

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905
Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic
(814) 244-4063

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent
(04.21.2024.)

Mark 10:32-45

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. **(KJV)**

St. Mary of Egypt Luke 7:36-50

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. **(KJV)**

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent-St. Mary of Egypt

The Church is rapidly approaching the end of Great Lent. Each day offers believers opportunities to greatly benefit the soul. St. Mary of Egypt stands before believers in the Church as a primary example of repentance.

Daily believers are encouraged to fall down before the Lord God and seek forgiveness. The suffering of Jesus Christ on the Cross serves as the supreme reminder of Christ's love for every person.

St. Luke's Gospel for today describes Jesus' willingness to forgive sinners. Jesus' love and mercy for sinners is evident in the Gospel. St. Luke's Gospel shines the ray of hope for every sinner.

Jesus describes His forthcoming arrest, death and resurrection in St. Mark's Gospel. The journey to Pascha is guided by the foreknowledge of Jesus Christ's arrest, suffering, death and resurrection.

Believers find definition, meaning and hope for their lives in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ creates the pathways for life eternal. Jesus' defeat of death assures believers of the possibility of the general resurrection.

The day of Jesus' return to judge the living and the dead remains unknown. Each Great Lent serves as precious time for wise believers to prepare for the Great and Final Judgment.

St. Mary of Egypt made full benefit of the opportunity to repent. St. Mary progressed from being a flagrant sinner to becoming a saint. She is an inspiring model of repentance for all in the Church.

Every person regardless of the degree of personal sin can find hope in the life of St. Mary of Egypt. Repentance is possible for believers with the mind and willingness to repent.

The Lenten journey is an immeasurable blessing for believers. The Lenten journey provides for renewal and growth in the Lord Jesus Christ. New life in Christ is great joy.

Holy Baptism is the beginning experience with Jesus Christ. Repentance keeps the believer on the narrow path to God's Kingdom. Repentance keeps the possibility of eternal life alive.

Holy Week is on the horizon. Each day remaining is an investment in the Kingdom of God. Cherish the time remaining to fully invest in God's Kingdom!

Invest completely in the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. (Mt.6:33)

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent. St. Mary of Egypt. Holy Apostle Herodion, Agabus, and Others. April 8/21, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

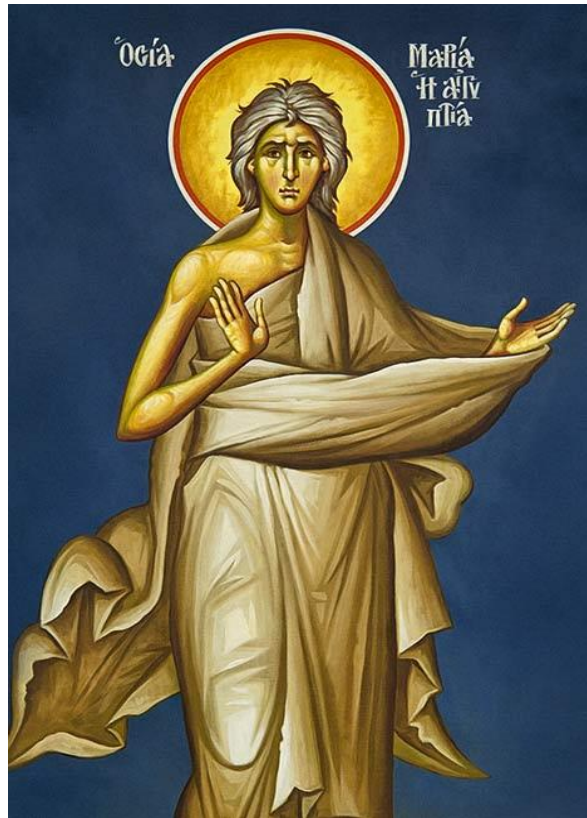
Father Rodney Torbic

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Introduction

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent the Orthodox Church commemorates our Righteous Mother Mary of Egypt. The feast day of Saint Mary of Egypt is April 1, however, she is also commemorated on this Sunday due to her recognition by the Church as a model of repentance.

Life of the Saint

Our holy mother Mary was born in Egypt. She had left her parents at the age of twelve to go to Alexandria, where she spent the next seventeen years in debauchery and the greatest profligacy. Living on charity and linen-weaving, she nevertheless offered her body to any man, not being forced to it by dire necessity as were so many poor women, but as though she were consumed by the fire of a desire that nothing was able to appease.



