

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND



SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA

Byzantine Catholic Church - Washington community

12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur, Beltsville, MD 20705

www.stgregoryofnyssa.net / Facebook: stgregorybyzath

Services live-streamed on Facebook

Pastor: Reverend Serhii Deiak

Email: frsergij@stgregoryofnyssa.net

Fr. Serhii Cell: (240) 644-2661 / Office: (301) 953-9323

Deacon: Deacon William (Bill) Szewczyk

Email: deacon@stgregoryofnyssa.net

PATRONAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Byzantine Catholic Church – Baltimore community

1260 Stevens Avenue, Arbutus, MD 21227

www.patronagechurch.com / Facebook: Patronagechurch

Email: patronage.church@gmail.com / Office: (410) 247-4936

Pastor: Reverend Serhii Deiak

Email: frserhiipatronagechurch@gmail.com / Fr. Serhii Cell: (240) 644-2661

PATRONAGE MISSIONARY CHURCH IN HAGERSTOWN

St. Ann Catholic Church

1525 Oak Hill Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21742

Pastor: Reverend Serhii Deiak

Contact: Adam and Lauren Myers:
(301) 791-0930 / axxearp@yahoo.com

Next Liturgy: Saturday

February 18th, at 10am

CONFESSION: Fr. Serhii is available 20 minutes before or immediately after Divine Liturgy.

Let Us Remember in Prayer: The people of Ukraine, that peace may be soon restored to their land.

Those who are ill or convalescing: Thomas Petrick, Father Joseph Borodach, Rosemarie Pipta, Laverne Hametz, Michael and Carol Slovinsky, James DeWolfe, Howard Guba, Lector Joseph and Marie Repasi, John Sekura, Madeline Bender, Richard Cooley, Christine Szewczyk, Kathleen Lynch, Ken Demianchik, Michael Fitzgibbon, Suzanne Krofchik, Mary Jo Kelly Wilhelm, Robert P. Pipta, Christine Pipta Svitana, Ann Dardzinski, Doreen Dardzinski, David Chekan, Anna Rae Brabston, Keith Hay, Walter Krofchik, Sylvia Rusnock, Nickolette Dobrovoczky, Irene Simi, John Cahill, Clara Valeika, Caroline Belensky, Nancy Erdek, Kay Dinko, Doris Ruszin, Anne Gupman, Anna Martin, Marge Dulina, Georgianna Kostak, Betty Rankin, Sandra Suseck. May our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician and Healer of souls and bodies, grant them peace and good health for many blessed years.

St. Gregory Church:

Stewardship: (Donate at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=2442387>) Feb. 5

Offertory: \$1287.00

Tithe.ly: \$39.30

ECL: \$48.00

Kolachi sales: \$60.00

Patronage Church:

Stewardship: (Donate at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=2346733>) Feb. 5

Offertory: \$1189.50

Tithe.ly: \$60.00

Holydays: \$112.50

ECL: \$30.

Hagerstown Mission:

Stewardship: Feb. 5

Tithe.ly: \$19.00

Lector Signup: A signup sheet for lectors for Sunday's Divine Liturgies is on the table in the back of the hall. Please consider signing up for this important service. If you have never chanted the Epistle, the cantors will be happy to work with you to make you feel comfortable.

Welcome to Our Parish: We welcome all new visitors to our parish family, and are happy you are joining us to share in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to be added to our parish email list, send an email to us at frsergij@stgregoryofnyssa.net or frserhiipatronagechurch@gmail.com. *My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.* (Isaiah 56:7)

Old oak tree

Not far from the university stood a mighty oak, known throughout the neighborhood. Under its winged branches, students gathered for years - to chat, to sing... No one could imagine the university territory without this giant tree, the spreading branches which amazed and fascinated everyone who stopped to look at it. It seemed to be an inseparable element of the surrounding landscape, but...

One day, that giant fell to the ground with a terrible crash. And now on the broken trunk it was possible to trace what no one noticed and could not notice for years: the process of internal destruction, which day by day, month by month, year by year led the once strong tree to its death. And although the destruction continued very slowly, "quietly", it by no means meant that the tree was not dying. The mighty oak tree, which seemed to live forever, was rotting from the inside. And people invariably saw only its outer shell.

