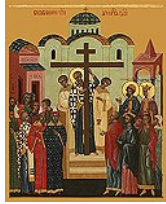


✠Bulletin✠

Week of March 29th to April 4th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 1

St. Mary of Egypt

Hieromartyr Mark, Bishop of Arethusa (364), Martyr Cyril the Deacon of Heliopolis, and others who suffered under Julian the Apostate (362). Ven. John, Anchorite, of Egypt (4th c.). St. Eustathius the Confessor, Bishop of Kios in Bithynia (9th c.). St. Nikéas of the Roslavl Forests (Russia—1793).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday March 29, 2026

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Wednesday April 1st

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Saturday April 4th

Lazarus Saturday

8:45 am - Hours

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday March 29th

- Short Choir Practice following Divine Liturgy
- Inquirers & Catechism Class

Tuesday March 31st

5:30 pm Choir Practice at the church

There is No Shame in Repentance: Homily for the Commemoration of St. Mary of Egypt and the 5th Sunday of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church

By Fr. Philip LeMasters

It has never been hard to find examples of people using religion to get what they want in this world. It is usually easy to see when others do that, but much harder to recognize when we fall prey to the temptation of trying to use God to fulfill our self-centered desires. The harsh truth is that doing so is simply a way of worshiping ourselves, no matter what we say we believe.

In today's gospel lesson, James and John understood Christ's prediction of His death and resurrection so poorly that they asked for the places of highest honor in His Kingdom, which they surely imagined would be an earthly political realm. The Lord told them that they did not know what they were asking, for to be exalted in His Kingdom would require sharing in the cup and baptism of His great Self-offering for the salvation of the world. It would require "becoming the servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

The Savior taught His confused disciples that His way is completely different from the path of earthly rulers who seek to exalt themselves by lording it over others. He suffered at the hands of precisely such authorities who could not tolerate any threat to their power. By ascending the Cross, descending to Hades, and rising from the tomb, Christ revealed the pathetic weakness of those who use the fear of death to serve their own fleeting glory upon the earth. To attempt to use His Kingdom to fulfill self-centered desires for power, pleasure, or any other worldly goal is to miss the point entirely of why our Great High Priest offered Himself as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. By uniting ourselves to Him in holiness, we become participants by grace in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity, not people who are successful in making the world their god.

Today we commemorate St. Mary of Egypt, who found healing in Christ from notorious addiction to sexual pleasure, which is another form of the idolatry of making the world our god. Through decades of intense asceticism in the desert, she found healing from domination by lust and became a glorious saint. She did so not by pursuing the false glory of the world, but by becoming radiant with the glory of God through humble repentance.

Addiction to gratifying our self-centered desires, no matter what they are, distorts the beauty of our souls as those who bear God's image and likeness. We must remember, however, that Christ's mercy extends to even the most corrupt sinner who comes to Him in humble repentance. [Zacchaeus](#) turned from his love of money by returning more than what he had stolen and by giving generously to the poor. In contrast to the self-righteous Pharisee in the parable, the tax collector humbly begged for God's mercy and found it. The prodigal son came to himself and was restored beyond his expectations. The disciples ultimately abandoned their desire for worldly power and became martyrs, including St. Peter, who had denied the Savior three times. St. Paul went from being a fierce persecutor of Christians to the apostle to the Gentiles. St. Mary of Egypt, who began as a horribly depraved person, ended up as such a model of sanctity that we celebrate her memory each Lent without shame or embarrassment. We learn from these examples that there is always hope for the [healing of our souls](#), regardless of the mess we have made of our lives. Our faith is not in a simple moralism in which the good succeed and the bad fail, but in a Lord Who has conquered the enslaving power of sin and death. He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The healing of human persons in such remarkable ways is not accomplished by the conventional politics or ethics of this world, regardless of whether religion is somehow invoked to support them. Such transformation is, instead, a sign of Christ's victory through His Passion. His selfless service for our sake knew no bounds and stopped at nothing, not even Hades and the tomb, in order to deliver us from the despair to which we had enslaved ourselves. He freely entered into the full consequences of our corruption in order to heal and triumph over them. He did so not for His own sake, but for ours. "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

