



St. Elias Melkite Church

Serving San Jose & South Bay Area, CA

14263 Mulberry Dr., Los Gatos, CA 95032

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Sunday, April 2, 2017: Fifth Sunday of Lent—Venerable Mother Mary of Egypt

Divine Liturgy

Sundays: 11am

Feastdays: See website Calendar

Confession Times

Wednesdays: 5-6 pm

Sundays: 10-11 am

Vespers, Bible Study, and Social

Wednesdays of Fast: 6pm

Presanctified Liturgy and Social

Fridays of Fast: 7:30pm

Sunday School: After liturgy

Contact the Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo

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SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com

Qurban and Socials

- This Sunday, 4/2
Qurban: Kaldani
Social: Kaldani
- Next Sunday, 4/2
Qurban: Carnazzo
Social: Higareda

Pray for Servants of God

Kaldani Family

Timothy Ciardella

Higareda Family

Jabra Asfour

Holly Handal

Kayla Marie Handal

Hania Dabit

Liliane Ghazal

Nabil Matta

John Andrews

Thomas Kalil

Mary Solis

Nader Khoury

Asleep in the Lord

Atef Kuburssi

Zobeida Srour

Fuad and Renee Kalil

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vespers and Presanctified:

Remember that we have Vespers every Wednesday at 6pm and Presanctified every Friday at 7:30pm throughout the time of the Great Fast.

Lazarus Saturday (4/8): Divine Liturgy at 11am followed by children's palm making and decoration of the Church for Palm Sunday.

St. Elias Ladies Meeting (4/8): 11am Divine Liturgy followed by Church Decorating and Cleaning

PRAYER

O Lord God, You examine the inner heart. You know our concerns before they emerge into being. You saved Mary of Egypt from the tribulations of this earth, for she had recourse to You. We implore You to purify our hearts and to make us temples of your Holy Spirit and rich in virtues, so that we may glorify You by hymns of praise and good works. For You are our God and to You are due all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

HYMNS

Troparion of the resurrection (5th tone): Let us, O faithful, * praise and worship the word, * coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, * born of the Virgin for our Salvation; * for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross * and to endure death * and to raise the dead * by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of our Mother Mary of Egypt: In you O Mother Mary, was restored the likeness of God. For you carried your cross and followed Christ, you taught by your deeds how to spurn the body, for it passes away, and how to value the soul for it is immortal. Wherefore, your soul is forever in happiness with the angels.

READINGS

Hebrews 9: 11-14 BRETHREN, when Christ appeared as the high priest of the good things to come (Cf. Lv. 16: 14; 19: 4), he entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not as a part of the present creation), nor again by virtue of blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of his own blood, into the sanctuary, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer sanctify the unclean for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ (Cf. Rv. I: 5), who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

Mark 10: 32-45 At that time Jesus took the Twelve, and began to tell them what would happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him and scourge him, and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, "Master, we want thee to do for us whatever we ask." But he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at thy right hand and the other at thy left hand, in thy glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of which I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?" And they said to him, "We can." And Jesus said to them "Of the cup that I drink, you shall drink; and with the baptism with which I am to be baptized, you shall be baptized; but as for sitting at my right hand or at my left, that is not mine to give, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard this, they were at first indignant at James and John. But Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers among the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to become great shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all; for the Son of Man also has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Irmos: In you, O full of grace, all creation exults, the hierarchy of angels together with the race of men: in you, sanctified Temple, spiritual Paradise, Glory of virgins of whom God took flesh from whom our God who exists before the world, became a child! For He has made your womb his throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. In you, O Woman full of grace, all creation exults: glory to you!

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Lazarus Saturday: 11am Divine Liturgy followed by Church Decorating and Cleaning

Palm Sunday: 10am Orthros, 11am Procession and Divine Liturgy

Holy Monday: 7:30pm Presanctified Liturgy

Holy Tuesday: 7:30pm Bridegroom Matins

Holy Wednesday: 7:30pm Presanctified and Anointing with St. Basil Community

Holy Thursday: 7:30pm Divine Liturgy, 9:00pm Twelve Gospels with St. Basil Community

