

*Our Lady of the Sign  
Byzantine Catholic Church*

7311 Lyons Road, Coconut Creek, Florida 33073  
[www.SouthFloridaByzantine.org](http://www.SouthFloridaByzantine.org)

**Rev. Martin Vavrak**

*Pastor*

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**Mr. Fred Wilson**

*Parish Manager & Cantor*

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*Website*



*Contribute*

Fr. Deacon Michael Opalka

Mr. Jon Cipyak, III & Ms. Lynn McFadden  
*Assistant Cantors*

Ms. Susan Scotts & Mr. Mike Donegan  
*Parish Guild Co-Chairs*

Mr. Jon Cipyak, IV & Mr. Mike Donegan  
*Lay Trustees*

**SLAVA ISUSU CHRISTU! SLAVA NA VIKI!  
GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!**

**LITURGY SCHEDULE**

**Third Sunday of the Great Fast – Veneration of the Cross  
w/Third All Souls Panachida**  
EPISTLE Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6  
GOSPEL Mark 8: 34-9: 1

**Saturday, March 7, 2026, 5:00 p.m.**  
For the Faithful of the Parish

**Sunday, March 8, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**  
+John L. Monito  
by Susan Scotts

*Sanctuary Candle:  
Health & Blessing of the Parish Family*

**Jerusalem Way of the Cross followed by  
Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**  
Genesis: 10: 32-11: 9  
Proverbs: 13: 19-14: 6

**Thursday, March 12, 2026, 6:00 p.m.**

**Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast  
w/4th All Souls Panachida**  
EPISTLE Hebrews 6: 13-20  
GOSPEL Mark 9: 17-31

**Saturday, March 14, 2026, 5:00 p.m.**  
Madelyn Cipyak  
by Jon & Suzie Cipyak

**Sunday, March 15, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**  
For the Faithful of the Parish

*Sanctuary Candle:  
Health & Blessing of the Parish Family*

**CONFESSION SCHEDULE**

Fr. Martin is available to hear confession immediately following each Divine Liturgy or by scheduling an appointment in advance by contacting Fr. Martin.

**ROSARY SCHEDULE**

- Friday: 5:40 p.m.
- Saturday: 4:40 p.m.
- Sunday: 9:40 a.m.

**WELCOME!**

We welcome our guests and visitors, and are happy to have them join us in prayer.  
If you have not officially registered in the parish, and would like to, please speak with Fred.

**REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS** Please continue to remember in our prayers all the needs of the parish family, the sick and suffering, those who have asked for our prayers, especially Frantisek Vavrak, Helena Huk, Angie Nemeth, Lesia, and Natasha Lemeshova. Let us remember the priests and bishops of the Catholic Church, those people who have been denied their basic human rights and dignity, the oppressed, the lonely, the homeless and those who suffer, and those who have no peace of mind or heart. ***Please check our website during your daily prayers for an up-to-date listing of those who are in need of our prayers.***

*Pastoral Message*

Dear faithful parishioners, and you who have come to our church for the first time – welcome!

**THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT**

In the middle of Lent, the Church sets before us the Cross of Christ. On two other occasions during the year, September 14th and August 1st, the Cross is presented for our remembrance and veneration. Both these feasts link the adoration of the Cross to historic events. However, the remembrance of the Cross on the third Sunday of Lent speaks only to our faith and reverence. It is to proclaim the part played by the Cross in the history of salvation and to prepare us for the vision, still far-off, of the Cross which, on Holy Friday, will be erected on Golgotha.

During matins, towards the end of the great doxology, the priest places a cross on a tray covered with flowers and, carrying the cross above his own head, he leaves the sanctuary and the iconostas. He is preceded by lighted candles and censers. Having reached the middle of the church, he places the cross on a table. He censes it. The choir sings: 'We venerate Thy Cross, O Master, and we glorify Thy holy Resurrection'. The congregation comes to kiss the cross, which remains thus exposed in the middle of the church during the whole of the feast. The meaning of the feast is well expressed by this chant for matins: 'When, on this day, we look at the precious Cross of Christ, in faith let us adore it, let us rejoice, and embrace it ardently, beseeching our Lord, who of His own choice gave Himself to be crucified on it, to make us worthy of adoring His most precious Cross so that, free from all defilement, we may attain the day of Resurrection.'

