



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Fr. Gregory Fedorchak, Parish Rector 607-427-3286, father.fedorchak@gmail.com*

**Upcoming Services:**

**April 2, Wednesday**

6pm – Presanctified Liturgy

**April 4, Friday**

6pm – Akathist to the Theotokos

**April 5, Saturday**

5pm – Great Vespers

**April 6, Sunday (St Mary of Egypt)**

10am (9:40am Hours) – Divine Liturgy

**April 9, Wednesday**

6pm – Presanctified Liturgy  
& Archbishop Michael Visit

**April 12, Lazarus Saturday**

9am – Divine Liturgy

5pm – Great Vespers

**April 13, Palm Sunday**

10am (9:40am Hours) – Divine Liturgy

6pm – Bridegroom Matins

**Daily weekday Vespers** – 5pm at the Hermitage

**The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent:**

**Saint Mary of Egypt**

**April 6**



**Fifth Saturday of Great Lent:**

**Akathist to the Theotokos**

**April 5**

*In you, O Mother, was preserved with exactness what was according to the image; 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 for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore, O Venerable Mary, your spirit rejoices with the Angels.*

**Troparion of St Mary of Egypt**

*Victorious leader of triumphant hosts, we your servants, delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity, so that we may sing: Rejoice, unwedded Bride!*

**Kontakion of the Theotokos**

**Save the Date!**

**Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with Vladyka Michael**

**Wednesday, April 9, 6 PM**

**Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
**From *The Orthodox Faith* - Volume II: Worship**  
**By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko**

The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come “to call sinners to repentance” and to save them from their sins (Luke 5.32). In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in Lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.

***Having been a sinful woman, you became a Bride of Christ through repentance. Having attained the angelic life, you defeated demons by the weapon of the Cross; therefore, O most glorious Mary you are a Bride of the Kingdom.***

**Kontakion**

***Excerpt from the Life of St Mary of Egypt...***

Abba Zosimas, according to the custom of the monastery, went deep into the desert hoping to find someone living there who could benefit him. He walked into the wilderness for twenty days and then, when he sang the Psalms of the Sixth Hour and made the usual prayers. Suddenly, to the right of the hill where he stood, he saw a human form. He was afraid, thinking that it might be a demonic apparition. Then he guarded himself with the Sign of the Cross, which removed his fear. He turned to the right and saw a form walking southward. The body was black from the blazing sunlight, and the faded short hair was white like a sheep’s fleece. Abba Zosimas rejoiced, since he had not seen any living thing for many days.

The desert-dweller saw Zosimas approaching, and attempted to flee from him. Abba Zosimas, forgetting his age and fatigue, quickened his pace. When he was close enough to be heard, he called out, “Why do you flee from me, a sinful old man? Wait for me, for the love of God.”

The stranger said to him, “Forgive me, Abba Zosimas, but I cannot turn and show my face to you. I am a woman, and as you see, I am naked. If you would grant the request of a sinful woman, throw me your cloak so I might cover my body, and then I can ask for your blessing.” Then Abba Zosimas was terrified, realizing that she could not have called him by name unless she possessed spiritual insight. Covered by the cloak, the ascetic turned to Zosimas: “Why do you want to speak with me, a sinful woman? What did you wish to learn from me, you who have not shrunk from such great labors?”

Abba Zosimas fell to the ground and asked for her blessing. She also bowed down before him, and for a long time they remained on the ground each asking the other to bless. Finally, the woman ascetic said: “Abba Zosimas, you must bless and pray, since you are honored with the grace of the priesthood. For many years you have stood before the holy altar, offering the Holy Gifts to the Lord.”

These words frightened Saint Zosimas even more. With tears he said to her, “O Mother! It is clear that you live with God and are dead to this world. You have called me by name and recognized me as a priest, though you have never seen me before. The grace granted you is apparent, therefore bless me, for the Lord’s sake.”

**[Note! If the life of Saint Mary of Egypt is new to you, be inspired by the full story! It can be found at**

**<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2024/04/21/18-5th-sunday-of-great-lent-st-mary-of-egypt>**

Excerpts from ***Reflecting on the life of St. Mary of Egypt***

By Chaplain Patrick Tutella

From the OCA website

*“Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 2.)*

During Great Lent we remember and venerate Saint Mary of Egypt both on April 1 and the Fifth Sunday of Lent. With the Canon of St. Andrew, read in many churches during the first and fifth weeks of Lent, we uphold her as an icon of repentance, an example for every Orthodox Christian to emulate. Yet for many years, she lived

a life of bondage to sexual passions. If St. Mary of Egypt were alive today, would we welcome her into our assembly?

*“I confess to Thee, O Savior, the sins I have committed, the wounds of my soul and body, which murderous thoughts, like thieves, have inflicted inwardly upon me.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 12.)*

...

