

MEATFARE SUNDAY
SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT



Icon of the Last Judgment



**Holy Spirit
Byzantine Catholic
Church**

4815 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-2917
Parish Office: (412) 687-1220

Monsignor Russell A. Duker, Pastor



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2017

THE SUNDAY OF MEATFARE – JUDGMENT SUNDAY
(THE FOURTH PRE-GREATFAST SUNDAY)

≡≡≡ LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR CHEESEFARE WEEK ≡≡≡

Sunday, February 19:



11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy

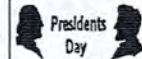
- * For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish
- + Mary H. Sekela by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ratkovich



Monday, February 20:



The 47th American Presidents Day (Civic Holiday)

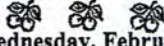


9:00 a.m. – Presidents-Day Divine Liturgy

- * For Unity, Harmony, and Goodwill Within Our Country



Tuesday, February 21:



9:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy: + Monsignor John M. Macko, 2/20/05 – 12th Anniv.



Wednesday, February 22:



Cheesefare Wednesday (Day of Fast)



9:00 a.m. – 1st and 6th Pre-Greatfast Hours

7:00 p.m. – Divine Liturgy: + Leo Prosko by Mr. and Mrs. Maxim Behary



Thursday, February 23:



The Discovery of the Honored Head of Saint John the Baptist

9:00 a.m. – Feastday Divine Liturgy

- + Olga H. Mann by The Bruce Mann Family



Friday, February 24:



Cheesefare Friday (Day of Fast)



9:00 a.m. – 3rd and 9th Pre-Greatfast Hours

7:00 p.m. – Divine Liturgy: + Emily Pulanski by Mr. & Mrs. Simeon Voitovik



Saturday, February 25:



Cheesefare Saturday: Commemoration Of All Ascetics

9:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy: + Remembrance of All Souls with Panachida



Sunday, February 26:



The Sunday Of Cheesefare – Forgiveness Sunday (5th Pre-Greatfast Sunday)

11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

- * For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish
- * Birthday Blessings for Mrs. Martina K. Revilak



AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY..... Meatfare Sunday signals the fact that in just one week our annual spiritual journey will begin as we traverse the desert of the Great Fast. We are presented today with the fourth requisite necessary for repentance as the criterion of LOVE is shown to be the standard used by the Just Judge (Jesus) at the Awesome Judgment. As Paul reminds the Corinthians, all of our actions must be motivated by genuine Christian love.

SCRIPTURAL LESSONS FOR TODAY'S DIVINE LITURGY.....

EPISTLE: I Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Section 140)

In this section of his first letter addressed to the early community of Christians at Corinth, Greece, the Holy Apostle Paul warns about showing bad example to those whose faith may not be very strong. Paul tells the Corinthians to guard against causing scandal to weaker Christians who are not firmly rooted in the Faith. He raises the question of exactly what should be the motivation of one's actions. Should we act because of our knowledge, the truth, and the correctness of our actions; or must we take into consideration a certain charity for our neighbor and a concern for the spiritual well-being of other people? According to the teachings of Jesus, we always must be motivated by LOVE, and our actions will be demonstrative of this proper intention. The model for such love comes from our Lord Himself. We must look to Jesus' interactions with the various people whom He encountered during His lifetime. When we cause harm through our deeds, or if we damage the consciences of our brethren by our bad example, then we are sinning really against the Lord Jesus. God ultimately will judge each of us on how well we have exhibited this Christian love in our daily lives.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46 (Section 106)

Our holy gospel lesson for today is the account of the last judgment as described by the Holy Evangelist Matthew. All nations will be assembled before Christ at this "Awesome Judgment," and He will divide people from each other as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep (representing the righteous) will be placed at His right hand, while the goats (indicative of evildoers) will be relegated to His left. Ultimately, the wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment, but Jesus' true followers will be rewarded with eternal life in the fullness of His kingdom. We are told that the law of LOVE is the basic criterion by which justice will be meted out by Jesus when He returns as the divine Judge at the end of time. This "love" is not simply the hypothetical and philosophical solicitude for one's fellowman; rather it is a real practical awareness of the dignity, worth, and needs of "the other person"—any human being. Christian love provides the ability to see Jesus in others and then enables us to transform this perception into deeds whereby we aid, comfort, and concern ourselves with our neighbor—every person. When we act with Christian love toward others, then we can be assured that God our Father will respond to our own needs with this same kind of love.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AT THE PRE-GREATFAST SEASON

THE FOURTH OF THE PRE-GREATFAST PREPARATORY SUNDAYS.....

