



## **Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**

**714 Westmoreland Avenue**

**PO Box 3**

**Slickville, PA 15684-0003**

**[724] 468-5581**

[www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org)

Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

# **GREAT LENT**

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Bishop Robert, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Anthony Dimitri, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Archimandrite Lev, Father Taras Naumenko, Father Nestor Kowal, Father Gabriel Rochell, Father Bill & Pani-Matka Sonia Diakiw, Pani-Matka Linda Oryhon, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Tim Tomson, Protodeacon Mykola Dilendorf, Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 4-year-old with a brain tumor, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George & Mika Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Peter & Karen Special, Doris Artman, Nancy Barylak, Henry & Shirley Tkacik, Martin Golofski, Anthony Yerace, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [3-year-old with cancer], Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Charles & Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Glenn Miller, Vince Ferro, Michael Pawlyshyn, Dorothy Lednovich, Kristin Batch



*Litany in Blessed Memory of John Cherepko, Rose Lopushanksy, Michael Brittan,  
Frank & Ollie Pendlyshok, & Vladimir Hanczar—Fr. Bob  
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Maxine Kitch—Liz Obradovich*

**Thursday, April 7                      Slickville Ecumenical Service                      7:00 PM  
Saint Sylvester Roman Catholic Church—Pastor Tom Holmes Speaking**

**Sunday, April 10                      Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great    10:30 AM  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT MARY OF EGYPT  
SAINT HILARION THE NEW-ABBOT OF PELECETE; SAINT STEPHEN THE  
WONDERWORKER-ABBOT OF TRYGLIA; MARTYRS JONAH, BARACHISIUS, ZANITHAS,  
LAZARUS, MARUTHAS, NARSES, ELIAS, MARINUS, ABIBUS, SEMBEETH, & SABBAS IN  
PERSIA; MARTYR EUSTRATIUS OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 5*

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 10:32-45

*Parastas in Blessed Memory of Martha Batch—Harry Batch*

**Thursday, April 14                      Slickville Ecumenical Service                      7:00 PM  
Holy Ghost Orthodox Church—Rev. Linda Steward Speaking**

**Sunday, April 17                      Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom    10:30 AM  
PALM SUNDAY—ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM  
SAINT JOSEPH THE HYMNOGRAPHER OF SICILY; SAINT GEORGE-MONK OF MOUNT  
MALEON IN PELOPONNESUS; SAINT ZOSIMAS-MONK OF PALESTINE; VIRGIN-  
MARTYR PHERBUTHA OF PERSIA, HER SISTER, AND SERVANTS; SAINT JOSEPH  
THE MUCH-AILING OF THE PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 6*

Philippians 4:4-9

John 12:1-18

**BULLETIN INSERT FOR 03 APRIL 2011  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT JOHN  
CLIMACUS—JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT  
SAINT JAMES THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP OF THE STUDIUM;  
SAINT CYRIL-BISHOP OF CATANIA; SAINT THOMAS-  
PATRIARCH OR CONSTANTINOPLE**

**TROPARION—TONE 1**

O Dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body!  
You were a wonder-worker, O our God-bearing Father John!  
You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer:  
Healing the sick and souls of those drawn to you by faith.  
Glory to Him who gave you strength!  
Glory to Him who granted you a crown!  
Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

#### **KONTAKION—TONE 4**

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence,  
To be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe,  
O our Father and Teacher John.

#### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 8**

**READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**PEOPLE:** Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

**READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**PEOPLE:** Let the righteous exult in glory! Let them sing for joy on their couches!

**READER: In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!**

**PEOPLE:** Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

**READER: Pray and make your vows.**

**PEOPLE:** Before the Lord our God!

#### **ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8**

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Dear brothers in the Holy Priesthood: Glory to Jesus Christ!

I pray that this short note finds you spiritually renewed as we approach the mid-Lenten season of this year's journey to the Bright Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Recently, following the memorial services for His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of blessed memory of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Johnstown, PA, His Beatitude Metropolitan Constantine, His Eminence Archbishop Antony and I, were able to visit Rev. Fr. Paul Bigelow in Johnstown hospital. Fr. Paul has regained some of his faculties and we were able to enjoy a long and uplifting conversation with him, as well to offer prayers for his recovery.

He had asked me to express his sincerest gratitude for your kind prayers, while he is recovering in the hospital and hopes to return to his pastoral duties in due time.

