

# St. Basil the Great

## MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

901 Sherman Drive, Utica, NY 13501

Telephone Number: 1 (315) 732-4662

Email: fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com

Website: stbasilutica.org

### PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

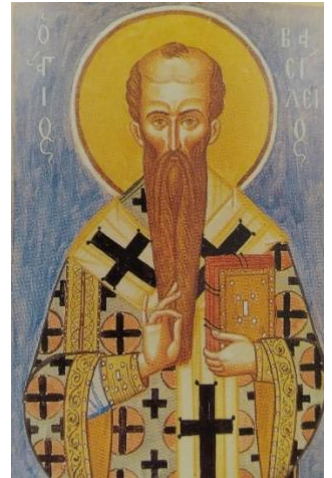
Rev. Thomas A. Moses

### WEEKEND VISITING CLERGY:

Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka    Rev. James Koury    Rev. Oliver Black

*"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins."*

- St. John Chrysostom



## Monthly Bulletin: February 2022 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

### Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

*Maryann Astour (Chair), Albert Casab, Janet George, Robert Lalli,  
Michelle Roth, Anthony Showa, Robert Zaloom*

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:** Before or after any service, or by appointment;

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION:** Please contact the pastor in advance to arrange for the required baptismal preparation and formation;

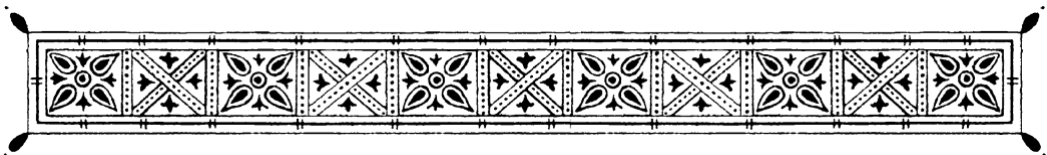
**HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:** At least six months prior to the proposed wedding date, please contact the pastor to arrange for the required interview and sacramental preparation and formation;

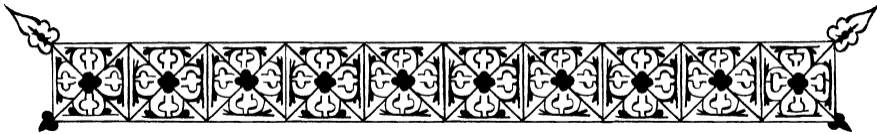
**HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK:** Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed. The pastor will make attempt to provide himself or arrange for another priest to provide the sacrament of anointing;

**HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK:** Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive the Eucharist in their home or in a local hospital. Please advise the pastor when the sacrament is needed.

**FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL SERVICES:** Please contact the pastor to plan arrangements to provide a proper burial and honor the memory of our beloved departed.

*Please remember to contact the pastor if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!*





**Sunday, February 20, 2022**

**Sunday of Meat-Fare**

**Commemoration of our Father among the Saints Leo, Bishop of Catania**

**Antiphon**

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6)**

See Divine Liturgy book

**Troparion of St. Basil the Great (Tone 1)**

**Kontakion of Meat Fare (Tone 1)**

O God, when You shall come down upon earth in your glory, every creature shall tremble before You. A river of fire shall flow before your judgment-seat, the books shall be opened and all secrets revealed. On that day, O Just Judge, deliver me from eternal fire and make me worthy to stand at your right!

**PROKIMENON**

My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

**Stichon:** The Lord has chastised me through His teaching, yet He has not delivered me to death.

**READINGS**

**Epistle:** 1 Cor. 8:8-13; 9:1-2 **Gospel:** Matthew 25:31-46

**Sunday, February 27, 2022**

**Sunday of Cheese-Fare**

**Commemoration of our Holy Father Procopius the Decapolitan, Confessor**

**Antiphon**

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 5)**

See the Divine Liturgy book

**Troparion of St. Basil the Great (Tone 1)**

**Kondakion of the Prodigal Son (Tone 3)**

When in my wretchedness I ran away from Your fatherly love, I squandered in wickedness the riches You had given me. And so now, like the Prodigal Son, I cry out to You: "I have sinned in your sight, O Merciful Father: receive me now that I repent and make me as one of your hired servants."