Today we are observing **The Sunday of Meatfare**. This is the fourth of the five Sundays of preparation that our Byzantine Catholic Church provides for us as we progressively move toward the season of the Holy Great Fast. This fourth pre-greatfast Sunday is termed "*meatfare*" because in the early Church, the faithful already began to abstain from meat products from this day forward. The fast from meat began early as a prelude in order to adjust mentally and to acclimate physically for the full ascetical efforts of prayer, fasting, and self-denial that then would be required one week later. In fact, when the Holy Forty-Days Fast actually would begin, meat would not be eaten for the entire greatfast period. Thus Meatfare Sunday literally indicated a true "farewell to meat." This particular Sunday is also known as **Judgment Sunday**, a name derived from the gospel account of Christ's final reckoning with humanity which is called the **Awesome Judgment**. The Church once again instructs us about the necessary elements required for **repentance**. Three Sundays ago the account of Zacchaeus was given, emphasizing his *desire*. Then we compared the prayers of the publican and the pharisee, observing the necessity of *humility*. Last Sunday we were shown the *sorrow* of the prodigal son and his *metanoia* (conversion of heart) as he recognized his sinfulness and demonstrated his contrition. Today the scriptural lessons, in a somewhat negative inducement toward repentance, accentuate the lot of sinners in torment and damnation in hell as we are presented with the next requisite for repentance. The theme for Meatfare Sunday is the Christian concept of **LOVE**, and how we as Jesus' followers must manifest it in our daily lives.

PRESIDENTS DAY WILL BE OBSERVED TOMORROW, FEBRUARY 20TH.....

Our nation will pause tomorrow, **Monday, February 20th**, to commemorate **Presidents Day** as we honor with respect and dignity the office of the presidency of the United States of America. We pay tribute to all of the leaders of our country, beginning with George Washington, our first president and one of our founding fathers; Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth president, who presided over the nation when the Union itself nearly was split asunder by internecine strife; and all of the incumbents down to the current 45th president, Donald J. Trump. Their task is to guide and to lead our beloved homeland. In reality, the American President is the foremost leader in the entire world—a truly awesome political and moral responsibility! His prominence and influence are unequalled. At every Divine Liturgy, our Church leads us in prayer for our country and for its civil authorities. May the Holy Spirit enlighten our leaders and imbue them with divine wisdom. On this Presidents Day, let us pray to God to provide us with leaders who epitomize the civic and ethical ideals upon which this nation was founded and who deserve the esteem that is bestowed upon them in our divine services when we pray for "the *honorable* government of our country." May God continue to bless America!

CHEESEFARE-WEEK OBSERVANCE HONORING SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST.....

The feastday commemorating the **Discovery of the Venerable Head of Saint John the Baptist** will be observed on **Cheesefare Thursday, February 23rd**. Saint John the Baptist's hallowed head was retrieved by two monks from the palace of King Herod Antipas who had him beheaded. These monks brought John's precious head to Emesa in Syria. There, it was pillaged, and its second finding occurred during the reign of Emperor Marcianus in 431 A.D. In time, this relic was again lost, and it was recovered for a third time in 823 A.D. and then brought to Constantinople, the capital city of the Byzantine Empire. Today, the sacred head of the honorable baptizer of Christ reposes in Saint Sylvester's Church in Rome. As we prepare for the Great Fast which will begin in just four days, this commemoration in honor of Saint John the Baptist bids us to recall the holy Precursor's ministry to the people of Israel wherein he called them to *repentance* because the Kingdom of God was at hand. The Great Fast reechoes for us this same call for repentance.

SETTING GOALS NOW FOR THE GREATFAST SEASON.....

The solemn penitential season of the Holy Great Fast will begin on **Pure Monday, February 27th**, one week from tomorrow. Penance, purification, prayer, reformation, and reconciliation are all watchwords for the greatfast season. We employ various figures of speech such as "*the desert*" and "*the world*" to express, to assess, and to summarize the dimensions of faith that we profess, the attitudes that we possess, and the behavior that we exhibit. During the forty-day period of the Great Fast, we should attempt to discover in our church, in society, and in ourselves the places of "*the desert*" and "*the world*." One of our primary greatfast initiatives must be to examine our faith and our actions in light of exactly what penances we must impose upon ourselves in order to obtain a complete purification in the sight of our Heavenly Father and to affect a total reconciliation with Him. There are so many societal and personal temptations that could distract us in this resolve, but the time for self-reflection and individual spiritual examination is upon us! As we follow the sacred passion of our Lord and meditate upon His redemptive acts performed for our eternal salvation, we must delineate certain spiritual goals for ourselves. Establish your aims for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (generosity and charity) before God and then maintain them! As we begin the Great Fast in this year of 2017, put forth the effort to make this a spiritually profitable greatfast season. God truly will bless you with both His heavenly and earthly rewards!

The Twofold Coming of Christ

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom.

In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future.

At the first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At His second coming He will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming He endured

the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming He will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.

We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

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