If you wish to send him a note or a post card, please forward the communication to the following address:

Fr. Paul Bigelow  
Select Specialty Hospital of Johnstown  
Lee Campus Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center  
320 Main Street  
Room 382-2  
Johnstown, PA 15901

Please, continue to remember Fr. Paul in your daily prayers.

With prayers and gratitude, wishing you spiritual renewal,

+Daniel

### The Annunciation (March 25)

The Annunciation! At one time, this was one of the brightest and most joyful days of the year, the feast which consciously, and even unconsciously, was connected with a jubilant intuition, a radiant vision of the world and of life. The Gospel of Luke records the story of the Annunciation.

[The] angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Rejoice, O favored one, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus..." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you: therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God... For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it

be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.  
(Lk : 26-35)

Of course, viewed from the perspective of so-called "scientific" atheism this Gospel story supplies plenty of reasons for speaking of "myths and legends." The rationalist will say, "When do angels ever appear to young women and hold conversations with them? Do believers really think that people of the twentieth century, living in a technological civilization, could believe this? Can't believers see just how silly, unscientific and impossible this is?" The believer always has only one answer to this kind of contentious debate, disparagement and ridicule: yes, alas, it is impossible to fit this into your shallow worldview. As long as your arguments about God and religion remain on the superficial level of chemical experiments and mathematical formulas you will always easily win. But chemistry and mathematics are of no help whatsoever in proving or disproving anything at all in the realm of God and religion. In the language of your science, the words angel, glad tidings, joy and humility are of course completely meaningless. But why limit the discussion to religion? More than half of all words are incomprehensible to your rationalistic language, and therefore in addition to religion you will have to suppress all poetry, literature, philosophy and virtually the whole of human imagination. You desire the entire world to think as you do, in terms of production and economic forces, of collectives and programs. Yet the world does not naturally think in this way and must be handcuffed and forced to do so, or rather, appear to do so. Yo! you say that all imagination is false because the "imaginary" does not exist, and yet the imagination is what people have always lived by, live by now, and will in the future as well. For everything most profound and most essential in life has always been expressed in the language of imagination. I don't pretend to understand what an angel is, nor, using the limited language of rationalism, can I explain the event that occurred almost two thousand years ago in a tiny Galilean town. But it strikes me that mankind has never forgotten this story, that these few verses have repeatedly been incorporated into countless paintings, poems and prayers, and that they have inspired and continue to inspire. This means, of course, that people heard something infinitely important to them in these words, some truth which apparently could be expressed in no other way than in the childish, joyful language of Luke's Gospel. What is this truth? What happened when the young woman, barely past childhood, suddenly heard-from what profound depth, from what transcendent height!-that wonderful greeting: "Rejoice!" For that is indeed the angel's message to Mary: Rejoice!

The world is filled with countless books on struggle and competition, each attempting to show that the road to happiness is hatred, and in none of them will you find the word "joy." People don't even know what the word means.

But the very same joy announced by the angel remains a pulsating force, that still has power to startle and shake human hearts. Go into a church on the eve of Annunciation. Stay, wait through the long service as it slowly unfolds. Then the moment comes when after the long wait, softly, with such divinely exquisite beauty the choir begins to sing the familiar festal hymn, "With the voice of the Archangel, we cry to You, O Pure One: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with You!" Hundreds and hundreds of years have gone by, and still, as we hear this invitation to rejoice, joy fills our heart in a wave of warmth. But what is this joy about? Above all we rejoice in the very presence of this woman herself, whose face, whose image, is known throughout the world, who gazes upon us from icons, and who became one of the most sublime and purest figures of art and human imagination. We rejoice in her response to the angel, to her faithfulness, purity, wholeness, to her total self-giving and boundless humility, all of which forever ring out in her words: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Tell me, is anything in this world, in any of its rich and complex history, more sublime and more beautiful than this one human being?

