

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family
Sub-Deacon: Raphael Ruggiero

SEPTEMBER 8, 2024
Sunday Before Exaltation of the Cross
Birth of the Theotokos

Schedule of Divine Services

Sunday, Sept 8: Sunday Before Exaltation of the Cross & Birth of the Theotokos
10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy
IMO John Modecki by Dolores and Joseph Bacasa

Monday, Sept 9: Synaxis of Joachim and Anna
6-6:45pm Confessions, 7pm Divine Liturgy (open intention)

Friday, Sept 13: Feast of the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection
6-6:45pm Confessions, 7pm Divine Liturgy (open intention)

Saturday, Sept 14: Exaltation of the Cross – Solemn Holy Day
10am Confessions, 11am Divine Liturgy with Procession
For the Intentions of the Parish

Sunday, Sept 15: Sunday After the Exaltation of the Cross
10am Monthly Matins (rescheduled from 9/1), 11am Divine Liturgy
IMO Michael Dubansky, by his brother Mark Dubansky

All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out request form in back of church and give to Fr. Michael.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS: If you are interested in learning how to lead Matins as a Reader’s Service on Sunday mornings before Liturgy, please see Father Michael. During the summer, Sunday Morning Matins will be celebrated the first Sunday of the month.

ART, WINE & WORDS FUNDRAISER - Sunday November 3, 2024. Planning is underway for this unique event that will include an art auction, poetry & basket raffle. We are currently accepting donations for the basket raffle! More details to follow, but if you would like to be part of this one-time event, please see Natalia Rudiak or Lynne Walicki.

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY..... As we prepare to celebrate the discovery of Jesus’ esteemed CROSS, we now focus our attention on this impressive instrument of our salvation. In being lifted-up upon the lowly tree of the praiseworthy cross, Jesus proclaimed that His outstretched arms would draw all people to Himself. Thus drawn to Christ, the Apostle Paul claims that his view of the world and his relationship to it are seen through the prism of the holy cross which gives purpose and direction to life.

EPISTLE: Philippians 2:5-11 ~ Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

EPISTLE: Galatians 6:11-18 (Section 215) ~ Brethren: See, I write to you in my own large handwriting! Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised are making a play for human approval – with an eye to escaping persecution for the cross of Christ. The very ones who accept circumcision do not follow the law themselves. They want you to be circumcised only that they may boast about your bodily observance. May I never boast of anything but the cross of your Lord Jesus Christ! Through it, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. It means nothing whether one is circumcised or not. All that matters is that one is created anew. Peace and mercy on all who follow this rule of life, and on the Israel of God. Henceforth, let no man trouble me, for I bear the brand marks of Jesus in my body. Brethren, may the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

~~~~~Today's holy epistle lesson comes from the last paragraph of the Holy Apostle Paul's letter addressed to the Church at Galatia. Paul emphasizes to the Galatians the meaning and the significance of the magnificent CROSS of Jesus in their everyday lives. As the Christian's honored symbol of victory, the august cross of our Lord signifies that the world and all of its transitory components are things that are "dead" to us; and similarly, we are "dead" to the illusionary material things of this fleeting world. We are in this present terrestrial world for a relatively short period of time, but through the power of Jesus' life-creating cross and the redemption achieved through it, we have access to a New Life in the everlasting Kingdom of God. This eternal existence has been prepared by God the Father for all of us who share the burden of carrying the salutary cross of Jesus as we pass through this lifetime that has been given to us here on earth.

**GOSPEL: Luke 10:38-42 & 11:27-28** ~ As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." While he was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed." He replied, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

**GOSPEL: John 3:13-17 (Section 9)** ~ "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

~~~~~Our gospel message for this Sunday Before the Glorious Elevation of the Illustrious Cross is taken from that section of the Holy Evangelist John's account where Jesus is being questioned by Nicodemus, a prominent Jewish leader. As Jesus explained God's reason for sending His Son to earth, the theme of the salvific CROSS comes to the fore. The most perfect way by which God's Son could demonstrate His immense love for us and secure our eternal salvation was for Him to offer His life for the world's redemption. He had to be lifted-up on this sacred wood, so that through the perfect sacrifice upon the life-giving cross, salvation would be achieved, giving us access to everlasting life. We faithful followers of Christ, who have shared "our load" of His admirable cross and have borne vicariously the burden of His salutary passion by shouldering our own "little crosses" each day of our lives, are assured of an eternal reward as God passes us from this transitory life into the fullness of New Life with Him in His heavenly Kingdom.

PREPARATORY SUNDAY FOR THE UNIVERSAL ELEVATION FEAST.... Today is the Sunday Before the Victorious Elevation of the Splendorous Cross as well as the Sacred Nativity of the Most Holy Godbearer. Because of the central role played by the meritorious cross of Christ in the plan for our redemption, our Byzantine Catholic Church gives added emphasis to this esteemed salvific symbol by focusing on its importance on both the Sunday preceding and the Sunday following the Holy Elevation Feast.

