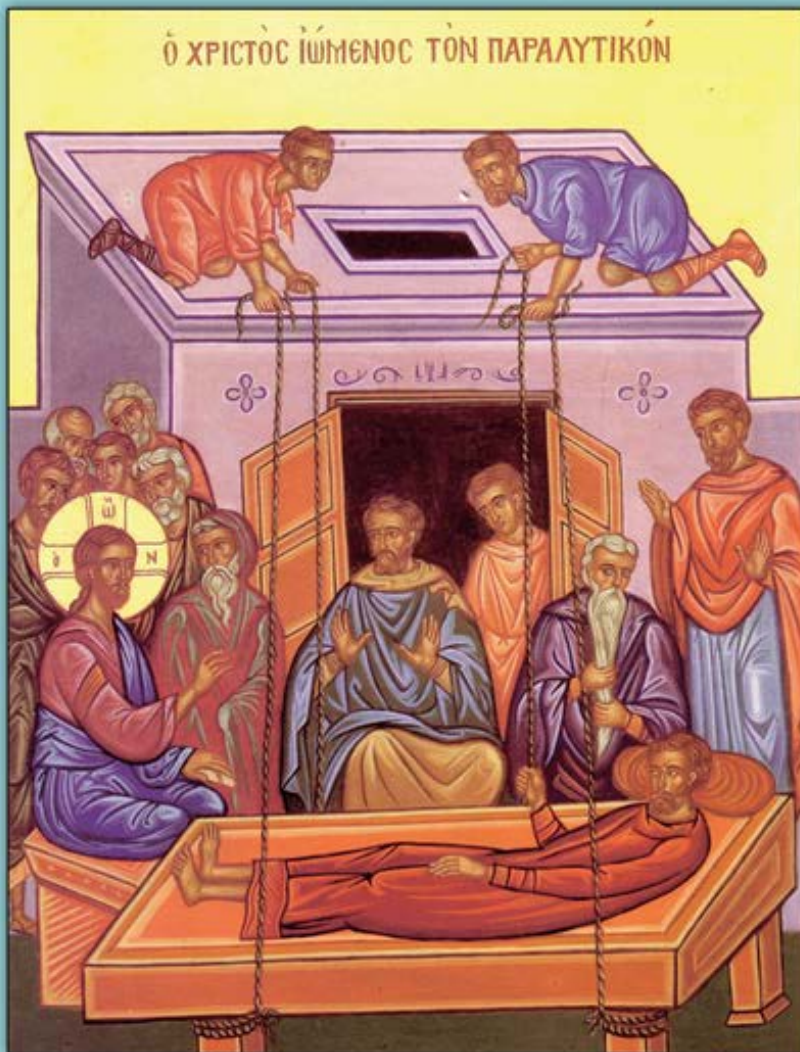


SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS



Icon of Healing the Paralytic

St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (antiochian.org) ... and ...
The Diocese of Charleston, Oakland & The Mid-Atlantic (antiochian.org/east)
("...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch!" [Acts 11:26](#))



111 Alberta Avenue // Johnstown, PA 15905-3002
Website: stmaryaocc.org // E-Mail: stmaryaocc@outlook.com

Most Rev. Metropolitan SABA – Archbishop & Primate
Right Rev. Bishop THOMAS – Auxiliary Bishop
Very Rev. Fr. Donald E. Shadid, M.Div. & D.Min. – Archpriest & Pastor
Sub-Deacon Timothy (Cade) Scott, MAT
Edward Makdad, Jr. – Parish Council Chairperson

“The World is Evil... Weep for your Sins... Have a Piece of Chocolate!” (Advice from Staretz in Russia to Fr. T. Hopko+)

Fr. Don – Cell: 814-242-0084 – abeenad1@gmail.com – Office: 814-255-2148

+ THE COMMEMORATION OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS + (The Second Sunday of Great Lent)

Sunday, March 31, 2024

Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory be to Him Forever!

HYPATIOS The Wonderworker, Bishop of Gangra / Prophet JOEL

March is “Antiochian Women Month!”

We welcome all of you, our Faithful and our Visitors, to St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church! It is a pleasure to have you with us as we glorify and praise the Name of our God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Please sing along with our Choir during the Liturgy.

Please note, as has been the practice of the Church since the Feast of Pentecost, that the Sacrament of Holy Communion can only be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, regular Confession (at least twice per year ... 7 Yrs. old & up), who attend Liturgy regularly & on time (at least 3 times a month) ... and ... are at peace with all people.

When receiving Holy Communion, please fold your arms over your chest, open your mouth wide, tip your head back slightly, and allow the priest to place the elements in your mouth.

For our non-Orthodox brethren, we welcome you to sing and pray with us, venerate the Cross, and receive the Blessed Holy Bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Please join us again soon. May God Bless You Always!

