

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

## MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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### PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Jos. Bartnicki. Nik-  
ki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley.  
Chris Carey. Lois Cianci. James Kane. Maryann Nappi Donahue.  
Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara  
Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Charl. & Joe Prezzia.  
Johanna Simon. Sue Solsman. Sus. Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry  
Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev.  
Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk. ✱Rev.  
Frank Milienewicz ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charl. &  
James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia  
Assaf. ✱Joe & Marie Barron. ✱Paul & Mary Ann Bauman. ✱A.J.  
Bolos. ✱Veronica Bolos. ✱Jos. Bolos. ✱Gary Bolos. ✱Natey  
Cheffers. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimacosky. ✱Ann & John  
Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Joe. & Margt. Dil-  
lenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Joe King. ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Ma-  
nuele. ✱Frank Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L. Mooty.  
✱Karen Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱  
Char. Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon.

### CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

### DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline ..... 0:00 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: ..... 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros ..... 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: ..... 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: .... 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

### HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; following  
any service; or by appointment.

### HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services / call the Rectory.

### HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

### VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

## SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE



Icon of the Presentation of Our Lord -- February 2nd

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM	
02 FEBRUARY 2025 ♦ TONE 04 EOTHINON 00 † ENCOUNTER OF THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST ♦ PURIFICATION OF MP	
<u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 17</i>
<u>ANTIPHONS:</u> <i>Encounter of the Lord</i>	
FIRST:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 29</i>
SECOND:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 32</i>
BEATTITUDES:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 125</i>
<u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u> <i>Encounter of the Lord</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 161</i>
<u>APOLYTIKIA:</u>	
<i>Resurrection (Tone 4)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 42</i>
<i>Encounter of the Lord (3x)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 162</i>
<i>Glory to the Father....</i>	
<u>KONDAKION:</u> <i>Encounter of the Lord</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 163</i>
<u>TRISAGION:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 50</i>
<u>PROKIMENON:</u> <i>(Weekday Wednesday)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 130</i>
<u>EPISTLE:</u>	<i>Hebrews 7:7-17</i>
<i>Brethren</i> , certainly the lower is blessed by the higher. And in one case indeed mortal men receive tithes, while Scripture testifies that this man lives on. And even Levi, the receiver of tithes, was also, so to speak, through Abraham made subject to tithes (Cf.Gn. 14:20), for he was still in his father’s loins when Melchisedek met him. If then perfection was by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need was there that another priest should rise, according to the order of Meichisedek, and said not to be according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, it is necessary that a change of law be made also. For the one of whom these things are said is from another tribe, from which no one has ever done service at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Judah (Cf.Is.1:2), and Moses said nothing at all about priests when referring to this tribe. And it is yet far more evident if there arises another priest, according to the likeness of Meichisedek, who has become so not according to the law of carnal commandment, but according to a life that cannot end. For it is testified of him, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Meichisedek (Ps.109:4).”	
<u>ALLELUIA:</u> <i>(Tone 4)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 59</i>
<i>Now you</i> shall dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to your word in peace; because my eyes have seen your salvation. <i>A light</i> of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people, Israel.	
<u>GOSPEL:</u>	<i>St. Luke 2:22-40</i>
<i>At that time</i> the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord according to the Law of Moses, (as it is written in the Law of the Lord: “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” And behold, there was in Jerusalem a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by inspiration of the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he also received him into his arms and blessed God, saying, “Now you release your servant, O Lord, according to your word, in peace; because my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples: A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for your people Israel.” And Joseph and his mother were marveling at the things spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And your own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after she was first married and by herself as a widow to eighty-four years. She never left the temple, with fastings and prayers worshipping night and day. And coming up at that very hour, she began to give praise to the Lord, and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had fulfilled all things prescribed in the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, into their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong in spirit. He was full of wisdom and the grace of God was upon him.	
<u>HIRMOS:</u> <i>Encounter of the Lord</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 164 / p.77</i>
<u>KINONKON:</u> <i>Encounter of the Lord</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 165 / p. 83</i>
<u>COMMUNION HYMN:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 87</i>
<u>POST- COMMUNION HYMN:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 87</i>

### Their Wonderworking Relics

Cyrus and John had put themselves in mortal danger to sustain the faith of Athanasia and her daughters. As a result they personified the Lord Jesus’ teaching, “*Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel’s will save it*” (Mk 8:35). The witness of Ss. Cyrus and John would come to be spread far beyond the place of their martyrdom.