Let us not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Let the Cross be our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before we sleep, and when we rise up; when we are on the road, and when we are still. Great is that preservative; it is without price... it is the Sign of the faithful, and the dread of devils: for He triumphed over them in it, having made a show of them openly for when they see the Cross they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him, who bruised the head of the serpent.

*By St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

*In Christ,  
Fr. Martin Vavrak - Pastor*

**SCHEDULING UPDATE** Due to a scheduling conflict, for this week only, Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will be held on Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. Be sure to join us 15 minutes early for a very special devotion, the Jerusalem Way of the Cross.

*Announcements & Reminders, continued...*

**SLAVIC KITCHEN** If you would like to order pierogi, kielbasa, stuffed cabbage and baked goods from our sister church in Ft. Pierce, you are in luck as order forms are now available! Orders are due by Sunday March 22.

**RAPIDIA (LITURGICAL FANS)** This weekend, as Fr. Martin blesses the rapida, lets take a moment to understand their meaning and history. These circular discs mounted on long handles placed on either side of the cross behind the Holy Table, are adorned with the image of the six-winged seraph, or sometimes other heavenly figures. In the ancient Church, rapida had a practical origin: deacons would wave them gently over the eucharistic gifts on the altar to keep insects away during the Divine Liturgy, particularly in the warm climates where early Christianity flourished. Over time, this practical act was transformed into something deeply symbolic and was retained even after the need for it had passed.

Today their use is ceremonial and theological. The seraphim depicted on the fans evoke the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1–3), in which the six-winged angels stand before the throne of God crying "*Holy, Holy, Holy.*" When servers carry or hold the rapida near the altar, they visibly represent the angelic host attending the Lord in the Eucharist. Their presence at the Holy Table reminds the faithful that the Divine Liturgy is not merely a human act of worship, but a participation in the unceasing praise of heaven.

In this way, what began as a humble practical tool became one of our Church's most quietly profound liturgical symbols: the invisible made visible, the heavenly made present. Thank you to Susan Scotts who donated the Rapida, in honor of the Gregory & Thomas Monito Families, and to George and Bob, who made special mounting mechanisms for their use this past week.

**EASTERN CATHOLIC FORMATION** Our Eastern Catholic Formation classes offer a transformative journey into the depths of our ancient faith. Everyone is welcome, whether you're a lifelong Byzantine Catholic or newly discovering our traditions. Contact David Wilson for more information at: 407.985.8834

**GRAVE WATCH** A Grave Watch will be held following Friday night Vespers and end Saturday morning. Individuals or families may sign up via the sheet posted by the coffee table for one-hour blocks of time throughout the evening of Great and Holy Friday. Time slots are used to ensure our Lord's body is not left alone in the tomb. That does not mean if a slot is full, others cannot join. Everyone is welcome to pray at any time throughout the vigil. Just remember to be respectful, as this is a time for quiet self-prayer.

## *Directives for the Great Fast* from the Office of the Bishop

Our Tradition is to abstain from meat after Meatfare Sunday and from dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday until Easter. The following are the minimum requirements:

1. All who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passiac are required to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

## *Announcements & Reminders*

**ANNUAL PICNIC** Our second annual parish picnic is scheduled for Palm Sunday, and will take place on the parish grounds immediately following liturgy. Tickets for the event are \$20 per adult, and \$10 per child under 10 years old. Friends and family are most welcome to attend. A 50/50 raffle will also be held, with tickets available now for purchase. Please see Fred to purchase your tickets.

**THE ART OF PYSANKY** Long before Christianity arrived in Ukraine and the Carpathian regions, people decorated eggs with geometric symbols as offerings to the sun; prayers for spring's return and life renewed. When the Byzantine rite took root in these regions, the Church did not erase these traditions, it embraced them. The pysanka (from the Ukrainian *pysaty*, "to write") became a vessel of theological meaning. The egg, already a symbol of new life, found its deepest truth in the Resurrection.

In the Byzantine Catholic tradition, this connection runs especially deep. The Church's rich liturgical aesthetic of icons, incense, and chanted tones, reflects a theology of *theosis*, the transformation of the material world into something sacred. A pysanka fits naturally into that vision: ordinary beeswax and dye, ordinary hands, working through the dark weeks of the Great Fast to produce something that will be blessed at Pascha with joy.

The symbols carry their own quiet catechism. A stylized sun speaks of Christ the Light. A fish recalls the early Church. A deer evokes the Psalmist's longing soul. Wheat and spirals suggest life without end. Each egg, small enough to hold in one palm, carries within it the whole story of death overcome. To write a pysanka during Lent is to do what the Byzantine Catholic tradition has always done; to take ancient human longing and fill it, from the inside, with Easter.

