

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Lowell, Massachusetts



5th Sunday of Great Lent:
St. Mary of Egypt

April 18, 2021

ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

The Rt. Rev. Bishop JOHN, Diocese of Worcester and New England

Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Leonard Faris

Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

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WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) Service 9:00 a.m. Sunday School: Every other Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Church Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 a.m. and we should not arrive late. When we do arrive late and the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the priest is preaching the sermon or the Great Entrance is taking place, please **REMAIN** in the Vestibule until it is finished before entering the Church. At the end of the Divine Liturgy please keep your conversation until you have left the Church.

We should leave the Church in silence.

Important Notice: The reception of Holy Communion is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and recent Confession. Confessions are heard on Sunday mornings during the Matins Service or by special appointment. The Eucharistic Fast begins at midnight on Saturday and ends up with the receiving of Holy Communion. If you are on medication or a young child, you can have a light breakfast before coming to church. If you have any questions, please call Fr. Leonard.

Thank you,

Father Leonard

Prayer Requests and Bulletin News: All prayer requests and articles for the weekly bulletin must be submitted each week by **Noon, Tuesday**: emailed to Fr. Leonard at fatherfaris@comcast.net or call



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

If anyone is in the hospital it is the duty of the family to inform the priest so that he can visit the patient. Also, if anyone is homebound and would like to receive Holy Communion, he/she or a family member should contact Fr. Leonard to make arrangements to bring the Sacrament to the shut-in. Fr. Leonard is always happy to bring the Sacraments to those in Hospitals, Nursing Homes or at home. Thank you and God bless!



Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 4

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation, and proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled.

Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

Entrance Hymn

Ha-lum-mu li-nas-judu, wal-nar-ka 'lil-ma-sih, khal-lis-na ya bna l-lah, ya
man qa-ma min by-nil-am-wat, li-nu-rat-til la-ka, Hal-li-lu-ia

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 4 (repeated)

Troparion of St. Mary of Egypt, Tone 8

Through thee, the divine likeness was securely preserved, O mother Mary; for thou didst carry the cross and follow Christ. By example and precept thou didst teach us to ignore the body, because it is perishable, and to attend to the concerns of the undying soul. Therefore, doth thy soul rejoice with the angels.

Troparion of St. George, Tone 4

As deliver of captives and defender of the poor, healer of the infirmed, champion of kings, victorious great martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.

Ordinary Kontakion Sundays, Tone 2

O Undisputed Intercessor of Christians, the Mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator. Turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although we be sinners. Come to us, in time, with aid as we cry unto thee in faith, for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions, O Theotokos, who didst ever intercede for those who honor thee.

THE EPISTLE

Make your vows and pay them to the Lord our God. God is known in Judaea.
His Name is great in Israel. The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews.
(9:11-14)

Brethren, Christ having appeared a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; neither through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having found eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of bulls and goats and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (10:32-45)

At that time, Jesus took His twelve Disciples, and began to tell them what was to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and 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 upon Him, and kill Him; and after three days He will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Him, and said to Him, "Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire" And Jesus said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And they said to Him, "Grant us to sit, one at Thy right hand and one at Thy left, in Thy glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit at My right hand or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

*Prayers are being offered for the
Health and Safety of:*

Nora Abdelahad
Connie Abodeely
Virginia Andersson
Lorice Ansara
Yvette Ansara
Nel Arsenault
Siham Bahou
Charles Behrakis
Ed Betor
Paul & Kerrie Betor
David and Cindy Boragine
Ida Boragine
George Ellis
Michael Faris
Michael Forsley
Athanasia Grivas
Duayne Habib
Elias Hanna & Family
Joe Kadir
Fr. Stephen and Family
Nuha Shahin Louh
Rose Lowe
Joseph Mansour
Lynn, Thomas Marcotte & Family
Clemence Maria
Karine Nababout & Family
Gwen Noonan
Helen Poulos
Jamalie Saad
Michael Saati
Amad Tayebi
Jack Trottier
Robert, Denise & Megan Wagstaff
Dr. Vartan & Lisa Yeghiazarians &
Family
Genia Yeghiazarians
Fr. Andrew and Khouryee Jane Zbeeb

Prayers are being offered in Memory of:

