

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MARKELLA

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

With the Blessings of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius

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Protopresbyter Fr. Theodoros Giannakopoulos • Archimandrite Fr. Epiphanius Antoniou

MARCH 23RD/APRIL 5TH – FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT: COMMEMORATION OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

Τὸ Ἀναστάσιμον. Ἦχος α'.

Τοῦ λίθου σφραγισθέντος ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων
καὶ στρατιωτῶν φυλασσόντων τὸ ἄχραντὸν Σου
Σῶμα, ἀνέστης τριήμερος Σωτήρ, δωρούμενος
τῷ κόσμῳ τὴν ζωὴν. Διὰ τοῦτο αἱ Δυνάμεις τῶν
οὐρανῶν, ἐβόων Σοι Ζωοδότα. Δόξα τῇ
Ἀναστάσει Σου Χριστέ. Δόξα τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ
Σου, μόνε Φιλάνθρωπε.

Της Ἀγίας τοῦ Ναοῦ. Ἦχος πλ. α'. Τὸν Συνάναρχον Λόγον

Παρθενίαν τηρήσασα ἀδιάφθορον, ουρανοῖς
θαλάμοις νῦν συνηρίθμησαι, του πατρός το
ασελγές αποκρούσασα, τους μαστούς και
κεφαλὴν ἀπετημήθης πάρ αὐτοῦ, Μαρκέλλα
Χίου το κλέος, και νῦν ως μάρτυς στεφθεῖσαι,
πηγὴ θαυμάτων ἀφθονος δείκνυσαι.

Ἀπολυτίκιον. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

Ἐν σοὶ Μῆτερ ἀκριβῶς διεσώθη τό κατ' εἰκόνα·
λαβοῦσα γάρ τόν σταυρόν, ἠκολούθησας τῷ
Χριστῷ, καί πράττουσα ἐδίδασκες, ὑπερορᾶν
μέν σαρκός, παρέρχεται γάρ· ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δέ
ψυχῆς, πράγματος ἀθανάτου· διό και μετά
Ἀγγέλων συναγάλλεται, Ὅσια Μαρία τό πνευμά
σου.

For the Resurrection. 1st Tone.

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews;
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure
Body; Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world. The powers of heaven
therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to
Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy
Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou
Who lovest mankind.

For the Saint of this Temple. Plagal of 1st Tone. Let Us Worship the Word

Thy virginity thou didst preserve most incorrupt
and now thou has been numbered among those
who dwell in the mansions of heaven. Thou didst
reject thy father's advances for which he severed
thy breasts and head O Markella; the glory of
Chios! And now crowned as a martyr thou wellest
forth abundant miracles.

Apolytikion. Plagal of 4th Tone.

In thee, O Mother, was carefully preserved what
is according to the Image. For thou didst take the
Cross and follow Christ. By so doing thou didst
teach us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away,
but to care for the soul as an immortal thing.
Therefore, St. Mary, thy spirit rejoices with the
Angels.

EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

Lesson from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Hebrews (9:11-14)

Brethren, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.



Fifth Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Gospel According to St. Mark (10:32-45)

At that time, Jesus took his twelve disciples, and he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους Ἐπιστολῆς Παύλου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (9:11-14)

Ἀδελφοί, Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειοτέρας σκηνῆς, οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν, οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος εἰσηλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια, αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος. Εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἶμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων, καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωμένους, ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἅμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ὑμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων, εἰς τὸ λατρεῦειν θεῷ ζῶντι;



Πέμπτη Κυριακὴ των Νηστειῶν: Οσίας Μαρίας της Αιγυπτίας Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Μᾶρκον Ἀγίου Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (10:32-45)

