



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week's Schedule

Saturday, April 17

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, April 18

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Monday, April 19

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers

Tuesday, April 20

9:00 am Lenten Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, April 21

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy /fellowship

Thursday, April 22

9:00 am Lenten Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Friday, April 23

7:00 pm Moleben for the Sick

Saturday, April 24 Lazarus Saturday

9:30 am Students' Confession

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Breakfast

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, April 25 Palm Sunday w/Procession

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Fifth Saturday/Sunday of Great Lent

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

April 17-18, 2021

Announcements

➤ **As we complete** the last week of the Great Fast and enter into Holy Week, let us redouble our efforts to remain faithful and patient. This is our opportunity to bring the Saturday and Sunday congregations together for the most important week of the year. **This will be the first time we're together for Holy Week and Pascha feasts in two years!** This is an occasion for tremendous celebration and thanksgiving to God. Please join us!

➤ We are in need of **donations for flowers** which will adorn the tomb of Christ and the church beginning on Holy Friday through Pascha and St Thomas Sunday. Please either use the envelopes provided or earmark a special donation for flowers. God bless you!

➤ It is a tradition for each family to prepare a **basket of Paschal and fasting food** to be blessed after the Divine Liturgy on Holy Pascha. We will also have our annual feast downstairs after the Divine Liturgy. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

➤ Please remember in your prayers **Susan and Richard Porter** who were victims in a serious car accident on their way to church last Sunday. It was caused by a careless driver who was driving at a high rate of speed in the wrong lane and hit Rick and Susie's car head on. Rick sustained minor injuries and bruising but Susie suffered a broken wrist and ankle. Their car was totally destroyed. Please pray for them and their healing. May God watch over them and keep them in his safety and protection.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none)
Home: George Shaytar. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **The Mertz Family** for the health of Rick and Susie Porter; Happy Birthday to Theo Mertz and Helen Billak. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton; for special intentions. From **Irene Kulchock** for the departed servants Stephen Pravlochak (3/31/1979) and Bridget Kulchock (3/21/2006); for the health of Jan Pravlochak. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servants Olga Kasnot and Jack Saban. From **John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Galina Vilkova. From **John and Nancy Pravlochak** for the newly departed servant Jack Saban; in memory of mother Anna; for the health of granddaughter Julia on her birthday; Helen Billak on her birthday; health of grandchildren. From **Mat. Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant of God Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Sandi Tirpak** for the departed servant of God my mother (4/10); in memory of Jack Saban; for the health and salvation of my family; for special intentions. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant Jack Saban; for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Charles Wasilko** for the departed servant Jack Saban. From **Marsha Wasilko** in memory the newly departed Jack Saban and Olga Kasnot; happy birthday and many years to Helen Billak!

Thank You

➤ **to Lindy Hamilton** for sponsoring all categories of monthly donations for in April, in memory of her twin brother, Russell: (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10).

St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: Ezekiel

Scripture reference: Book of Ezekiel

Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Ezekiel? What was happening in Israel during his life?
- Where did Ezekiel live while prophesying? Why did he live there?
- What happened to Solomon's temple during this time?
- Ezekiel lived in a very hard time for the Jewish people. How did Ezekiel respond? Did he lose hope in the Lord, his people, the whole world?
- What is the significance and meaning of Ezekiel's visions? The wheel? The dry bones?
- How does Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones help us understand the Resurrection?
- Have you had dreams? How are dreams different from visions?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Reread the vision(s) of Ezekiel and illustrate them (chapter 1 and 37). Make two drawings for each vision. Read the description once out loud and then draw the vision based on your memory. The second time, keep the scripture open and read carefully and quietly to draw a more precise drawing. Compare the two illustrations.

Prayer: Lord, give us strength and raise us up as you did the dry bones.



Hymns and Readings for Saturday, April 17

Tone 8 Troparion *(Theotokos)*

When the Archangel understood the mysterious command,

he came to the house of Joseph with haste and proclaimed to the unwedded Lady:

“He Who bowed the heavens by His condescension is contained fully and without change in you!

As I behold Him in your womb, taking the form of a servant, I am frightened, but cry:// ‘Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!’”

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

Tone 8 Kontakion *(Theotokos)*

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts!

We, your servants delivered from evil sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos.

As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity//

so that we may sing: “Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!”

Tone 3 Prokeimenon *(Song of the Theotokos)*

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. *(Lk. 1:46-47)*

Epistle of the Saturday (Hebrews 9:24-28)

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is

appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Epistle of the Theotokos (Hebrews 9:1-7)

Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance;

Gospel of the Saturday (Mark 8:27-31)

Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?”