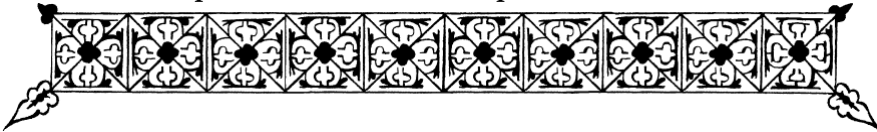
**PROKIMENON**

May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**Stichon:** Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

**READINGS**

**Epistle:** 1 Cor. 6:12-20 **Gospel:** Luke 15:11-32



**It is a great joy** for priests and other clergy to work in company with Christ and see Him restore life to others in so many ways through their ministry, as we can imagine in the case of His disciples in the early Church. We are in great need for dedicated priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers to continue this same apostolic ministry and to be fathers and servants to the people of our parishes. Please pray for vocations and encourage any potential candidates you may notice.

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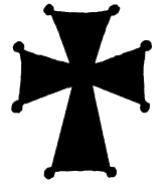
### **UPCOMING SERVICES:**

Sat. Feb. 19	11:00 AM	<b>Liturgy, Memorial and Burial Service for Steven Tehan:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Feb. 20	11:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sat. Feb. 26	4:30 PM	<b>Vigil Divine Liturgy:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Feb. 27	11:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy with Memorial Service for Fr. Saba Shofany:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Feb. 27	6:00 PM	<b>Forgiveness Vespers (Beginning of Lent):</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Wed. Mar. 2	6:00 PM	<b>Presanctified Liturgy:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Fri. Mar. 4	6:00 PM	<b>Akathist:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sat. Mar. 5	4:30 PM	<b>Divine Liturgy:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Mar. 6	11:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy with Memorial Service for John Gazzal:</b> Fr. Thomas Moses

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### **LITURGY INTENTIONS**

Please, email Fr. Thomas at [fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com](mailto:fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com) to request memorial services or prayer intentions for your beloved living or deceased.



**Saturday February 19, 2022, 11:00 AM:**  
**For the repose of the soul of**  
**Steven Tehan**  
**Divine Liturgy with Memorial Prayers and Burial**

**Sunday February 20, 2022, 11:00 AM:**

**For the repose of the souls of**

**Dr. Albert E. Altongy**

By Anne P. Altongy

**Jalil and Phillipine Altongy**

By Anne P. Altongy

**Jeanette Farewege**

By Melenie Meyers

**Julia Nassimos & John Gazzal**

By Mary Nassimos

**Rev. Saba Shofany**

By Olga Shofany and Family

**Saturday February 26, 2022, 4:30 PM:**

**For the repose of the soul of**

**Dr. Albert E. Altongy**

By Anne P. Altongy

**Jalil and Phillipine Altongy**

By Anne P. Altongy

**Peter Champagne**

By Fr. Thomas and Rebekah Moses

**Karen Cragolin**

By Robert Lalli

**Sunday February 27, 2022, 11:00 AM:**

**For the repose of the souls of**

**Julia Nassimos & John Gazzal**

By Mary Nassimos

**Rev. Saba Shofany with Memorial Service**

By Olga Shofany and Family

**Saturday March 5, 2022, 4:30 PM:**

**For the repose of the souls of**

**Dr. John George and Joseph Kakaty**

By David and Janet George

**Steven Tehan**

By Edward and Carmella Nassimos

**Sunday March 6, 2022, 11:00 AM:**

**For the repose of the souls of**

**John Gazzal with Memorial Service**

By Nancy Gazzal and Family

**Rev. Saba Shofany**

By Olga Shofany and Family



## **Announcements:**

Please, email Fr. Thomas to request prayer intentions and memorials or to discuss information and “thank you” notes to be included in future bulletins: [fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com](mailto:fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com).

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### **Parish Advisory Council Meeting**

Please join us on Monday February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM for a Parish Advisory Council Meeting. All are welcome! Please contact Fr. Thomas if you are willing to serve on a financial or building maintenance committee.

