

**BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Sherman Drive, Utica NY 13501  
Saba Shofany, Pastor  
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**SUNDAY OF THE MEAT- FARE  
Saturday, February 03 & Sunday, February 04, 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 27/28: \$ 427.00      Funeral & Memorial Services: \$ 540.00**  
**Syrian Cheese Sale: \$ 100.00      Fuel: \$ 0.00**

**† MEMORIAL MASSES †**

**THIS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 03**

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson  
† **Pauline Major**, By Robert Lalli  
† **Mary Machis**, By Mr & Mrs William Chanatry

**THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 04**

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson  
† **Joseph Reesh**, By his daughters  
† **Mary Machis**, By Mr & Mrs Sharon Lupino

**NEXT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10**

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson  
† **Mary Machis**, By Mr & Mrs William Chanatry

**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

† **Ida McHarris**, By Rosellen M Mattson  
† **Father Julien Eliane**, By Robert Lalli  
† **Pierre Kawam, 15<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By his wife Lorraine Kawam

**\* ANNOUNCEMENT \***

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

**THANKS AND TRIBUTE**

**SYRIAN BRAIDED CHEESE:** Let us all express our appreciation to the Cheese Making Committee, Janet George, MaryAnn Astour, Virginia Lynch, Sandy Showa, Michelle Roth, Nadia Casab, Barbara Dunlevy, and Tony Showa for their help making our Syrian Braided Cheese. Great thanks to John Gazzal for donating a great quantity of muhlab spice for the cheese, and to Marcia Reesh for creating labels used to list ingredients on the braids. St Basil and the entire parish community deeply appreciates your sincere dedication. God bless you! Fr. Saba

**GREAT FAST**

EASTERN CHRISTIANS LOVE TO THINK in terms of forty days. The Great Fast and its echo, the forty days between the feasts of the Transfiguration and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the churching of an infant forty days after birth and the memorial service forty-days after death are the most obvious examples. This pattern is ultimately drawn from the Scriptures where significant events are regularly placed in this time frame. In the Old Testament, the great flood lasted for 40 days and 40 nights (*Gen 7*). Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights when he received the Ten Commandments (*Ex 24*). In Deuteronomy 9 we read that Moses interceded on Israel’s behalf for 40 days and 40 nights. The Israelite spies took 40 days to spy out Canaan (*Num. 13*). Goliath taunted Saul’s army for 40 days before David arrived to slay him (*1 Sam 17*). When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights to Mt. Horeb (*1 Kings 19*). It was after a 40-day fast that the Tempter came to test Jesus (*Mt 4: 1-11*).

There is another 40-day period mentioned in the New Testament, and also observed in the life of our Church: the 40 days between Christ’s nativity and the day when His parents brought Him to the temple, “*to do for Him according to the custom of the Law*” (*Lk 2:27*). While there the Lord encountered the elderly Simeon and Anna, who recognized God’s decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah’s coming. We celebrate this event on February 2 (the 40<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas) as the Hypapante, or Encounter, of the Messiah with His people, personified by Simeon and Anna. Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that **a mother must be purified** after 40 days. “*She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over*” (*Lev 12:4*).

**In Jewish law** any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood – the carrier of life – makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways. There was an additional prescription according to the Torah: **the redemption of the firstborn son**. “*Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem*” (*Ex 13:13*). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that every-thing comes from Him and is His. Children could be “redeemed” by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God’s saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, “*it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ*” (*Lk 2:26*). He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Cantic of Simeon: “*Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel*” (*Lk 2:29-32*). We repeat this cantic at the end of every day (vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy, as well as when any child is presented in church 40 days after its birth. Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment “*and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem*” (*Lk 2:38*).

(FebLeaflets2018)