Mary, the Most Pure One, the One who is Full of Grace, is truly the One in whom, as the Church sings, "all Creation rejoices." The Church answers the lie about man, the lie that reduces him to earth and appetite, to baseness and brutality, the lie that says he is permanently enslaved to the immutable and impersonal laws of nature, by pointing to the image of Mary, the most-pure Mother of God, the One to whom, in the words of a Russian poet, "the outpouring of sweetest human tears from overflowing hearts" is offered in unending stream. The lie continues to pervade the world, but we rejoice because here, in the image of Mary, the lie is shown ! for what it is. We rejoice with delight and wonder, for this image is always with us as comfort and encouragement, as inspiration and help. We rejoice because in gazing at this image, it is SO easy to believe in the heavenly beauty of the world and in man's heavenly, transcendent calling. The joy of Annunciation is about the angel's Glad Tidings, that the people had found grace with God and that soon, very soon, through her, through this totally unknown Galilean woman, God would begin to fulfill the mystery of the world's redemption. There would be no thunder and no fear in His presence, but He would come to her in the joy and fullness of childhood. Through her a Child will now be King: a Child, weak, defenseless, yet through Him all the powers of evil are to be forever stripped of power. This is what we celebrate

on the Annunciation and why the feast has always been, and remains, so joyful and radiant. But I repeat, none of this can be understood or expressed in the limited categories and language familiar to "scientific" atheism, which leads us to conclude that this approach willfully and arbitrarily has declared an entire dimension of human experience to be non-existent, unnecessary and dangerous, along with all the words and concepts used to express that experience. To debate this approach strictly on its own terms would be like first climbing down into a black underground pit where, because the sky can't be seen, its existence is denied. The sun can't be seen, and so there is no sun. All is dirty, repulsive, and dark, and so beauty is unknown and its existence denied. It is a place where joy is impossible, and so everyone is hostile and sad. But if you leave the pit and climb out, you suddenly find yourself in the midst of a resoundingly joyful church where once again you hear, "With the voice of the Archangel, we cry to You, O Pure One: Rejoice!"

*[Taken from, "Celebration of Faith" Sermons, Vol. 3 "The Virgin Mary" by the late Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, SVS Press, 1995. Available at: 800-204-book]*

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT—VENERATION OF THE CROSS**

(Heb. 4:14-5:6; Mk.8:34-9:1)

Dr. M. R. Brett-Crowther

It is sometimes said that this Sunday is meant to encourage us. How anyone can be encouraged who faces crucifixion is a difficult question.

But if this Sunday at least reconciles us to the fact, it can bring us a peaceful outlook towards Great Week. The epistle reading takes the Old Testament sacrifices of the Temple and gives them a Christian meaning. 'Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed.' That is, we must keep the faith because Jesus is greater than the high priest of the Old Testament. The high priest would go, once a year, into the holiest part of the Temple, sprinkling the blood of a sacrificed animal - giving its life up as the means of his entry to the holy place - and offering its life for the forgiveness of those sins which Jews had committed without really knowing what they were doing. But the high priest could not secure even by this rite the forgiveness of any sins committed with a deliberate purpose. So Jesus' cross is a way to go beyond guilt.

The epistle continues, echoing this point. 'For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weakness with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin.' The writer says that Jesus knows the temptations of deliberate sins; and yet he can forgive



those as well as the unimportant, almost accidental ones, the breaches of formal conduct - like not fasting on a fast day. 'Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.' The encouragement, then, is in the fact that Jesus as our high priest can act more completely than ever the priests of the Old Testament could act.

The argument continues that Jesus' life had prepared him for this priesthood because he was in sympathy with man and in obedience toward God. 'Every high priest has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; and so he can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives in the limitations of weakness.' The writer refers to the sin offering, being made 'for himself as well as for the people.' The image of the priest is of a total representative doing the sacrifice of prayer for the community.

The writer says that like Aaron (Ex: 28: 1) a priest is called by God, but the writer distinguishes the priesthood of Jesus from that of Aaron by saying that Christ - the Messiah - was also called; but in his case, Jesus was called to a superior priesthood, that of the ancient Old Testament figure Melchizedek; who combined both priesthood and messiahship in his person, and did not come from a regular priestly family - like Aaron's descendants. (Heb 7) Above all, Christ accepted priesthood 'from the one who said to him: You are my son, today I have become your father.' (Ps 2: 7)

The gospel reading confronts us with the sacrifice of the New Covenant - the experience which makes the New Testament what it is: the death on the Cross of Jesus. 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.' The Romans made a condemned man carry part of his own cross - the cross-beam on which his arms would be fixed - to the place of execution. This is a rough, direct image of the cost of discipleship. The taking up of the cross and the following are expressed not as a once-only act, but as a repeated act: a habit of crucifixion of ourselves is what we are asked to develop. 'What gain, then, is it for a man to win the whole world and ruin his life? And indeed what can a man offer in exchange for his life?' Life - the word here is psyche - means everything in a human life: the use of time, the waste of opportunity, the accumulation of experiences; and the point is to choose what is best. Jesus is saying that if we accept him and the implications of his view, we have something more important than wealth, fame and property. We have something better than all feelings. 'And indeed what can a man offer in exchange for his life?' The idea here is that life in Christ is the great treasure; and also the gospel suggests that the approaching death of Jesus is the only sacrifice which can bring us to the true fulfilment.

