

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

28 Cross Street - Auburn, New York, 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Pastor

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Office Hours Thursday from 2PM to 4PM or by Appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck

Reader Nathaniel Donch

Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels

Jr. Warden – Reverend Deacon David Donch

Secretary – Jane Kimak

Treasurer - Glenn Peters



Sunday, April 2, 2023

St Mary of Egypt



Saturday, April 1 – 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy

- 5:00 PM Vespers with Archbishop Michael

Sunday, April 2 – No Adult Education

-9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Michael

Lenten Luncheon with Archbishop Michael

Wednesday, April 5– 8:30 AM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Friday, April 7 – 5:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Saturday, April 8 – 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Lazarus Saturday

– 5:00 PM Vespers with Litya

Sunday, April 9 - Palm Sunday

-9:10 AM – Blessing of Pussy Willows and Palms

– 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

We welcome Archbishop Michael who is visiting our parish this weekend!

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to visit us.

Eis Polla Eti Dhespota

We are planning a Lenten Luncheon in the church hall after Divine Liturgy.

Thanks so much to all who worked so hard to make Pascha Breads this week. May God Bless You Richly for your dedication and hours of help!

Donations

\$70 in decorated candles for the Feast of Holy Annunciation by Dave Lupo in memory of the members of the Lupo-Grega-Villano

\$25 by Karen and Greg Schoonover in memory of Jim Roschick for the General Fund

\$2,500 in Memory of Walt and Jennie Marko for the General Fund by an Anonymous Donor

Please remember that Holy Confession is required of all Orthodox Christians at a minimum annually.

Confessions are available on Wednesday mornings at 8:00 AM and Friday afternoons at 4:15 PM before Presanctified Liturgies, Saturday mornings at 8:00 AM before Divine Liturgies, and 4:15 PM Saturday evenings before Vespers.

Please remember our Food Pantry Ministry. It is a great blessing to be able to help others especially during this time of Great Lent. May our generosity not end at Holy Pascha, but become a regular part of our lives!

Saint Plato the Confessor of Studion



Commemorated on [April 5](#)

Saint Plato was born in the year 735 into a pious Christian family of the parents, Sergius and Euphemia. Orphaned early on, the boy was taken to be raised by relatives, who gave him a fine education. When he grew up, he began life on his own. The saint occupied himself in the first years in the management of the property which his parents had left him upon their death. He was very temperate and hard-working and acquired great wealth by his toil. However, the future monk's heart blazed with love for Christ. He gave away all his property, set his servants free and withdrew into a monastery named Symbolon near Mount Olympos.

His prayerful zeal, love of work and geniality won him the love of the brethren. When he was not praying he copied service books, and compiled anthologies from the works of the holy Fathers.

When the head of the monastery Theoctistus died in 770, the brethren chose Saint Plato as igumen, even though he was only thirty-five years old. After the death of the emperor Constantine Kopronymos (775), Saint Plato went to Constantinople. Patriarch Paul wanted to make him Bishop of Nicomedia, or the igumen of one of the monasteries in Constantinople; but such was the saint's humility, that he hastened back to the Symbolon Monastery. In 782, he withdrew to the desolate place of Studion with his nephews Saints Theodore (November 11) and Joseph (January 26). On the mount they built a church in honor of the

holy Apostle John the Theologian, and founded a monastery, whose Superior was Saint Plato.

When Saint Tarasius and the empress Irene convened the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 787, Saint Plato took an active part in its work. Being learned in Holy Scripture, he successfully unmasked the error in the Iconoclast heresy and defended the veneration of holy icons. When Saint Plato approached old age, he transferred the administration of the monastery to Saint Theodore.

In 795 the emperor Constantine VI (78-797) forced his wife to become a nun, and he married one of his relatives, Theodota.

Even though the holy Patriarch Tarasius condemned this marriage, Joseph, a prominent priest of Constantinople, violated the Patriarch's prohibition and celebrated the marriage of the emperor. When they learned of this, Saints Plato and Theodore excommunicated the emperor from the Church and sent a letter about this to all the monks. The enraged emperor gave orders to lock Saint Plato in prison and to banish Saint Theodore to Thessalonica. Only after the death of the emperor in 797 did they receive their freedom. Saint Theodore settled in Constantinople and became igumen of the Studion monastery. Saint Plato lived as a simple monk at this monastery under obedience to his nephew.

When the new emperor Nikēphoros (802-811) returned the excommunicated priest Joseph to the Church on his own authority, Saints Plato and Theodore again came forward denouncing the unlawful activities of the emperor. For this the brave confessors were again subjected to punishment in 807. They were jailed for four years. Saint Plato was freed from imprisonment in 811 after the death of the emperor, and he returned to the Studion monastery.

He lived three more years at work and prayer, and departed to the Lord on Lazarus Saturday at age 79, on April 8, 814. Saint Plato is honored as a Confessor because of his fearless defense of the holy icons.