As we begin the last week of Great Lent, let us be on guard against the temptation to use any aspect of our faith for self-glorification. If our prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other spiritual disciplines become means of merely accomplishing our goals or of making us think that we have achieved some level of righteousness, they will do us more spiritual harm than good. They are, instead, simply ways of opening ourselves to the healing mercy of Christ so that we will become more like Him. The more that His life becomes ours, the more we will find strength to take up our crosses as we follow Him into a Kingdom not of this world. The more that we take our eyes off ourselves and serve our neighbors in humility, the more we will find the healing of our souls. Lent is almost over. Let us use the coming week to follow the example of St.

Mary of Egypt, and of all the saints, in becoming more truly human in God's image and likeness. Christ did not reject them and He will not reject us, if we come to Him as they did in

God Grant You Many Years!

Birthdays

Anna Casey 4/02
Eric (Michael) Brewer 04/02
Katherine Frank 4/05
Abby Tomlinson 4/07
Anthony (Theophan) Gordon 4/08
Christine Robinson 4/08
Ethan (Thaddeus) Ridgdill 4/11
Deborah Montgomery 4/13
Rose Gala 4/16
Sophia Canko 4/26

2026 Monthly Donations for Church Votive Candles

The church uses 12-hour 51% Beeswax votives, which are a cleaner burning candle and protect the church walls from soot. The approximate monthly cost of these votives for weekend Vespers & Divine Liturgy is \$100.00 per month. If you would like to donate (as a memorial, thanksgiving, or just to donate), please see Tanya Grubii. Thank you!

April
Holy Week/Pascha
May
June
July
August
August Feast Days
September
October
November
December
December Feast Days

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Heather (Helen) Auld

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday April 5th

Palm Sunday

9:15 am – Hours

Blessing of Palms

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Holy Monday – April 6th

5:30 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Holy Tuesday – April 7th

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Holy Thursday – April 9th

3:00 pm - Mystical Supper Vesperal Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Choir Practice

Good Friday – April 10th

3:00 pm - **Great & Holy Friday**

Burial of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

Holy Saturday – April 11th

9:00 am Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy

HOLY PASCHA Sunday – April 12th

***Tentative: 8:00 am**

MATINS & RESURRECTION LITURGY

***Blessing of Baskets & Egg Hunt**

Bright Wednesday April 15th

8:45 am - Paschal Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 1 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:

“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!

Glory to Thy Kingdom!//

Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

Tone 8 Troparion *(St. Mary of Egypt)*

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother,
for you took up the Cross and followed Christ.

By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away;
but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.//

Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with the angels.

Tone 3 Kontakion *(St. Mary of Egypt)*

Having been a sinful woman,
you became through repentance a bride of Christ.

Having attained angelic life,
you defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross.//

Therefore, O most glorious Mary, you are a bride of the Kingdom.

Tone 6 *(Steadfast Protectress....)*

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,
constant Advocate before the Creator:

do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us
who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us,
O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 1 Prokeimenon *(Resurrection)*

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee!

(Ps. 32:22)

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!

(Ps. 32:1)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon *(St. Mary of Egypt)*

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. *(Ps. 67:36a)*

Hebrews 9:11-14 (Epistle)

Brethren: But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Galatians 3:23-29 (Epistle, St. Mary of Egypt)

Brethren: But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me. (Ps. 17:48)

V. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. (Ps. 17:51)

Tone 1

V. I waited patiently for the Lord; He attended to me and heard my supplication. (Ps. 39:1)

Mark 10:32-45 (Gospel)

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Luke 7:36-50 (Gospel, St. Mary of Egypt)

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had

nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading Mark 10:32-45

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

32-34. Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Why does He foretell the things that will happen to Him? He does this to prepare and to calm the minds of the disciples, so that having heard of these things beforehand they would more easily endure them and not be overwhelmed all at once in their anguish. He also foretold these things so that they would know that He suffered them of His own will. For although He knows these things beforehand, and is able to flee from them, He does not do so, and thus He makes it abundantly clear that He gives Himself over to His sufferings willingly. The Lord takes the disciples aside privately to speak with them alone. For His Passion is a mystery to be revealed only to those closest to Him. And this is why on the road He leads the way before them all, wanting to separate His disciples from the rest of the crowd. But also, by leading the way, He shows that He hastens to His Passion and does not evade His death which is for our salvation. Although He lists all these sorrowful things that will happen, yet there is one consolation, that He will rise on the third day.