HOLY DAY SATURDAY: EMINENT ELEVATION OF THE TRIUMPHANT CROSS.... This Saturday, September 14th, we shall celebrate ceremoniously The Feast of the Universal Elevation of the Majestic Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On this most important holy day and liturgically significant feast, we commemorate the actual discovery of the sanctifying wood of the true cross of Jesus. The initiative to find Christ's redemptive cross was begun by Empress Helen, the eighty-year-old mother of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine the Great. In the year 326 A.D., excavations were begun in Jerusalem near Golgotha, and eventually the three crosses of Great Friday were unearthed. Constantine and Helen, both of whom eventually became saints of the Church, had a magnificent basilica constructed over the holy sepulcher, which also was discovered nearby. This great church was dedicated on September 13, 335 A.D. Then on the following day, September 14th, Bishop Macarios, the Bishop of Jerusalem, triumphantly carried Christ's distinguished cross through the Holy City; and before taking it into the new edifice, he ELEVATED it in all directions, symbolically displaying this estimable instrument of our salvation to the entire universe as the people fell to their knees in profound veneration. On the Holy Elevation Feast, the noble cross of the Lord is displayed solemnly on the tetrapod in the middle

of the church where it remains for seven days. During this time, we make our way to the Golgotha of the tetrapod to venerate the exalted cross. We venerate the worthy cross of Christ by approaching the tetrapod; making two metanies (a deep bow, lowering the hand to touch the floor and then making the sign of the cross); kissing the sacred cross; and then again making another metany. Each time that we make these three metanies, we repeat silently to ourselves: “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” In visual commemoration of Christ’s victorious passion which is signified by His marvelous cross, red vestments are employed on the elevation holy day and throughout its postfestive period. The faithful should endeavor to wear something RED on the Honorable Elevation Feast and for the following Sunday in symbolic tribute to the Lord Whose praiseworthy Blood was shed willingly for our redemption upon the glorious wood of the miraculous cross. Traditionally, a strict fast is prescribed on this holy day. Put forth the sacrificial effort to fast in honor of Jesus’ supreme sacrifice made on this laudable wood in expiation for all of our sins. In this way, we thus unite ourselves with our Savior’s salutary sufferings as a gesture of our love for Him and out of profound respect for His vivifying cross, the venerable symbol of our salvation.

THE BLESSED NATIVITY OF THE GODBEARER... Today, September 8th, we observe the Feast of the Noble Nativity of the Most Holy Godbearer. This holy day commemorates the first mystery of salvation to be observed in the new church calendar year. Joachim and Anna were an aged childless couple who lived in Jerusalem whom God had selected to become the parents of an infant girl. This child, who was named Mary, would be exceedingly special in God’s plan for the salvation of the human race. With this feast, the Byzantine Catholic Church glorifies the birth of the Virgin Mary, who was destined by God to become the compassionate mother of His beloved Son. She thus was the honored daughter selected by the benevolent Father to be the esteemed bride of the illuminating Holy Spirit. Because Mary was a descendant, although quite an obscure one, of the royal house of King David, the Child born to her, nonetheless, would be of kingly lineage. In celebrating the Most Pure Virgin Mary’s role in salvation history by giving birth to the Son of God – Jesus – Who will become the Savior of the world. This Marian feast marks the beginning of the work of redemption, for now all of those salvific acts will begin to unfold that will culminate with the birth of the long awaited Messiah – the Christ Child – the Redeemer of mankind. As we honor the All-Glorious Virgin Mary by celebrating her birthday, let us beseech our Heavenly Mother to lead us to Jesus, her divine Son and our God; to watch over each of us, her earthly children with her maternal protection; and to guide us all to our eternal homeland.

PRAYER FOR OUR FOUR SAINTLY BISHOPS:

Please pray for the causes of our four Sainly Bishops and ask them to intercede for your specific intentions: O Almighty God, our Lord, we bless You, we praise You, and we thank you for all the graces which You, in Your infinite mercy have bestowed upon us. We are especially grateful for giving us four saintly and heroic Bishops: **Bishop Theodore G. Romzha, Bishop Paul P. Gojdich OBSM, Bishop Basil Hopko, and Bishop Alexander Chira**, who, by their courage, charity, and intrepid faith, inspired our Ruthenian people in the darkest moments of their history. By their great sufferings, humiliating imprisonment, and violent death they gave living witness to their Catholic faith and glorified Your exalted name. Therefore, O Gracious Lord, glorify them in return by Your divine power and inscribe their names in the book of Your Saints. For you are holy, our God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen. With Ecclesiastical Approbation Acknowledgment of answered prayers: Postulator’s office, 54 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214, U.S.A.

PRAYER FOR SEMINARIANS: **Saints Cyril and Methodius**, Venerable Apostles of the Slavs and Patrons of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we place our Seminarians in your loving care. Help them to grow in humility, meekness and prudence. Enkindle in them a burning zeal for souls. May their hearts be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and may they learn to know and love the church so that they may always and everywhere think, speak and act with Her, the Glorious Spouse of Christ. May they become exemplars of generosity and detachment from the things of this world. But above all, O Venerable Patrons, help them to truly know, love and serve the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose priests they aspire to be. Amen. St. Michael the Archangel, Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, By the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen