCA, you must come to confession to your parish priest at least once a year. It would be a terrible embarrassment for the priest to have to turn you away from the chalice for your lack of attention to this essential point. If you wish to come to Confession, please do so **before Holy Week**, which is a very busy time, and which is not the appropriate time for Confession.

OUR VENERABLE MOTHER MARY OF EGYPT was a desert ascetic who repented of a life of prostitution. She lived during the sixth century, and passed away in a remarkable manner in 522. The Church celebrates her feast day on the day of her repose, April 1; additionally, she is commemorated on the Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt, the fifth Sunday in Great Lent.

She began her life as a young woman who followed the passions of the body, running away from her parents at age twelve for Alexandria. There she lived as a harlot for seventeen years, refusing money from the men that she copulated with, instead living by begging and spinning flax.

One day, however, she met a group of young men heading toward the sea to sail to Jerusalem for the veneration of the Holy Cross. Mary went along for the ride, seducing the men as they traveled for the fun of it. But when the group reached Jerusalem and actually went towards the church, Mary was prohibited from entering by an unseen force. After three such attempts, she remained outside on the church patio, where she looked up and saw an icon of the Mother of God. She began to weep and prayed with all her might that the Mother of God might allow her to see the True Cross; afterwards, she promised, she would renounce her worldly desires and go wherever the Mother of God may lead her.

After this heart-felt conversion at the doors of the church, she fled into the desert to live as an ascetic. She survived for years on only three loaves of bread and thereafter on scarce herbs of the land. For another seventeen years, Mary was tormented by "wild beasts-mad desires and passions." After these years of temptation, however, she overcame the passions and was led by the Mother of God in all things.

Following 47 years in solitude, she met the priest Saint Zosima in the desert, who pleaded with her to tell him of her life. She recounted her story with great humility while also demonstrating her gift of clairvoyance; she knew who Zosima was and his life story despite never having met him before. Finally, she asked Zosima to meet her again the following year at sunset on Holy Thursday by the banks of the Jordan.

Zosima did exactly this, though he began to doubt his experience as the sun began to go that night. Then Mary appeared on the opposite side of the Jordan; crossing herself, she miraculously walked across the water and met Zosima. When he attempted to bow, she rebuked him, saying that as a priest he was far superior, and furthermore, he was holding the Holy Mysteries. Mary then received communion and walked back across the Jordan after giving Zosima instructions about his monastery and that he should return to where they first met exactly a year later. When he did so, he found Mary's body with a message written on the sand asking him for burial and revealing that she had died immediately after receiving the Holy Mysteries the year before (and thus had been miraculously transported to the spot where she now lay). So Zosima, amazed, began to dig, but soon tired; then a lion approached and began to help him, that is, after Zosima had recovered from his fear of the creature. Thus Saint Mary of Egypt was buried. Zosima returned to the monastery, told all he had seen, and improved the faults of the monks and abbot there. He died at almost a hundred years old in the same monastery.

Later, the story of Mary's life was written down by Saint Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The *Life of Saint Mary of Egypt* is read during Great Lent along with the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete.

DYNAMIS Gospel for the Sunday of Mary of Egypt, 5th of the Great Fast

The Life-Giving Cross: *Saint Mark 10:32-45, especially vss. 32, 33: "Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles.'"* Every human being will have to answer the Lord Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I Am?" (Mark 8:29). When Christ first asked this question, Peter, spoke for the group, confessing the Lord Jesus to be "the Christ" (Mark 8:29). Subsequently, the Lord stretched the disciples' insight concerning Himself: as the Christ - that is, as the Messiah - He would triumph, but only through suffering and death - by rising on the third day. He did not, and still does not, permit "the Christ" to be used apart from betrayal, condemnation, death, and Resurrection. These are essential realities of His gift of salvation to us. This is how the God-Man defines Himself.

The assertion of a suffering Christ was one of three prophecies by the Lord concerning His Passion (8:31; 9:31; 10:32,33). This present reading is the final and most detailed of these. After this prophecy, James and John asked the Lord: "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory" (Mark. 10:37). How lightly they passed over the "delivery" to the chief priests and scribes, the condemnation, the surrender to the Romans, the mocking, scourging, spitting, and the execution! Still, Saint John Chrysostom softens the appalling flippancy of these sons of Zebedee: "But let no man be troubled at the Apostles being in such an imperfect state. For not yet was the Cross accomplished, not yet the grace of the Spirit given."

Grasp Saint John Chrysostom's point: after the Passion and the Glory, the disciples were very different men, humbled in themselves. We have the privilege of looking back at the Lord's Passion "through" the Resurrection, but still the life-giving Cross must confront us in its double truth: the suffering of our Savior, and our suffering as sinners. The Gospels require us to "...look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein and not be forgetful hearers" (see James 1:25).

What a timely reading this passage is! We have arrived at the last Sunday of Great Lent. Soon we will focus solemnly on the saving events of Great and Holy Week. May we, like the first disciples - as we participate again in the Lord's Passion - see the price He paid to release us from the thrall of death and sin. How wisely the Holy Fathers of the Church crafted this Sunday with its dual focus on the Life-giving Passion and on the Venerable Saint Mary of Egypt!

Why Saint Mary? Because she embodies the true repentance that embraces the Passion. When she saw herself, she venerated the Life-giving Cross, and chose the life of struggle and repentance in the desert. Listen to the experience of that blessed former harlot in her own words:

"The holy day of the Exaltation of the Cross dawned while I was still flying about - hunting for youths.... When the hour for the holy elevation [of the Cross] approached, I was trying to make my way in with the crowd.... I was stopped by some force which prevented my entering.... Having repeated my attempt three or four times, at last I felt exhausted and... began to understand the reason why I was prevented.... it was my unclean life which barred the entrance to me. I began to weep and lament." She, however, begged the Mother of God to intercede with Christ for her, and the weeping Mary received the grace to see the Cross: "I saw too the Mysteries of God and how the Lord accepts repentance." Thus, she spent forty years in the desert repenting.

Having taken thee, O righteous Mary, as an example of true repentance, we beg thee implore Christ our God to grant us the same gift and grace, that in faith and yearning we may sing songs of deliverance unto thee.