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### **Lenten Prayer Group**

During Lent, beginning on Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM, a prayer group will meet on Zoom weekly. Meetings will take place on Tuesday nights at 6:00 pm, on Zoom. The prayer group will help encourage each other in our fasting, share prayer intentions for the week, read and pray some of the readings and prayers from the Lenten weekday services, and to sing some of the beautiful hymns of the Great Fast. Meetings will last about 20 or 30 minutes. All are encouraged to attend. All that is needed is either a smart phone or a computer. Please email Fr. Thomas to sign up or if you need help download and using Zoom.

Note: If preferred by all in attendance, Facebook Messenger is another option for meeting.

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### **Memorial Gift for Fr. Saba**

Father Thomas would like to commission an icon for the adornment of the baptistry, and Maryann Astour is arranging for a memorial plaque to be included with St. Basil's departed pastors, both in memory of Fr. Saba Shofany. Please contact Fr. Thomas if you would like to contribute to the projects.

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### **Thank You:**

**Hanan Barahmeh** for baking the Prospora, which is the bread used for communion.

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### **Reading Corner:**

#### **The Call of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving**

For many Eastern Christians, Lent is embraced as a time for the renewal of repentance, fervent seeking after God, and increased love and concern for our neighbor. After a few weeks of preparation for the Great Fast, we begin a period of bright sorrow; forty days leading up to Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and finally Pascha, Easter, or the Feast of all Feasts.

I say bright sorrow because joy and sorrow are kept in tension. We experience sorrow because of the suffering endured by our Lord in the Crucifixion. But at the same time we experience joy because we know the end of the story: Christ is risen from the dead and by His death he has trampled upon death, and to those in the tombs, He has given life!

### **Fasting**

The Church in her wisdom, over centuries, developed this season of fasting in preparation for a season of feasting. It is generally understood that the traditional fast, handed down through generations, is to abstain from meat and dairy for the whole of Lent and limit food and drink to one or two small meals a day (yes, no snacking), and only after a certain hour. In order to observe this fast, one needs will power, preparation, and devotion to the precepts of the Church. For the

young and healthy, it is recommended to put forth a valiant effort to observe the Great Fast according to the tradition of the Church. But, the degree of observance is a personal matter worked out in the conscience of the believer and in dialogue with his or her parish priest or spiritual guide. On the one hand, the person who fasts can reap rewards from Great Lent. On the other hand, the church does not shame those who don't fast, but he who doesn't fast has lost a great opportunity.

There are many reasons why Eastern Christians fast the way we do. Some are related to Genesis. One of God's first commands concerns fasting: "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen. 2:17). God created the world and everything in it, and he gave trees, their seeds and fruit to man for food (cf. Gen. 1:29). It is not until after the Fall that humanity begins to eat the flesh of animals. Some say that not eating animal products during Lent is symbolic of our return to Paradise, to Eden, to our state before the Fall. Another, more practical, reason for fasting is to remind ourselves of our dependence on God. Every time I have to plan a meal around fasting or put down a snack I automatically picked up, I am reminded of God and the fact that I belong to Him, and not to my belly. In addition, there is frequent exercise of will power in order to observe the inconvenience of fasting. This is practice and exercise so that when I am confronted with sin elsewhere in life, I am stronger and better able to choose what is good and reject evil.

In order to warn the faithful of the dangers of pride mingled with works of righteousness, the Church places before the beginning of the Great Fast the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. The gospel reading is a parable about two men who enter the Temple to pray: one, a Pharisee, having performed righteous deeds, in his arrogance boasts to God of the good things he has done, and thanks God for not making him like sinners; while the other, a Publican, having no righteous deeds to bring before God, begs for mercy. Jesus tells his disciples that it was the Publican who walked away justified in his humility before God. The parable also "shows that when righteousness, which is marvelous in every other respect and sets a man close to God, takes pride as its companion, it casts that man down into the lowest depths" (Blessed Theophylact, The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke).