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, παραλαβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητάς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἤρξατο αὐτοῖς λέγειν τὰ μέλλοντα αὐτῷ συμβαίνειν, ὅτι ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσι καὶ γραμματεῦσι, καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτὸν θανάτῳ καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσι, καὶ ἐμπαίξουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ μαστιγώσουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐμπτύσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσεται. Καὶ προσπορεύονται αὐτῷ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης υἱοὶ Ζεβεδαίου λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, θέλομεν ἵνα ὃ ἐὰν αἰτήσωμεν ποιήσης ἡμῖν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τί θέλετε ποιῆσαί με ὑμῖν; οἱ δὲ εἶπον αὐτῷ· δὸς ἡμῖν ἵνα εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἷς ἐξ ἐωνύμων σου καθίσωμεν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ σου. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ οἶδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω, καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι; οἱ δὲ εἶπον αὐτῷ· δυνάμεθα. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τὸ μὲν ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω πίεσθε, καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθήσεσθε· τὸ δὲ καθίσαί ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ ἐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἠτοίμασται. Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ δέκα ἤρξαντο ἀγανακτεῖν περὶ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωάννου. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς λέγει αὐτοῖς· οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν· οὐχ οὕτω δὲ ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὃς ἐὰν θέλη γενέσθαι μέγας ἐν ὑμῖν, ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, καὶ ὃς ἐὰν θέλη ὑμῶν γενέσθαι πρῶτος, ἔσται πάντων δούλος· καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθε διακονηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι, καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

Monday, April 6th

St. Zacharius the Recluse of Egypt (4th c.)
St. Artemon Bishop of Seleucia (1st c.)

Tuesday, April 7th

The Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Wednesday, April 8th

Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
Hieromartyr Irenaeus Bishop of Srem, Serbia (304)

Thursday, April 9th

St. Matrona of Thessalonica (4th c.)
Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius (304)

Friday, April 10th

St. Hilarion the New, Abbot of Pelecete (754)
Venerable Stephen the Wonderworker Abbot of Tryglia (815)

Saturday, April 11th

Lazarus Saturday

Martyr Mark Bishop of Arethusa and with him Hieromartyr Cyril Deacon of Heliopolis (364)



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT: COMMEMORATION OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

On the 5th Sunday of Great Lent the Church commemorates the memory of St. Mary of Egypt, who is an Example of Repentance.

St. Mary was born in Egypt and at the age of 12 began to live a life of debauchery in Alexandria, where she spent 17 years. Driven by the adulterous flame of the flesh, one day she boarded a boat which was sailing for Jerusalem. Arriving at the Holy City, she wanted to enter the Church, in order to venerate the Honorable Cross, but some invisible force restrained her. In great fear, she gazed upon the Icon of the All-Holy Mother of God in the vestibule and promised that if she would be allowed to enter the Church, she would confess her sinfulness and the uncleanness of her life, and that she would go wherever the All-Pure One would direct her. She was then permitted to enter the Church.

Having venerated the Cross, she again entered the vestibule and, before the icon, gave thanks to the Mother of God. At that very moment she heard a voice saying: *“If you cross over Jordan you will find real peace.”* Immediately she purchased three loaves of bread and started out for the Jordan. She remained in the wilderness for 40 years with great struggles.

Once, during Great Lent, a certain Hieromonk, the Elder Zosimus, withdrew into the wilderness (it was the custom in the Monasteries that at the beginning of each Great Lent, the monks would cross the Jordan and scatter throughout the desert where they would stay until Palm Sunday). Suddenly, he caught sight of a human being with a withered and naked body, who began to flee from the sight of him. The Elder ran for a long while until this person crouched down in a brook and cried out: *“Abba Zosimus, forgive me for the sake of the Lord. I cannot face you for I am a naked woman.”* St. Zosimus then tossed his outer garment to her, which she wrapped around herself and then showed herself to him. The Elder was frightened upon hearing his name, spoken from the mouth of this woman whom he did not know. Following his prolonged insistence, the woman related her life story. Finally, she begged him to bring her Holy Communion the following year on the shore of the Jordan.

St. Zosimus gave her Communion, and on his return the next year he found her at the appointed place, wrapped in his mantle, her face toward the East, lying in eternal repose. In the sand she had written her name, instructions for her burial and a note that she had died the day he brought her Holy Communion. Weak and without tools St. Zosimus despaired of a way to bury the Saint, but God sent an affectionate lion who dug a deep hole in the sand. Covering St. Mary’s feet with tears and kisses, he committed her to the earth with prayers. The lion went off into his desert and the Elder returned to his monastery, where he told the story which has been kept to this day, written by St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

ΠΕΜΠΤΗ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΝΗΣΤΕΙΩΝ: ΟΣΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΙΓΥΠΤΙΑΣ

Γεννήθηκε στην Αίγυπτο και σε ηλικία μόλις δώδεκα ετών άρχισε να ζει ακόλαστο βίο στην Αλεξάνδρεια επί δεκαεπτά χρόνια ακολουθούσε διεστραμμένο τρόπο ζωής. Η Μαρία, οιστρηλατημένη απ' το σαρκικό πάθος της πορνείας, ακολούθησε κάποιους νέους και επιβίβαστηκε σε ένα πλοίο με προορισμό τα Ιεροσόλυμα. Φθάνοντας στην Αγία Πόλη, θέλησε να επισκεφθεί την εκκλησία για να προσκυνήσει τον Τίμιο Σταυρό. Όμως μια αόρατη δύναμη την εμπόδιζε να εισέλθει στον Ναό της Αναστάσεως. Έντρομη, τότε, στήλωσε το βλέμμα της στην εικόνα της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου στον νάρθηκα και προσευχήθηκε θερμά να της επιτραπεί να ασπαστεί τον Τίμιο Σταυρό, ομολογώντας την αμαρτωλότητά της και εμπιστευόμενη τα βήματά της στην Πανάχραντο Θεοτόκο.

Τότε πράγματι, της επετράπη η είσοδος μέσα στην εκκλησία. Αφού προσκύνησε τον Σταυρό, επέστρεψε στον νάρθηκα γονάτισε μπροστά στην εικόνα και ευχαρίστησε θερμά τη Θεοτόκο. Την ίδια στιγμή άκουσε μια φωνή να της λέει: «Εάν περάσεις τον Ιορδάνη, θα βρεις την αληθινή ειρήνη!». Η Μαρία βγήκε και, αφού αγόρασε τρία καρβέλια ψωμί, ξεκίνησε για τον Ιορδάνη ποταμό. Την επομένη μετέλαβε των Αχράντων Μυστηρίων στο μοναστήρι του αγίου Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή και πέρασε τον Ιορδάνη ποταμό. Παρέμεινε σαράντα οκτώ χρόνια στην έρημο ολομόναχη, υπομένοντας αγόγγυστα πολλές δοκιμασίες, με ακρότατη άσκηση, «πυκτεύουσα», παλεύοντας με τα άλογα πάθη της και τους εμπαιθείς λογισμούς σαν με άγρια θηρία. Τρεφόταν μόνο με αγριόχορτα.

Αφού τελείωσε την αφήγησή της, στάθηκε όρθια σε στάση προσευχής· τότε ο Ζωσιμάς την είδε να αιωρείται πάνω από το έδαφος. Η Μαρία τον παρακάλεσε να έλθει ξανά τον επόμενο χρόνο να της φέρει τη Θεία Ευχαριστία· εκεί, στις όχθες του Ιορδάνη, θα ερχόταν να το συναντήσει για να κοινωνήσει.

Πράγματι, ένα χρόνο αργότερα, ο αββάς Ζωσιμάς κατέφθασε με τη Θεία Κοινωνία στις όχθες του Ιορδάνη· ήταν ήδη βράδυ. Έμεινε να αναρωτιέται πώς εκείνη θα διέσχιζε τον Ιορδάνη ποταμό; Τότε, μέσα στο φεγγαρόφωτο διέκρινε τη μορφή της να πλησιάζει το ποτάμι, να κάνει το σημείο του Σταυρού επάνω του και κατόπιν να βαδίζει επάνω στο νερό σαν να ήταν ξηρά! Αφού την κοινωνήσε, η οσία τον παρακάλεσε να ξανάρθει μετά από ένα χρόνο στην ίδια εκείνη πηγή όπου συναντήθηκαν την πρώτη φορά.

Ο καιρός πέρασε, ο αββάς επέστρεψε σ' εκείνο το σημείο και ανακάλυψε εκεί το άψυχο σώμα της. Πάνω απ' το κεφάλι της ήταν γραμμένο στην άμμο: «Αββά Ζωσιμά, θάψε εδώ το σώμα της ταπεινής Μαρίας, απόδος χουν εις χουν. Απεβίωσα την 1η Απριλίου, το ίδιο βράδυ του σωτηρίου μαρτυρίου του Χριστού, αφού κοινωνήσα των Αχράντων Μυστηρίων». Από την επιγραφή αυτή πληροφορήθηκε για πρώτη φορά ο Ζωσιμάς το όνομα της οσίας και ερμήνευσε το άλλο φοβερό θαύμα που είχε συντελεστεί: το γεγονός ότι τον προηγούμενο χρόνο, όταν της μετέδωσε τη Θεία Κοινωνία, εκείνη είχε φθάσει μέσα σε λίγες ώρες το ίδιο βράδυ στο σημείο συνάντησής τους, ενώ εκείνος πεζοπορούσε είκοσι ημέρες για να μεταβεί εκεί. Ο άγιος Ζωσιμάς έθαψε το σώμα της μεγάλης αυτής οσίας, της Μαρίας της Αιγύπτιας. Επιστρέφοντας στο μοναστήρι του, διηγήθηκε όλο τον βίο της και τα θαύματα στα οποία ο ίδιος υπήρξε αυτόπτης μάρτυς.

