

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
901 Sherman Drive, Utica, New York 13501
Phone 315.732.4662 Email stbasilutica@gmail.com
Website www.stbasilutica.org

6th SUNDAY AFTER EASTER – ASCENSION FEAST
Saturday, May 12 and Sunday, May 13, 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 all of our convalescing friends, including Nancy Gazzal, Edgar Hallak, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, and Carol Young. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection May 5/6: \$ 186.39

Votive Candle Collection: \$ 290.61

Memorial Services: \$ 100.00

Sale of 7 Small Pews: \$ 350.00

Syrian Cheese Sale: \$ 230.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, MAY 12

† James Chanatry, by Lorraine Chanatry-Howell

† Margaret Casab, by Shirley Casab

† Rose Marie Korrie, by Shirley Casab

† J.A.F Lieutenant Najib Barahmeh, by Michael & Christine Barahmeh

THIS SUNDAY, MAY 13

† George Kawam, by his wife Renee Kawam

† Jannah Jbarah, by her family

NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 19

† George Kawam, by his wife Renee Kawam

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 20

† Mary Machis, by Mr. & Mrs. Henry George Murad and Family

† Jannah Jbarah, by her family

*** ANNOUNCEMENTS ***

1. The next St Basil Parish Advisory Council will be held on Monday, June 4 @ 6:30 PM in the Rectory.
2. Our PayPal link is available on our website offering a safe, secure, and confidential option to donate to St Basil, Utica. Please go to www.stbasilutica.org, click on the Donation Tab and follow the webpage instructions. Weekly Sunday Bulletins can also be found there, click on the Announcement Tab. Thank you for visiting our page!

THE HOLY ASCENSION

Perhaps the more important reason why we ignore the Ascension today is that it is overshadowed in the historical Churches of East and West by the more prominent celebrations of Pascha, which precedes it, and Pentecost, which follows it. Christ's Ascension, nonetheless, is of major importance for our understanding of the mystery of our salvation and of what is to come in God's plan for us. It is a feast that expresses hope that a place has been prepared for us in the Kingdom of God alongside the risen Christ.

The Ascension marks the end of Christ's time on earth, as recorded in the Scriptures. Matthew records the Lord's last words – "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28: 19) – but does not describe the Ascension. In Mark's Gospel the narrative continues: "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen" (Mk 16:19-20).

It is the evangelist Luke who gives us the fullest picture. In his Gospel we read "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them" (Lk 24:49-51).

In Luke's Acts of the Apostles, the Lord's words of farewell are followed by the following narrative: "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:9-11).

The risen Christ physically leaves this world, not by dying again, but by being "taken up" into heaven. He had not risen in order to resume the life of men on earth, and so His risen body was not limited in the way that earthly bodies are. He arose in a glorified body, immortal (never to die) and incorruptible (never to decay), for "He clothed the mortal in the splendor of incorruption" (St John Chrysostom).

This body, fully human but glorified, ascended into heaven and, as we say in the Creed, is now seated at the right hand of the Father. The Lord Jesus is exalted and glorified with His heavenly Father, as He was from all eternity, but now in His humanity, in the body incarnate from the holy Virgin Mary. As we pray in the canon at orthros:

"O Christ, having taken upon Your shoulders our nature, which had gone astray, you ascended and brought it to God the Father" (Ode 7). "Having raised our nature, which was deadened by sin, You brought it to Your own Father, O Savior."

For the first time, a human body is glorified in the presence of the eternal God, offering our own fallen yet restored nature to Him who is the Source of all life. This is what the Protomartyr Stephen saw in his vision of the risen Lord: he "gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" (Acts 7:55, 56).

And yet, Christ is also present to us, as we sing in the kontakion of this feast: "You gloriously ascended, O Christ our God, without abandoning us, but remained with us forever." Christ had promised to abide with us, as we read in the Gospel of John: "I will not leave you orphans" (Jn 14:18). His presence, by the power of the Holy Spirit, would be His Body, the Church.

(MayLeaflets2018)