

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 ST. FRANCIS CABRINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

Contact office: 570.343.6092 † 570.468.4854  
stjosephscranton@gmail.com ♣ www.melkitescranton.org

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Mich. Abda. Jos. Bartnicki. Nikki 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 Prezgia. 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. Jos. Daratony. ✱Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. 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. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Natey Cheffers. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimacosky. ✱Ann & John Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Joe. & Margt. Dillenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Joe King. ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱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.

## 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.

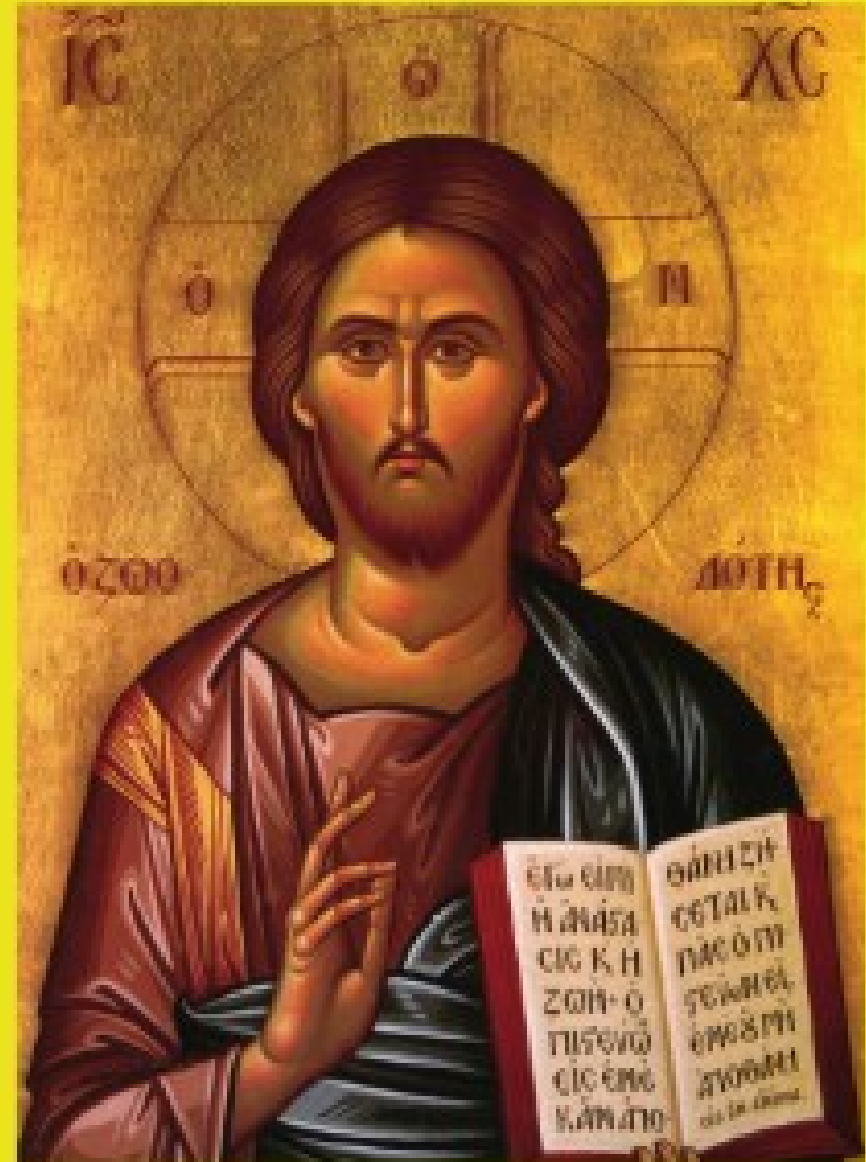
## HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

## VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

## CHEESEFARE SUNDAY



Icon of Christ the Teacher

# DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

02 MARCH 2025 ♦ TONE 08 EOTHINON 08 † SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS ♦ CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

## GREAT DOXOLOGY:

*Liturgy Book p. 17*

## ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

SECOND:

*Liturgy Book p. 32*

BEATTITUDES:

*Liturgy Book p. 125*

## ENTRANCE HYMN:

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

## APOLYTIKIA:

*Resurrection (Tone 8)*

*Liturgy Book p. 46*

*Hieromartyr Theodotos, Bishop of Cyrene on Cyprus*

*Liturgy Book p. 99*

*Glory to the Father....*

## KONDAKION: Cheesefare

*Handout*

## TRISAGION:

*Liturgy Book p. 50*

## PROKIMENON:

*(Tone 3)*

*Liturgy Book p. 56*

## EPISTLE:

*Romans 13:11-14:4*

*Brethren*, now our salvation is nearer than when we came to believe. The night is far advanced: the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly as in daytime, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and as for the flesh, pay no attention to its lusts. But whoever is weak in faith, receive him without arguing about opinion. For one believes he may eat all things but another who is weak, let him eat vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who does not; and let not the one who does not eat judge the one who does, for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls but he will stand, for God is able to make him stand.