Join us on Thursday, March 26, at 6:00 p.m. to learn how to write your own pysanka! Cost is only \$20.00, and includes supplies and a light bite to eat. Speak with Fred to RSVP.

**LITURGY INTENTIONS** If you would like a Liturgy offered for the blessed memory or health of a loved one, please fill out the form located in the back of the church. **Requests can also be made online.** Simply visit the Contribute page on the parish website, and follow the link to our secure online payment portal.

**SANCTUARY CANDLE** Each week, we light a seven-day candle, that remains lite inside the church for the entire week, symbolizing the presence of Jesus within the Tabernacle. The faithful can offer the week-long burning light in remembrance or for the health and blessings of a loved one. This is a long-standing tradition within many of our churches. If you would like to make an offering, please complete the form located in the back of the church.

### **HOLY WEEK & PASCHA LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

- ❖ Holy Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Great and Holy Friday: 7:00 p.m.
- ❖ Holy Saturday: 5:00 p.m.
- ❖ Pascha: 10:00 a.m.

*Blessing of Baskets will take place after Liturgy on Holy Saturday and Pascha Sunday*

## *Third Sunday of the Great Fast*

### Veneration of the Cross

The following is an outline to use with the Green Hymnal.

Page Number		Page Number	
11-13	Enarxis & Litany of Peace <b>SIT</b>	53 Melody B	Creed
14-15	First & Second Antiphons	55 & 96	Anaphora
18 Melody A	Hymn of the Incarnation <b>STAND</b>	96	Holy, Holy, Holy
22	Third Antiphon		Take, eat... <b>PROFOUND BOW</b>
25	Entrance Hymn		Drink of this... <b>PROFOUND BOW</b>
152 & 223	Troparion <b>SIT</b>	98	We praise you...
224	Kontakion	98	Instead of "It is truly proper..."
33 Melody B	We bow to your cross... <b>STAND</b>	63-65	Preparation of Communion <b>SIT</b>
224	Prokeimenon	74	Our Father <b>STAND</b>
	Epistle <b>SIT</b>	78 Melody A	Communion Hymns
225	Alleluia <b>STAND</b>	83	We have seen...
35	Preparation for Gospel	84	May our mouth... <b>SIT</b>
	Gospel	87	Arise! Now that we... <b>STAND</b>
	Homily <b>SIT</b>	88 Melody A	Blessed be the name...
35-37	Litany of Fervent Supplication	432	Panachida
42 Melody A	Cherubikon <b>STAND</b>	33 Melody B	We bow to your cross...
49-50	For the precious gifts...	454 Melody A	Beneath your Compassion

#### **EPISTLE**

Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6

Scripture says: Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession of faith. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need.

Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with erring sinners, for he himself is beset by weakness and so must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. One does not take this honor on his own initiative, but only when called by God as Aaron was. Even Christ did not glorify himself with the office of high priest; he received it from the One who said to him, "You are my son; today I have begotten you"; just as he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

## *Hymns*

#### At the most holy cross

1. At the most holy Cross of our Savior, we bow in honor and sing our praise; we praise Your suffering and all Your torments, for it was by them You saved us all.
2. Krestu Tvojemu, Spase Vladyko, poklon, čest', slavu skaldajem vsji. Strast' Tvoju slavim, Bože veliku, i mnogi muki, rany svjatji.
3. At the most holy Cross of our Savior, now and forever we bow our head. In Your great mercy You poured our Your life, saving all sinners with such great love.

#### In Gethsem'ne's darkness

1. In Gethsem'ne's darkness Jesus prayed for us, when He asked God for the strength to bear the cross.
2. Angels came to serve our Lord the help He sought; strength to suffer from the chalice which they brought.

Refrain: The sword of sorrow, foretold long ago, Your Mother's heart will know.

#### **HOLY GOSPEL**

Mark 8: 34-9: 1

At that time Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them: "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my steps. Whoever would preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's sake will preserve it. What profit does a man show who gains the whole world and destroys himself in the process? What can a man offer in exchange for his life? If anyone in this faithless and corrupt age is ashamed of me and my doctrine, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes with the holy angels in his Father's glory." He also said to them: "I assure you, among those standing here there are some who will not taste death until they see the reign of God established in power."