In 414 St Cyril of Alexandria had the relics of Ss. Cyrus and John brought to Menouthis, a city northeast of Alexandria. Menouthis was sacred to the pagan deities Isis and Serapis. At that time there was a temple at Menouthis famed for its oracles and cures which attracted even some simple Christians. St. Cyril thought to replace this cult by establishing a shrine to St. Cyrus the Unmercenary Healer. As Cyril explained in a homily, he had a vision in which an angel instructed him to bring the relics of St Cyrus to Menouthis in order to do battle with Isis.

When the floor of St Mark’s was opened, two graves were found and the story of Cyrus’ companion John came to light. Both bodies were brought to Menouthis with much fanfare, an event commemorated in the Byzantine Churches on June 28. As St Cyril described it, “The holy martyrs, Ss. Cyrus and John, came forth ready to do battle for the Christian religion... As their reward for their love for Christ, they received the power to trample upon Satan and expel the force of evil spirits” (Homily 18, 3).

St Cyril knew that it would be futile to forbid Christians to visit “the Mistress,” as Isis was known; he did, however, insist that they first visit the relics of Ss. Cyrus and John. This expression of Christian devotion caused the priests of Isis to refuse them entry to her shrine, effectively bringing its popularity to an end!

Entrusted to the care of the Pachomian monastery of Tabennisi, the shrine of Ss. Cyrus and John became known throughout the Middle East and beyond for the healings reported there. This in turn spread the fame of the saints and the city eventually became known as Aba-Kyr (Father Cyrus).

Perhaps the most famous healing attributed to these saints was that of St Sophronios of Jerusalem who was cured of ophthalmia, an inflammation of the eyes which often led to total blindness. In gratitude he composed an encomium in praise of the saints recounting a number of miracles attributed to them. In English this work is generally called *The Seventy Miracles of Ss. Cyrus and John*.

It is thought that St Sophronios was to some extent responsible for the rise of devotion to these saints in the West. In 634 Sophronios sent a copy of his Miracles along with some relics of Ss. Cyrus and John to Pope Honorius in Rome. Sophronios was seeking the pope’s support in the doctrinal controversies of the day. In time three churches were erected in Rome in honor of these saints, mistakenly called “St Passera” (Pa Ser = Aba Kyr).

In the tenth century the relics remaining at Menouthis were relocated to a church bearing their name in Old Cairo, the new center of Coptic Church life. In 960 this church was destroyed in a riot and the relics moved to the nearby Church of St Barbara where they remain in a chapel dedicated to their memory. A portion of their relics is also enshrined in the nearby monastery of Deir Tadros.



JANUARY 31: HOLY MARTYRS CYRUS & JOHN

IT IS NOT OFTEN that the Byzantine, Coptic and Roman Churches commemorate saints on the same day. It is true in the case of saints like the holy martyrs Cyrus and John, who are remembered on January 31. They were not Apostles who brought the Gospel to new lands or Church Fathers whose thought influenced Churches all over the world. Who were they and what does their witness have to say to us today?

Cyrus the Unmercenary Healer

Nothing is known of the early lives of these saints. We do not know whether either or both of them were born into Christian families. We first meet them later in life, during the persecution of Diocletian (303- 305), which was particularly fierce in Egypt. At that time Cyrus was a physician in Alexandria who treated the sick with potions he developed in his workshop, a place later transformed into a shrine.

Cyrus is celebrated as one of the great “Unmercenary Healers” – those who would not accept payment for their services, seeing their skill as a gift from God. This practice attracted many of his patients to Christ and, consequently, brought Cyrus to the attention of the authorities. Denounced to the city prefect, Cyrus fled and took refuge in the Roman province of Arabia (southern Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia today). There he abandoned the practice of medicine and adopted the monastic life. When the persecution waned, Cyrus returned to Egypt. John, a young Christian soldier from Edessa in northern Mesopotamia was on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when he heard of the physician-become-monk, Cyrus. He sought him out, becoming his companion and disciple.

The Great Persecution

Diocletian abdicated on May 1, 305. His successor, Maximinus, renewed the persecution of Christians the next year. The contemporary Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Martyrs of Palestine*, writes that tens, twenties, even hundreds of Christians were put to death on a single day in Egypt, making it the region which suffered the most during the persecutions. According to one report, 660 Christians were killed in Alexandria alone between 303 and 311. To this day the Coptic Church structures its calendar around this persecution rather than the birth of Christ.

