



704 W. Sam Houston
Pharr, TX 78577
Priest Silviu Bunta

Fr. Silviu: father.silviu@gmail.com, 317-362-2853
Office: stgeorgepharrtx@gmail.com, 956-781-6114

Week of March 17, 2024

Sunday, March 17

SUNDAY OF THE EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE — Ven. Alexios the Man of God (411). St. Patrick, Bishop of Armagh, Enlightener of Ireland (ca. 461). Tone 8.

9:00am Matins

10:00 The Divine Liturgy of St. John the Golden-mouth

11:45 Sunday school

12:00pm Fellowship

This Divine Liturgy's Hymns & Readings

Tone 8. Troparion of the resurrection

You descended from on high, O Merciful One! You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

Tone 8. Kontakion of the resurrection

By rising from the tomb, You raised the dead and resurrected Adam. Eve exults in Your Resurrection, and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One.

Tone 6. Kontakion from the Tridion

O Master, Teacher of wisdom, Bestower of virtue, Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor, strengthen and enlighten my heart! O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You: "Have mercy on me, a transgressor, O merciful Lord!"

Tone 8. Prokeimenon

Pray and make your vows before the Lord, our God.
In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel!

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

Tone 8. Alliluias

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

This week's schedule

Monday, March 18. Beginning of Lent. St. Nikolai of Zhicha (1956). St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem (386)

1:00-3:00pm Fr. Silviu office hours

Tuesday, March 19. Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria, and those with them at Rome (283).

Wednesday, March 20. The Holy Fathers who were slain at the Monastery of St. Savva (796).

3:00-5:00pm Fr. Silviu office hours

6:00-8:00pm Ninth Hour and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

Thursday, March 21. St. Jacob the Confessor, Bishop of Catania (8th-9th c.).

Friday, March 22. Ieromartyr Basil of Ancyra (362-363).

Saturday, March 23. St. Theodore the Recruit.

5:00-5:45pm Adult education class with Fr. Kyril

6:00-7:00pm Ninth Hour and Great Vespers

7:00-7:30pm Choir practice

Announcements

Lent begins tomorrow, March 18

Tomorrow, on March 18, Lent begins in the earnest and we give up all non-Lenten food. This also means that from now on until Pascha, we will have the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on weekdays, and also other Lenten services, and not the usual non-Lenten services (such as Daily Vespers). Do be mindful that the only way to have an experience of Lent in the church is to come to these weekday services. Saturdays and Sundays do not change during Lent, so if one comes to church only on Sunday, one will not have a true experience of Lent.

Bring an icon to church on March 24, the Sunday of Orthodoxy!

The first Sunday of Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy and is dedicated to the ultimate triumph of the veneration of icons at the council in 843. On this day we also have the special service (“Synodikon“) dedicated to this triumph, in which we profess our faith. During this service, as always, we will have a procession around the church while holding icons. So please make sure that you and all the members of your family bring an icon, of their patron saint or another favorite icon.

Vesperal Liturgy for the feast of the Annunciation on Monday, March 25

On Monday, March 25, we celebrate the great feast of the Annunciation. We will have the Divine Liturgy of St. John the Golden-mouth in the evening, at 6:00.

Quote of the Week

The problem is not that it is difficult to find the passions that are in us, but that we don't want to find them; we don't want to know they are there, or that we are under the sway of such things, since this would make us feel as if the ground had fallen away from under our feet. This is because we have become dependent on a false image of our self that we have, and we hold on to it tightly in order not to lose it. And when you hold on to it like that, there's no room left inside of you for anything else. Then we are left wondering: ‘Where is God?’ The answer is simple: By holding on so tightly to our sense of self, we choked God, strangled Him, and put Him to death. “But,” you might ask, “can God die?” He can die to us. He can be dead to each and every one of us. “But can He rise again?” Yes, when

you change your mind, when you repent. When you do this, God comes to life within you, He rises up within you, and then you celebrate the Resurrection of Christ: you are baptized again, born again, and you give Him the right to take away your passions and lead you to a place of freedom.

Of course, even though it is true that one can easily discover what his passions are, this does not mean that we are able to fight against them. This is not what St. Maximos says. Instead, he teaches that freedom from the passions is something granted to you by God's grace, which comes about when you abandon yourself to the Holy Spirit. God will enlighten you to understand that there is a snake concealed in the grass, but only He can remove it.

What, then, are you supposed to do? Change your mind, change the way you think. In a word, repent. I've seen how the inclination of my will deceives me; I've seen how my desires and attachments distort my view of the world. Now, however, I follow the will of another, and am doing exactly the opposite of what I used to do. This act of self-denial, which is the denial of my will, and in particular of the inclination of my will, is a basic presupposition for God to look upon us in mercy, and at some point to grant us the gift of freedom from the passions. And when we come to hate our lives in this world, and to bind ourselves to those around us in love, then God will grant us this gift. As a rule, though, we love ourselves, we prop up the idea of our self at all costs, and refuse to see and accept the truth about it. But by seeking to maintain our notion of ourselves we deny that we are in the grip of the passions. But if we do the opposite, we can make progress.

As we said, it is not difficult to know what your passion is. Pay attention to where your mind goes. Either it will go to your passion, or to Christ, or to something else. It is not possible for the human mind to be "nowhere." It has to grab on to something, latch on to something, and this "something" is what gives it a feeling of fullness and satisfaction, and this will either be God or something other than God

(from Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra, *The Mystical Marriage. Spiritual Life according to St. Maximos the Confessor*, Newwrome Press, 2018, pages 20-21)