Έτσι δοξάζει ο Κύριός μας τους μετανοημένους αμαρτωλούς. Η οσία Μαρία εορτάζει την 1η Απριλίου και μνημονεύεται την Ε΄ Κυριακή της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, ημέρα που είναι αφιερωμένη σ' αυτήν. Η Εκκλησία την έχει ως υπόδειγμα μετανοίας για τους πιστούς, τις ημέρες αυτές της αγίας Νηστείας. Αναπαύθηκε περί το έτος 530 μ.Χ.

A SERMON ON THE SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT

By Metropolitan Moses

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today, for the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent, we celebrate the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt. Saint Mary lived during a time when Christianity dominated the Mediterranean world. Yet, somehow, despite the fact that she lived in the midst of a Christian culture, she was somehow lead astray and departed from her parent's home as a twelve year old runaway and was immersed in a life of total and complete subjection to the irrational passions for seventeen years. One can only speculate, who led her astray? Was it a peer or a slightly older child or some evil adult who convinced her to "form a strategy" for a life of reckless self-destructive promiscuity?

As disturbing the early part of her life was, the second part of her life was nothing short of a miracle for the ages. We know from the account that she related to Saint Zosimas that after living a life of spiritual darkness for seventeen years God then found an opportunity and used her curiosity regarding the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross to separate her from her former environment in Egypt to draw her away from her life of sin. After she arrived in Jerusalem, she desired to enter the Church of the Resurrection see the Cross and could not. After three or four failed attempts, she went out to a porch and she began to realize why she could not enter in the church. She then began to feel the full burden of her sin and separation from God, but she did not despair and she turned her gaze to an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos and said:

"O Lady, Mother of God, who gave birth in the flesh to God the Word, I know, O how well I know, that it is no honor or praise to thee when one so impure and depraved as I look up to thy icon, O ever-virgin, who didst keep thy body and soul in purity. Rightly do I inspire hatred and disgust before thy virginal purity, but I have heard that God Who was born of thee became man on purpose to call sinners to repentance. Then help me, for I have no other help. Order the entrance of the church to be opened to me. Allow me to see the venerable Tree on which He Who was born of thee suffered in the flesh and on which He shed His holy Blood for the redemption of sinners and for me, unworthy as I am. Be my faithful witness before thy son that I will never again defile my body by the impurity of fornication, but as soon as I have seen the Tree of the Cross I will renounce the world and its temptations and will go wherever thou wilt lead me."

After worshipping the Cross she again returned to the icon and prayed, seeking guidance where to go and she heard a voice say unto her from on high, *"If you cross the Jordan you will find glorious rest."* Saint Mary was called not by men, but was called, protected and guided by the Most Holy Theotokos. After she changed her life she had to struggle in spiritual warfare for seventeen years, that is, the same amount of years she had formerly lived in sin. It was only after those many years of purification that the warfare subsided and she experienced peace, illumination and deification.

In the midst of all things ever written concerning the human person, the life of Saint Mary of Egypt stands out as a monument to the depths of a contra-natural life of enslavement to the passions, the love of God for sinners and an ascent to the heights of spiritual progress that only the holiest of the saints achieved in this life. She achieved the ultimate purpose for which man was created, that is, theosis, deification and divine participation. Words fail to describe what she became, but she reached the height of human personhood, that is, by grace she realized the full potential of what it means to be "made in the image and likeness of God." We are all made in the image of God because we have reason and free will, but she attained the likeness through purification and participation in God's grace.

During our modern era there are many opinions expressed concerning the human person.

The Darwinist-materialists claim that we are merely accidents of nature that exist in the biosphere of earth, which is only a rock that is hurtling through the cold darkness of space. This world-view has given birth to another philosophical view, that is, of nihilism, that asserts that man has no real purpose or place of importance in the universe.

