

BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sherman Drive, Utica NY 13501

Saba Shofany, Pastor

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SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Saturday, January 27 & Sunday, January 28, 2018

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:00AM **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Matins/Orthros: Every Sunday at 9:00AM **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing members, including Lorraine Chanatry-Howell, Nancy Gazzal, Edgar Hallak, Daniel Klockowski, and Rose Pawlinga. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection Jan 20/21: \$ 459.00 Memorial Services: \$ 20.00
Fuel: \$ 5.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

† **Ida McHarris**, By P. A. Haddles
† **Joseph Showa**, By Anthony & Sandra Showa

THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

† **Ida McHarris**, By Leo & Judith Schwenzfeier
† **Salwa Atallah-Hamati**, By Maggy Atallah

NEXT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 03

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson
† **Pauline Major**, By Robert Lalli

NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 04

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson
† **Joseph Reesh**, By his daughters

*** ANNOUNCEMENT ***

The next Parish Advisory Council meeting will be held on Mon Feb 5, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm.

The body, as well as the spirit, is important in Christian life. As St Paul says, “*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Cor 6: 19-20). We are not meant to ignore or belittle the body because we are Christians. The body is not an enemy but a partner and collaborator with the soul in the work of our sanctification. The body, as well as the spirit, is meant to be transfigured in Christ and so we are called to glorify God in it.

Purifying the Body: The first way in which we glorify God in the body is by accepting and affirming its freedom from the control of sin and death. United to Christ in baptism, we have already been given a share in that freedom, which will be completely realized in the life of the world to come. As long as we are in this life, however, we must work along with Christ-in-us to maintain the body’s freedom from the influence of sin.

And so, one way in which we glorify God in the body is by the Church’s ascetic tradition, which focuses on freeing the mind and the heart from attachment to the things of the senses. Christian asceticism is not anti-physical but seeks to liberate the body from the lure of the sensual so that the physical may be sanctified.

The Church Fathers considered that the most basic ascetic practices focus on controlling the *passions* or cravings of the body for food and drink and for sexual release. This is not because they are our greatest inner enemies - pride and vanity have that dubious distinction – but because it is easier to conquer our physical cravings than our spiritual impulses. This is why St Paul, in 1 Corinthians, singles out the power of gluttony and lust as the enemy’s first line of attack on the believer. “*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?*” (v.15). How can you surrender to the first assault the enemy mounts against you? If we cannot put aside fatty foods on Wednesdays and Fridays, much less during the Fasts, how can we even begin to deal with things like spiritual laziness (sloth) or pride that afflict us in our innermost hearts?

Worshipping in the Body: We live our life in Christ in our bodies, as well as in our spirits, and so the Eastern Churches have insisted that the body join the spirit in worshipping the One who created us as both physical and spiritual. We bow, we kneel, we make the sign of the cross, we prostrate, we kiss, we eat, and we drink. We glorify God in the body by entering body, soul, and spirit in the worship of the Church.

One way we glorify God in our bodies at worship is by standing for prayer. In some churches people are directed to stand or sit at different times during the service. Sitting, however, is the stance taken by an audience rather than a participant, whether it be at the theater or at worship. Worshippers are an “audience” during readings or a sermon; during prayers and litanies they are participants and more fittingly stand rather than sit.

Two bodily gestures in Eastern worship not common in the churches of the West are the metany and the prostration. In the metany, we make the sign of the cross and bow from the waist, extending our right hand until our fingers touch the ground. In the prostration we kneel on both knees and bow until our forehead touches the ground. Both gestures indicate our complete submission to the King of all.

The Great Fast: During the Church fasts, we have ample opportunities to glorify God in the body through more frequent church services and through fasting. Eastern Christian fasting incorporates two ways of using our bodies in worship. In *ascetic or total fasting*, we do not eat or drink anything. Period. This kind of fasting is in the spirit of Deuteronomy 8:3, quoted by Christ to the tempter, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Mt 4:4). Traditionally people fast this way before receiving Holy Communion. Clergy who will serve the Liturgy – and in some Churches whoever will receive the Eucharist – are expected to fast from sexual activity as well. It is also customary to fast totally for a certain period on all fast days. Thus, many fast this way until noon during these seasons. (*JanLeaflets2018*)