What happened to an oak can happen to a person. Let it be in a figurative sense... An imperceptible moral decay can continue very slowly, giving rise to, however, a deadly internal disease.

This Psalm is sometimes referred to as the Psalm of the “Two Ways,” representing the two paths each person can go down – the path of righteousness, or the path of the sinner. The righteous are those who meditate on God’s Law day and night, and they are compared by the Psalmist to a tree planted by a stream of living water that yields the fruits of virtues in due time, and whose righteous life will endure and prosper in God’s blessings.

The wicked, however, are compared to “winnowed chaff,” the worthless part of a plant that is separated from the good plant seeds and discarded in the wind. This process of separation is called “winnowing” where both seeds and chaff are tossed into the air and the wind blows the chaff away. The Psalmist says that the wicked will be judged, and they will not find a place along with the just that God will guard. Rather the way of the wicked will lead to their doom.

In Matthew’s Gospel which we heard today, Jesus relates a parable which uses different imagery, but communicates the same reality of just such a day of Final Judgment. In Jesus’s parable, instead of an earthly garden paradise, we have a heavenly royal throne room. Here all of the nations are gathered around the Great Shepherd King seated on His throne as he holds court. On this great and terrible day of the Lord, the nations are “winnowed” or divided up like a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats; one on His right hand and the other on His left.

On the right side are the sheep who represent those who show mercy and charity to the Shepherd-King in the distressing disguise of those in need, which is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Essentially during their earthly life, they engaged in the corporal works of mercy. On the left side we have the place of the goats, who are those who refused such loving kindness to their Shepherd-King because they did not recognize Him in the distressing disguise of those in need.

When we read this parable now in the light of Psalm 1, the first book of the Shepherd-King David’s Psalter, we have even greater clarity as to God’s “winnowing.” His separation of the righteous and unrighteous on the Day of Judgment. Those who are among the righteous who were compared to a sturdy, fruitful and prosperous tree of life planted in God’s paradise by streams of living water in the Psalms, are also characterized by Jesus as one of His faithful flock as the Good Shepherd King because they not only meditate on the Word or instruction of God day and night, they live it out in the merciful loving-kindness shown to their neighbor.

Those who reject this way, who do not think on the Law of God in their heart and do not keep His holy commandments to show mercy, will be like the chaff blown away like the wind, or like the rebellious goats cast off into eternal punishment.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us choose the first path of the faithful sheep of our faithful and Good Shepherd this day as we prepare for the Great Day of the Lord. Let us choose this Great Lent to hear the Word of the Lord with the ears of our heart and to keep this word by faithfully practicing the works of mercy. – Rev. Daniel Dozier

Schedule of Divine Services:
SAINT GREGORY CHURCH

SUNDAY, Feb. 12, 2023

Meatfare Sunday

Our Holy Father Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch

8:45 AM *Hymns from Matins*

9:00 AM *Divine Liturgy in memory of +Nicholas G. Patchan as requested by Kathleen Patchan (10th anniversary)*

SUNDAY, Feb. 19, 2023

Cheesefare Sunday

The Holy Apostle Archippus

11:00 AM *Hymns from Matins*

11:15 AM *Divine Liturgy in memory of +Bibish Carole, +Hugh, +Vivian as requested by Francisca Nzounkekang*

PATRONAGE CHURCH

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Meatfare Sunday

Our Holy Father Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch

11:00 AM *Hymns from Matins*

11:15 AM *Divine Liturgy*

SUNDAY, Feb. 19, 2023

Cheesefare Sunday

The Holy Apostle Archippus

8:45 AM *Hymns from Matins*

9:00 AM *Divine Liturgy in memory of +Zach Kennedy as requested by Lisa and Rich Guba*

Propers for today: Tone 3, page 135; Meatfare Sunday, page 217

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2; Gospel, Matthew 25:31-46.

Meatfare Sunday: For those following the strict Lenten Fast, today would be the last day to eat meat (the flesh of any animal with a backbone) before Pascha. Even if one is not keeping the strict fast, it is a good practice to begin our Lenten observance gradually. One could, for example, begin the readings or prayers they intended to do during the Fast today and save other practices for Cheesefare. The idea is to gradually enter into the Fast and not make a sudden switch.