This world-view reduces life to the principle of the survival of the fittest and is governed for the most part by experiences of pleasure and pain. As the old saying goes, “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” There is a logical link between Darwinist-materialism and hedonism. Pagan-Darwinism was one of the philosophical underpinnings for the Nazi regime. For the Nazis, the destruction of a competing culture was simply nature’s elegant way of making way for “the fittest.”

For those of the Darwinist-materialists who do not embrace the “survival of the fittest” principle for cultures, the highest and most noble purpose they can reach is to achieve random acts of kindness or to have meaning through temporary human relationships or human achievement that ultimately ends in annihilation through death. This world-view dominates the government schooling is very influential in our society. In fact, it is this world-view that is the underlying source of the curriculum changes in Ontario.

There are many so-called progressives in society today who claim that they embrace a multiculturalism that tolerates competing world-views, but in many cases these are the same people who ridicule Christians for their desire to raise their children according their world-view and beliefs.

We as Orthodox Christians believe that, although we are made from the dust of the earth our ultimate purpose is to be united to the Creator of the universe. Saint Mary was temporarily cast into the depths, but through the mercy of God she rose up to freedom in Christ and the heights of divine participation.

I entreat you all to converse with your children every day and tell them what their purpose is, that they are the children of God and they are meant to be free in Christ our Savior. Our Savior instructed the Jews of His day with the words, “Amen, amen, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave abides not in the house forever: but the Son abides forever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:34-36) We must write these words on our hearts. We must imprint them on the hearts of our children.

The world around us lies in sin and in our struggle against sin it is useful for us to review the admonishments spoken by the men of God regarding our struggle against sinful habits. Abba Dorotheos of Gaza once described the importance of cutting off the passions before we become accustomed to them in the following words:

“There was once a great Abba with his disciples in a place where there were lots of cypress trees, large and small. The Abba said to one of his disciples, ‘Pull up that young cypress.’ It was very little and the man was able to lift it out with one hand. The Abba then pointed to a bigger one and said, ‘Pull that up, as well’. He shook it back and forth with both hands and managed to uproot it. Then the Abba showed him another one, bigger again, but when he’d tried his best and had sweated over the job, he was still unable to move it. When the Abba saw that the disciple wasn’t up to the task, he told another brother to get up and help him. Both together they were able to pull it up. Then the Abba said to the brothers: ‘That’s what the passions are like, brethren. When they’re new, if we want we can easily pull them out. But if we ignore them when they’re new, they take root, and the deeper they go the more effort it takes to get rid of them. And if they really penetrate deeply within us, then we can’t remove them by ourselves unless we have the aid of saintly people who, by God’s grace, support us.’”

Let us cut off the beginnings of sin, lest sin take root in us. I ask you all to ponder the great miracle of the life of Saint Mary of Egypt and the special protection and guidance that she received from the Most Holy Theotokos. We live in a culture that is changing for the worse and we are all in need of protection and guidance from the Most Holy Mother of our God. I humbly entreat you to dedicate your children to her protection. Put an icon of the Theotokos in a prominent place in your home and lead your child there to pray before the icon and train them to ask her for help.

May God guide you all and give you wisdom in your personal choices regarding how you arrange your life so that you may find freedom in Christ and participation in His Grace, through the prayers of Saint Mary of Egypt and of all the saints who triumphed over sin in times past. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Construction continues on the entryway of the Cathedral. To donate to the Entryway Fund, please see the inside of the Newsletter or speak to someone at the pangari.
- Services during Great Lent will be live streamed at the following times:
 - Presanctified Liturgy every Wednesday at 7 PM and Friday at 7 AM
 - Salutation to the Theotokos every Friday at 6 PM
 - Divine Liturgy every Saturday at 7:30AM and Sunday at 8AM
- This year's Greek Independence Day Parade has been postponed. We will keep you informed of the date change.
- As we start the Lenten season, we know that Holy Week and Pascha will soon be here and we are reminded of the many needs of our Cathedral. Please help as much as you are able to offset the cost of the flowers needed for the Epitaphio of our Lord.

ENTRYWAY FUND DONATIONS

Please mark next to the item you would like to donate:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Column | \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steps | \$3,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platform (5 SF) | \$1,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Donation | _____ |

To donate- tear off this slip from the Newsletter and give it to a member of the office.

Please make checks payable to
"Cathedral of Saint Markella"