



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

**The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent:
Saint Mary of Egypt
April 21**

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, April 13, 20
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, April 14, 21
Divine Liturgy: 10am
Coffee and fellowship will follow the service

*The above services are at
St. Olympia Church
34 North Main Street
Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
St. Olympia Orthodox
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Canton, NY13617*



**Fifth Saturday of Great Lent: Akathist to the Theotokos
April 20**

In you, O Mother, was preserved with exactness what was according to the image; for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away; but to care for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore, O Venerable Mary, your spirit rejoices with the Angels.

Troparion

Having been a sinful woman, you became a Bride of Christ through repentance. Having attained the angelic life, you defeated demons by the weapon of the Cross; therefore, O most glorious Mary you are a Bride of the Kingdom.

Kontakion

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts **From *The Orthodox Faith* - Volume II: Worship** **By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko**

As we already have seen, the eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in the Orthodox Church on lenten weekdays. In order for the faithful to sustain their lenten effort by participation in Holy Communion, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. The service is an ancient one in the Orthodox Church. We officially hear about it in the canons of the seventh century, which obviously indicates its development at a much earlier date.

On all days of the holy fast of Lent, except on the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, and the holy day of the Annunciation, the Liturgy of the Presanctified is to be served (Canon 52, Quinisext, 692).

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. There is no consecration of the eucharistic gifts at the presanctified liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the eucharistic gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, unless, of course, the feast of the Annunciation should intervene; hence its name of "presanctified."

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served on Wednesday and Friday evenings, although some churches may celebrate it only on one of these days. It comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. The faithful who are unable to make the effort of total fasting because of weakness or work, however, normally eat a light lenten meal in the early morning.

During the psalms of Vespers, the presanctified gifts are prepared for communion. They are transferred from the altar table where they have been reserved since the Divine Liturgy, and are placed on the table of oblation. After the evening hymn, the Old Testament scriptures of Genesis and Proverbs are read, between which the celebrant blesses the kneeling congregation with a lighted candle and the words: "The Light of Christ illumines all," indicating that all wisdom is given by Christ in the Church through the scriptures and sacraments. This blessing was originally directed primarily to the catechumens—those preparing to be baptized on Easter—who attended the service only to the time of the communion of the faithful.

After the readings, the evening Psalm 141 is solemnly sung once again with the offering of incense. Then, after the litanies of intercession and those at which the catechumens were dismissed in former days, the presanctified eucharistic gifts are brought to the altar in a solemn, silent procession. The song of the entrance calls the faithful to communion.

Now the heavenly powers [i.e., the angels] do minister invisibly with us. For behold the King of Glory enters. Behold the mystical sacrifice, all fulfilled, is ushered in.

Let us with faith and love draw near that we may be partakers of everlasting life. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

After the litany and prayers, the Our Father is sung and the faithful receive Holy Communion to the chanting of the verse from Psalm 34: "O taste and see how good is the Lord. Alleluia." The post-communion hymns are sung and the faithful depart with a prayer to God who "has brought us to these all-holy days for the cleansing of carnal passions," that he will bless us "to fight the good fight, to accomplish the course of the fast, and to attain unto and to adore the holy resurrection" of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is traditionally considered to be the work of the sixth-century pope, Saint Gregory of Rome. The present service, however, is obviously the inspired liturgical creation of Christian Byzantium

Check this out!!



https://www.nynjoca.org/news_240330_1.html

Fifth Sunday of Lent
From *The Orthodox Faith* - Volume II: Worship
By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come “to call sinners to repentance” and to save them from their sins (Luke 5.32). In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in Lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.

Excerpts from *Reflecting on the life of St. Mary of Egypt*
by Chaplain Patrick Tutella
from the OCA website

“Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 2.)

During Great Lent we remember and venerate Saint Mary of Egypt both on April 1 and the Fifth Sunday of Lent. With the Canon of St. Andrew, read in many churches during the first and fifth weeks of Lent, we uphold her as an icon of repentance, an example for every Orthodox Christian to emulate. Yet for many years, she lived a life of bondage to sexual passions. If St. Mary of Egypt were alive today, would we welcome her into our assembly?

“I confess to Thee, O Savior, the sins I have committed, the wounds of my soul and body, which murderous thoughts, like thieves, have inflicted inwardly upon me.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 12.)

For seventeen years, Saint Mary of Egypt lived a lifestyle that isolated her from the community and God. Covered with filth amassed over the years, her heart yet longed for union with God. ...