Holy Friday: 3pm Ninth Royal Hour, 6pm Epitaphios Service

Holy Saturday: 10am Baptism of Kayla Marie Handal, 11am Divine Liturgy

Great and Holy Pascha Sunday: 11am Hajmat followed by Divine Liturgy

From the Diocese

AS THE GREAT FAST draws to a close, we are presented with the story of St Mary of Egypt. Her Life, by St Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, is read on the Thursday of Repentance, along with the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete. On the fifth and last Sunday in the Great Fast, Mary herself is commemorated. The story of her early dissolute life, her remarkable conversion, and the asceticism which characterized the rest of her days made her the classic model of repentance in both East and West. The second figure in St Sophronios' Life stands in complete contrast to his principal subject. St Zossima (April 4) is described as a devout monk in an unnamed Palestinian monastery. While Mary lived a freewheeling and undisciplined life before her conversion, Zossima had been raised in the monastery since his infancy. This practice was not uncommon before the modern age. We are told in the Life that Zossima "... had been through the whole course of the ascetic life and in everything he adhered to the rule once given to him by his tutors concerning spiritual labors. He had even added much himself in his efforts to subject his flesh to the will of the spirit." Thus, while Mary was indulging her every carnal desire, satisfying her "insatiable desires and irrepressible passions" (as she described it), Zossima was learning to subject his passions to the spirit. The Life insists that "he had not failed in his aim. He was so renowned for his spiritual life that many came to him from neighboring monasteries and some even from afar." Zossima, we are told, "never ceased studying the Divine Scriptures.... his sole aim being to sing of God and to practice the teaching of the Divine Scriptures."

Zossima's Dilemma: When Zossima, by then a hieromonk, had spent some 50 years in the monastery, he came to think that he had attained a certain level in the ascetic life beyond his fellows. He knew that he had not exhausted the spiritual life, but did not know where to go from here. "Is there a monk on earth who can be of use to me and show me a kind of asceticism that I have not accomplished? Is there any man to be found in the desert who has surpassed me?" Was Zossima displaying pride? He was not self-satisfied with his achievements nor was he condescending to others less advanced than himself. He more resembled the young man whom Christ told to keep the Commandments and who replied, "I have kept all these things since my youth. What do I still lack?" (Mt 19:20) Zossima wanted to deepen his spiritual life but was frustrated that he could not find a spiritual mentor who could help him progress. By way of response, an angel appeared to him and counseled him that there are always unknown struggles in the spiritual life greater than the challenges he had already faced. "That you may know how many other ways lead to salvation, leave your native land like the renowned patriarch Abraham and go to the monastery by the River Jordan." There he would eventually encounter, not a monk or even another man, but a woman whose witness renewed his spiritual life as well as the lives of countless believers ever since. Zossima remained in his monastery and lived to be over 100. It would be his obedience to tell Mary's story to the world. Zossima was not told to imitate Mary's radical asceticism but to recognize "how many other ways lead to salvation." In this his story resembles that attributed to St Anthony the Great, who lived in solitude in Egypt. "It was revealed to Father Anthony in the desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Trisagion with the angels."

Ways Leading to Salvation Today As the Great Fast draws to a close, we may feel that we have lived its call to prayer, fasting and almsgiving to the full. Yet there are in our midst others who, like St Mary of Egypt, call us by their example to examine the possibilities of stretching our spiritual muscles further than we imagine possible. Los Angeles attorney Tony Tolbert recalls how there was always room in his family home for someone down on their luck. This memory prompted him to move back into his parents' house and offer the use of his own fully furnished home for one year so a homeless family could regroup and move on with their lives. Felicia Dukes was living with three of her children in a single room at a family shelter, but her oldest son was over the age limit and could not stay with them. The family was reunited due to Tolbert's stunning offer and could begin rebuilding their lives. "You don't have to be Bill Gates or Warren Buffet or Oprah," Tolbert said. "We can do it wherever we are, with whatever we have, and for me, I have a home that I can make available."

When Palm Beach physician Richard Lewis died, friends and colleagues gathered at a local mortuary to pay their respects. They were astonished when the doors opened to admit a group of physically and mentally disabled people who came in to join them. Unknown to anyone – including his own twin brother – Dr Lewis had been supporting six group homes in the area caring for the disabled. Swedish tourists Annis Lindkvist and her sister Emma were visiting Edinburgh, Scotland when a chance meeting changed their lives. Jimmy Fraser, unemployed and homeless after his marriage failed was begging in the street when the women asked him for directions. They struck up an acquaintance and, ultimately a friendship. The women obtained a passport for Fraser and paid for his flights so that he could join their family for Christmas. The women took him sightseeing and to a hockey match as well as to Midnight Mass. "People promise you things all the time on the street," Fraser reflected, "but they never materialize ... Being homeless is cold, lonely and depressing and you get a lot of abuse from people. This was an incredible act of kindness!" The women are arranging a similar visit for Easter.

The extraordinary acts of these secular "Marys" bring to life the following words by the nineteenth century Russian saint, John of Kronstadt: "And God reveals His hidden saints so that some may emulate them and others have no excuse for not doing so. Provided they live a worthy life, both those who choose to dwell in the midst of noise and hubbub and those who dwell in monasteries, mountains and caves can achieve salvation. Solely because of their faith in Him, God bestows great blessings on them. Hence those who because of their laziness have failed to attain salvation will have no excuse to offer on the day of judgment. "If you love your neighbor, then all of heaven will love you. If you are united in spirit with your fellow creatures, then you will be united with God and all the company of heaven; if you are merciful to your neighbor, then God and all the angels and saints will be merciful to you. If you pray for others then all of heaven will intercede for you. The Lord our God is holy; be holy yourself also."