### **Prayer**

St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians called the followers of the Lord to "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17). Eastern Christians, in particular the monastics, have spent centuries struggling to understand and practice the meaning of this teaching. Lent becomes a season for increased effort to dialogue with God and to be with God both in silence and in worship. If we can not attain to unceasing prayer because of our current state in life, at least we can spend more time in the awareness that we are in the presence of God, no matter where we are or what we are doing.

The Church provides opportunities for frequent communal prayer during the Great Fast. It is likely that you could find more prayer services at an Eastern Church over the course of Lent and Holy Week than at any other time during the year. Also, we are called to more fervent personal

prayer: a call to an increased devotion to a prayer rule or to the Jesus Prayer (a short prayer that can be repeated throughout the day, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner.”) Many pastors call their flocks to turn off the television, or the computer, and instead to read the Scriptures and find time for silence.

St. Paul also exhorts married couples concerning the marital act: “do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again” (1 Cor. 7:5). Many faithful husbands and wives over the centuries have observed sexual abstinence for the whole of Lent in order to devote more thought and time to God.

### **Almsgiving**

In preparation for the Great Fast, on the last Sunday that meat is permitted (ten days before Ash Wednesday), the gospel reading from Matthew is about the Last Judgment. Here, Jesus gives to the Church the implied command to perform corporal works of mercy: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Matt. 25: 35-36). Lent becomes an opportunity to make a greater effort to see Christ in the poor, the suffering, and the stranger, in the least among us.

On the last Sunday that dairy is permitted (the Sunday before Ash Wednesday), the gospel reading, again from Matthew, teaches us how to give alms: “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:3). Blessed Theophylact interprets the left/right hand to mean, “Let not your vainglory be aware of your almsgiving” (The Explanation: The Holy Gospel According to Matthew).

### **Final Reflections**

The Pharisees are often portrayed as wicked in the gospels: they are proud and rigid and they are fierce persecutors of Jesus and the disciples. At the same time, the Pharisees also fast, give alms and pray. They are zealous for the traditions of their fathers and the strict observance of the Law; Jesus tells us: “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 5:20). But righteous works must be yoked with faith, love and humility; external observance of the commandments is not enough. Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites, or ‘actors’, who are “like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” (Mat. 23:27).

During this season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, let us imitate the Pharisee in his virtues and the Publican in his humility; and let us fast not only from food and drink, but also from sin, from gossip, jealousy and anger! In the words of St. John Chrysostom: “what good is it if you don’t eat meat or poultry, and yet you bite and devour your brothers and sisters?”



***Please remember*** to pray for the health and protection of our Bishop Nicholas and his reverend clergy, the faithful in this city of Utica and every surrounding country place, the government and the armed forces that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, the parish community of St. Basil the Great Melkite Greek Catholic Church, and for all of the intentions of her faithful, for Dillan, Jordan Barahmeh, Maryangela Fiorentino, Rt. Rev. Ed Kakaty, Mary Nassimos, John Roth, Karen Zalatan, Robert Zaloom.

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***If you are visiting our church,*** our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, please visit [www.melkite.org](http://www.melkite.org) or [www.godwithusonline.org](http://www.godwithusonline.org).

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**God With Us Online Presents:**

A Live Webinar

**THE WAY OF THE PILGRIM**

Unlocking the Jesus Prayer

Rev. Hieromonk Maximos Davies

Mondays: March 7<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 8-9 p.m. ET

“Pray always,” St. Paul exhorts us (1 Th. 5.17). And yet, how do we achieve this? The ascetics of the Church have long extolled the Jesus Prayer as the most powerful means to achieve unceasing prayer. Join us as we explore this rich, but simple prayer of our Eastern Christian tradition, seeking to “remember God more often than [we] breathe.”

**Register at:** [www.Godwithusonline.org](http://www.Godwithusonline.org)

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**Let us continue to keep in our prayers the departed servant of God**

Steven Tehan, who reposed in the Lord on Tuesday February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

A Divine Liturgy with Memorial Prayers and Burial took place on February 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM.

***“O Christ God, with the Saints grant rest to the soul of your servant,  
in a place where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing, but everlasting life.”***

***May his memory be eternal.***