“Christ became man, calling to repentance thieves and harlots. Repent, my soul: the door of the kingdom is already open, and Pharisees and publicans and adulterers pass through it before thee, changing their lives.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 9, Vs. 342)

The healing of the venerable Saint Mary of Egypt was not instantaneous but required a rigorous and lengthy spiritual journey. Being led by the Holy Spirit, she retreated to the wilderness where she lived the life of a hermit for seventeen years, seeking freedom from bondage of the passions. She spent a further thirty years in the wilderness having obtained the true gifts of repentance, healing and freedom from the enslavement of sin. During Great Lent, each of us seeks repentance, turning from our own vices and passions and setting our minds and hearts on God. Through the intercessions of the most Holy Theotokos, God grants us the gift of compunction to turn from our wounds and sins to find healing and comfort in Him.

Let us remember Saint Mary of Egypt and her wonderful redemption. During the remainder of this Lenten journey, may we pray to be freed from our imprisonment to the passions that enslave us.

*Having been a sinful woman,
You became through repentance a Bride of Christ.
Having attained angelic life,
You defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross;
Therefore, O most glorious Mary you are a Bride of the Kingdom!*
(Kontakion: Tone 3)

5th Saturday of Great Lent: of the Akathist to the Theotokos April 20

On the Fifth Saturday of Great Lent, the Saturday of the Akathist, we commemorate the “Laudation of the Virgin” Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos.

In 625, when the emperor Heraclius was fighting the Persians, the Khan sent forces to attack Constantinople by land and by sea. Patriarch Sergius urged the people not to lose heart, but to trust in God.

A procession was made around the city with the Cross of the Lord, the robe of the Virgin, the Icon of the Savior not made by hands, and the Hodēgētria Icon of the Mother of God. The Patriarch dipped the Virgin’s robe in the sea, and the city’s defenders beat back the Khan’s sea forces. The sea became very rough, and many boats sank. The invaders retreated, and the people of Constantinople gave thanks to God and to His Most Pure Mother.

On two other occasions, in 655 and 705, the Theotokos protected the city from Saracen invaders. A feastday dedicated to the Laudation of the Virgin was established to commemorate these victories. The Akathist to the Mother of God is believed to originate from this period, and its use has spread from Constantinople to other Orthodox lands.

The icon before which the Akathist was sung was given to the Dionysiou Monastery on Mt. Athos by Emperor Alexius Comnenos. There, it began to flow with myrrh. There were at least three wonderworking copies of this icon in Russia before the Revolution.

This icon shows the Mother of God seated on a throne, and surrounded by Prophets with scrolls.

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, “the city of the Virgin,” by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the liturgical life of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, and to many Saints.

The Akathist hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God, beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: “Rejoice.” As the hymn is chanted all of the events related to our Lord’s Incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin’s womb. The unborn John the Baptist prophetically rejoices. The shepherds recognize Christ as a blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin “the things of earth join chorus with the heavens.” The pagan Magi following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world.

The word “akathistos” means “not sitting,” i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet. The stanzas alternate between long and short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of “Alleluia.” Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: “Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded.”

The first part of the hymn is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary’s surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph’s doubts as to her innocence. The second part is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ’s coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God’s Son. The fourth and the last part is once more a lyric and rhetorical appraisal of Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

THE AKATHIST SERVICE IN HONOR OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY



Troparion to The Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

"To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

The Work on the Floor of the Sanctuary Continues...
We're almost there!
Glory to God!
And heartfelt thanks to Joseph and Ryan and every one who has helped!



*Unless the Lord builds the house, Those who build it labor in vain;
Unless the Lord guard the city, Those who guard it stay awake in vain.
Psalm 126:1*

PARISH WISH LIST

A wish list to help our parish grow!

RECURRING needs:

Paper Plates (small and large), **Paper Bowls**, **Hot Cups**
Napkins
Plastic Utensils, especially **Forks**
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

Holy Mother Olympia, pray to God for us!

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

*****Presanctified Liturgy with Archbishop Michael*****

Wednesday, April 17, 6 PM followed by a fellowship meal.

Presbyter's Council Meeting

Thursday, April 25, 11 AM

Zoom



"In peace let us pray to the Lord!"

This means first of all that we are called to assume a state of inner peace.

Those who will take part in the Divine Liturgy should rid their minds of all confusion, all susceptibility to fleshly and earthly temptations, all obsession with 'worldly cares', all hostile feelings towards any other person, and all personal anxiety...

Then at once there is a second request: "For the peace from above..."

The peace which we have already requested is something other than a state of mind or a psychological condition produced by our own effort. It is peace which comes 'from above'.

We should humbly recognize that such peace is a gift from God, and we should open ourselves to this gift...

Then comes a third request for peace: "For the peace of the whole world..."

The peace which we request goes beyond our isolated person...

We pray for the peace of the universe... we find ourselves in harmony with everything God has called into being.

A Monk of the Eastern Church