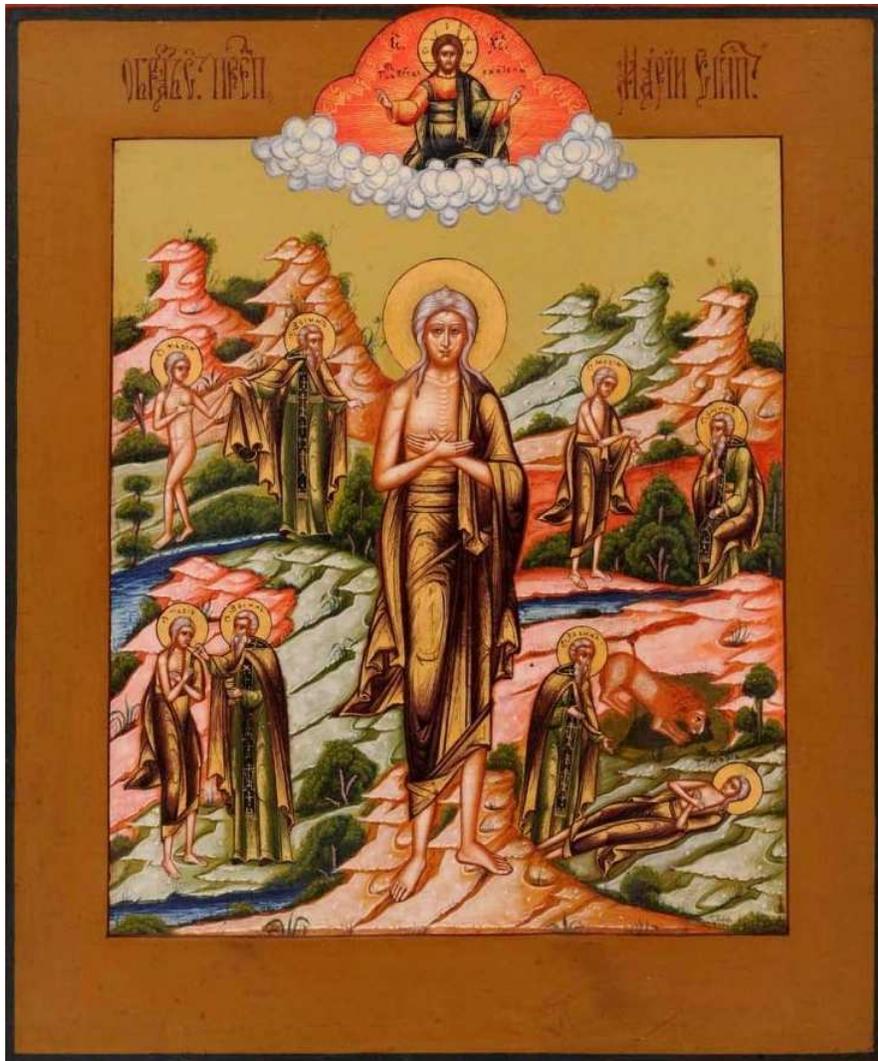


Learning Resolve from St. Mary of Egypt

Today we celebrate the memory of one of the greatest saints known to the history of the Church: Mary of Egypt. She spent her life not as an ordinary person, but as a highly spiritual one, as an angel in the flesh. Her life was beyond our comprehension: how can someone live for forty-seven years in the desert, perfectly alone and in silence, enduring terrible demonic temptations and the horror of death? The only kind of person who could take on such an ascetic struggle is one who loved Christ with all her being and was prepared to renounce even her natural human needs. And the Lord, beholding this extraordinary resolve, this extraordinary love, granted her everything needful. We do not understand how, spending forty-seven years in the desert, she did not perish from hunger, thirst, or disease. But the Lord strengthened her in this ascetic struggle by His grace-filled power.

St. Seraphim of Sarov was asked: “How do our times differ from those of the first Christians?” St. Seraphim replied that we do not share their resolve to follow Christ everywhere and at all times, to be with Him alone until the end. Here Mary of Egypt, embarking on this path after the most terrible fall that can be committed, rose to unattainable heights.

Today’s Gospel reading is about how Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus Christ to be his guest [Luke 7:36-50; reading for St. Mary]. When a sinful woman heard that the Savior had taken His place at table in Simon’s house, she brought a vessel with precious myrrh. Weeping, she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. She anointed His feet with the precious myrrh that was traditionally used in worship for anointing the head. She saw and understood Who was before her. But Simon and the others began to murmur: How can He allow a sinful woman to touch Him? But the Lord said: Why do you upbraid her, when you yourselves have not observed the elementary rules of hospitality? You have not washed your Guest’s feet to ease the heat and you have not anointed His head with ointment, but she has anointed My feet therewith. Since she loved much, her many sins are forgiven.



It was the same with Mary of Egypt: she so loved the Lord that He not only forgave her terrible and innumerable sins, but raised her to the heights of holiness. Like the Lord, she walked on water by God's power. Also like the Lord – Who loves everyone and all of humanity, Who cares for each one of us, Who strives to grant everything that is needful for salvation – she prayed for the entire world. It is said that the world coheres by the prayers of the righteous. And indeed, there are men of prayer who pray not only for those closest to them, but for everyone. They pray in such a way that they are ready to sacrifice everything, that the Lord might have mercy on us and save us. They put all their strength into prayerful entreaty for our sinful world. We differ from these saints in that we do not have that resolve, that love and selflessness, which the Holy Venerable Mary of Egypt expressed so clearly.

In these remaining days of Lent, let us try to make an effort to make up for what we have not managed to accomplish in the days of the fast that have gone by. Only one week is left before Holy Week begins. Each of us should resolutely battle against and defeat his sins: if you have quarreled, then do not quarrel; if you have judged, then do not judge – but if you do judge, then repent immediately; if you have been disobedient, then be obedient, obliging, and solicitous; if you have been offended, then do not take offence. Put all your effort into overcoming those sins from which we, and those around us, suffer so much. May God grant that, through the prayers of the Holy Venerable Mary of Egypt, the Lord might strengthen us in spiritual warfare! The Gospel reading concludes with these words: *Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace* (Luke 7: 50). May God grant that we be strengthened so that our faith might be saving! Amen.

Archpriest Alexander Iliashenko

