



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

"Enter the Church ... for here is the physician, not the judge.

Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

March 23, 2014

The Third Sunday of the Great Fast

The commemoration of our Venerable Father Nikon

and the Disciples who were martyred with him

THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

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

The Troparion of the Resurrection (Third Tone) Page 50

The Troparion of the Holy Cross (First Tone)

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, and protect Your nation by the power of Your Cross.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (First Tone): Page 15

The Kontakon of the Annunciation (Eight Tone): Page 16

Instead of the usual Trisagion (Holy God, Holy Mighty one..) we sing:

We bow in worship before Your Cross, O Master,
and we give praise to Your Holy Resurrection.

THE PROKIMENON:

O LORD, SAVE YOUR PEOPLE AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE!

To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

Today's Readings: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 and Matthew 8:34-9:1

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Alice Page (29th), Peter Gula (16th),
Salim Fawaz (19th), Souad Kessop (2nd), Stephen Stephen (36th),
and Bedra Ashkar (38th)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the members of our parish who have departed from this life,
and for our departed friends, relatives, and loved ones

For Christians throughout the world
who suffer persecution for the sake of the Cross of Christ

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Anne Jadda (52nd Anniversary)

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Anne Gallagher, by the Lazos and Ashooh Families



*There will be a meeting of the Parish Council
on Monday, March 31 at 8:00 PM, following Great Compline.*



The Third Sunday of Lent is the Sunday of the Holy

Cross. The Cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the Lenten season not merely to remind us of Christ's redemption and to keep before us the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which we must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt.10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor.1:24). It is meant to be a source of power and inspiration, the support of the just and the hope of the sinner. The Cross is

planted in the midst of Great Lent like the Tree of Life in the midst of Paradise, so that anyone looking upon it may find health, strength, and the courage to pursue the course of the Fast.

The Lenten Dinner!

The annual Lenten Dinner will be held next Sunday, following the Sunday Divine Liturgy. It will feature a wonderful array of foods, and some lovely company. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$3 for children, and are available at the door.

GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS!

The drawing for the winners of the Lenten Charity Raffle will be held at the Lenten Dinner. There are still some raffle tickets still remaining for those who wish to participate, and they will be available at the dinner. The tickets are \$100 each. Only 110 tickets will be sold. Prizes are: 1st prize \$2,500, 2nd prize \$1,000, 3rd prize \$500.

Lenten Mission: The next two Friday evenings

Out Lenten Mission this year is a video presentation by Fr. Robert Baron. It will be shown in the church hall following Akathist. This weeks' topic is "Knowing that you are a sinner."

There will be a second collection next week for the mortgage.

Please pray for the release of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi and Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim who were abducted on April 22, 2013, 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.

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 21 Sunday 11:00 AM: 142

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,279.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope offering last week was \$33.⁸²

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 342,647.⁷⁵

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Mar. 24	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: Feast of the Annunciation
Wed., Mar. 26	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 28	7:00 PM	Akathist Hymn, followed by 2nd night of the Lenten Mission
Sat., Mar. 29	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. John Climacus
Sun., Mar. 30	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Mar. 30	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. John Climacus

The Day God Took Flesh

**Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation
will be celebrated on Monday at 7:00 PM.**

The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25. The Feast commemorates the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, whereby He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, whereby Mary freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God's plan for our salvation.

It has been said that this event, the conception of Christ, even more than His birth, changed the course of the planet. When the Word of God assumed human nature it was not at His birth, but at His conception, when He took our nature in the form of a fetus in the womb of the Theotokos. His birth revealed the mystery of His incarnation to the world but it was at His conception that this mystery was accomplished.

Although it falls during Great Lent, The Feast of the Annunciation is always celebrated with great joy. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).

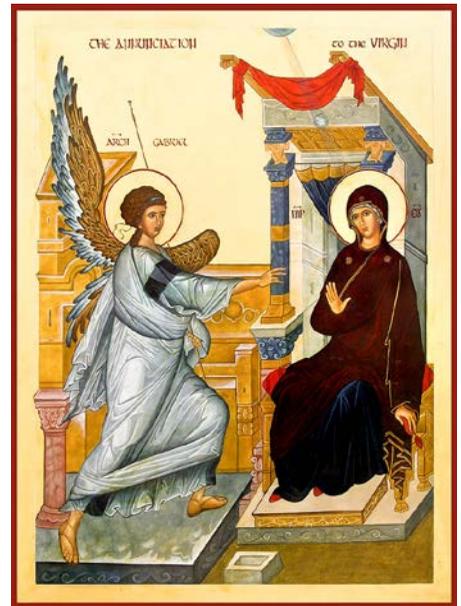
Icon of the Feast

The icon of the Annunciation is one that presents the joy of the announcement of the coming of Christ. It is an icon of bright colors, depicting the Archangel Gabriel, who has descended from heaven, and the Virgin Mary, who has been chosen to be the Mother of God.

The Archangel is shown with his feet spread apart as if he is running to share the good news with Mary. In his left hand is a staff, the symbol of a messenger. His right hand is extended toward Mary as he delivers the message and announces the blessing bestowed upon her by God.

On the right side of the icon the Virgin sits on an elevated seat, indicating that as the Mother of God she is "greater in honor than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim." In her left hand she holds a spindle of scarlet yarn which depicts the task she was assigned of preparing the purple and scarlet material to be used in making the veil for the Temple in Jerusalem. Her right hand is raised in a gesture of acceptance in response to Gabriel's message. Her posture expresses willing cooperation with God's plan of salvation. The three stars on her garments represent that she was a Virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ.

At the top of the icon the segment of a circle represents the divine realm, from which three rays emerge. This demonstrates the action of the Holy Spirit coming upon her.



THE FATHERS SPEAK: *On the Meaning of the Cross*

The cross is the door to mysteries. Through this door the intellect makes entrance in to the knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is concealed in the sufferings of the cross. And the more our participation in its sufferings, the greater the perception we gain through the cross. For, as the Apostle says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

-The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac of Syria

Of course, it would be easier to get to paradise with a full stomach, all snuggled up in a soft feather-bed, but what is required is to carry one's cross along the way, for the kingdom of God is not attained by enduring one or two troubles, but many! *-Elder Anthony of Optina*



The Most High planted in the middle of Paradise The thrice blessed wood, the gift of life for us, In order that, in approaching it, Adam might find eternal and immortal life; But he did not strive earnestly to know this life, And he failed to attain it, and revealed death. However, the robber, seeing how the plant in Eden Had been beautifully transplanted in Golgotha, Recognized the life in it and said to himself: "This is what my father lost formerly In Paradise."

-St Romanos the Melodist

Don't Forget:

THE WEEKDAY SERVICES DURING LENT

Let us come together as a parish family to support and encourage one another at the special prayer services that are offered throughout Lent:

Monday evenings, 7:00 PM: Great Compline:

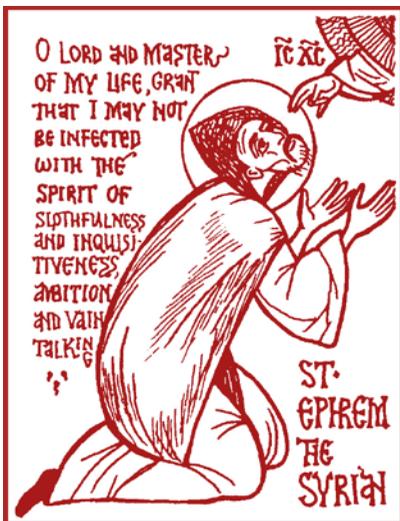
The Office of Compline is the nighttime prayer of the church. It is enhanced during Lent to contain beautiful prayers of repentance and to remind us during our Lenten struggle that "*God is with us!*"

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM: Presanctified Liturgy:

During the season of Great Lent, we traditionally "fast" from the joy of the Divine Liturgy on weekdays. However, so as not to be denied the strength that comes from receiving from the Lord's Table, the church offers us this service, which is Lenten vespers followed by Holy Communion.

Friday evenings, 7:00 PM: The Akathist Hymn:

This service presents a beautiful series of hymns to the Mother of God. We pray this service during Lent in anticipation of the great feast of the Annunciation that comes on March 25th.



We Bow in Worship Before Your Cross

PEOPLE WERE FASCINATED by the degree of realism and downright sadism portrayed in Mel Gibson's 2004 film, *The Passion of the Christ*. The physical sufferings inflicted on the film's Jesus were far more gruesome than anything described in the Gospels. In fact, the film relied less on the Scriptures than on visions attributed to the nineteenth century German nun, Anne Catherine Emmerich by her countryman, the poet Clemens Brentano.

The film and the visions it portrays have both been criticized for their departure from the Gospel. Still they stand in a tradition, particularly strong in medieval Europe, which emphasized the physical suffering of Christ in the passion more than His sinless response to the torment. Much of this emphasis stems from the medieval idea that the passion was inflicted on Christ as a punishment for our sins.



The Cross in Our Liturgy

The vision of the cross in our liturgy is very different, particularly as expressed in the Mid-week of the Great Fast when we solemnly bring it forth and venerate it. The cross is carried in procession around the church during the great doxology of Orthros (Matins) to the ringing of the church bells. It is surrounded with flowers which, in many churches, are distributed to the participants as they come forward to venerate the cross. The Cross is considered, as in the early Church, as first of all a sign of Christ's triumph over death: ineffable joy for those who believe in Him. As St John Chrysostom emphasized, the Cross "...is the originator not so much of suffering as of passionlessness."

This emphasis should not surprise us if we but reflect on the hymns which we sing on this Sunday and through the week. One of the most frequently repeated is the kondakion, a veritable paean of triumph:

"The Angel's fiery sword will no longer guard the gate of Paradise, for the Cross of the Lord has put it out wondrously. The power of Death has been broken, the victory of Hades wiped out, and You, my Savior, have stood up and called out to all those bound in Hell: 'Come now; enter again into Paradise!'"

The angel's sword mentioned in the kondakion refers to the last line in the story of the Fall, *Gn 3:23, 4*: "...the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life".

Other hymns of this feast reflect the same excitement. At Vespers we sing:

"Hail, O life-bearing Cross, bright Paradise of the Church, Tree of incorruption! You have obtained for us the enjoyment of everlasting glory. Through you, the hosts of devils are driven out,

the choirs of Angels rejoice as one, and the company of the faithful hold celebrations. Unconquerable weapon, impregnable stronghold, triumph of kings and pride of priests: grant that we may be witnesses to Christ's Passion and Resurrection!"

At Orthros we hear:

"In Paradise of old, the Enemy stripped me bare. By making me eat from the forbidden tree, he brought in death. But the tree of the Cross was planted on earth. It brought mankind the garment of life and the whole world is filled with unbounded joy. Seeing the Cross exalted, let us all cry aloud to the Lord with one voice: 'Your temple is filled with Your glory!'"

"It is a festive day in Heaven; for Death is wiped out by the Resurrection of Christ. Once again life springs forth, and Adam is raised and exults with joy. Let us all praise the victory of the Lord."

"Joy reigns on earth and in Heaven today, for the sign of the Cross has shone over the world; its thrice-blessed image is a fountain of eternal joy for those who venerate it."

"Cleansed by abstinence, let us hasten with fervor to kiss and glorify the most holy wood on which Christ was crucified and saved the world in His goodness."

"O faithful, let us cry out in joy to our God, clapping our hands with the divine praise; let us kiss the Cross of the Lord. It is a fountain of holiness for the whole world."

"Today the Cross of Christ pours out its sweet aroma: it is the wood that blossoms forth life. Let us breathe in this pleasing scent of the Divinity, which we bless forever and ever."

"Rejoice and dance for joy, O holy Church of God, who bows today before the thrice-blessed wood of the holy Cross of Christ. Hosts of angels in Heaven stand trembling before it."

Perhaps most surprising are the verses of the canon chanted at Orthros:

"Today is the day of the Resurrection! O nations, let us be jubilant! For this Passover is the Passover of the Lord, in that Christ made us pass from death to life and from earth to Heaven, we who sing the song of victory!

"Come, let us drink a new drink: not miraculously produced from a barren rock, but from the Fount of immortality springing forth from the tomb of Christ, in which we are established.

"Let the God-inspired Habakkuk the prophet stand with us on the holy watch-tower. Let him point out to the radiant angel who proclaims with vibrant voice: "Today salvation comes to the world, for Christ is risen as all-powerful!"

Do you recognize it? It is the Paschal Canon by St John of Damascus which is sung as matins on the feast of the Resurrection! This Mid-Sunday of the Fast is nothing other than an anticipation of Pascha. We venerate the cross and sing paschal hymns to encourage us to continue our ascetic efforts during the Fast. As food, drink and rest restore us physically, the veneration of the Cross refreshes us spiritually and strengthens us to continue our journey through the Great Fast.

Few of us would participate so wholeheartedly in a joyful celebration – wedding, anniversary, office party – without bringing something to the feast. Our joy in the Cross is authentic to the degree that we bring the fruit of repentance, re-focusing our energy on the spiritual life as completely as we can during this season. We turn away from food, drink, or entertainment to signify that we are reordering our lives away from obedience to our passions (gluttony, lust, greed, etc.) in response to the gift of God's love manifested on the Cross.

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, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Peggy Hunt, 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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