

St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral

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The Cathedral Messenger

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Archbishop Melchisedek
Archpriest John Mikita (Dean)
Protodeacon Michael Wusylko
Deacon Stephen Boyd

March 2024

Annunciation (Fr. John Parsells)

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

On the Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast, the Church calls to remembrance the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, a woman who experienced like few others the two poles of the spiritual life, a woman who knew from first hand experience the depth to which man can fall through sin and the height to which man can rise in Christ through repentance. But today, on this 25th of March, the liturgical commemoration of St. Mary of Egypt is superceded, superceded by the commemoration of another Mary – Mary, the Mother of God.

On this day we recall that great of event of the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, in which he tells her of God's will to become man, to make His abode within her womb by the overshadowing grace of the Holy Spirit. And we sing in the Troparion of the feast, "Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery, the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, as Gabriel announces the coming

of Grace!"

In this dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary, we see much more than a mere conversation between an angel and one of the Hebrews – rather, we see what is perhaps, the most important dialogue in all of salvation history, what is perhaps, the most important conversation between God and mankind, the Archangel Gabriel being God's messenger and the Virgin Mary being as the one, as Scriptures say, who is both highly favored by God and called blessed by all generations of men.

Now what is so special about this conversation? Just that without it, our salvation would not have come to pass: the Son of God, the One who was to be called "Jesus" because He would save His people from their sins, would not have been born, and would not have been able to accomplish as a man our victory over sin, death, and the devil; and we would all therefore still be dead in our sins.

But in this conversation, we see not only the beginning of our salvation as the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, but we also see a reversal,



This month's newsletter is sponsored by Alexander and Elena Tarassov, in loving memory of the Tarassov and Afanassieva family members.

and undoing, of what had gone wrong in Paradise.

We recall that in the Garden of Eden, our ancient Fall began with a conversation between an angel and a woman, with a dialogue between Satan, the first among the fallen angels, and Eve, the first among the woman of the human race.

Whereas of old that dialogue between the devil and Eve had disastrous consequences for the human race, here the dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the New Eve, the Virgin Mary, had tremendously positive consequences for all of mankind; for this dialogue led not to sin, corruption and death, but to the birth of the One Who would destroy such things. This dialogue did not lead to man's expulsion from Paradise, but rather to his entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whereas in Paradise, we see the pride of man, who sought to become God without the Lord's cooperation, in Nazareth, we see the humility of God, Who sought to become man but only by first asking the cooperation of the Holy Virgin. Where of old the Fall was preceded by man's pride and defiance, in the Annunciation, restoration is preceded by God's humility and meekness.

Whereas in Paradise, God used Adam in the creation of Eve, causing a deep sleep to come upon him so that He could form Eve from his rib. In Nazareth, God asks the New Eve, the Virgin Mary, to participate in the welcoming of the New Adam, Jesus Christ, asking her to offer not a rib but her own flesh and asking her to accept not a deep sleep but the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

And so, today we celebrate the beginning of a new creation, the flowering of a new garden, not in Eden but in the city of Nazareth, a city whose name bears witness to its high calling for Nazareth means the city of a new sprout or a new shoot.

This new sprout is of course, Jesus Christ, the One who would later call Himself the True Vine, Whose heavenly Father is the Vinedresser, Whose earthly Mother is the root from which He sprang into this world, and Whose branches are all those who would later be grafted into His life, bringing forth the fruits of His Holy Spirit.

Now while the imagery is striking and very beautiful and the events of this day, miraculous and very wonderful, we mustn't lose sight of the primary message of today's events.

The primary message is that though our God is powerful and wise enough to do all things necessary for our salvation, He will not force Himself upon us for He is meek and lowly of heart. God has created us in His image and likeness as free beings, each able to determine his or her own destiny, each able to accept or reject His invitation to the heavenly kingdom, and each able to chose

whether or not he or she wants to participate in his or her own redemption and salvation.

Just as the Lord did not force the Virgin to accept His invitation to become the Mother of God, so too does the Lord not force us to accept His invitation to become sons and daughters of His Heavenly Father.

The Lord does not force us to pray, to study His word, or to walk in His commandments; He does not force us to repent and receive forgiveness of sins in Confession, to turn to Him for the healing of soul and body in Holy Unction, or even to draw near to Him and receive His most precious Body and Blood with fear, faith, and love in Holy Communion. All of these things the Lord wills for us because He knows that through them we can be saved, through them we can overcome the temptations of our lives and we can walk with Him in newness of life, through them we can be incorporated into His victory over sin, death, and the devil.

