

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church



100th Anniversary

THE FORERUNNER

St John the Baptist Orthodox Church

211 Cable Avenue – East Pittsburgh, PA 15112

HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN GREGORY OF NYSSA

American Carpatho-Russian Diocese-Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

The Very Reverend Protopresbyter Joseph Fester

Rectory: 412-824-0246 Mobile: 412-607-7039

Email: protopresbyterjoseph@gmail.com

Website: www.sjbeastpitt.org – Facebook: @stjohneastpitt

Subdeacon Gary Grysiak, Cantor; Reader Justin Rosco, Choir Director;

Robert Pervuznik, Jr., Parish Council President

| 5 Sunday | 6 Mon | 7 Tuesday | 8 Wednesday | 9 Thurs | 10 Friday | 11 Saturday |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Palm Sunday 9:00 Festal Liturgy | Holy Monday 9am Presanctified Liturgy | Holy Tuesday 9am Presanctified Liturgy | Holy Wednesday 9am Presanctified Liturgy | Holy Thursday 9am Vespers Liturgy | Holy Friday 9am Royal Hours | Holy Saturday 9am Vespers Liturgy |
| 5pm Bridegroom Matins FB Live | 5pm Bridegroom Matins FB Live | 5pm Bridegroom Matins FB Live | 5pm Holy Unction FB Live Stream | 5pm Passion Gospels FB Live Stream | 7pm Great Vespers FB Live Stream | 9pm Nocturns, Paschal Matins FB Live Stream |

WE SAY- to all who are with us today at St. John's for the first time, ***you are welcome here!*** We pray that you will consider making St. John's your spiritual home. Please join us after Liturgy downstairs for fellowship.

OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD- Sometimes we miss a Sunday and the opportunity to offer our financial gift to the Lord. If we do, please catch up with your gifts. Whether we are here or not, our parish bills continue. Thanks, and God bless!

Sunday, April 5 and 12, 2020 – Attendance 4 – Weekly Offering, \$995 – Palm Sunday Offerings, \$105 Holy Thursday, Friday and Saturday Offerings, \$180 – Easter Offering, \$275 – Easter Candles, \$35 – Membership Dues, \$200 – Patriarchal Pence, \$95 – Needy Envelopes, \$155 – Easter Flowers, \$20 – Vigil Candles, \$246 – Icon Project, \$50 – Total \$3459

IT WILL BE IMPORTANT- for us to keep our weekly donations to St. John's going while we all practice social distancing and follow the rules set forth by our Metropolitan Gregory and local government officials to limit direct participation in the Divine services to only essential persons. Please mail your offerings to the church address. You can also call the rectory with your Vigil intentions or mail in your requests.

ALL SERVICES- for Holy Week and Pascha will be live streamed on FB at <https://www.facebook.com/joseph.fester>

THE APRIL CALENDAR- and service schedule can be viewed at https://sjbeastpitt.org/calendar/month_print.php

TODAY- we blessed our new Royal Doors icons of Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Many thanks to Anna Margaret Costa for her generous donation that has added great beauty to our Church. God bless you.

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------------|
| Holy Monday | Matthew 21:18-43 | Matthew 24:3-35 |
| Holy Tuesday | Matthew 22:15-23:39 | Matthew 24:36-26:2 |
| Holy Wednesday | John 12:17-50 | Matthew 26:6-16 |
| Holy Thursday | Matthew 26:2-20, John 13:3-17, Matthew 26:21-39, Luke 22:43-45, Matthew 26:40-27:2 | |
| Holy Friday | Matthew 27:1-56, Mark 15:16-41, Luke 23:32-49, John 18:28-19:37 | |
| Holy Saturday | Romans 6:3-11 | Matthew 28:1-20 |
| PASCHA | Act 1:1-8 | John 1:1-17 |

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS – Thomas Planiczki, Josephine Sofelkanik, Michael Sterchak, John Edward Stagon, Kathryn Rogulin, Cathy Pervuznik, Fr. Michael and Matushka Susanne Senyo, Wally Perkins, Fr Lawrence Barriger, Gina Marie Gaspard, Dannette Wargo, Pani Marie Brancho, Rose Hollis, Marti and Cathilynn Baran, Aubrey Welch, Kalina Walker and the child, Malachi, born of her, Ashley Yeagers and the child Lincoln Carl born of her. Fr. John Dixon, Fr. Jonathan Tobias, Fr Daniel Prez (Joe Monde's brother), Michelle Clayton, Joshua and Natalie Walsh, Nicholas Hollis and all healthcare workers and for all sick with COVID-19 virus. Please keep Father Joseph informed on changes to anyone's health status so he can minister to them.