For seventeen years, Saint Mary of Egypt lived a lifestyle that isolated her from the community and God. Covered with filth amassed over the years, her heart yet longed for union with God. ...

*“Christ became man, calling to repentance thieves and harlots. Repent, my soul: the door of the kingdom is already open, and Pharisees and publicans and adulterers pass through it before thee, changing their lives.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 9, Vs. 342)*

The healing of the venerable Saint Mary of Egypt was not instantaneous but required a rigorous and lengthy spiritual journey. Being led by the Holy Spirit, she retreated to the wilderness where she lived the life of a hermit for seventeen years, seeking freedom from bondage of the passions. She spent a further thirty years in the wilderness having obtained the true gifts of repentance, healing and freedom from the enslavement of sin. During Great Lent, each of us seeks repentance, turning from our own vices and passions and setting our minds and hearts on God. Through the intercessions of the most Holy Theotokos, God grants us the gift of compunction to turn from our wounds and sins to find healing and comfort in Him.

Let us remember Saint Mary of Egypt and her wonderful redemption. During the remainder of this Lenten journey, may we pray to be freed from our imprisonment to the passions that enslave us.

*Having been a sinful woman,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
You became through repentance a Bride of Christ.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
Having attained angelic life,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
You defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
Therefore, O most glorious Mary you are a Bride of the Kingdom!  
(Kontakion: Tone 3)*

## **5th Saturday of Great Lent: of the Akathist to the Theotokos** **April 5**

On the Fifth Saturday of Great Lent, the Saturday of the Akathist, we commemorate the “Laudation of the Virgin” Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos.

In 625, when the emperor Heraclius was fighting the Persians, the Khan sent forces to attack Constantinople by land and by sea. Patriarch Sergius urged the people not to lose heart, but to trust in God.

A procession was made around the city with the Cross of the Lord, the robe of the Virgin, the Icon of the Savior not made by hands, and the Hodēgētria Icon of the Mother of God. The Patriarch dipped the Virgin’s robe in the sea, and the city’s defenders beat back the Khan’s sea forces. The sea became very rough, and many boats sank. The invaders retreated, and the people of Constantinople gave thanks to God and to His Most Pure Mother.

On two other occasions, in 655 and 705, the Theotokos protected the city from Saracen invaders. A feastday dedicated to the Laudation of the Virgin was established to commemorate these victories. The Akathist to the Mother of God is believed to originate from this period, and its use has spread from Constantinople to other Orthodox lands.

The icon before which the Akathist was sung was given to the Dionysiou Monastery on Mt. Athos by Emperor Alexius Comnenos. There, it began to flow with myrrh. There were at least three wonderworking copies of this icon in Russia before the Revolution.

This icon shows the Mother of God seated on a throne, and surrounded by Prophets with scrolls.

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the liturgical life of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, and to many Saints.

The Akathist hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God, beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice." As the hymn is chanted all of the events related to our Lord's Incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin's womb. The unborn John the Baptist prophetically rejoices. The shepherds recognize Christ as a blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin "the things of earth join chorus with the heavens." The pagan Magi following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world.

The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet. The stanzas alternate between long and short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of "Alleluia." Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: "Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded."

The first part of the hymn is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary's surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph's doubts as to her innocence. The second part is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ's coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God's Son. The fourth and the last part is once more a lyric and rhetorical appraisal of Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

THE AKATHIST SERVICE  
IN HONOR OF  
THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY



**Troparion to The Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary**

"To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!



**Rest of Saint Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow,  
Enlightener of the Aleuts, Apostle to the Americas  
March 31**

*You evangelized the northern people of America and Asia, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to the natives in their own tongues. O holy hierarch father Innocent, enlightener of Alaska and all America, whose ways were ordered by the Lord, pray to Him for the salvation of our souls in His Heavenly Kingdom!*

Troparion



**Venerable Joseph the Hymnographer  
April 4**

*Come, let us acclaim the divinely inspired Joseph, the twelve-stringed instrument of the Word, the harmonious harp of grace and lute of heavenly virtues, who lauded and praised the assembly of the saints. And now he is glorified with them.*

Troparion



**Repose of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow,  
Enlightener of North America  
April 4**

*Let us praise Tikhon, the patriarch of all Russia, and enlightener of North America an ardent follower of the Apostolic traditions, and good pastor of the Church of Christ. Who was elected by divine providence, / and laid down his life for his sheep. Let us sing to him with faith and hope, and ask for his hierarchical intercessions: Keep the church in Russia in tranquility, and the church in North America in peace. Gather her scattered children into one flock, bring to repentance those who have renounced the True Faith, preserve our lands from civil strife, and entreat God's peace for all people!*

**Troparion**



**The HOLY SYNOD  
of the  
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, beloved children in the Lord,

This year, the Orthodox Church in America marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the repose of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and Enlightener of North America. It is now a full century since this great missionary and churchman fell asleep in the Lord on the feast of the Annunciation (March 25/April 7, 1925), dying as a confessor for the faith under the Soviet yoke.