Then Jesus makes a separation of the sheep from the goats (cf Matt 25: 31-46), as he says 'For if anyone in this adulterous and sinful generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he

comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' This is another of Jesus' mysterious claims to be the Messiah - Son of Man - and the language shows that what is difficult now will be completely changed at the Second Coming: victory, not rejection, Christ in glory, not Christ suffering. The reading ends with a strange assurance: 'I tell you solemnly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.'

The coming of the Kingdom can be understood in several ways. Jesus opens the door to this situation by being among the people of Israel and proclaiming that he fulfils the prophecies: the Son of Man is Messiah. The true destiny of the faithful people is about to be identified by proof that the kingdom of the heart - not an earthly kingdom - is where God reigns in triumph. There is another sense, that this state of affairs will develop and as more disciples take up their cross, so the kingdom will spread. And it can also mean that many of those who are looking at what Jesus is doing now in his earthly ministry before the crucifixion will not die until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. In other words, they will find that the crucifixion will not end the course of events, for the resurrection will then take effect, and there can be no better way of receiving the gift of spiritual life than through participation in that world-changing, earth-shattering event.

So then, the priesthood of Jesus fulfils all previous forms of sacrifice for sin and failure. The priesthood comes out of the community of belief and gives to the community the power to live with true fulfilment, as God wants. The kingdom is that state of affairs; and Jesus has begun that reign which is yet to be fulfilled. Fulfilment there will certainly be. That is a question of faith. Crucifixion there must be.

That is a decision of faith. But hard as the choice is, 'anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.' As St Maximos the Confessor said, 'he who knows the mystery of the Cross and the Tomb, knows also the essential principles of all things. Finally, he who penetrates yet further and finds himself initiated into the mystery of the Resurrection, apprehends the end for which God created all things from the beginning.' So that is the encouragement of this day: 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.' Choose, choose now; choose for all time and beyond time.

O Lord, Thou hast stretched out Thine hands of Thine own will upon the Cross: fill us with Thy light through fasting and through prayer, through abstinence and works of charity; and count us worthy to adore Thy Cross with contrite hearts, for Thou art good and Thou lovest mankind.

O mighty wonder! Before us stands the Wood, on which Christ was crucified in the flesh. The world venerates it and, illumined, cries aloud: "Great is the power of the Cross! When devils look upon it, they are burnt; by the sign of the Cross they are consumed with fire." O pure and holy Wood, I call thee blessed; I honor thee and worship thee with fear, and I give glory unto God

who through thee hast bestowed upon me life without end. *from Vespers of the Sunday of Cross Adoration*

Today is revealed the mystery that is from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of man, that, sharing in what is worse, He may make me share in what is better. In times of old Adam was once deceived: he sought to become God, but received not his desire. Now God becomes man, that He may make Adam God. Let creation rejoice, let nature exult: for the Archangel stands in fear before the Virgin and, saying to her 'Hail', he brings the joyful greeting whereby our sorrow is assuaged. O Thou who in Thy merciful compassion wast made man, our God, glory to Thee!

*from Matins for the feast of the Annunciation attributed to St. Theophanes the Confessor, 9th century*

*From the sayings of the Paradise of the Desert Fathers*

"They said of Abba Macarius the Great that he became, as it is written, a god upon earth, because, just as God protects the world, so Abba Macarius would cover the faults which he saw, as though he did not see them; and those which he heard, as though he did not hear them."

Hold fast to the blessed and joyful sorrow of holy compunction and do not cease laboring for it until it lifts you high above the things of the world to present you, a cleansed offering, to Christ.

*St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 7*

**REMINDER:** The second of the annual Slickville Ecumenical Lenten Services will be held on Thursday, April 7, at 7 PM at Saint Sylvester Roman Catholic Church. Pastor Tom Holmes will be the speaker. Please plan to join with your neighbors as we continue our Lenten journey to Pascha!