

CROSSROADS

Sunday's Scriptures:

Epistle:

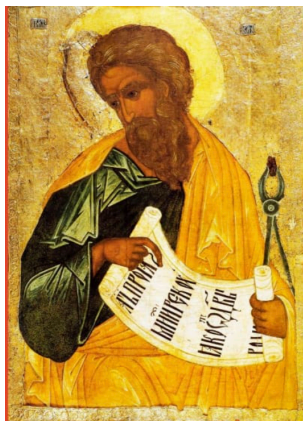
Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel:

Luke 7:36-50

This Week:

- 1) **Thursday, April 2** –
“Interested in Orthodoxy” –
“How Are We Saved – Final” –
7 PM – on ZOOM
- 2) **Friday, April 3, 9 AM** –
Community Luncheon
- 3) **Friday, April 3**, Confessions
– 6 PM / 7 PM – ***Liturgy of the
Presanctified Gifts***
- 4) **Saturday, April 4: *Lazarus
Saturday, Divine Liturgy and
reception into the Orthodox
Faith of:***
**Ellen, Zachary, Nora,
Holden, and Harold Froese;**
**Lindsay, Timothy, Sarah, and
Julie Millek;**
Joshua Marcano



THE COAL OF FIRE

by Sebastian Brock

St. Ephrem employs the term “***Coal of Fire***,” derived from the vision in the temple of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:6), with reference to both Christ Himself and to the Eucharist:

The Coal of Fire that came to burn away thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:18) dwelt in a womb, refining and sanctifying that place of pangs and curses (Genesis 3:16).
(Commentary on the Diatessaron 1:5)

Appropriately enough St. Ephrem picks up the image in a delightful way when he describes the presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2:38):

The prophetess Anna embraced Him
and put her mouth to His lips.
The Spirit rested on her lips, as on Isaiah's;
his mouth was silent, but the Coal of Fire
opened up his mouth by touching his lips.
Anna's mouth too became fervent with the Spirit (or
breath) from His mouth
and she sang to Him: “O royal Son, O lowly Son,
You listen in stillness, You see, but are hidden,
You know but are unknown;|
O God and Human, praise to Your Name.”
(Nativity 6:13-14)

In Isaiah's vision the coal of fire is held by the seraph in tongs, and it merely touches Isaiah's lips. The fact that Christians actually hold and consume Christ the new Coal of Fire is for Ephrem a source of utter astonishment:

The seraph could not touch the coal of fire with his fingers,
and the coal merely touched Isaiah's mouth:
the seraph did not hold it, Isaiah did not consume it,
but our Lord has allowed us to do both.

(Faith 10:10)

For St. Ephrem the coal of fire in Isaiah 6 is but a specific example of the way in which the divinity can be spoken of as fire; earlier in the same hymn he writes:

In Your Bread, Lord, there is hidden the Spirit who is not consumed,
in Your Wine there dwells the Fire that is not drunk:
the Spirit is in Your Bread, the Fire in Your Wine,
a manifest wonder, that our lips have received.!

(Faith 10:8)

It is the descent of the Spirit as Fire that effects the consecration of the Bread and Wine. The idea of the descent of fire in this context derives from a number of Old Testament passages where the descent of fire upon a sacrifice denotes the divine acceptance of that sacrifice (e.g. 2 Chronicles 7:1, Solomon's dedication of the Temple). In this *tenth hymn on Faith*, Ephrem specifically refers to Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38), also consumed by the descent of divine fire:

Fire descended and consumed Elijah's sacrifices;
the Fire of Mercy has become a living sacrifice for us:
fire consumed Elijah's oblation,
but we, Lord, have consumed Your Fire in Your oblation.

This divine fire is to be held in the greatest awe, for it can be destructive in the case of sinners, just as much as life-giving, as St. Ephrem warns in the previous stanza where he draws attention to one particular Old Testament example where this happened:

Fire descended in wrath and consumed the sinners (Genesis 19:24).
The Fire of Mercy has now descended and dwelt in the Bread:
instead of that fire which consumed mankind,
we have consumed Fire in the Bread—and we have come to life.

Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner



(includes salad and dessert)

Date: April 25th (Saturday)

Time: 5:00 - 8:00 PM (final seating at 7:30 PM)

Place: Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

11 Wilkins Station Rd, Medford NJ 08055

Prices: Adults - \$20.00

Children 10 years and under - \$10.00

Children under 5 years - no charge

Takeout is available ❖❖ Walk-ins Welcome

Please see Barbara Mosser or Carol Ann Curry for reservations, or

RSVP via email to ochctickets@gmail.com or

text/call Phyllis at (609) 315-1258

RSVP by April 22

If you are unable to attend, donations are welcomed and appreciated!

Also happening 5:00 - 8:00 PM our

❖❖ 50/50 Raffle! ❖❖

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❖❖ Church Boutique selling Icons and Jewelry ❖❖

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LAZARUS SATURDAY RECEPTION!

On **Lazarus Saturday, April 4**, we will be welcoming

*Ellen, Zack, Nora, Holden, and Harold Froese;
Lindsay, Timothy, Sarah, and Julie Millek,
and Josh Marcano.*

into the Orthodox faith and the life of our community.

The Divine Liturgy will begin at 9 AM and everyone is invited to a special coffee hour which will follow the service.

Sign-up sheets for attendance and for helping are posted on the bulletin board in the church hall. May God grant all of our new members – Many Years!!!

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NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 4, is our MONTHLY CHARITY SUNDAY!

A REMINDER FROM YOUR INREACH/OUTREACH MINISTRY ABOUT THE YELLOW ENVELOPE FUND Do your home finances include an emergency fund for those inevitable times of need? Well, our parish does too...that's why there is a Yellow "Monthly Charity Collection" Envelope in each pack of church donation envelopes.

Administered by Father John and our Inreach/Outreach Ministry, the funds collected via these envelopes are used for everything from parishioner emergencies (food, utility bills, health emergencies, etc.) to requests for humanitarian aid from local, regional, and national organizations of the church and elsewhere, but the needs of our parishioners come first! Our I/O Ministry is often called upon to provide meals to the sick and the grieving, flowers when appropriate, gift cards, food coupons, help with bills, rent, etc, and the Yellow Envelope fund allows us to provide these items.

We have never had to turn anyone away, thank God, and it's your generosity that makes it all possible. So, the next time you see that Yellow Envelope, please keep all of the above in mind!

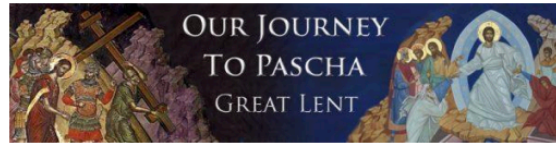
Your Inreach/Outreach Ministry thanks you!

[If you do not use the envelope system for your church donations, feel free to leave cash or a check in the collection basket, earmarked "**Charity**".]

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Our Inreach/Outreach Ministry will be **collecting used prescription glasses, reading glasses, and sunglasses**, both in adult and child sizes which will be donated and repaired for distribution for those in need. There is a donation box in the vestibule where they can be left.

NEW JERSEY DEANERY 2026 LENTEN MISSION SERVICE SCHEDULE



Sunday, March 8, 5:00pm

2nd Sunday of Great Lent - St. Gregory Palamas
Holy Spirit Church
102 Rte 284, Wantage NJ

Sunday, March 15, 5:00pm

3rd Sunday of Great Lent - The Precious and Life-giving Cross
St. Vladimir Church
812 Grand Street, Trenton, NJ

Sunday, March 22, 5:00pm

4th Sunday of Great Lent – St. John Climacus
Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church
35 Orange Ave., Clifton, NJ
Main Celebrant: Archbishop MICHAEL