## ALLELUIA:

*(Tone 8)*

*Liturgy Book p. 59*

**In you**, O lord, I have hoped: let me never be put to shame. In your Justice, save me and deliver me.

**Be for me** a protecting God, a sheltering house to save me.

## GOSPEL:

*St. Matthew 6:14-21*

**The Lord said**, "If you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses. And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting. Amen, I say to you they have had their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not be seen by men to fast, but by your Father, who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where worm and rodent consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither worm nor rodent consumes, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart."

## HIRMOS:

*Liturgy Book p.77*

## KINONKON:

*Liturgy Book p. 83*

### TRADITIONAL FAST OF GREAT LENT

† On weekdays of Great Lent, Monday through Friday, there are restrictions on both the number of meals taken daily and on the types of food permitted; but when a meal is permitted, there is no limitation to the quantity of food that may be eaten. † On weekdays, fast is broken [the first meal of the day is taken] at/after the noon hour. † Throughout Great Lent, the fast excludes the eating of meat and meat products, cheese, milk, butter, fish, olive oil, wine and alcoholic beverages. † On the Feast of Palm Sunday the eating of fish is permitted. Olive oil, as well as wine, is permitted on various feastsdays (consult the calendar), as well as on Saturdays and Sundays. † While the above rules of fasting are to be encouraged, in all things the Christian is called to exercise moderation and charity. The elderly and those in poor health, especially, are urged to be prudent. If in doubt, speak with your spiritual father or confessor.

and the spirit of virtues? - this is important to understand.

You know that things have their own smell, peculiar to them. If your things remain in your room, and the room remains locked, your smell, the spirit of these things, will remain in it. You know that if you pour a fragrant substance into a vessel, then empty the vessel and wash it, the aroma will remain for a long time; and vice versa, if something that stinks is poured in, then the stinking spirit will remain for a long, long time. This is what happens in the human soul. In the soul of a person, all the vices that a person sins leave their spirit, their mark, on the other hand, all the good that he creates leaves their light. If a person has always done evil deeds, if his soul is saturated with vices, the spirit of these vices will remain in the soul forever. If a person lives a good life, does a lot of good, if he constantly sanctifies his soul with prayer, he is imbued with the spirit of prayer,

We know from everyday experience that we can already with a brief acquaintance, sometimes at the very first meeting, we can catch what kind of spirit a person is. If we meet a person who is mired in sins, you will catch what kind of spirit this person is. It is similar to how a dog searches for a smell, which remains even on the tracks of a person, and leads to this person.

Every person has his own spirit, and so Saint Ephraim the Syrian asks God not only to deliver him from vices and give virtues, he asks that the Lord give him the spirit of these virtues, to deliver him from the spirit of vice - so that there is no trace of the smell of vice, so that it smells with the sweet fragrance of Christ.

One must know that it is much easier to get rid of individual vices than to get rid of the spirit of these vices. This spirit clings extremely tenaciously to our hearts, and it is possible to completely get rid of the wicked spirit only gradually, praying to God for help, so that God will deliver us from this evil spirit. This is how the words of Ephraim the Syrian should be understood. Perhaps they can be understood more directly.

We always live and act under the spiritual influence of two things: on the one hand, the grace-filled holy influence of God Himself, the Angels and the Saints, and, in particular, our Guardian Angel; on the other hand, the spirit of Satan, the demonic spirit, always pours out on us in a dark stream. And just as among the Angels of Light there are Angels who carry individual holy virtues, so among demons there are carriers of individual sins that always affect us. Therefore Saint Ephraim asks God that by the grace of God the dark, crafty demonic spirits that lead us to sin be driven away.

You see what these deep words of Ephraim the Syrian mean? Asking consciously to free us from the very spirit of wickedness, malice, all vices, is extremely difficult, since the power of demons over us is extremely strong. Remember that by your own efforts you cannot avoid the dark, disastrous influence of these spirits, so humbly pray to God, as Ephraim the Syrian teaches to pray:

Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of idleness,  
despondency, lust for power, and idle talking.

Bestow on Your servant instead a spirit of chastity,  
humility, patience, and love.

Yes, Lord King, grant me to see my own offenses,  
and not to condemn my brethren, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

# PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM

By St. Luke, Archbishop of Simferopol and All Crimea

Lord and Master of my life,  
give me not a spirit of idleness,  
despondency, lust for power, and idle talking.