But brothers and sisters, all these things are offered as an invitation, an invitation which we can either accept, reject, or choose to ignore.

Two thousand years ago, the Virgin humbly accepted the Lord's will with the words, "Let it be to me according to your word." This simple response, allowed the Lord, Who once walked with Adam and Eve in the coolness of Paradise, to once again walk among us His beloved people, this time not simply as their Creator, but now also as their Redeemer, as the One Who would accomplish all things necessary for their salvation.

And through our own personal response to God's invitation to walk with Him each day in newness of life, He will likewise accomplish all things necessary for our own salvation. All we have to do is accept the invitation to follow Him, as His disciples, as His co-travelers, as His friends, and even as His brothers and sisters for through adoption by grace we have become sons and daughters of His heavenly Father.

Let each of us today, and everyday, listen to the humble voice of the Lord and accept His invitation. The Lord wills to do great and marvelous things for us, let us do our part, and welcome Him into our minds, hearts, and lives, so that we might walk with Him as new creatures of God, new men and women in Christ, as the first fruits of a redeemed and sanctified creation.

Through the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Glory to Jesus Christ!



Schedule of Divine Services

March 2024

(Note: Calendar is subject to change. Please consult calendar at sanocpgh.org/calendar)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Feb. 25 Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am	Feb. 26	Feb. 27	Feb. 28	Feb. 29	1	2 Pierogies Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm
Fast-free Week						
3 The Prodigal Son (Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basilicus) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am OC Life 12:00 pm	4	5	6 Vespers 6:30 pm Adult Education 7:00 pm	7	8 Steve Christophorou for Clergy 9:00 am Reader's Vespers 7:30 pm	9 Memorial Saturday Hours 8:40 am Liturgy 9:00 am Steve Christophorou for Laity Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm
10 Meatfare Sunday (Sunday of the Last Judgement) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am	11	12	13 Vespers 6:30 pm Adult Education 7:00 pm	14	15 Reader's Vespers 7:30 pm	16 Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm
17 Cheesefare Sunday (Forgiveness Sunday) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am Forgiveness Vespers 7:00 pm	18 Great Canon 7:00 pm	19 Great Canon 7:00 pm	20 Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 am Great Canon 7:00 pm	21 Great Canon 7:00 pm	22 Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 am Akathist of Thanksgiving 7:00 pm	23 Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm
24 Sunday of Orthodoxy (Forefeast of the Annunciation) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am Annunciation Vigil 7:00 pm	25 Annunciation Hours 8:40 am Vesperal Liturgy 9:00 am	26	27 Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm	28	29 Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 am Akathist Hymn 7:00 pm	30 Moliaben 4:15 pm Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 St. Gregory Palamas (St. Innocent of Alaska) Church School 9:00 am Hours 9:40 am Liturgy 10:00 am	April 1	April 2	April 3	April 4	April 5	April 6
			Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm		Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 am Akathist Hymn 7:00 pm	Great Vespers & Confessions 5:00 pm



SANWA ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The next pirogie workshops are March 2nd and April 20th. Please mark your calendars! We now have 6 brunch teams. Please see the listings of names.
2. Last Wednesday of each month help is needed to prepare a meal for neighborhood resilience. Please see Matushka Mary if you are interested in helping !

PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

The first meeting of the newly elected parish council officers and members was held on Sunday, February 18th, which included the following topics:

- The Parish Council Development Forum, held on February 10th in New Kensington, was attended by Fr. John, Larissa Lindquist, Tim Shewczyk, Frank Namisnak, Beth Benton, Michael Laquatra and Ray Steeb. This was a timely forum for our council as it discussed the roles/responsibilities of council members and encouraged us to find ways to improve our current practices.
- Choros – We continue working to find the right/best lighting for our new Choros.
- Church Sign – We continue working on the best lighting and landscaping for the sign.
- Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry – Dana Davison discussed this program which he has received training for in the hopes of launching a branch of the ministry here. More information to follow, but please reach out to Dana with inquiries.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 7:00 pm in the Church hall and via Zoom.