Tax Statements: Those that wish to receive a charitable tax statement for the year 2022, please let us know by sending an email to either patronage.church@gmail.com or frsergij@stgregoryofnyssa.net, and add to the subject line, "Tax Statement."

The Bishop's Appeal began October 25, 2022.

- The goal for Patronage of the Mother of God Parish is again \$9,800.00. \$3,240.00 in donations have been credited to Patronage. When we meet our goal, the parish will receive 40% rebate.
- The goal for St. Gregory Parish is again \$5,400.00. \$8,750.00 in donations have been credited to St. Gregory. Many thanks to all the parishioners of St. Gregory for the generous support of our diocese! During the summer, our bishop's office will return 40% of your donations to our community.

Patronage Church Pot Luck: Please join us after Liturgy on Sunday, February 26th, for a pot-luck luncheon and to watch the first of a series of videos on the Apocrypha in Scriptures. After the video, we will be discussing our upcoming parish festival, repair ideas for our social hall kitchen and bathrooms, and those interested in joining our parish and financial council. Please bring a dish and any proposals or ideas you may have to share.

St. Gregory Pot Luck: Our next pot luck lunch will be on Cheesefare Sunday, February 19. John Cahill will also have the first of a series of videos on the Apocrypha in Scriptures. A signup sheet will be in the hall. Please join us. After the video, we invite everyone to join our Parish and Finance Council for 2023.

An Invitation from Bishop Kurt: To all the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Passaic, the Eparchy of Parma, the Eparchy of Phoenix, and the Exarchy of Toronto: Mark your calendar for the Metropolitan Assembly of 2023. Your Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla is calling you to assemble.

When: November 2-5

November 2-3, Thursday through Friday evening especially for clergy

November 3-4-5, Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday especially for laity

Where: St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church Hillsboro, New Jersey

Homily for Sunday of Meatfare – Sunday of the Last Judgment Matt 25:31-46 – Psalm 1

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

One of the greatest repositories of prayer in the Christian Church is the Psalter of the Old Testament, largely attributed to the work of King David the Prophet. The Psalms, in fact, make up the Church's primary prayer book, not just for personal prayer, but for the liturgical prayers of the Church throughout the year both in the Divine Liturgy and in the prayers of the Horologion, the Book of the Hours of Prayer.

The Book of the Psalms were created as a special canon of prayer especially for the Levites in Jerusalem in the Tent of David, built to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Levites had been appointed by Moses to carry, assemble, guard, serve, and then disassemble the Mosaic Tabernacle and all of its parts including the Ark during the wandering in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt and the revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai. This tent was to be the place of God's habitation in the midst of Israel.

Now that the Ark of the Covenant with God's *shekinah* glory-cloud overshadowing it had come to rest on God's Holy Mountain, Mount Zion in the Royal City of Jerusalem and in David's Tent as a new paradise of God's presence, there was no more need for the Levites to set up, tear down and move the tabernacle. King David, assembled his own book of songs in worship and appointed the Levites to a special task of singing these liturgical hymns in the praise of the Holy God.

The Church as the heir to Israelite worship as fulfilled in Christ continued this tradition given to us by the apostles of using the Psalms as the book of praise to the Holy Trinity and to the Incarnate Son of God. The Psalter is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament and it represents the part of the canon of the Bible that the Church uses the most, praying it daily in all of our services.

As Christians, King David's Prophetic Psalter should be part of our daily prayer, and since we are instructed by the Church to treat this Lenten season as a time of increased prayer in addition to Fasting, Repentance, and Works of Mercy, we will connect a Psalm to the theme of one or more of the readings to encourage us to seek the Face of God in His presence in our worship. I want to offer a brief observation about the Gospel of Meatfare Sunday, also known as "The Sunday of the Final Judgment."

The Book of Psalms begins with Psalm 1, which is a brief but powerful Psalm: *Happy indeed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor lingers in the way of sinners nor sits in the company of scorners, but whose delight is the law of the Lord and who ponders his law day and night. He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit in due season and whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper. Not so are the wicked, not so! For they like winnowed chaff shall be driven away by the wind. When the wicked are judged they shall not stand, nor find room among those who are just; for the Lord guards the way of the just but the way of the wicked leads to doom.*