Sunday, March 29, 5:00pm

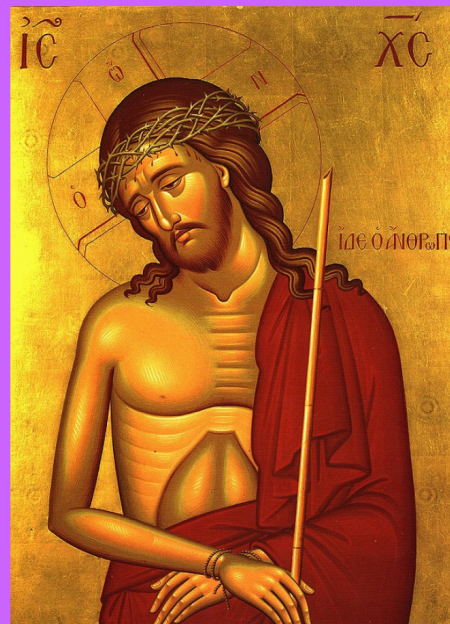
5th Sunday of Great Lent – St. Mary of Egypt
Saints Peter and Paul Church
76 Whitehead Ave., South River, NJ

The Greater Philadelphia Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood

invites everyone to attend the 2026

Lenten Vespers Services

March 1 4:00pm	Sunday of Orthodoxy Descent of the Holy Spirit Romanian Orthodox Church 1323 Ashbourne Rd, Elkins Park, PA 19027
March 8 4:00pm	Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas Holy Ghost Orthodox Church 70 holy ghost Way, Phoenixville, PA 19460
March 15 4:00pm	Sunday of the Cross St. George Georgian Orthodox Church 412 Philmont Ave, Feasterville. PA 19053
March 22 4:00pm	Sunday of St. John Climicus St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church 237 N 17th St, Philadelphia, PA 19103
March 29 4:00pm	Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Ss. Peter & Paul Ukranian Orthodox Church 1406 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, DE 19809
April 5 4:00pm	While not usually included with the Lenten Vespers, all are welcome to attend the service of Bridegroom Matins at St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral 8598 Verree Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19115





Parent Page Newsletter

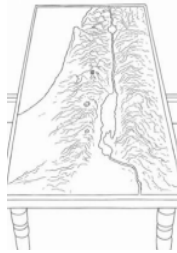
For the parents of children in the CGS Atrium, March 2026

Lent and Holy Week

The forty days of Lent give our families a special season to prepare our hearts for the great feast of Easter, when we remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. During the first weeks of Lent, we focus on returning to the Lord with all our hearts and renewing our relationship with Him. As we enter Holy Week, the Church's prayer and worship begin to shift, and we notice meaningful changes in the liturgy. Beginning with Palm Sunday, we are invited to enter into the Gospel story more fully, participating in the reading as a way of walking with Jesus and reflecting on the great mystery of His Death and Resurrection.

As we move into Holy Week, the Church invites us to enter more fully into the life of Christ through the liturgies and prayers that mark His Last Supper, His Passion, and His Resurrection. On Thursday, we remember the final meal Jesus shared with His disciples. On Friday, we recall His Passion and Death, and on Saturday evening at the Easter Vigil, we celebrate the light of Christ breaking into the darkness on this Holy Night. Together, these days form one continuous prayer that helps us reflect on the great love Jesus poured out for all people in what we call the Paschal Mystery.

In the atrium, our preparation for the Feast of Easter follows the rhythm and movement of the Church. Because Jesus' Death and Resurrection cannot be separated, we are always careful to remember to announce that although He died, He is risen. Just as the Church helps all of us enter more fully into the events of Holy Week, we support the children in reflecting on these mysteries using the materials in the atrium.



The raised-surface map of the Land of Israel helps the child see that Jesus lived in a real place and at a real time. The children locate Jerusalem on the map as the city where Jesus died and rose. With the youngest children, we do not dwell on the details of His Passion; rather, we focus on the mystery of God's great love. Jesus chose the context of the Passover meal—an annual celebration in Jerusalem—to help His disciples understand the gift of His life. Jesus said He eagerly desired to share this meal with them, and in doing so, He found a way to express His love and His desire to remain close to them. It was at this meal that Jesus spoke new words that had never before been heard at a Passover meal.