So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”

Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Gospel of the Theotokos (Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28)

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!”

But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Communion Hymn for the Theotokos

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the Name of the Lord. *(Ps. 115:4)* Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Akathist Hymn

Forty years after a great victory in Constantinople against the Scythian Khagan and the Persian

Sharbaraz through a miracle performed by the Mother of God, during the reign of Constantine Pogonatos, the Hagarenes mustered an enormous army and attacked Constantinople. They laid siege to the city for seven years and, while wintering in the regions around Cyzicus, lost many of their own soldiers. Then, giving up and withdrawing with their fleet, they reached Syliaion, where they all drowned at sea, by the mediation of the All-Pure Mother of God. Again, a third time, during the reign of Leo the Isaurian, the Hagarenes, numbering very many thousands, first destroyed the Persian Empire, and then invaded Egypt and Libya, India, Ethiopia, and Spain. After that, they advanced against the very Queen of cities, with the additional support of 1800 ships. They surrounded the city and waited to take it by storm. The holy people of the city, bearing the hallowed Wood of the Precious and Life-giving Cross and the venerable Icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria, went around the walls, tearfully propitiating God. Thereafter, the Hagarenes decided to separate their army into two divisions: one division marched against the Bulgarians, but more than twenty thousand of them were slain in the fighting; the other division remained behind to capture Constantinople. However, they were prevented from so doing by a chain that extended from Galatia to the city walls. Retreating, they reached the Sosthenian Strait, where most of their ships were smashed and destroyed by the onrush of a north wind. The survivors were stricken with a terrible famine, to the point that they cooked human flesh and even ate dung. They then fled, but when they reached the Aegean Sea, almost all of their vessels sank with all hands into its depths; for a hailstorm suddenly fell from the sky, causing the sea to seethe so much that it dissolved the pitch that held the ships together. Thus, that innumerable fleet was destroyed, and only three ships survived to report what had happened.

We celebrate the present feast on account of all these preternatural miracles of the All-Pure Mother of God. The hymn is called “Akathist” because at that time all the people chanted it to the Mother of the Word while standing throughout the night; and also because, while we are accustomed to sitting down when such hymns are chanted on the other Feasts, on the present Feast of the Theotokos, we all stand and listen to the hymn.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, April 18

Tone 4 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

Tone 8 Troparion (*St. Mary of Egypt*)

The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Mother, for thou didst take up the Cross and follow Christ. By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for it passes away; but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.// Therefore thy spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with the angels.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 4 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master,// He has risen on the third day!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 3 Kontakion (*St. Mary of Egypt*)

Having been a sinful woman, thou becamest through repentance a bride of Christ. Having attained angelic life, thou didst defeat demons with the weapon of the Cross.//

Therefore, O most glorious Mary, thou art a bride of the Kingdom.

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (*Resurrection*)

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (*Ps. 103:26*)

Epistle of the Sunday (Hebrews 9:11-14)

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Gospel of the Sunday (Mark 10:32-45)

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. 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; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.”

And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They said to Him, “We are able.”

So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1) The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! (Ps. 111:6) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

St Mary of Egypt

When she was only twelve years old, she slipped away from her parents and went to Alexandria, where she lived a life of prodigality for seventeen years. Then, moved by curiosity, she

departed for Jerusalem with many pilgrims, in order to be present at the Exaltation of the Precious Cross. During the voyage, she gave herself over to every kind of licentiousness and immorality and enticed many into the pit of perdition.

Wishing to enter the Church, on the day when the Cross was being elevated, three times, four times, she sensed an invisible force that prevented her from entering, whereas the crowd of people with her was entering without any hindrance. Smitten in her heart by this, she resolved to change her life and to propitiate God through repentance; and thus, on returning to the Church, she entered it with ease. After venerating the Precious Cross, she departed from Jerusalem that same day, crossed the Jordan, and went into the inner recesses of the desert, where, for forty-seven years, she lived a life that was very severe and superhuman, praying alone with God.

Near the end of her life, she encountered a hermit named Zosimas and, after recounting her life from the beginning, she besought him to bring her the immaculate Mysteries so that she might receive communion. He did so the following year, on Great Thursday. When Zosimas returned a year later, he found her dead, stretched out on the ground, with a note near her, which read: “O Abba Zosimas, bury the body of humble Mary in this place. I reposed on the same day that I communed the immaculate Mysteries. Pray for me.” Her death is assigned to the year 378.

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on the 1st of April; but she is also commemorated on this day, as the Holy Fast is already drawing to a close, in order to arouse the slothful and the sinners to repentance, having St. Mary as an example.

By her intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.