Bestow on Your servant instead  
humility, patience, and love.

Yes, Lord King, grant me to see my own offenses,  
and not to condemn my brethren,  
for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

This is the Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, about whom I have already told you, and some of whose great works I have read. Why does the Holy Church give this prayer such an unusually prominent place in the Divine Services, why is it repeated so many times during all Lenten Divine Services? Not without a special reason - you yourself feel with your heart what the reason is - this prayer penetrates the heart like no other, you feel its special, exceptional, divine power.

Why is this? Because it poured out from a completely cleansed, perfect, holy heart, from a mind enlightened by God's grace, which became a partaker of the mind of Christ. Hence, such power, such a mysterious effect on the Christian heart by this amazing prayer.

To begin with, I will say that the very fact that Saint Ephraim asks God to deliver him from everything wicked that is contrary to God, so that the Lord vouchsafes him virtues, the most important great virtues, is extremely important. Why is he asking for them? There are people, and especially in the old pagan times, who relied on themselves in everything, thought that everything was achievable by the powers of their mind, their feelings. Even now there are people who do not understand that much, and moreover, the most important, the most precious, the most secret, is inaccessible to our mind and feeling.

People who understand this remember what the Holy Apostle Paul said: "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15). This is what the greatest foremost apostle says, recognizing his impotence to follow the path of goodness, deeply understanding that his flesh, which pulls down and does not let the heart rise towards God, has tremendous power over it. He yearned, tormented in soul, that he did not do that good that his soul longed for, but did that evil that he did not want.

Saint Ephraim, deeply aware of this, prayed to God to deliver him from vices, to give him the strength to do good. We get the power to do good deeds only from God, we get the power to get rid of vices only from God. The soul of every Christian is vaguely aware of this, and therefore the prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is so touching.

Go deeper into this prayer, think about why he does not simply ask God to deliver from such and such vices and give such and such virtues. Why does he say: "Give me not a spirit of idleness, curiosity, lust for power, and idle talking"? Why does he speak of the spirit of vices

## SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Afternoon, March 01

*Mystery of Repentance:*

*Confessions: 3:00 p.m.*

*Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.*

*Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.*

Sunday Morning, March 02

**SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS:**

**CHEESE-FARE SUNDAY**

*Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.*

**40th Day Memorial:**

**Marie Shehadi Barron**

**Potluck Brunch**

**Religious Education: Church Hall**

Sunday Afternoon, March 02

**Ice Cream Social: +/-1:00 p.m.**

**Forgiveness Vespers: +/-1:30 p.m.**

Monday, March 03

**GREAT LENT BEGINS**

**DAY OF STRICT FAST & ABSTINENCE**

**Presanctified Divine Liturgy:**

**5:00 p.m. Gregory the Great Academy**

**7:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church**

Tuesday Evening, March 04

**NO LITURGICAL SERVICE**

Saturday Afternoon, March 07

*Mystery of Repentance:*

*Confessions: 3:00 p.m.*

*Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.*

*Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.*

Sunday Morning, March 10

### 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 March: Marie Barron✠  
from M/M Timothy Miyashiro
- 02 March: Marie Barron✠  
from M/M John Echan
- 08 March: Aziz Simon✠  
from M/M Francis Hall
- 09 March: Aziz Simon✠  
from M/M Francis Hall

### LENTEN SERVICES

**GREGORY GREAT ACADEMY:**

Monday, Wednesday: **Presanctified: 5:00 p.m.**

Friday: **Presanctified: 11:00 a.m.**

**ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED:**

Tuesday: **Presanctified: 7:00 p.m.**

Thursday: **Presanctified: 7:00 p.m.**

Friday: **Akathist Hymn: 7:00 p.m.**

# FASTING FROM MYSELF

THE LAST SUNDAY BEFORE THE GREAT FAST has several descriptive names. It is called the *Sunday of the Expulsion*, remembering the sin of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden. It is also *Cheesefare Sunday*, the last day for eating dairy products. Finally it is the *Sunday of Forgiveness*. On this day we are expected to ask forgiveness from anyone we have offended. Perhaps it is a good idea to give this day yet another name, one which includes the meaning of the others. Let's call it *Ego-fare Sunday*.

## The Expulsion from Paradise

The story of Adam and Eve – really the story of any sin – is about ego. In Genesis we read that God said, "...if you eat of it [the tree] you will surely die." But Eve said, "Gee, it looks good. I'd like to see for myself." And we know the rest.