Over the bread, Jesus said: "This is my Body, given for you," and over the wine: "This is my Blood, shed for you." The Bread and the Wine become Jesus, who wants to give himself to us and to all people. That night, Jesus found a way to remain, giving the gift of himself to all people of all times. With these words of love, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gives all of himself to all his sheep.

The children also work with a model of the City of Jerusalem that highlights the key places of Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection—the upper room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the places where He was tried and condemned, Calvary, and the empty tomb. As they revisit the biblical story, they discover that these moments are part of one great event of love that we call the Paschal Mystery.



Seeking Volunteer(s)

His Eminence, Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey need a few people to help in various Diocesan Ministries.

Diocesan Communications Team—Volunteers Needed



The Diocese of New York & New Jersey is forming a Diocesan Communications Team to assist with maintaining and strengthening our digital presence. Volunteers may serve in one area or collaborate across roles, depending on interest, skills, and availability. No one is expected to do everything; even modest, consistent help is valuable.

Website Support (Orthodox Web Solutions)

Assist with basic website updates and posting announcements. Familiarity with Orthodox Web Solutions is helpful but not required; willingness to learn is essential.

Estimated time commitment: 1–2 hours per week (remote and flexible).

Social Media Support

Assist with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube posting and content organization. Video creation and basic editing skills are a plus, but not required.

Estimated time commitment: 1–3 hours per week, shared among team members.

Regional Coverage (Archbishop's Visits)

Because the Diocese spans New York and New Jersey, volunteers are sought to assist with local coverage of the Archbishop's visits in their own region (North/South Jersey, NYC, Long Island, Upstate NY, Western NY).

Responsibilities may include taking photographs, short video clips, or recordings of homilies when appropriate.

Estimated time commitment: occasional, event-based, you will not be asked to travel outside your region; typically 2–4 hours per visit, which includes attending the Divine Services during which His Eminence presides.

Use this form to submit your interest for Communications- <https://form.jotform.com/253645524628160>



The Department of Youth Ministry

Fr. Martin and Matushka Dennise Kraus are in need of some assistance with the Youth Ministry Program.

Men's Mountain Respite

This ministry is seeing wonderful growth. Are there any men in the Diocese who would be willing to assist Fr. Martin with planning and executing retreats?



Diocesan Stewardship Publication

This quarterly publication has languished for several years due to the lack of an Editor. Do you have a heart for Stewardship and enjoy writing?

Skills needed:

- 1) Ability to write and compile information about Stewardship.
- 2) Familiarity with Microsoft Publisher.
- 3) Prepare and format publication.
- 4) Submit to Chancery by appropriate deadline.

Stewardship

is heart work



"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21

If you are willing to help His Eminence, Archbishop Michael and serve the Diocese of New York and New Jersey with any of these Ministries, please contact the Chancery Office.

Phone: 914-779-6580

Email: info@nynjoca.org

Some Ways to Support our Parish

Here are some ways that this can be done:

- 1) **Cash** (If an annual record of this donation is desired then it should be put in an envelope with your name on it, so that a record can be kept and a receipt eventually will be prepared and available).
- 2) **Monthly Envelopes** can be sent to your home (see Fr. John if you would like to donate this way).
- 3) **A Check** can be made out to the church and given in the donation basket or left in the church office.
- 4) **Having a check sent directly from your bank account to the church** (in the same way that bills can be paid on your computer through your bank).

Address the check to:

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
Box 805
Medford, NJ 08055

- 5) **Using our online app, tithe.ly** – Please note that there is a 3% processing fee - this can be added to the donation or it will be subtracted from the donation):

- 1) You can use the **QR Code** at our website: <https://holycrossmedford.org/>



- 2) Go to: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/1197928

- 3) TEXT the word, **“Give” to: 1-833-854-9049**

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SHOP RITE COUPONS

Cards are available in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$25, and \$20.

Shop-Rite sells the cards in bulk to us at a 5% discount. The gift cards are available from **Larry Skvir** every Sunday at coffee hour. If you regularly shop at Shop-Rite and don't use the gift cards, please consider purchasing them in 2026.