HOLY OBLATION: Offered by *Edward & Nancy Makdad* for the health of *All Within The Makdad Family*.

PASCHAL CANDLES: Offered: in beloved memory of *Joshua Mack* by The Mack Family; **(2)** for the health of *Don McMillan* by his wife, *Kathy ... and ... (3)* in beloved memory of *Jesse George* by his mother, *Christine Asfar*.

PROSKAMEDIA CANDLE: Offered for the health of: **(1)** *Maria* as she celebrates her Birthday (March 2) and her Feast Day (March 25); and *Ivan, Miranda, Paul, Grace, Fotia, Alexa, Andrea, Becky, Connie & Arianna* by The McClatchey Family ... **and ... (2)** *Elias Ghantous* as he celebrates his Birthday (March 16) by parents, *Albert & Mary Jo*, sister, *Marissa & husband, Mike* and wife, *Rebecca*.

SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLE: Offered: **(1)** for the health of *Albert & Mary Jo Ghantous* by Children & their Families ... **and ... (2)** in beloved memory of parents & grandparents, *Edward (+33 Yrs.) & Julia (Audi) Mack (+26 Yrs.)* by *Butch & Renee (Mack) D’Ettorre* and Family.

PRAYERS OF LITURGICAL REMEMBRANCE: Offered: **(1)** in beloved memory of *Amelia Joseph (04/02 – 25 Yrs.)* by The Joseph Family ... **and ... (2)** for the health of *Rick & Jackie Riccio* by *Bill & Eliesha Cacciotti*.

TRISAGION PRAYERS OF MERCY (Naha): Offered in beloved memory of mother, *Helen Nohaile (+03/31 – 15 Yrs.)* by *Eliesha Cacciotti*. **“May Her Memory Be Ever Eternal!” and “Christ is Risen!”**

***For The Living – “God Grant Them Many Years!”...and...
For The Departed – “May Their Memory Be Ever Eternal!”***

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- VARIATIONS & NOTES ON THE LITURGY -

PLEASE NOTE: *During the Sundays of Great Lent, we celebrate the “Liturgy of St. Basil the Great” (Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia), in which the priest’s prayers for the Faithful are longer and more penitential, and the Anaphora Prayers (the offering of the Liturgical Gifts for consecration) are more detailed regarding our Salvation History. Also, today, Fr. Don has to prepare the Lamb for this week’s Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Please be attentive during these prayers and quiet moments so that you may truly join your prayer to that of the Church. We have Service Books on the Front Pews for this Liturgy so that you may more easily & fully participate in our Worship. Thank You!*

THIRD ANTIPHON: (*Sung During The Little Entrance – Tone Two*)
See “Troparion of The Resurrection” below.

AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION: *(Tone Two)*

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou Deathless and Immortal One, then Thou didst destroy Hell with Thy Godly power; and when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ Thou Giver of Life, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS: *(Tone Eight)*

O Star of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, O comeliness of ascetics, and incontestable champion of those who speak in theology, Gregory the wonder-worker, the pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, implore thou constantly for the salvation of our souls.

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION: *(Patron Feast Day - Tone One)*

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION, GREAT LENT & AKATHIST SAT.: *(Tone 8)*

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: "Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom."

EPISTLE: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 *(Second Sunday of Lent)*

HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 2:1-12 *(Second Sunday of Lent)*

Concerning the "Kiss of Peace," prior to the Nicene Creed, we encourage you to greet those around you with a handshake, saying: "**Christ is in Our Midst!**" ... the response being: **He is And Always Shall Be!**" In this way, we express: (1) our Joy that God has acted to restore our Communion with Him ... and ... (2) our Hope in the Resurrection from the Dead that is offered to us by our Lord's own "trampling down death by death!" **God is With Us ("Emmanuel")!**

MEGALYNARION *(Instead of "It Is Truly Meet..." - for St. Basil's Liturgy):*

In thee rejoiceth, O full of grace, all creation: the angelic hosts, and the race of men, O hallowed Temple and noetic paradise, glory of Virgins, of whom God was incarnate and became a little child, even our God Who is before all the ages; for He made thy womb a throne, and thy body He made more spacious than the heavens. In thee rejoiceth, O full of grace, all creation; and it glorifieth thee.

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- THIS WEEK'S EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS -

Church Office: Tuesday – Friday ... 9 AM – 2 PM.

+ Monday, April 01 – GREAT COMPLINE – 6 PM ... Followed by BIBLE STUDY.