Sin is about ego: someone (Eve or me) decides that they will ignore someone else (God or my spouse) and do what I want. I prefer my will to the will of another, to God's word in the Scriptures or to the Tradition of the Church. And so the remembrance of the original sin on this Sunday is a call for us to see that our ego is at the heart of our own sins and to resolve to hold it in check. This struggle is at the heart of any profitable Fast.

## Fasting with the Mind of the Church

Cheesefare Sunday is traditionally the last day for eating dairy products until Pascha, as the Great Fast begins tomorrow. This poses a problem in our society where meat and dairy are the substance of every meal. Some people say that they cannot do without meat and so they only fast sporadically. By this they may mean they need protein and are not aware of other sources of protein, such as beans, peas, soy products (tofu), as well as seeds and nuts. But it is perhaps more likely that people miss the taste of meat, fish or dairy products more than their protein content.

As a result many people replace these foods, not with vegetables and grains, but with meat and dairy substitutes made to taste like meat and dairy products. Technically these foods are not meat or dairy – they only taste like them – so they don't break the Fast. Or do they?

Christian fasting is not based on an avoidance of any foods because they are unclean or taboo in any way. Neither do we abstain from meat or dairy during the Fast for health reasons, out of respect for the creatures that produce them or for environmental concerns, legitimate as they may be. We do not even fast during this season to lament Christ's suffering and death. As St John Chrysostom wrote, "The Passion is not a reason for fasting or mourning but one for joy and exultation" (Sixteenth Homily on Matthew).

Fasting in the Eastern Churches is a tool for retraining the ego. It is a way of curbing the "I crave" in each of us and doing it together as a community. Fasting is a type of self denial, an imitation of Christ's own emptying Himself in order to share our human condition. The liturgy expresses this poetically: "The flower of abstinence grows for the entire world from the tree of the Cross. Let us then accept the Fast with love and take pleasure in the fruit of Christ's divine commandments" (Orthros, First Wednesday of the Fast). The self-emptying of the cross bears fruit in us when we strive to empty ourselves through fasting.

While we strive to control our greed, lust or pride, ego does not take a break. Fasting

(and actually any Church practice) can become focused on my will. One example is what we fast from. Before children are old enough to actually fast, they are often encouraged to "give something up for Lent," to decide what they want to do in observance of this season. Unfortunately many people don't progress beyond this age spiritually. They still try to decide what *they* want to do. Ego again!

When we fast we are called to follow the Church's way of fasting, not to decide for ourselves how or when to fast. We fast, for example on most Wednesdays and Fridays, not Tuesdays and Thursdays. We may need to lessen the amount of fasting because of our health or the rigors of our work, but we should be wary of letting what we want to do turn our fasting into an ego trip. We may feel the need of more protein than some fasting foods provide while conveniently forgetting that some pulses (e.g. lentils) contain more protein than some meats. This is why making any changes in the traditional practice should be done with the blessing of one's spiritual father who can help us distinguish a real need from the promptings of our ego.

People with real health issues will always receive a blessing to eat meat or dairy during the Fast but for most people, their reluctance to avoid these foods – and for forty days, at that – is because they don't want to give up the taste. If we look to the Fast in the way that the Church does, as an exercise in curbing our ego, we may well decide to avoid meat and dairy "look-alikes" as well.

## Taking Pride in Fasting

Another way fasting can become an ego trip for the unwary is the way we take pride in it, be it our personal fasting or that of our Church. "We don't fast just one day – our 40 days is 40 days!" As Christ indicated in Mt 6:16-18, there are always people who fast with fanfare – another manifestation of the ego. This is something we must be on our guard against as it is so easy to fall into this trap. If you are having lunch with friends or colleagues avoid saying things like, "I can't eat that, I'M FASTING!" It would be more in the spirit of a true Fast to say something like, "I'll just have a salad, I've been watching my diet lately." This is a verbal way of anointing one's head and washing one's face, to use Christ's imagery, lest we appear to be broadcasting our fast to one and all.

As we prepare to intensify our fasting during this season, let us examine the spirit in which we fast. Let us begin the Fast with this understanding: not measuring our fasting by what we eat and how much, but of the effect it has on us, whether our fasting makes us free or whether we become slaves of fasting itself.

The Great Fast is a time to struggle with our ego, our self-centered self-love. Our fasting is truly effective in this regard when we pay less attention to ourselves, to our wants to our needs and increase our love for others. Find someone who is hungry for food and feed them, or someone who is spiritually hungry and nourish help them. To do that, we must be able to see and pay attention to the needs of another. And we can't do that if we are constantly focused on ourselves.

It is easier to observe the Church's fasting rules, attend its additional services, and contribute to its charitable programs in a formal way without struggling against our ego. To do so empties our Fast of any worthwhile result as the following hymn from the Triodion indicates: *In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O my soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.*