April Birthdays - Kristopher Carlisle 4/14 Brian White; Sr. 4/14 Garrett Skidmore 4/27 Mary Lou Begey 4/28 DeBorah Hutnyan 4/30 Cindy Sterchak 4/30

April Memorial – Newly departed: Paul Haruilesko

Perpetual: John & Anna Sabo, Harry & Mary Tucker, Julia Wazso, Michael & Mary Sivack, John Kalita, John, Mary & George Sabol, Magdalena Sadvary Sabol, George & Helen Kusik, Thomas Planiczki, Michael Yakubik, Pauline Sabo, John Zura, Anna Chokla, John Hrenko, Sr., Michael Billi, Michael Kostik, Julia Waszo, Maria Muchaj, George Oleksuk, Anna Rel, Michael Suvak, Mary Regrut, Michael Tabak, John Zebra, William Floder, Xenia Marchak, Mary Harajda, John Uram, Marie Ziatyk, Nicholas Kosarich, Helen Kravec, John Geras, George Pervuznik, Nicholas Muchkaj, William Weidenhof, Magdalena Sabol, William Geezer, Florence Skuby, John K Horsak, Stanley Majawski, Helen Evansky-Gabor, Henry Michael Beben, Andrew Kuzemka, Rose Fester and for all victims of the COVID-19 virus

O Christ our God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your Passion by raising Lazarus from the dead. Therefore, we as the children of Israel carry the symbol of victory and cry out to Your, the Conqueror of death: “Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Palm Sunday Tropar)

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

Joyous Feast of our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

As we conclude the 40 days of the Great Fast this past Friday, we enter this "bridge" weekend of Lazarus Saturday and Palm. The purple colors are set aside and gold vestments are worn by the clergy. We sing of the anticipated coming Resurrection of our Lord.

The raising of the Lord's friend, Lazarus, is not only a great miracle for Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, and for all those who witnessed it, but it points to the universal Resurrection of all mankind and the ultimate defeat of Hades and the last enemy of man, death itself.

The shortest verse in all of Holy Scripture is recorded by St. John the Theologian, John 11:35. Just two words, "*Jesus wept.*" Only two words but in those two words we see the depth of love, compassion and self-identification of our Lord with His creation. The Lord of Lords and the King of Glory stands before the tomb of Lazarus and He weeps. In that moment, the One who is Life comes face to face with the utter consequences of sin: decay, corruption and death. He who is without sin and corruption comes to the tomb and confronts the stench of death and He weeps. Why? Because it was not God's plan when He created the Cosmos and man, made in His Image and Likeness to suffer these things.

St. Basil the Great, in his beautiful Anaphora Prayers of the Divine Liturgy recounts,

"When You fashioned man, taking dust from the earth, and honored him with Your own image, O God, You set him in a paradise of plenty, promising him life immortal and the enjoyment of eternal good things in the observance of Your commandments. But when he disobeyed You, the true God, who had created him, and was led astray by the deceit of the serpent, and was slain by his own trespasses, You did banish him in Your righteous judgement, O God, from Paradise into this world, and did turn him back to the earth from which he was taken....."

It is this fallen cosmic state that our Lord remembers what should have been! He remembers the beauty of the created world as He stands before the tomb of His friend, Lazarus. Lazarus, four-days dead. Lazarus bound up in death, decay and corruption. Lazarus as a symbol of the death, decay and corruption of all creation.

And as Scripture makes clear when Jesus commands the tomb to be opened, Martha, Lazarus' sister protests saying, "Lord, he has been in the tomb four days, he will stink of death." Yes, Jesus wept!

But it is precisely this confrontation that our Lord was born to have and defeat. Born in fact to die, to "give Himself up for the life of the world." The bringing back to life of Lazarus by Jesus is not just a great miracle, but it is an act of divine kindness. Jesus resurrects Lazarus so that His friend will witness the ultimate defeat of death when Jesus goes to the Cross and Himself is bound in grave clothes. But, unlike Lazarus, Jesus will not be subject to corruption, again as St. Basil writes: "*for it was not possible for the Author of life should be held by corruption*"

