

# St Michael's Orthodox Church

*A parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania*

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## March 23, 2025 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent – SUNDAY OF THE CROSS

*PLEASE TAKE the LENT & PASCHA CALENDAR from the candle stand in addition to this bulletin.  
That calendar IS our Service Schedule, until Pascha.  
(It is two pages, for both March and April 2025.)*

*Coffee Hour is offered by: (all coffee hours are Lenten until Pascha)*

March 23: Mat. Dolores & Marilyn Petorak  
March 30: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts  
April 6: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

April 13 (*Palm Sunday*): Susan Schlasta & Deborah Bernosky  
April 20: PASCHA

### Announcements

THANK YOU to everyone who has offered donations and prayers for our Flower Drive. So far, prayers have been offered **in memory of**: Henel & Nicholas Myshak, Olga & Andrew Grancey, Alex & Elizabeth Hockin, Rebecca and John Hanchak, members of the Leschak and Keklock families, the Deak & Jubinski Families, Dorothy & Eugene Skorupa, Joseph & Eleanor Siniawa, Robert Furiosi, and Paul Sernak. And **for the health of**: Camille Palese, George & Marilyn Petorak, Josh Petorak, Rdr. Jon & Anna Marie Black, Gloria & Tom Shaw and family, and Miles & Roxanne Neutts. **If you still want to make an offering**, please do so soon – place it in the collection basket, mail it to the Church address, or use our online DONATE button.

### In your prayers

**The ill and the afflicted**: Fr. Daniel Donlick, Fr Gregory White, Pdn. Gabriel Petorak, Dn Geoffrey LoBalbo, Mat. Myra Kovalek, Gregory Hansen, Olga Krutz, Maryanne Krisa, Michael Krisa, Barbara Mosley, Mary Ann Serafini, Alexis Meholic, Tom Shaw, George Petorak, Sandy Gillott, Debbie Jadick, Susan Schlasta, Evan Kraky, Laura Piwowarski, Karen Abercia, Daniel Kitchura, Mark Klapatch, Gregory Klapatch, Jerry Soroka.

**Homebound**: John Drutarosky, Theresa Krenitsky, Barbara Palubniak, Peggy Petrilak, Nicholas Mattise, Jerry & Marilyn Soroka, Paul Kostiak, Dolores Brophy, Paul Mosley, Adam & Mary Ann Serafini, Florence Zielinsky.

**The newly-departed**: Archpriest Paul Harrilchak (3/12). Priest Jonas Worsham (3/8).

### Hymns of the Day

*Resurrection (Tone 6)*

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure body. / Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

*Cross (Tone 1)*

O Lord, save Thy people / and bless Thine inheritance. / Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians / over their adversaries, / and by virtue of Thy Cross, // preserve Thy habitation.

*Cross (Tone 7)*

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; / it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross. / The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished; / for Thou, O my Savior, hast come and cried to those in hell: // “Enter again into Paradise!”

## Today's Scripture

*Epistle: Hebrews 4:14 - 5:6*

*Brethren:* Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him:

*"You are My Son, today I have begotten You."*

As He also says in another place:

*"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek";*

*Gospel: Mark 8:34 - 9:1*

*The Lord said,* "If any one would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

And Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

**The theme of sacrifice ... is a major part of our heritage,** and comes especially to the fore in the **priestly prayers of the Anaphora.** As St. Gregory Nazianzus reminds us, "We needed a God made flesh and made dead, that we might live." We can see this element of sacrifice in many places of our Liturgy. First, the priest, in preparing and sanctifying the mysteries, re-enacts for us what happened to Jesus on the cross, even to the point of piercing "the lamb." Secondly, just after the prayers for the catechumens, as he prays, the priest calls what is about to happen a "bloodless sacrifice." And finally, in the Anaphora, we hear about Christ's body broken for us and the blood of the New Covenant shed for us and for many. Indeed, the Deacon prays that the gifts offered will be received by "our Loving God at his holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar as an offering of spiritual fragrance."

This language of **altar, reception, and fragrance** is reminiscent of Old Testament sacrifice, such as when Noah offered a sacrifice to God in thanksgiving after the flood, and God is said to have "smelled" the odor of the sacrifice and responded in favor (Gen 8:21). We know, having seen the Father in the character of his Son, that He does not need anything, or require to be cajoled to receive the offering that Jesus made, and that we present to him in the mysteries. **But the language of sacrifice is aptly used and helps us to grasp the wonder of what He has done for us.** "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Father does not require this of an unwilling victim; rather, Son and Father, joined by the sanctifying Spirit, act together in this sacrifice of all sacrifices, for the life of the world.

– Orthodox Church in America, *Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs*, 2023, 186-167.

**It is never so difficult to say from the heart, "Thy Will be done, Father," as when we are in sore affliction or grievous sickness, and especially when we are subjected to the injustice of men, or the assaults and wiles of the enemy. It is also difficult to say from the heart "Thy Will be done" when we ourselves were the cause of some misfortune,** for then we think that it is not God's Will, but our own will, that has placed us in such a position, although nothing can happen without the Will of God. In general, it is difficult to sincerely believe that it is the Will of God that we should suffer, when the heart knows both by faith and experience that God is our blessedness; and therefore it is difficult to say in misfortune, "Thy Will be done." We think, "Is it possible that this is the Will of God? Why does God torment us? Why are others quiet and happy? What have we done? Will there be an end to our torments?" And so on. But when it is difficult for our corrupt nature to acknowledge the Will of God over us, that Will of God without which nothing happens, and to humbly submit to it, then is the very time for us to humbly submit to this Will, and **to offer to the Lord our most precious sacrifice--that is, heartfelt devotion to Him, not only in the time of ease and happiness, but also in suffering and misfortune;** it is then that we must submit our vain erring wisdom to the perfect Wisdom of God, for our thoughts are as far from the thoughts of God "as the heavens are higher than the earth."

– St John of Kronstadt