Charles Abdelahad
George Abodeely
Miriam Abodeely
Andrew Ansara
Elias Ansara
John Ansara
Maurice Ansara
Michael Ansara
Phyllis Arsenault
Gladys Assaly
Linda Assaly
Yaacoub Awad
Juliette Bahou
Laurice Bahou
Widad Batten
James "Jimmy" Beaudry
Calvin Beede
June Behrakis
Lillian Betor
Dorothy Boragine
Sal Boragine
Cleopatra Bouras
Ella Jean Elias
Rosalind Elias
Frances Ellis
Frank Ellis
George & Elsie Faris
Mary T. Faris
Mary V. Faris
Phillip George
Elizabeth & Joseph Ghareeb
Elias Grivas
George P. Habib
Emile & Teffaha Haddad
Philip & Rosalind Hajjar
Charles & Annie Hamwey
Bernice Higgins
Dorothea Husson
Eleanor Husson
Joanne Husson
N. Mary Husson
Terry Husson Kadir
Siham Khadij
George Lowe
Amanda Louh
Efthymios & Paraskevi Manolis
Robert Maria
George Matook
Denise McCradu
Nafie Moses
Elias Nababout
Fred Noonan
Frederick & Matilda Noonan
Paul Panagopoulos, Sr.
Anisse Saad
Hanna Saad
Mary Saati
George W. & Mary Saba
Badawi Sabbouh
Eleanor Shalhoup
Fred Simon
Chakeep Skaff
Judy Skaff
Mildred & Arthur Skaff
Minnie Skaff
Nellie Husson Skaff
Ricky Skaff
Stephen Skaff
T. Michael Skaff
J. B. Taleb
Elaine Vieira
Leon Yeghiazarians
Mary Ann & Charles Zaharias
Hilda Zananiri
Nahil Zananiri



ALTAR BREAD

Today's Altar Bread is being offered in loving memory of Joseph and Elizabeth Ghareeb. May their memories be eternal.



MEMORIALS - Today, April 18th

A Memorial Service, in loving memory of Joseph (26 years) and Elizabeth (27 years) Ghareeb, is being offered by the Ghareeb Family. May their memories be eternal.



THIS WEEK

Sat 4/24 9:00 am Lazarus Saturday—Divine Liturgy



FLOWERS

The flowers adorning the Icon of The Blessed Virgin are given in honor and for the Health and Safety of Sara Skaff, requested by her aunt, Nicole Skaff. May God bless Sara and Nicole with good health, happiness and long life!



IMPORTANT REMINDER

Confessions are heard before and after all Lenten services and on Sundays following the Divine Liturgy. During Holy Week, confessions will be heard “ONLY” on Monday and Tuesday, before or after the Bridegroom Service. If you plan on receiving Holy Communion during Holy Week or on Pascha, you must first come to confession. This is the rule of the Church. Any question see Fr. Leonard.



REMINDER

PLEASE REMEMBER TO WEAR A MASK WHEN
ENTERING THE CHURCH AND
WEARING IT THROUGHOUT THE
LITURGY.

St. Mary of Egypt

St. Mary of Egypt is revered as the patron saint of penitents. Saint Mary, also known as Maria Aegyptiaca, was born somewhere in the Province of Egypt, and at the age of twelve she ran away from her parents to the city of Alexandria. Here she lived an extremely dissolute life.^[4] In her *Vita* it states that she often refused the money offered for her sexual favors, as she was driven "by an insatiable and an irrepressible passion," and that she mainly lived by begging, supplemented by spinning flax.

After seventeen years of this lifestyle, she traveled to Jerusalem for the Great Feasts of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. She undertook the journey as a sort of "anti-pilgrimage," stating that she hoped to find in the pilgrim crowds at Jerusalem even more partners in her lust. She paid for her passage by offering sexual favors to other pilgrims, and she continued her habitual lifestyle for a short time in Jerusalem. Her *Vita* relates that when she tried to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the celebration, she was barred from doing so by an unseen force. Realizing that this was because of her impurity, she was struck with remorse, and upon seeing an icon of the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary) outside the church, she prayed for forgiveness and promised to give up the world (i.e., become an ascetic). Then she attempted again to enter the church, and this time was permitted in. After venerating the relic of the true cross, she returned to the icon to give thanks, and heard a voice telling her, "If you cross the Jordan, you will find glorious rest." She immediately went to the monastery of Saint John the Baptist on the bank of the River Jordan, where she received absolution and afterwards

Holy Communion. The next morning, she crossed the Jordan and retired to the desert to live the rest of her life as a hermit in penitence. She took with her only three loaves of bread, and once they were gone, lived only on what she could find in the wilderness.