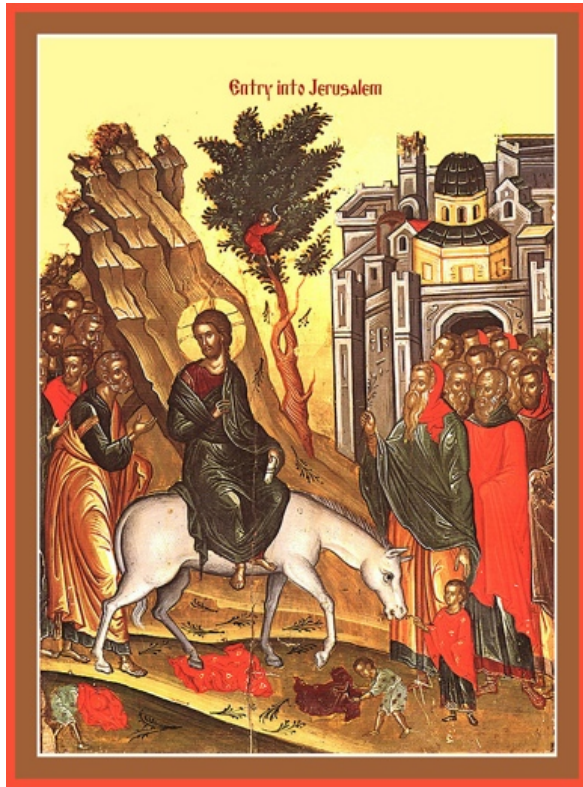
So, we will walk with our Lord from Bethany as he leaves Lazarus, Martha and Mary and makes His way to Jerusalem. He will be met with palms and rejoicing. The crowds will gather to see the One who raised Lazarus from the dead. They will sing, "*Hosanna*" and greet Him as a King. We will be with Him as He gives His final discourse with His disciples, preparing them for His betrayal, trial, execution, death and burial. We will be with Him as the tomb is sealed and the guard is set. And, we will be with Him when the Myrrh-bearing women come to the tomb to perform the traditional burial customs, only to find the tomb empty and the Lord Risen!

This most holy week of the year will take a special effort this year since most of us will be unable to be physically present for the Holy Week services and Pascha. But let us take comfort and be reminded that on that first Holy Friday, Saturday, and Pascha, most of the Lord's disciples were locked behind closed doors for fear of the Jewish authorities. It was only the women who were part of our Lord's company who braved to go to the tomb. So, most of us will hear of the Resurrection this year, like the disciples, behind closed doors. Unlike them, we will watch on our computers, tablets or smart phones. It will be a vicarious experience and one that will challenge us to bridge the physical distance from our homes to our church with a faith that can overcome any distance. Indeed, our faith in the Resurrection overcomes over 2000 years and any distance or obstacle.

May we all be one in prayer, in faith, and in love this week and always. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Father Joseph



PALM SUNDAY – Metropolitan Anthony of Sourzeh

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Today Christ enters the path not only of His sufferings but of that dreadful loneliness which enshrouds Him during all the days of Passion week. The loneliness begins with a misunderstanding; the people expect that the Lord's entry into Jerusalem will be the triumphant procession of a political leader, of a leader who will free his people from oppression, from slavery, from what they consider godlessness - because all paganism or idol-worship is a denial of the living God. The loneliness will develop further into the dreadful loneliness of not being understood even by His disciples. At the Last Supper when

the Saviour talks to them for the last time, they will be in constant doubt as to the meaning of His words. And later when He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane before the fearful death that is facing Him, His closest disciples, Peter, John and James - whom He chose to go with Him, fall asleep, depressed, tired, hopeless. The culmination of this loneliness will be Christ's cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Abandoned by men, rejected by the people of Israel, He encounters the extreme of forsakenness and dies without God, without men, alone, with only His love for God and His love for mankind, dying for its sake and for God's glory.

The beginning of Christ's Passion is today's triumphal procession. The people expected a king, a leader - and they found the Saviour of their souls. Nothing embitters a person so much as a lost, a disappointed hope; and that explains why people who could receive Him like that, who witnessed the raising of Lazarus, who saw Christ's miracles and heard His teaching, admired every word, who were ready to become His disciples as long as He brought victory, broke away from Him, turned their backs on Him and a few days later shouted, Crucify Him, crucify Him. And

Christ spent all those days in loneliness, knowing what was in store for Him, abandoned by every one except the Mother of God, who stood silently by, as She had done throughout Her life, participating in His tragic ascent to the Cross; She who had accepted the Annunciation, the Good Tidings, but who also accepted in silence Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce her heart.