In celebration of this centennial, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America has blessed a churchwide celebration of St. Tikhon on the day customarily observed as his feast in many places, October 9, 2025. Under the supervision of the diocesan hierarch, one or more cathedrals in each of our dioceses should mark this occasion with All-night Vigil, Liturgy, and other festive services as may be possible, using whatever accustomed texts may be available. Clergy from throughout each diocese should make every effort to attend such services, and the faithful should be invited and encouraged to join their clergy and hierarchs in common prayer to St. Tikhon, tireless archpastor of North America, architect of our Church, and powerful intercessor before the Lord.

Through the prayers of the holy hieroconfessor Tikhon of Moscow, may we continue to find guidance in his legacy and example.

# St. Olympia Lenten Fellowship

## *The Fast & The Curious*



1 March

Hymns of Repentance: The Orthodox Essence of Lenten Worship (Dr Jessica Suchy-Pilalis)

8 March

Lenten Nourishment (Pres Krista Fedorchak)



15 March

Repentance in Western Saints (Joseph Stark)

22 March

Movie Night: Prince of Egypt



29 March

Themes of Repentance in Byzantine Iconography (Mother Sophronia)

5 April

Chess Tournament



12 April

Sing for Joy with Hymns of Pascha (an informative song-filled session w/ Dr Jessica)

**come for Vespers at 5PM**  
**stay for Fellowship (~6-8PM)**  
**34 N Main St, Norwood**

## UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

### Work Day

Tuesday, April 1, 2:30 – 5:00 PM, or whenever you can come!

### “Book” Study

Thursday, April 3, 5:45 PM – 7:15 PM. Bring a poem to share! Contact Joseph Stark with questions.

### Lenten Fellowship:

Saturday, April 5, 6:00 PM. We will continue our Lenten Fellowship Series with a Chess tournament! It will be potluck style—bring something Lenten (no meat/dairy) to share *if you'd like*, but food is in no way a requirement for attending. All are welcome!

### Sunday School

Sunday, April 6, Pres will lead another Sunday School lesson for the kids at the beginning of coffee hour. We will learn another song, this time about the raising of Lazarus!

### Archbishop Michael Visit – Presanctified Liturgy + Dinner with our Hierarch!

Wednesday, April 9. 6:00 PM. We will need volunteers to help clean the church, prepare food, and set-up. Contact Jess Gurrea if you are interested in helping.

### Fr. Gregory Speaking at “Trust Truth” Event, Hosted by St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Canton

Tuesday, April 10, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM @ the Best Western in Canton. The talk is entitled, “Freedom Ain’t Free: Healing the Will with Help from the Ascetic Fathers.” It is a 30-minute talk followed by a discussion.

## UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

### Camp Fundraiser

A “Spaghetti and Song” fundraiser for St. Andrew’s Camp will be held on Sunday, May 4, at 4 pm at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Endicott. Tickets can be purchased at <https://givebutter.com/KzEdEw>.

### Young Adult Retreat

Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18 @ St. Andrew’s Camp. Open to Orthodox young adults, catechumens, and inquirers age 18-35. For questions, contact [LonnBologna@gmail.com](mailto:LonnBologna@gmail.com) or text 203-258-5324.

## OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SAFETY** – Please steer clear of the basement as work intensifies. You may still use the bathroom, but please avoid the kitchen area and debris.

**Coffee Hour** – Please consider sponsoring a meal after Liturgy. This coming Sunday’s slot is open. Sign up [here](#) or on the list at Church.

**Food Drive** – A Lenten almsgiving opportunity: we are collecting shelf-stable food items for our local Norwood Food Pantry. They are specifically in need of pasta, pasta sauce, and condiments. See the box in the side narthex.



***Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.***

The Jesus Prayer is work common to angels and humans. With this prayer people attain to the life of the angels in a short time. The prayer is the source of all good works and virtues and drives the dark passions far away from man. In a short time it makes a man capable of acquiring the grace of the Holy Spirit. Acquire it, and before you die you will have acquired an angelic soul. The prayer is divine rejoicing. No other spiritual weapon can so effectively restrain the demons. It burns them as fire burns a wick.

*St. Paisios Velichkovsky*



Volunteers at Norwood's Annual Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 29!



Thank you to everyone who donated baby goods and money for the National Orthodox Baby Shower! We donated 5 high chairs, 2 car seats, and 2 car seat/stroller combination units to CareNet Pregnancy Resource Center in Watertown, NY.