One day, seeing a crowd of Lybians and Egyptians moving towards the port, she followed them and set sail with them for Jerusalem, offering her body to pay her fare. When they arrived in the Holy City, she followed the crowd that was thronging towards the Church of the Resurrection, it being the day of the Exaltation of the Cross. But, when she reached the threshold of the church, an invisible force prevented her entering in spite of repeated efforts on her part, although the other pilgrims were able to go in without hindrance. Left alone in a corner of the narthex, she began to realize that it was the impurity of her life that was preventing her approaching the holy Wood. She burst into tears and smote her breast and, seeing an icon of the Mother of God, made this prayer to her: "O Sovereign Lady, who didst bear God in the flesh, I know that I should not dare to look upon thine icon, thou who are pure in soul and body, because, debauched as I am, I must fill thee with disgust. But, as the God born of thee became man in order to call sinners to repentance, come to my aid! Allow me to go into the church and prostrate before His Cross. And, as soon as I have seen the Cross, I promise that I will renounce the world and all pleasures, and follow the path of salvation that thou wilt show me."

She felt herself suddenly freed from the power that had held her and was able to enter the church. There she fervently venerated the Holy Cross and then, returning to the icon of the

Mother of God, declared herself ready to follow the path that the Virgin would show her. A voice replied to her from on high: "If you cross the Jordan, you will find rest."

Leaving the church, she bought three loaves with the alms a pilgrim had given her, discovered which road led to the Jordan and arrived one evening at the Church of Saint John the Baptist. After having washed in the river, she received Communion in the Holy Mysteries, ate half of one of the loaves and went to sleep on the riverbank. The next morning, she crossed the river and lived from that time on in the desert, remaining there for forty-seven years without ever encountering either another human being or any animal.

During the first seventeen years, her clothes soon having fallen into rags, burning with heat by day and shivering with cold by night, she fed on herbs and wild roots. But more than the physical trials, she had to face violent assaults from the passions and the memory of her sins and, throwing herself on the ground, she implored the Mother of God to come to her aid. Protected by God, who desires nothing but that the sinner should turn to Him and live, she uprooted all the passions from her heart by means of this extraordinary asceticism, and was able to turn the fire of carnal desire into a flame of divine love that made it possible for her to endure the implacable desert with joy, as though she were not in the flesh.

After all these years, a holy elder called Zosimas (April 4), who, following the tradition instituted by Saint Euthymios, had gone into the desert across the Jordan for the period of the Great Fast, saw one day a human form with a body blackened by the sun and with hair white as bleached linen to its shoulders. He ran after this apparition that fled before him, begging it to give him its blessing and some saving words. When he came within ear-shot, Mary, calling by name him whom she had never seen, revealed to him that she was a woman and asked him to throw her his cloak that she might cover her nakedness.

At the urging of the monk, who was transported at having at last met a God-bearing being who had attained the perfection of monastic life, the Saint recounted to him with tears the story of her life and conversion. Then, having finished her account, she begged him to come the following year to the bank of the Jordan with Holy Communion.

When the day arrived, Zosimas saw Mary appearing on the further bank of the river. She made the sign of the Cross and crossed the Jordan, walking on the water. Having received Holy Communion weeping, she said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:29). She then took leave of Zosimas, asking him to meet her the following year in the place where they had first met.

When the year was past, Zosimas, going to the agreed spot, found the Saint's body stretched on the ground, her arms crossed and her face turned towards the East. His tearful emotion prevented him from noticing at once an inscription traced on the ground by the Saint, which read: "Abba Zosimas, bury here the body of the humble Mary; give what is of dust to dust, after having prayed for me. I died on the first day of April, the very night of the Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, after having partaken in the Holy Eucharist." Consoled in his grief by having learned the Saint's name, Zosimas was amazed to discover that she had, in several hours, covered a distance of more than twenty days' march.

After having vainly tried to break up the earth with a stick, he suddenly saw a lion approaching Mary's body and licking her feet. On the orders of the Elder, the beast dug a hole with its claws, in which Zosimas devoutly placed the Saint's body.

On his return to the monastery, he recounted the marvels that God had wrought for those who turn away from sin and move towards Him with all their hearts. From the hardened sinner that she had been, Mary has, for a great many souls crushed under the burden of sin, become a source of hope and a model of conversion. This is why the Holy Fathers have placed the celebration of her memory at the end of the Great Fast as an encouragement for all who have neglected their salvation, proclaiming that repentance can bring them back to God even at the eleventh hour.

