

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

March 22, 2015 - The Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast

THE SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

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

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Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

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

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: 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 (*Eighth Tone*) Page 52

The Troparion of St. Mary of Egypt (*Eighth Tone*)

In you, O Mother Mary, was restored the likeness of God, for you carried your cross and followed Christ. You taught by your deeds how to spurn the body, for it passes away, and how to value the soul, for it is immortal. Wherefore your soul is forever in happiness with the angels.

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

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

THE PROKIMENON:

**MAKE VOWS TO THE LORD YOUR GOD AND FULFILL THEM;
LET ALL ROUND ABOUT BRING GIFTS TO THE AWESOME GOD.**

God is renowned in Judah; in Israel great is His Name!

Today's Readings: Hebrews 9: 11-14 and Mark 10: 32b-45

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Alice Page (30th), Peter Gula (17th), Salim Fawaz (20th),
Souad Kessop (3rd), Stephen Stephen (37th), and Bedra Ashkar (39th)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Lucy Coriveau,
by her grand-nieces Grace and Amanda Ouellette

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the health and salvation of all the members of the parish,
and of all or our friends, relatives, and loved ones

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the health and salvation of all the members of the parish,
and of all or our friends, relatives, and loved ones



Calling all cookbook lovers!

We will be putting together a cookbook with traditional Lebanese recipes to sell at church events. We are looking for a couple of people who can collect recipes and edit them. If you can help out, please see Rachel Minsinger or contact her by phone at 603-296-5038 or email at rcullen.clarinet@gmail.com. Recipes will start being collected soon!

This Week: The Feast of the Annunciation and The Raising of Lazarus!



The Feast of the Annunciation is a celebration of the Incarnation of the Lord and commemorates the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary that she had been chosen to be the Mother of God. This feast will be observed with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday evening at 7:00 PM. The Raising of Lazarus will be commemorated with a Divine Liturgy on Friday evening at 7:00 PM.

Many thanks to all who worked so diligently to make our annual Lenten Dinner such a success. It was wonderful food, wonderful company, and a wonderful time was had by all!

Next weekend there will be a special collection for the flowers for Easter.



Sunday School News: There will not be any Sunday School classes next Sunday, March 29 (Palm Sunday) or on the following Sunday, April 5 (Pascha). Classes will resume on April 12.

Father Tom will be in the church and available to hear confessions on Saturday, from 3:00-4:00 PM



Congratulations to the winners of the Lenten Raffle. They are: First Prize (\$2,000) Kamal & Najwa Moussoba; Second Prize (\$1,000) Will & Rachel Minsinger and Mary Cullen; Third Prize (\$500) Rt. Rev. Joseph Francavilla. Thanks to all of you who generously supported the raffle –it made a profit of \$5,500!

Helpers are needed on Saturday, March 28, 9 AM to 1 PM to clean the church in preparation for Great Week and Pascha. See Jeanine Notter if you can help.

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 9 Sunday 11:00 AM: 127

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,204.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$35.⁷⁶

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 301,723.⁶³

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Mar. 23	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Tues., Mar. 24	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: Feast of the Annunciation
Wed., Mar. 25	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 27	7:00 PM	Vespers Divine Liturgy: The Raising of Lazarus
Sat., Mar. 28	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: Palm Sunday
Sun., Mar. 29	10:15 AM	Orthros of Palm Sunday
Sun., Mar. 29	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: Palm Sunday

The Day God Took Flesh

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

ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH RAYA of blessed memory tells how, as a student, he visited his village priest during school breaks. On one visit he noted the Gospel book in the priest's icon corner opened to the story of the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38). Returning on his next break a few months later, the young Joseph saw the Gospel opened to the same page. When Joseph asked the priest why he kept reading the same story, the priest answered that one could read this passage every day and never exhaust its meaning.

The Gospel passage tells of Gabriel's message from God to the Virgin Mary and her response, "Let it be so according to your word." With her acceptance the eternal Word of God was conceived in her womb. 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.

Annunciation: the First Feast?

Much has been written about dating the birth of Christ. In the twelfth century, the Syriac theologian Dionysius Bar-Salibi wrote that December 25 was established in the West as the feast of Christ's Nativity to coincide with the pagan Roman celebration of the Invincible Sun. This concept became popular in the West particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More recent scholarship has shown that Christmas had been observed for years before Emperor Aurelian established the pagan festival in AD 274.

It was assumed that the date of the Annunciation was set in relation to the date of Christmas. Today it is recognized that the opposite was more likely the case. The ancient world put a great emphasis on *Coherence*: the underlying unity of related things. Already by AD 200 Christians were stressing that Christ suffered His passion on the same day He was conceived. His coming and the purpose of His coming were facets of the same mystery.

Tertullian of Carthage taught that the 24th of the Hebrew month Nisan (the day of the crucifixion in the Gospel of John) was equivalent to March 25 in the Roman calendar. Approximately 200 years later St Augustine of Hippo, wrote in his treatise *On the Trinity* that Jesus "...is believed to have been conceived on the 25th of March, upon which day also He suffered; so



the womb of the Virgin in which He was conceived, where no mortal was begotten, corresponds to the new grave in which He was buried, where no one was ever laid, neither before Him nor since.”

Like so many aspects of traditional Christian practice, this notion of coherence is also reflected in Jewish thought. Rabbis in the second century AD are recorded as teaching that the month of Nisan was the time of God’s decisive interventions in the world. “In Nisan the world was created; in Nisan the patriarchs were born; on Passover Isaac was born... and in Nisan they will be redeemed in time to come.” Their teaching that creation and redemption should occur at the same time of year would certainly resound with St Athanasius who wrote, “The renewal of creation has been wrought by the self-same Word who made it in the beginning” (*On the Incarnation*, 1).

Thus early Christians and their Jewish contemporaries used the calendar to express a spiritual teaching: the unity of God’s plan for the human race. God does not work in our chronological time. There are no calendars in heaven. God’s work is one; He creates and renews and refreshes His creation in one eternal act, in what we might call “really real” time. In stressing the unity of Christ’s incarnation and His passion these Christian thinkers were proclaiming the oneness of God’s plan for our salvation.

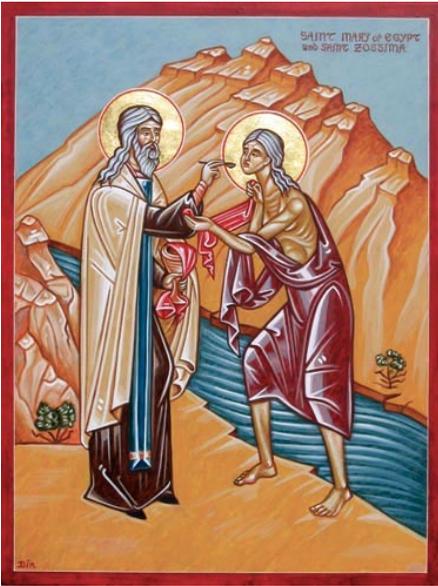
While the rabbis looked for redemption yet to come, Christians saw it effected in the incarnation of the eternal Word. “What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His image in mankind so that through it we might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? Men could not have done it for they are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own person because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, who could recreate man after the Image” (St Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 13).

Two Contemporary Developments

The mystery we celebrate on March 25 has been recognized as an important milestone for two very different groups of people. Many pro-life parents throughout the world have begun to celebrate their children’s *First Days*, nine months before their birthdays. In this they are rejecting the secular culture’s contention that a fetus is a “part” of the mother which only “becomes human” later in its development.

Christian pro-lifers accordingly keep the Feast of the Annunciation as the *First Day* of the Incarnate Word. They encourage its observance as a sign that the Christian community recognize and honor the conception and prenatal life of the Lord. If believers do not celebrate the conception of One who was foretold and announced by an angel, they reason, why should the world esteem the coming of its unwanted children?

In 1998 Argentina became the first nation to commemorate March 25 as the *Day of the Unborn Child*. Since then many other countries with a Hispanic culture (e.g, Central and South America, the Philippines) have done the same. In Spain the day was given a wider focus. Their *International Day for Life* encourages recognition of the dangers of euthanasia, embryo experimentation and other challenges to the sanctity of life. In the United States groups including the American Life League, the Knights of Columbus and Priests for Life have prompted observance and public recognition of this day.



St. Mary of Egypt

Our venerable mother Mary of Egypt was a desert ascetic who repented of a life of prostitution. She lived during the sixth century, and passed away in a remarkable manner in 522. She began her life as a young woman who followed the passions of the body, running away from her parents at age twelve for Alexandria. There she lived as a harlot for seventeen years, refusing money from the men that she cavorted with, instead living by begging and spinning flax.

One day, however, she met a group of young men heading toward the sea to sail to Jerusalem for the veneration of the Holy Cross. Mary went along for the ride, seducing the men as they traveled for the fun of it. But when the group reached Jerusalem and actually went towards the church, Mary was prohibited from entering by an unseen force. After three such attempts, she remained outside on the church patio,

where she looked up and saw an icon of the Theotokos. She began to weep and prayed with all her might that the Theotokos might allow her to see the True Cross; afterwards, she promised, she would renounce her worldly desires and go wherever the Theotokos may lead her.

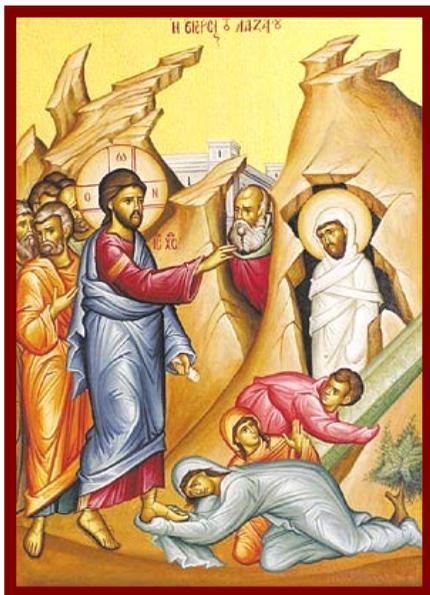
After this heart-felt conversion at the doors of the church, she found that she was able to enter the church. There she prayed and then fled into the desert to live as an ascetic. She survived for years on only three loaves of bread and thereafter on scarce herbs of the land. For another seventeen years, Mary was tormented by "wild beasts—mad desires and passions." After these years of temptation, she overcame the passions and was led by the Theotokos in all things.

Following 47 years in solitude, she met the priest St. Zosima in the desert, who pleaded with her to tell him of her life. She recounted her story with great humility while also demonstrating her gift of knowledge: she knew who Zosima was and his life story despite never having met him before. Finally, she asked Zosima to meet her again the following year at sunset on Holy Thursday by the banks of the Jordan.

Zosima did exactly this, though he began to doubt his experience as the sun began to go that night. Then Mary appeared on the opposite side of the Jordan; crossing herself, she miraculously walked across the water and met Zosima. When he attempted to bow, she rebuked him, saying that as a priest he was far superior, and furthermore, he was holding the Holy Mysteries. Mary then received communion and walked back across the Jordan after giving Zosima instructions about his monastery and that he should return to where they first met exactly a year later.

When Zosima returned, he found Mary's body with a message written on the sand asking him for burial and revealing that she had died immediately after receiving the Holy Mysteries the year before (and thus had been miraculously transported to the spot where she now lay). So Zosima, amazed, began to dig, but soon tired; then a lion approached and began to help him, that is, after Zosima had recovered from his fear of the creature. Thus St. Mary of Egypt was buried. Zosima returned to the monastery, told all he had seen, and improved the faults of the monks and abbot there. He died at almost a hundred years old in the same monastery.

A Prelude to Salvation



THE SIXTH WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST has a two-fold designation in our liturgical books. First of all, it marks the end of this fasting season. We also fast during the Great and Holy Week of the Lord's Passion, but that observance is not part of the Great Fast. The Great Fast has prepared us to celebrate the paschal mystery of Christ's saving passion, death and resurrection by inviting us to refocus our lives on God in repentance. During the Holy Week our fasting has a different character: it is a way of observing the sorrowful events of this week: the plotting against Christ, His betrayal, passion, death and burial.

The hymns to be sung at the services this week both of these themes. On one hand the services include chants focused on the end of the Great Fast such as the final sticheron sung this coming Friday:

“Count us worthy of beholding the week of Your Passion, O Lover of Mankind, for we have completed the forty days of the Fast for the profit of our souls.”

Other chants reflect the coming feast, recalling Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. At Orthros on Monday, for example, we sing:

“O faithful, let us prepare to celebrate Palm Sunday, joyfully observing the forefeast from this present day onwards, so that we may be counted worthy to see the life-giving Passion.”

The Death of Lazarus

Even more of this week's hymnody recalls the raising of Lazarus, whom the Gospel describes as having died four days before Christ raised him. In the Gospel of John, the raising of Lazarus and Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem are connected. We read that Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb at some time before His final trip to Jerusalem (see *Jn* 12:1). Yet the same Gospel points out that: “...*the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign*” (*Jn* 12:17-18). Jesus' return to Bethany sparks the triumphal reception into Jerusalem which Jesus received to the excitement over the raising of Lazarus.

SERVICES FOR GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Mon., Mar. 30	7:00 PM	The Bridegroom Service
Tues., Mar. 31	7:00 PM	The Bridegroom Service
Wed., April 1	7:00 PM	Vespers/Liturgy of the Last Supper, Holy Anointing
Thurs., April 2	7:00 PM	The Crucifixion Service
Fri., April 3	3:00 PM	Vespers for the Descent from the Cross
Fri., April 3	7:00 PM	The Burial Service with Lamentations
Sat., April 4	10:00 AM	Vespers/Divine Liturgy & Blessing of New Light
Sat., April 4	9:30 PM	Hajmeh, Matins, & the Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection
Sun., April 5	11:00 AM	The Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Ernie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Sarah Beadle, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Russell Pond, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, Laura Weingast, 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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