During the coming days we shall be not just remembering, but be present at Christ's Passion. We shall be part of the crowd surrounding Christ and the disciples and the Mother of God. As we hear the Gospel readings, as we listen to the prayers of the Church, as one image after another of these days of the Passion passes before our eyes, let each one of us ask himself the question, "Where do I stand, who am I in this crowd? A Pharisee? A Scribe? A traitor, a coward? Who? Or do I stand among the Apostles?" But they too were overcome by fear. Peter denied Him thrice, Judas betrayed Him, John, James and Peter went to sleep just when Christ most needed human love and support; the other disciples fled; no one remained except John and the Mother of God, those who were bound to Him by the kind of love which fears nothing and is ready to share in everything.

Once more let us ask ourselves who we are and where we stand, what our position in this crowd is. Do we stand with hope, or despair, or what? And if we stand with indifference, we too are part of that terrifying crowd that surrounded Christ, shuffling, listening, and then going away; as we shall go away from church. The Crucifix will be standing here on Thursday and we shall be reading the Gospel about the Cross, the Crucifixion and death - and then what will happen? The Cross will remain standing, but we shall go away for a rest, go home to have supper, to sleep, to prepare for the fatigues of the next day. And during this time Christ is on the Cross, Christ is in the tomb. How awful it is that, like the disciples in their day, we are not able to spend one night, one hour with Him. Let us think about this, and if we are incapable of doing anything, let us at least realise who we are and where we stand, and at the final hour turn to Christ with the cry, the appeal of the thief, Remember me, Lord, in Thy Kingdom! Amen.

April 5 and 12 Candle Intentions

Health

Babich, Sandy - Babich Family
Bires, Alice - Benjamin
Bires, Alice - Fr William and Pani Illeana Bennett
Bires Alice - Newborns David Andrew & Joseph Andrew Bennett
Bires, Alice - Scott & Sharon
Bires, Alice - Wally
Bires, Alice - Ron Raible
Bires, Alice - Coronavirus Victims
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Benjamin
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Luke & Alexis
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Irene & Basil
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Janet
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Deborah
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Burkett Family
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Josie Sofelkanik
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Bob & Miryam Knutson
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Mitzi Conroy
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Wally Perkins
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - John E. Stagon
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Anthony Macchiaroli
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Kevin Henry
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Fr. John Dixon
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Marti Baran
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Kalina, Sean, Mila & Malachi
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Virus Victims
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Healthcare and Grocery Workers
Hoskins, Bob & Cheryl - Virus Victims
Hoskins, Bob & Cheryl - Medical Workers
Kocan, Niki - Infant Lincoln Carl Yeagers (2)
Kocan, Niki - Family (2)
Kocan, Niki - Ashley Yeagers
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Mom
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Emily, Rebecca, Tanner, Tyler
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Kelly, Lauren, Michael
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - John E. Stagon
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Marti Baran
Perevuznik Jr., Bob -Danielle
Perevuznik Jr., Bob -Sean Nelis
Perevuznik Jr., Bob -Pani Brancho
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - All St. John Parishioners
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Perevuznik, Skimore, Durmis, Poach Families
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - For the Safety of All Front Line Workers during Pandemic
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Fr Joseph & Pani Kathy

Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Fr Jonathan Tobias
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Wally Perkins
Perevuznik Jr., Bob -Kalina, Sean, Mila and Malachi
Sabeh, Nancy - Family Members
Stagon, George & Barb - Fr. Matthew, Pani Eleni, Seraphim, Luka, Harikila, Xenia
Stagon, George & Barb - Jeffery, Nicole, Jillina Payton
Stagon, George & Barb - Connie and Tyler
Stagon, George- Barbara
Stagon, George & Barb - All Virus victims
Stagon, John Jr. - John & Jessica
Stagon, John Jr. - David, Linda, Johnny
Stagon, John Jr. - David II, Christal and Weston

Special Intentions

Alice Bires

Memory

Babich, Sandy - Ron Babich
Bires, Alice - Parents
Bires, Alice- Brother-in-law
Bires, Alice- Helen
Bires, Alice-Margie
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Mother, Helen Grysiak
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Father, Charles Grysiak
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Mother, Irene Barney
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Father, Edward Barney
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Metropolitan Nicholas
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Virus Victims
Hoskins, Bob & Cheryl - Don Pollock
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Dad
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Uncle Georg
Perevuznik Jr., Bob - Linda Zigler
Sabeh, Nancy - Family Members
Stagon, George - Mom and Dad
Stagon, John Jr. - Wife Anna
Stagon, John Jr. - Father, Mother, Brothers
Stekel, Peggy - Mom and Dad