Orthodox Commemoration of the Feast of Saint Mary of Egypt

The feast day of Saint Mary of Egypt is April 1, the day of her repose, however the Orthodox Church also commemorates the Saint on the Fifth Sunday of Lent. As a Sunday of Great Lent, the commemoration is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which is preceded by a Matins (Orthros) service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening.

Scripture readings for the Fifth Sunday of Lent are the following: At the Orthros (Matins): The prescribed weekly Gospel reading. At the Divine Liturgy: Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 10:32-45.

Saint Mary of Egypt is also commemorated on the Thursday before the Fifth Sunday of Lent, when her life is read during the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete. A canon in her honor is read at the end of each Ode. In parish churches the service and the canon is most often conducted on Wednesday evening.

Hymns of the Feast

Apolytikion: Plagal of the Fourth Tone

In you the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up your cross, you did follow Christ, and by your deeds you did teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passes away, but to attend to the soul since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mary, your spirit rejoices with the Angels.

Kontakion: Fourth Tone

Having escaped the gloom of sin, O blest Mary, and shining brightly with the light of repentance, thou didst present thy heart to Christ, O glorious one, bringing Him His Holy and all-immaculate Mother as a greatly merciful and most bold intercessor. Hence, thou hast found the pardon of thy sins and with the Angels rejoicest for evermore.

Services this Week

- **Lazarus Saturday – Saturday
(04.27.2024.)**
 - **Divine Liturgy – 9:30 AM**
 - **6:00 pm – Vrbica – Vesper Service -
Sanctification of palms and pussy
willows and procession following Vespers**
- **6th Sunday of Lent – (04.27.2024.)**
**Entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in
Jerusalem – Palm Sunday**
-Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM

Donations April 14, 2024

Offering - \$ 1,710.00 Candles - \$88.00 Dues - \$100

Large Candles

IMO Mary Ellen Locher-Byrd from Helene Gleason
IMO Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp
IMO Grandparents Amelia & Pete Mastovich from Rick Kondas
IMO brother Joseph Kondas from Rick Kondas

CONGRATULATIONS

**To our Father Dragan, Popadija Vladanka, and Petar on the
arrival of Beautiful Baby Vera on Thursday, April 4th.
God Bless the Vukovic Family!
dobrodošla devojčica!
Mnogaja Ljeta!**

**Please see attached form in regards to Flowers for
Pascha. If you have any questions, please see Suzette
Gardenhour.**

**Lazarus Saturday - Saturday, April 27th - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 AM
6:00 pm - Vrbica - Vesper Service - Sanctification of palms and pussy
willows and procession following Vespers.
SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS PLEASE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO PARTICIPATE!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday, April 21st – 5th Sunday of Lent
Lenten Vespers at Our St. Nicholas
Special Guest – His Grace Bishop Irinej
Speaker Fr. Stefan Djoric – 5 PM**

**Lazarus Saturday – Saturday, April 27th – Divine Liturgy – 9:30 AM
6:00 pm – Vrbica – Vesper Service - Sanctification of palms and pussy
willows and procession following Vespers.**

**Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 28th – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM
GREAT and HOLY THURSDAY - *May 2nd* - 9:30 am – Divine Liturgy
7:00 pm – Great Vigil (The reading of the 12 Gospels)**

**GREAT and HOLY FRIDAY - *May 3rd*
7:00 pm – Vespers Service Veneration of Plastanica (Epitaphios)**

**GREAT and HOLY SATURDAY - *May 4th* -9:30 am – Divine Liturgy
Egg coloring and Lunch Following Divine Liturgy
9:00 pm – Paschal Matins
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - PASCHA *May 5th*
10.00 am – Divine Liturgy**

Anniversary Celebration – Sunday, May 19th!!!!

**Cemetery Blessings
Saturday June 8th St. Nicholas & Grandview
Saturday June 15th Mercury Ave and St Petka**

Polka-Fest – Friday May 31st to Sunday, June 2nd

Band of Brothers – July 11-13th and 17 – 20th

TASTE OF SERBIA – Saturday, August 10th

Johnstown Slavic Festival – September 20-21st



FLOWERS FOR PASCHA



This year with our Easter falling on Sunday, May 5th, it may be difficult to get the flowers that we normally purchase. You have the option of purchasing your own flowers, or donating money that will be used to purchase flowers to decorate the tomb. Please complete the form below and return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, April 28th.

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Paid _____ Check # _____

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, March 19th. If you are out of town – payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church
1001 St. Clair Road, Johnstown PA 15905

Or contact Suzette at 814-421-1276 or shliva16@gmail.com

Please check this box if you will be purchasing your own flowers. They must be at the church no later than Friday morning, May 3rd.