

# Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

April 2, 2023

Tone 1



## *Fifth Sunday Of Lent*

*St. Mary of Egypt*

## **Divine Liturgy Readings**

*(Readings on Back)*

- ◆ **Hebrews 9:11-14**
- ◆ **Mark 10:32-45**

## *Announcements:*

### Reception into the Orthodox Church

Lazarus Saturday, April 8th, our Catechumen Megan Greller will be received into the Orthodox Church by Chrismation before the Liturgy. Our other 2 catechumen will be received into the Church the same day at St. John the Baptist Church in Campbell, OH. Congratulations to them all!

### Counters and Greeters Needed

We are looking for help with counting the weekly collections and serving as a greeter on Sunday morning. If you would like to help in either way, please see Amy Bastock (amybastock1967@gmail.com) for more details, and to sign up.

### Church Cleaning

On Saturday, April 8, we will have liturgy for Lazarus Saturday at 9:30. Immediately following liturgy, we will have a church cleaning party. Please bring your gloves, Windex, wood polish, etc.

### Eggs Needed

There is a sign-up list on the bulletin board downstairs. We need 9 doz eggs to be hard-boiled and brought to liturgy on Palm Sunday, April 9th so they can be dyed before Pascha. If you would like to sponsor a dozen, please sign up. If you would like to help dye the eggs, see Midge Liles.

## This Week

### Wednesday, April 5

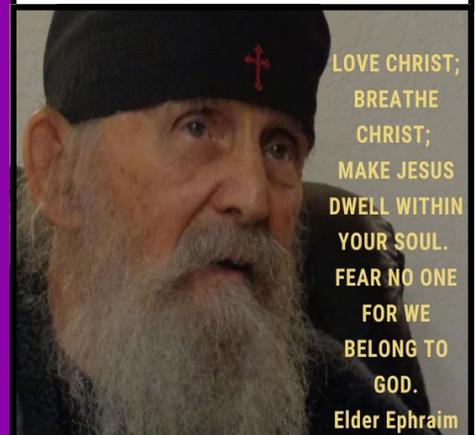
6:00pm - Liturgy of the  
Presanctified Gifts

### Saturday, April 8

9:30am - Lazarus Saturday  
Liturgy  
Church Cleaning to follow  
6:00pm - Vespers w/Litya  
Blessing of Palms & Branches

### Palm Sunday, April 9

9:00am - The Hours  
9:30am - Divine Liturgy



LOVE CHRIST;  
BREATHE  
CHRIST;  
MAKE JESUS  
DWELL WITHIN  
YOUR SOUL.  
FEAR NO ONE  
FOR WE  
BELONG TO  
GOD.  
Elder Ephraim

## *Gospel Meditation*

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds His disciples that He must suffer torture and death in order to defeat sin and death on our behalf—to make a way for us to inherit the Kingdom prepared for us. These are such stirring words; Christ reveals to them that He must die that mankind may live.

Immediately after telling them that He will die on their behalf, that He Himself is the ultimate, the final Pascha (Passover), the disciples begin vying for who will be on top in His Kingdom. They picture the Kingdom of Heaven just like the way of the world where influence and power politics can put you on top. We can imagine some of the disciples falling prey to this mistaken thinking, because we ourselves might have done the same. Jesus reminds us all that the way of the world won't get us anywhere in the economy of heaven. What's valued in the world is poison for the soul that desires the Kingdom of Heaven.

Instead, Jesus shows us a better way by example: a way that enables them and us to commune with the living God, to find freedom from vain and worldly pursuits, lust for power, and covetousness over what we don't have. He says, "Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. For even the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

This is also the story of Mary: she was busy wearing out her body and destroying both her body and her soul when she was confronted by the icon of the Holy Theotokos. The icon of the Virgin convicted her with her purity, her humility; she was forbidden entrance into the holy church of the cross in Jerusalem. She couldn't enter into the holy presence of Christ's victory over sin and death; she couldn't bear communion with Him in her present state. The Holy Virgin, whose loving and pure image confronted her, was everything that Mary was not; the Theotokos in her purity, her humility, in her YES to God's love and calling on her life, in her servanthood and submission, was outwards and inwards a mirror image to Mary's licentiousness, her vanity, her NO to God and to His likeness in her. Mary knew no love; the Theotokos knew only love.

In her despair over this realization, she desired a change, a new beginning with even greater fervor than she had desired the flesh up until that point—she turned away from her former life that was death and towards a new life in Christ, Who is Life.

After years of self-abuse and giving into the basest of passions, it took Mary seventeen years of intense struggle through prayer and extreme fasting to find freedom and win the victory over her passions—for no one is beyond God's healing and grace if they are willing to humble themselves, admit and confess their sins before God, as

Christ God spoke to the sinful woman who anointed His feet with her tears, saying, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

You may not have the depth of struggles with the passions or pride that Mary did or the woman who anointed Christ's feet. Perhaps you're not so enraptured by this world's temporal vanities, but we all are in need of continued healing and growth in God's divine grace, in the humility and repentance Mary exemplifies, that Christ God is, if we wish to be in His near presence. We all have need of continued struggle to be freed of the passions and grow in the faith that manifests itself in a servant's heart and love for those around us.

Our growth in the likeness of God, our return to our full selves—whom God has made us to be as His adopted sons—as those who have "put on Christ" and for whom much has been forgiven, begins with this humility, with our desire to love God more by loving each other right here, in the family of the Church. Only from this starting point of repentance, and forgiveness, do we learn to come outside ourselves to love our brothers in the world, and so, draw them also into the net of Christ's love and truth.



## Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

Our venerable mother Mary of Egypt was a desert ascetic who repented of a life of debauchery. 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 St. 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 Theotokos. She began to weep and prayed with all her might that the Theotokos might allow her to see the True Cross; afterwards, she promised, she would renounce her worldly desires and go wherever the Theotokos 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 Theotokos in all things.

Following 47 years in solitude, she met the priest St. 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 set that night. Then Mary appeared on the opposite side

### Prayers Appreciated for:

#### Living:

Archpriest Emil  
Dn. Doug  
Mat. Kathy  
Katherine, Sam,  
Lisa, Paula  
Marianne,  
Suleiman  
Steve

#### Departed:

Joshua

### Tall Candles

Are available to be sponsored. \$15 each. See Fr Joseph for availability.

### WEEKLY READINGS

#### **Monday, April 3**

*St Theodosia of Tyre*  
Genesis 27:1-41  
Proverbs 19:16-25

#### **Tuesday, April 4**

*St. Joseph the Hymnographer*  
Gen. 31:3-16  
Prov. 2:3-21

#### **Wed, April 5**

*St. Mark the Anchorite*  
Gen. 43:26-31, 45:1-16  
Prov. 21:23-22:4

#### **Thurs, April 6**

*St. Methodius*  
Gen 46:1-7  
Prov. 23:15-24:5

#### **Friday, April 7**

*St. Tikhon, of North America*  
Hebrews 7:26-8:2  
John 10:9-16

#### **Saturday, April 8**

*Lazarus Saturday*  
Heb. 12:28-13:8  
John 11:1-45

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.



## *Today's Scripture Readings*

### **Epistle: 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: 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."

*Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!*

## **Ss Peter & Paul Orthodox Church**

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