Approximately one year before her death, she recounted her life to Saint Zosimas of Palestine, who encountered her in the desert. When he unexpectedly met her in the desert, she was completely naked and almost unrecognizable as human. She asked Zosimas to toss her his mantle to cover herself with, and then she narrated her life's story to him. She asked him to meet her at the banks of the Jordan, on Holy Thursday of the following year, and bring her Holy Communion. When he fulfilled her wish, she crossed the river to get to him by walking on the surface of the water, and received Holy Communion, telling him to meet her again in the desert the following Lent. The next year, Zosimas travelled to the same spot where he first met her, some twenty days' journey from his monastery, and found her lying there dead. According to an inscription written in the sand next to her head, she had died on the very night he had given her Communion and had been somehow miraculously transported to the place he found her, and her body was preserved incorrupt. He buried her body with the assistance of a passing lion. On returning to the monastery he related her life story to the brethren, and it was preserved among them as oral tradition until it was written down by St. Sophronius.

Saturday of the Holy and Righteous Friend of Christ, Lazarus

Introduction

On the Saturday before Holy Week, the Orthodox Church commemorates a major feast of the year, the miracle of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when he raised Lazarus from the dead after he had lain in the grave four days. Here, at the end of Great Lent and the forty days of fasting and penitence, the Church combines this celebration with that of Palm Sunday. In triumph and joy the Church bears witness to the power of Christ over death and exalts Him as King before entering the most solemn week of the year, one that leads the faithful in remembrance of His suffering and death and concludes with the great and glorious Feast of Pascha.

Biblical Story

The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus Christ is found in the Gospel of John. Lazarus becomes ill, and his sisters, Mary and Martha send a message to Jesus stating, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." In response to the message, Jesus says, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it". Jesus did not immediately go to Bethany, the town where Lazarus lived with his sisters. Instead He remained in the place where He was staying for two more days. After this time, He told his disciples that they were returning to Judea. The disciples immediately expressed their concern, stating that the Jews there had recently tried to stone Him. Jesus replied to His disciples, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them".

After He said this, Jesus told his disciples that Lazarus had fallen asleep and that He was going there to wake him. The disciples wondered why He would go to wake Lazarus, since it was good for him to sleep if he was ill. Jesus, however, was referring to the death of Lazarus, and thus told the disciples directly that Lazarus was dead.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Since Bethany was near Jerusalem, many of the Jews had come to console Mary and Martha. When Martha heard that Jesus was approaching she went to meet Him and said to Him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of Him." Jesus told her that her brother will rise again. Martha said that she knew he would rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." Jesus asked Martha if she believed this. She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world".

Martha returned to tell Mary that Jesus had come and was asking for her. Mary went to meet Him, and she was followed by those who were consoling her. The mourners followed her thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When she came to Jesus, she fell at His feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus saw her weeping and those who were with her, and He was deeply moved. He asked to be taken to the tomb of Lazarus. As Jesus wept for Lazarus the Jews said, "See how He loved him." Others wondered that if Jesus could open the eyes of the blind, He certainly could have kept Lazarus from dying.

Jesus came to the tomb and asked that the stone that covered the door be taken away. Martha remarked that Lazarus had now been in the tomb for four days and that there would be a stench. Jesus replied, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" The stone was taken away, and Jesus looked toward heaven and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When He had said this, He called out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus walked out of the tomb, bound with the strips of burial cloth, and Jesus said, "Unbind him, and let him go".

As a result of this miracle, many of the Jews that were present believed in Jesus. Others went and told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. In response the Pharisees and chief priests met and considered how they might arrest Him and put Him to death. This miracle is performed by Christ as a reassurance to His disciples before the coming Passion: they are to understand that, though He suffers and dies, yet He is Lord and Victor over death. The resurrection of Lazarus is a prophecy in the form of an action. It foreshadows Christ's own Resurrection eight days later, and at the same time it anticipates the resurrection of all the righteous on the Last Day: Lazarus is "the saving first-fruits of the regeneration of the world."

As the liturgical texts emphasize, the miracle at Bethany reveals the two natures of Christ the God-man. Christ asks where Lazarus is laid and weeps for him, and so He shows the fullness of His manhood, involving as it does human ignorance and genuine grief for a beloved friend. Then, disclosing the fullness of His divine power, Christ raises Lazarus from the dead, even though his corpse has already begun to decompose and stink. This double fullness of the Lord's divinity and His humanity is to be kept in view throughout Holy Week, and above all on Good Friday. On the Cross we see a genuine human agony, both physical and mental, but we see more than this: we see not only suffering man but suffering God.

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Robert Maria.
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