

# OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

**A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

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**REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor**

**RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)**

**REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER**

**REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry**

**REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK**

*"Enter the Church and repent for your sin; for here is the physician, not the judge.  
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

**February 2, 2014**

## **THE FEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE**

**Parish Advisory & Finance Council:**

**KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JENNA NEHME, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE**

**Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON**

**Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS**

**Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER**

**N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Sunday 10 AM & 12:45 PM, before or after any service, or by appointment;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;**

**HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.**

*Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!*

# THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

## Response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Antiphon:

O Son of God who were carried in the arms of Simeon the Just, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

## The Troparion of the Resurrection (4<sup>th</sup> Tone) Page 52

### The Troparion of the Encounter of the Lord in the Temple (1<sup>st</sup> Tone) 2X

Hail O full of grace, Virgin and Mother of God! From you has arisen the Sun of Justice Christ our God, enlightening those who stand in darkness. You too, O just Elder Simeon, rejoice for carried in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who grants us resurrection.

### The Kontakon of Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (1<sup>st</sup> Tone)

O Christ Our God, who through Your birth have sanctified the virginal womb and have blessed the arms of Simeon, You have come today to save us. When wars prevail, keep Your people in peace and strengthen our public authorities in every good, for You alone are the Lover of Mankind.

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### THE PROKIMENON:

**MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD,  
AND MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD MY SAVIOR!**  
*Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid,  
for behold henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!*

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## **Today's Readings: Hebrews 7: 7-17 and Luke 2: 22-40**

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### The Hirmos of the Feast (3<sup>rd</sup> Tone)

O Mother of our God, hope and strength of all Christians, watch over those who place their hope in you, O Most Pure. Let us, O faithful, glorify the First-born, the Eternal Word of God, born of a Virgin all-pure, for we have seen beyond the shadow and letter of the Law, a sign of Christ in the words: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord

## LITURGY INTENTIONS

### Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of John Baroody (56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

### Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the health and salvation of all of the members of the parish

### Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Zeady Jadda (61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary)

### Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Lee Ann J. (Werner) Ritchotte,  
by her father Colin Werner





## TODAY IS THE FEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

In the Byzantine Church the title of this feast is Hypapanty, a Greek word that signifies “Meeting.” This feast, which closes the cycle of the Nativity according to the flesh of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, commemorates the event on the fortieth day after the birth of the Lord, when Mary carried Him to the Temple in accordance with the Mosaic Law to offer Him to the Lord, and to ransom Him by sacrifice.

They were met by Simeon in the Temple, who upon seeing the child Jesus exclaimed “Now you shall dismiss Your servant, O Lord, according to Your Word in peace, because my eyes have seen Your salvation, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.” As part of the commemoration of this “light of revelation,” candles will be blessed and distributed at the end of the Liturgy.

*“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. 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. 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.”*

**-St. Sophronius of Jerusalem**

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**Congratulations** to Ken Monty, who was elected as president of the Parish Advisory Council at the meeting last Monday evening. Congratulations also to Rich Ashooh who will serve as vice president, and Mary Cullen who will serve as secretary.

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**A Lebanese-style turkey dinner** (with hashweh) will be served next Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. The cost for the dinner will be \$7.

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**Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 15 Sunday 11:00 AM: 106**

**Last Weekend’s Collection: \$ 1,166.<sup>00</sup> Mortgage: \$947.<sup>05</sup>**

*The average Sunday envelope offering last week was \$33.<sup>02</sup>*

*The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 345,429.<sup>01</sup>*

### SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

*Weekday services will be held in the basement chapel*

Tues., Feb 4	8:30 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy: For the health of Declan Finn</b>
Wed., Feb. 5	7:00 PM	<b>Vespers</b>
Thurs., Feb. 6	8:30 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy: For the health of Julie Fregeau</b>
Sat., Feb 8	4:30 PM	<b>Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican</b>
Sun., Feb. 9	10:15 AM	<b>Sunday Orthros</b>
Sun., Feb. 9	11:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican</b>

## Preparing to enter the desert:

### The time of Pre-Lent

The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is itself preceded by its own liturgical preparation. This time of preparation is called Pre-Lent and the Sundays of this season have particular themes.

Next Sunday, **The Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican** marks the beginning of this time of preparation for

the spiritual journey of Lent. It is also on this day that the Church begins to use the liturgical prayers of the Lenten Triodion, prayers that gently call us to repentance. The Gospel reading for this Sunday is a parable about the two men who went to the Temple to pray -- one a Pharisee who was a very decent and righteous man of religion, the other a publican who was a truly sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. The first, although genuinely righteous, boasted of his goodness before God and was condemned. The second, although genuinely sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God (*Lk 18 :9*). The lesson of the parable is that the religious piety of the pharisee alone cannot save us. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching: sinners in need of God's mercy, healing and salvation.

The next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent is **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son**. Hearing the parable of Christ about God's loving forgiveness, we are called to come to our senses" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (*Lk 15:11-24*).