Maximinus had revised the procedure for registering citizens to include women and children. This enabled the authorities to summon even children and infants to offer sacrifice to the Roman deities. It happened that at Canopus, on the outskirts of Alexandria, officials arrested a Christian family and brought them to the city to sacrifice. Along with their mother, Athanasia, three youngsters had been arrested: fifteen-year old Theoctista, thirteen-year old Theodota and eleven-year old Eudoxia.

At that time in Egypt Christians were often mutilated and exiled to work in mines, if not killed outright. When Cyrus and John heard of it, they were concerned that the girls might not be strong enough to preserve their faith. They resolved to go to Alexandria to comfort and encourage these youngsters. When their presence became known, they too were arrested and beheaded together with the others on January 31, 311. They were buried at the Church of St Mark in Canopus.

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Saturday Afternoon, February 01

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, January 02

ENCOUNTER OF THE LORD, J. CHRIST

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Religious Education: following

Potluck Brunch

Saturday Afternoon, February 08

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, January 09

PHARISEE & PUBLICAN SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

FAST FREE WEEK

Saturday Afternoon, February 15

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

2024 WEEKLY COLLECTION

January 26

Weekly Offering: \$ 600.00

Monthly: \$ 25.00

Candles: \$ 25.00

Total: \$ 650.00

Thank you for your support!

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

01 February: Joseph Viola Family ✕

02 February: Joseph Viola Family ✕

08 February: Joseph Viola Family ✕

09 February: Joseph Viola Family ✕

Theophany House Blessings

If you would like your home blessed during this holy season please sign up in the back of the church, call the rectory 570.343.6092

St. Joseph Breakfast  
Sunday, March 23, 2025

# COME TO EXPEL THE DARKNESS

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE DOWN your Christmas tree? In our society some people throw theirs out on December 26! In the Christian East, however, many wait until today, the feast of the Infant Christ's Encounter (*Hypapante*) with His people in the persons of Simeon and Anna. This feast celebrates the event recorded in St Luke's Gospel: "*Now when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*" (Lk 2:22). While there they meet Simeon and Anna who recognize God's decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah's coming.

The passage brings several questions to mind:

## ***1 – What is “her purification”?***

Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that a mother must be purified after 40 days. According to the Torah, "*The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: “A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over”’*" (Lev 12:1-4).

In Jewish law any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood – the carrier of life – makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways.

## ***2 – Why is a child “presented to the Lord”?***

Again according to the Torah, "*Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem*" (Ex 13:13). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that it comes from Him and is His. Children could be “redeemed” by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

## ***3 – Why do we stress “the Encounter”?***

The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God's saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, "*it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*" (Lk 2:26). *He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Canticle of Simeon: “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel”* (Lk 2:29-32). We repeat this canticle at the end of every day (vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy, as well as when any child is presented in church forty days after its birth.

Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment "*and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem*" (Lk 2:38).

This Encounter celebrated the coming of the One for whom the Jews longed, the Messiah, and recognized that the Gentiles too would be enlightened through Him.

## **Our Celebration of This Feast**

As might be expected, this feast originated in Jerusalem where the event it remembers took place. It likely began in the era of St Constantine the Great who sponsored the development of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Sermons on this Feast by the bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407) have come down to us.

Egeria, the Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, wrote about witnessing this feast: "The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honor, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter. All the priests, and after them the bishop, preach, always taking for their subject that part of the Gospel where Joseph and Mary brought the Lord into the Temple on the fortieth day, and Simeon and Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, saw Him, treating of the words which they spoke when they saw the Lord, and of that offering which His parents made. When everything that is customary has been done in order, the sacrament is celebrated, and the dismissal takes place."

The feast soon spread to Antioch and then, to Constantinople and the whole empire. It became particularly important in Constantinople in the sixth century when a plague threatened the city. After a solemn procession on this feast the plague ceased.

When this feast was instituted, the birth of Christ and His baptism at the Jordan were observed on the same day, January 6 (as the Armenian Church still does today). The Hypapante was then kept on February 14. When the separate feast of the Nativity on December 25 became common, the Hypapante was moved accordingly.

## **Light to the Gentiles**

In the Western Church candles are blessed on this feast and a candlelight procession held in honor of the "Light to enlighten the Gentiles." This practice actually began in Jerusalem, as Egeria attests. When the feast was instituted in Constantinople the procession was introduced there as well. Today some Slavic Churches bless candles on this day but the procession has disappeared from this feast in the Byzantine Churches.

## **From a Homily of Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 636 AD)**

*In honor of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light.*

*Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the One who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of His eternal light.*

*Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ. The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the True Light in her arms and brought Him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the True Light as we hasten to meet Him.*

*The Light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the Light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through Him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.*

*Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this Light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness.*