+ Wednesday, April 03 – NINTH HOUR & TYPIKA – 5:15 PM ... Followed by the PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY – 6 PM – Please abstain from food & drink from your Noon Meal onward if you will be partaking of the Holy Eucharist at this Vespers Liturgy ... also, please note that since our Parish Organizations consist of many of the same parishioners, all within our Parish Family are asked to help with the set-up & clean-up of the Lenten Suppers ... if you can bring a non-meat and/or non-dairy Casserole / Dish / Lenten Dessert, please do so ... and ... everyone, please join us after the Service as we break our fast together.

+ Friday, April 05 – LITTLE COMPLINE WITH THE AKATHIST HYMN (Madayeh Service) – Stasis 3 – 6 PM.

+ Saturday, April 06 – GREAT VESPERS – 5 PM.

+ Sunday, April 07 – THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS – MATINS @ 8:30 AM & DIVINE LITURGY @ 9:30 AM ... Followed by Agape Fellowship.

Please Note that during the Great Lent, our Weekly Bible Study will meet after our Great Compline Prayers on the following Mondays ... April 01, 08, 15 & 22.

THOSE IN SPECIAL NEED OF OUR PRAYERS: AMBER HILLS @ CAMBRIA CARE CENTER (Ebensburg, PA): *Mary Ann Unis-Asfar (#606); LAURELVIEW VILLAGE:* *George Zdravecky (Health Care #302) & Rhoda (Nasser) Zdravecky (Vista – 913); HILLTOP HEIGHTS CARE CENTER (formerly “Laurelwood Care Ctr.): *Suzanne George (#37-W); HERITAGE RIDGE SENIOR LIVING (formerly “Lutheran Home”): *Elaine Heider (#34); QUALITY LIFE SERVICES – WESTMONT WOODS (formerly “Presbyterian Home”): *Emma (Nasser) Audey (#115-W) ... and ... IN TREATMENT, RECOVERING AND / OR “SHUT-IN AT HOME”:* *Becky Azar; Larry Bertino; Carolyn Clark; Renee D’Ettorre; Michael & Patty Devich; Joanne George; John & Dalal George; Olga Hodge; Denise Khorey-Harriman; Matthew Makdad; Huda Martin, Donald McMillan; Anna Marie (Abraham) Rovanseck and Sara Shahade. May God Be With All of Them & All of Those Who Are Ill and/or in Need!****

MEMORY ETERNAL! It is with a “bright sadness” that we announce that our Beloved **George Haidar** has “Fallen-Asleep in the Lord.” We pray that our Lord will grant him Rest in His Heavenly Kingdom where all of His Blessed Saints do Repose, and we ask Him to grant His Mercy & Peace (John 14:27) to the Haidar Families and us as we all mourn his Passing with the Hope of Christ in our Hearts (1 Thessalonians 4:13). ***May His Memory Be Ever Eternal & Christ is Risen!***

+++ LENTEN & PASCHAL OFFERINGS +++

We have now begun our 2024 Lenten Journey! There are many items that the Church needs for all of our special services, and we ask for your participation and support. ***If you would like to offer a donation to our St. Mary Parish Family “for the health of” or “in memory of” a loved one, please fill out the form below and leave it in the Prayer Request Box in the Hallway, marked for Fr. Don’s attention.*** We thank you and pray that your Lenten Journey and Pascha will be a most Fruitful, Joyful, & Peaceful one. (John 14:27)!

-----Cut Here-----

Dear Fr. Don:

It would be a great joy for me (us) to offer a donation:

Wine	\$
Agape Meal	
Incense	
Candles for Procession	
Holy Week Service Books for Parishioners	
Help the Needy (Pastor’s Discretionary Fund)	

For the Health of: _____

- and/or -

In Beloved Memory of: _____

Given by:



ST. MARY CHURCH PROJECT

National Orthodox Baby Shower

Sponsored by

St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church
and Orthodox Christians for Life

Did you know that pregnancy resource centers across the country provide free material resources to help women in crisis pregnancies?

Our Church is joining with Orthodox parishes across the country to hold a "baby shower" to support mothers who choose life for their unborn children!

Join us in collecting

- 4-oz baby bottles
- diaper wipes
- diapers (sizes 4 & 6)
- diaper bags
- monetary donations

These items will be donated to Birthright of Johnstown, our local pregnancy resource center. Please bring donations on 3/31, 4/7, and 4/14, and drop them off in the collection baskets set up in the back of the church hall. For any questions, contact Laura Slifko at laura.slifko@gmail.com / 814-242-9435.

Epistle

The Lord is my strength and my song. The Lord has chastened me severely.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (1:10-2:3)

Thou, “O Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands; they will perish; but Thou remainest; and they will all grow old like a garment, and like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years will not fail.” But to which of the angels did He say at any time, “Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet?” Are they not all spirits for liturgical ministry, sent forth to minister for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest at any time we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels was confirmed, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which having at first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard?