The next Sunday is called **Meatfare Sunday** since it is officially the last day before Pascha for eating meat. It commemorates Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (*Mt 25:31-46*). We are reminded this day that it is not enough for us to see ourselves as we are, and to come home to God as His prodigal sons. We must also act like His sons by following Christ, by seeing Christ in every man, and by serving Christ through them. Our salvation and final judgment will depend upon our deeds, not merely on our intentions. Every encounter with someone in need is an encounter with Christ. Every good deed done for someone in need is of infinite value, since it is done for Christ.

The final day before the beginning of Great Lent is **Forgiveness Sunday** or **Cheesefare Sunday** (so called because it is traditionally the final day before Pascha that dairy products are consumed). On this day we recall Adam's exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. The Gospel for the day tells us the Lord's teaching about fasting and forgiveness: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses" (*Mt 6:14-18*).

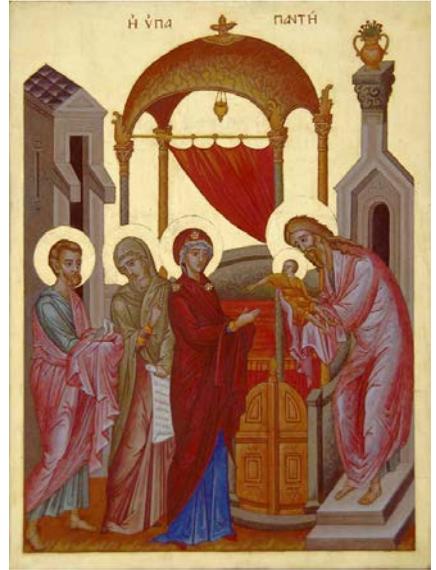
Great Lent begins on the evening of Cheesefare Sunday with the **Vespers of Forgiveness**. Mindful of the Gospel message - that we need to forgive one another so that God will forgive us - this service concludes with the Ceremony of Forgiveness. During this ceremony each person in the church will ask forgiveness of each other person, then everyone departs, returning to their homes to begin the time of the Great Fast.



# 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”?***

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 40 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 Symeon 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.

## What do visitors experience at our church?

*Fr. Andre came across this blog on the internet a few weeks ago, and shared it with me. It is the experience of a visitor to our church on Sunday, Dec. 1. Let us never take for granted the good things that God has given us right here in our own parish! -Fr. Tom*

“Wow! Sunday for the first time I attended a Melkite Divine Liturgy. I have to say I have never experienced the Divine Liturgy like this. I am still struggling to put into words what and how it was different as it is the same sacrifice with some very similar prayers. The Liturgy seemed to flow easily and more logically than I have experienced with either the Novus Ordo or the Extraordinary form.

“Now I am certainly not ready to apply to change rites, but I am yearning to attend another Melkite Divine Liturgy like nothing before. Not kneeling and not genuflecting was hard. Doing a little research into the rite over the past days has made me understand the rite is not just the Liturgy and there are many things which culturally I would have to figure out-after all I have been Roman for 49 years.

“I am not sure if after one experience I can communicate what I found at Our Lady of the Cedars which I haven't found anywhere else. Perhaps the presence of God was more profound or visible. Perhaps the community of worshipers (including the priest and deacon) seemed to be both more casual (no, casual is not the right word- perhaps humble) and intense at the same time.

“For the Melkites, this was not the first Sunday of Advent. The Gospel was about the blind man trying to reach Jesus over the objections of the crowd. One part of the homily struck me: the deacon told us that in contrast to the crowd which tried to prevent the blind man from reaching Jesus, the Church's mission (and thus ours) is to help “the blind” reach Jesus. It seemed to me that the Melkite Divine Liturgy was trying to help this blind man (me) reach Jesus this past Sunday.”

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**Please pray for the release** of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi and Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim who were abducted on April 22 when gunmen stopped their vehicle near the battleground northern city of Aleppo, where both are based. Please pray also for their deacon who was driving their car and was shot and killed in the attack.



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## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Francis of Assisi Parish Penny Sale

Held at Sacred Heart Church 265 Main Street in Manchester Sat. Feb 22 8:00am to 7:00pm Sun. Feb 23 9:30am to 5:00pm Over 300 prizes including iPad mini, 12ft Snark Sailboat, Gas Cards, Baskets of Cheer, 50/50 Drawings, Instant Winner Games, Theme baskets, and Fun for all Ages. Grand Prize Raffle \$1000, \$500, \$250. Saturday evening Baked chicken dinner. Saturday and Sunday Breakfast, Snack Bar, and Baked Goods.



**Please remember** to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Betty Bilodeau, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Danielle Caron, Meghan Connors, Lucy Corriveau, Julie Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Nicholas Daniak, Lynn Dargie, Marie Dargie, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Anne Gallagher, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, James McCloskey, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Virginia Pichette, Jean Poleatewich, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Robert Siwik, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

**If you are visiting our church,** our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.



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