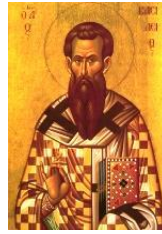


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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1st SUNDAY OF LENT- SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
Saturday, February 20 & Sunday, February 21, 2021

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**WEEKLY SERVICES**

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

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, John & Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**WEEKLY COLLECTIONS. THANK YOU!**

Weekly Collection Feb. 13/14: \$ 425.00      Church Ceiling Collections: \$ 580.00

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SPIRITUAL ADVICE OF THE DAY

“You (God) prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” (Psalm 23: 5-6)

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

**THIS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Kevin & Ameena Copeland  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Ralph & Denise Fusco  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Francis T. Roy  
† **Abdallah Ghryyeb**, By the Hesham & Najwa Marji

**NEXT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Janet George  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Kathrin Cummins  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Francis T. Roy  
† **Abdallah Ghryyeb**, By the Hesham & Najwa Marji

**THE GREAT LENT**

The Great Fast, forty days of preparation for the observances of Great Week and Pascha. On this, eve of the Fast, our Church always reads from St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, “*Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light*”(Rom 13:11, 12).

In our lectionary, the Epistle to the Romans is read during the first weeks after Pentecost. Why is this section appointed for this Sunday? ... because “*the day is at hand.*” The Great Fast begins this evening with “Forgiveness Vespers.” We have the opportunity to be untied from “our attachment to the things of this present world,” to “*cast off the works of darkness, and ... put on the armor of light*” (v. 13), through the observances of the Fast.

Appropriate as these words are on this day, that they were not written with the Fast in mind; there was no Great Fast in St Paul’s day. To what was he referring? Commentators believe St Paul’s sense of urgency derived from the portentous events in the Roman Empire of his day. The persecution of the Church had begun. Jewish unrest was intensifying, and a full-scale revolt would be mounted in a few short years, bringing about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Many Jews believed that the Messiah would be coming soon; many Christians believed that He (Jesus) would be returning soon. The “Day of the Lord” was at hand. For St Paul, this critical time in the history of the Church and the Jewish nation demanded that Christians focus their attention on the fundamental truth of their existence: they had a unique relationship to God in Christ. Everyone in the world was related to God as the work of His hands; Christians, however, were related to Him as His adopted children, God “*having predestined us to adoption as sons*” (Eph 1:5) in order to make present throughout the world the Gospel of salvation in Christ. It is this reality which defines a Christian’s way of life at this time.

St John Chrysostom, says that St Paul “... puts the Resurrection close at hand. For, as time advances, he means, the season of our present life is wasting away, and the life to come approaches. If then, you are prepared, and have done all that He has commanded, that day is salvation for you; but if you are not ready, it is not so.” That is not some kind of threat for Chrysostom: “It is not to alarm them that he exhorts them in this way, but out of kindness, in order to untie them from their attachment to the things of this present world” (Homily on Romans).

Most of us are quite happy to be attached to the things of this present world and resist parting from them. It is not unusual to find older people, who have moved from a family home to smaller quarters, tying to cram all “their things” into one or two rooms. Few are those who come to realize that, as the saying goes, “what you own, owns you.” For St Paul, our “things” are not something to hold on to, but to leave behind happily, because what waits for us is so far superior.

**Wakefulness and Sleep:** St Paul uses a number of contrasting examples in his epistles to represent the difference between the ways of believers and those of non-believers. Christians are told to be awake rather than to sleep, for “*the night is far spent, the day is at hand*” (v.12).

In the ancient world, sleep was frequently an image of death. As a descent into unconsciousness, sleep foreshadows the end of life. Because it is temporary, however, sleep is also an image pointing to the resurrection. At Christ’s resurrection, we are told in the Gospel, “*the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen sleep were raised*” (Mt 27:52). To be asleep is, in effect, to be dead.

Sleep is also an image of inattention when contrasted to watchfulness. The sentry is awake, alert to any danger. Thus, St Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “*Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober...*” (1 Thess. 5:7, 8). Sleep and drunkenness are equally devastating to a sentry who is supposedly on watch.

(Feb 2021 Leaflets)