Gospel

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (2:1-12)

At that time, when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and He was preaching the Word to them. And they came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now, some of the scribes were sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus reasoned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you reason thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic – “I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all. So that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

May God Be With You!

+++ CONFESION SCHEDULE +++

By Appointment ... Please Call or Text Fr. Don @ 814-242-0084.

Due to Fr.'s Commitment to Matins, Confession Will Not Be Offered On Sun. Mornings.

Saint of the Day – March 31, 2024

ST GREGORY PALAMAS

St Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), a monk of Mount Athos, was a practitioner of the method of prayer called hesychasm (hesychia means ‘silence’). This method of prayer is centered in the continuous repetition of the name of Jesus, usually in the form of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” And a rigorous bodily discipline—emphasizing certain sitting postures and breathing techniques—is employed in order to help unite the mind and heart in God. Through the use of this method of prayer, the hesychast monks claimed to experience genuine communion with God, including sometimes a vision of the Uncreated Light of Divinity such as that seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, and by the Apostles Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor.

He confirmed the Orthodox doctrine that man can truly know God and can enter into living communion and relationship with Him through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church. He explained that the Essence (or Super-Essence) of God is utterly unknowable and incomprehensible, while at the same time, the actions, operations, or Energies of God, which are also uncreated and fully divine (such as the Divine Light), are communicated to people by divine grace and are open to human knowledge and experience. This is what is meant when Christians are said to become “partakers of the divine nature.”

Saint Gregory Palamas also served the Church as Archbishop of Thessalonica from 1350 until his death in 1359. Just nine years after his repose, he was glorified as a saint of the Church, with the second Sunday in Great Lent being dedicated to him in addition to November 14, the day of his death. This double annual commemoration underlines how important this great Church Father is in the mystical/theological tradition of the Orthodox Church.

To God be the Glory and Praise Always!

Please Note: according to the Tradition of our Holy Orthodox Church, we are called during the Great Lent to place special emphasis on the Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving.

We have now entered into the whole fasting period of the Great Lent. Thus, we are called to Fast from all Meat, Dairy Products, Fish (excluding shellfish), Wine & Olive Oil. The most important thing to remember about our Fasting is that we are also called to approach this Discipline in the Spirit of the Law, not the Letter of the Law. Try to do the best you can; if necessary, begin with small steps and pray for the strength to take bigger steps as you are able.

Let us also avail ourselves of the opportunities during these next few weeks for extra prayer, Liturgically in Church and from within the Closet of our Hearts; and for the sharing of our Alms, our Mercies, with our Neighbor, anyone who is in need.

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***** 2024 CONFESSION SCHEDULE FOR GREAT LENT *****

Monday: 5:00 PM – 5:45 PM

Tuesday & Thursday: By Appointment

Friday: 5:00 PM – 5:45 PM

Saturday: 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM if Great Vespers Scheduled

Please Note: No Confessions on Wednesdays.

If you are not able to come for Confession during the times listed above, please call Fr. Don at 814-242-0084 and he will set up an appointment for you. Also, if you come for Confession right before a Divine Service, please join us for our corporate prayer if you are able. Thank You.

**Due To Fr.'s Commitment to Matins,
Confession Will Not Be Offered on Sunday Mornings.**

Note: All Parishioners Are Asked To Have Their Confessions Heard by Lazarus Saturday, April 27, 2024 ... (Exception ... Those Out of Town).

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You are Forgiven and Healed

In Capernaum Jesus is surrounded by great numbers of people. As He preaches to the crowd, four friends of a paralyzed man lower him on his mat through the roof so that he can be close enough for Jesus to see him and cure him. Jesus responds to this act of faith, not by healing the man immediately, but by touching off the first of a series of controversial dialogues with the Scribes and Pharisees. When Jesus says, "Child, your sins are forgiven," He is as much as saying, "It is God whom you approach." In the Old Testament, only God is capable of forgiving sins; and it was expected that He would do so only at the end of time. It becomes clear why the Scribes murmur "he is blaspheming" and why Jesus brings it all out in the open. His claim to be able to forgive sins better reveals His identity as Son of God than do the miracles He performs.

Aware of the silent censure His forgiving word has caused in the crowd, Jesus proceeds to prove that "the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth" by commanding the man to rise and walk in the sight of everyone. In concluding this miracle, Mark asks his readers to praise God for His presence in their midst as the forgiver-healer, just as the crowd did, even in the face of those who did not believe.

It is significant that Mark has chosen to present this miracle and teaching about Jesus' power to forgive sins so early in his Gospel drama. It shows that the need for the experience of God's forgiveness was as important to first-century Christians as it is today. Mark's readers praise God for saying clearly, and even today, "My sons, my daughters, I absolve you from your sins."

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