Clip and insert in prayer book to pray for those in the prayer list

Prayer List

(All names should be submitted to one of the Cathedral Clergy for commemoration at the divine services.)

For Health and Salvation: Matushka Eugenia Erica with child Erin with child Alexander Georgette Marilyn Marilyn	Adrienne George Sam Nathaniel Rebecca Yvonne Olga Jan	For the Newly Departed:
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Assignments

Date	Epistle	Hours	Greeters	Candle Room	Collection Counters	Bell Ringers	Brunch Group
Mar. 3	R Glisan	M Wusylko	E Glisan	S Romanchik	N Waryanka, R Glisan	Brayden & Julianna	VI
Mar. 10	D Geeza	J Hershey	C Namisnak	Rinaldo	J Dille, G Ribar	Brayden & Allie	I
Mar. 17	J Pazin	T Szewczyk	L Papakirk	G Ribar	N Tesone, K Zallow	Julliana & Jules	II
Mar. 24	J Hershey	G Pazin	B Daskivich	B Savchik	R Steeb, R Horodnic	Aleks & Allie	III
Mar. 31	F Balog	L Nescott	J Resovich	R Steeb	N Waryanka, R Glisan	Brayden & Julianna	IV
April 7	G Pazin	DN Davison	A Ribar	S Romanchik	N Waryanka, R Glisan	Brayden & Allie	V
April 14	G Brkovich	M Wusylko	C Steeb	Rinaldo	J Dille, G Ribar	Julliana & Jules	VI
April 21	R Glisan	J Hershey	C Namisnak	G Ribar	N Tesone, K Zallow	Aleks & Allie	I
April 28	D Geeza	T Szewczyk	E Glisan	B Savchik	R Steeb, R Horodnic	Brayden & Julianna	II



**ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE
ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY**

UPCOMING NEVSKY OCLIFE ACTIVITIES

Prayer: Upcoming Moleben services for victims of abortion:

- Saturday, Mar. 30, 4:15 p.m.
- Saturday, Apr. 20, 4:15 p.m.
- Sunday, May 19, following coffee hour
- Thursday, June 20, 7 p.m. (with a short talk afterwards)

Education:

- There will be a short talk following the Moleben on June 20 (details forthcoming)
- **Mark your calendars!!** Frederica Mathewes-Green (a well-known author and speaker on topics related to Orthodox belief and practice, including pro-life issues) will lead a retreat at the Cathedral on Saturday, Sept. 7.

Service:

- Annunciation Gift Bag Project for new moms and their newborns, to benefit Women's Choice Network: March 24-April 28. See next page for details.

Next meeting of our OCLife parish ministry: Sunday, March 3, following coffee hour. Please join us! All are welcome and encouraged to participate!



ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE
ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY

ANNUNCIATION GIFT BAG PROJECT FOR NEW MOMS & BABIES

TO BENEFIT WOMEN'S CHOICE NETWORK Where 'Choice' is "Choice for Life"

We will once again put together gift bags for moms who choose life and for their newborns. Gift bags will be available on **Sunday, March 24**, with the tags below on each bag to indicate the 5 items to purchase and place in each bag.

Please use the sheets in the hall to sign out the bags that you take and to sign them back in when you return them. **Deadline for returning filled bags is Sunday, April 28.**

Questions?: See Beth Benton or Carol Namisnak.



Orthodox Christians for Life – St. Alexander Nevsky
40 Days for Life Prayer Vigil in front of Planned Parenthood (Pgh.)
Saturday, February 17, 2024, 1-3 p.m., 28 degrees!



Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh & Western Pennsylvania

WHAT DO PEOPLE NEED FROM THE CHURCH?

- How to Lead Effective Christian Ministry -

with **Steven Christoforou**

Director of Operations & Community Engagement for FOCUS North America



RETREAT FOR LAITY

Saturday, March 9



\$20 registration at the door

Memorial Liturgy at 9am • Continental Breakfast, following Session 1 at 11am • Lunch at 12pm • Session 2 at 1:15pm

ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY CATHEDRAL

8290 Thompson Run Rd, Allison Park, PA 15101

To register contact - Fr. David Vernak

 *frdavidvernak@verizon.net*  *(201) 704-6217*

Special Church Events

**Blessed Feast of The Meeting of Our Lord & Savior
Jesus Christ in the Temple
Blessing of Candles**



Scout Sunday



Induction of our new Parish Council