35-39. Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." Another Evangelist says that the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Christ (Mt. 20:20). It is likely that both events took place. The apostles were embarrassed, and had their mother go first, and then they themselves approached Christ in private. This is what the Evangelist means here when he says that they "come unto Him", that they approach Him in private, apart from the others. Let us learn what it was they asked. They thought that His going up to Jerusalem meant that He was going to ascend the throne of an earthly kingdom, and that after He had become king He would suffer those things which He said He would suffer. With this understanding, they are asking to sit at His right hand and His left. This is why the Lord rebukes them for asking for something foolish. "You do not know what you ask" He says. You are thinking that My kingdom is an earthly kingdom, and you are asking for an earthly throne. But it is not so; rather, these things are beyond your understanding. To sit at My right hand is something so great that it goes beyond what even the angelic hosts can do. You are craving honor and glory, but I am calling you to die. By "baptism" and "cup" He means the cross. For a cup of wine is something a man gladly accepts, and it quickly puts him to sleep. And baptism is something which is done to cleanse sins. But James and John, not understanding what He said, gave their promise, thinking that He was speaking of an actual cup of wine, and the washing of the body which the Jews performed before they ate.

39-40. So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." Martyrdom, He is saying, will be yours, and you will die for Truth's sake. (*For bold confession of the Truth James was beheaded in Jerusalem in 45 AD, and John was cruelly tortured in Rome and then exiled to the island of Patmos. Tr.*) But to sit at My right hand and at My left is not Mine to give. Two questions may be asked: first, has it been prepared for anyone to sit there? Second, is the Master of all unable to bestow this seat? In answer we say that no one will sit at His right or at His left. Although in many places of Scripture you hear mention of sitting upon a seat in heaven (Mt. 19:28, Lk. 13:29, Eph. 2:6, etc.), understand that this refers to great honor, not a chair.

"It is not Mine to give" has this meaning: it is not for Me, the Just Judge, to bestow this honor as a favor, for that would not be just. Instead, this honor has been prepared for those who have contested and struggled for it. It is as if a just king had set a day for a contest of athletes, and then some of his friends come to him and say, "Give us the crowns." The king would say, "The crowns are not mine to give; rather, a crown is prepared for that contestant who shall compete and win." So too with you, O sons of Zebedee, you shall be martyrs for My sake; but if there is one who, along with martyrdom, exceeds you in every virtue, he shall precede you in honor.

41-45. And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." The disciples are still subject to human weaknesses, and here they are stung with envy. This is why the ten were displeased with the two. When did they begin to be indignant? When the ten saw they had not been received by the Lord and thought they had been pushed away, then they began to be indignant. For as long as the ten were shown honor by the Lord, it did not bother them that the Lord held these two in special honor. But here when they see these two asking for honor, the others could no longer endure it. Although they act in this imperfect way now, later you will see each one of them conceding the first place of honor to the other. Christ heals them, first calming them by calling them to Himself, and then showing them that to grasp for honors and to desire the chief place is the behavior of Gentiles. For the Gentile princes lord it over others in a tyrannical and domineering manner. But it is not so with My disciples, He says; instead let him who would be great serve all the others, for the mark of a great soul is to endure all things and to serve everyone. The example of this is near at hand: for the Son of Man Himself did not come to be served but to serve, and, what is even greater, He came to give His life as a ransom for many. For what could be greater and more marvelous than a man who not only serves, but even dies for the sake of the one he serves? Yet the Lord's serving and His humble lowering of Himself to be with us has become the exaltation and the glory of Him and all creation. For before He became man, He was known only to the angels; but after His incarnation and crucifixion, His glory is even greater and He reigns over all the earth.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following)

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a Child:
our God before the ages.
He made your body into a throne,
and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.//
Glory to you!

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil
tidings! *(Ps. 111:6b-7a)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!