

Parish Offerings – Sunday of the Cross-Veneration — March 8, 2026

“Everyone must give according to whatever he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor 9:7)

Holy Ghost Church, McKees Rocks

Regular Offering (\$1,464) YP (\$2)	\$1,466.00
Holy Days (\$20) Eastern Europe Collection (\$715)	735.00
Votive Candles	136.50
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	\$2,337.50

Holy Ghost Church, North Side

Regular Offering (\$496) YP (\$1)	\$497.00
Eastern Europe Collection	20.00
Votive Candles	66.00

Church Attendance Last Week \$583.00

Sat (MR), 4:00 pm (33);

Sun., (MR) 9:00 am (49); (NS) 11:00 am (29)

3rd Great Fast Wed. — (MR) 7:00 pm (14); 3rd Great Fast Fri. — (NS) 6:00 pm (8)

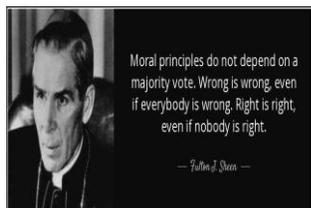
3rd Sunday of 5 Deanery Penitential Vespers – (McKees Rocks) 4:00 pm (88)



Valerian F. Szal
 238 Helen St.,
 Phone: (412) 331-9713
Michael P. Ferrell,
 Supervisor, CFSP
Our Family Still Serving Yours Since 1953



In Memory
+ Anna + Michael Sejka
+ Helen + Anna May Sejka
 By the Selka Family



North Side Parishioner
Alan Valeriano
(412) 638-3417
PA #172370



GCU offers Insurance and Annuity Benefits greater than most financial institutions. Info call Randy (412) 973-1085

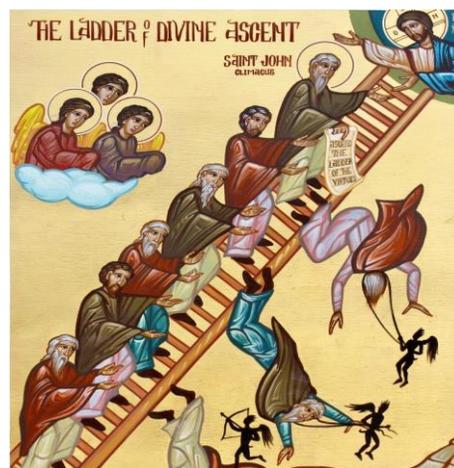


HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

225 OLIVIA STREET
 1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE

McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136
 PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

THE 4th SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
St. John Climacus Sunday — March 15, 2026



Catholics of the Ruthenian – Byzantine Rite in full communion with the Pope of Rome

The Very Reverend Father Frank A. Firko
 Pastor, Administrator & Protopresbyter
The Reverend Deacon Michael Meaders (NS)

Rectory: (412) 771-3324; Church Fax: (412) 331-1870
 MR School Hall Kitchen: (412) 331-5155

Web-site: www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org – E-Mail: ffaf334@verizon.net

SUNDAY RADIO (9:00 am WEDO 810 AM) & INTERNET DIVINE LITURGY

Sunday Divine Liturgies Saturday (MR) 4:00 pm Sunday (MR) 9:00 am Holy Ghost (NS) 11:00 a.m.	Holy Day Divine Liturgies w/Great Vespers (Oblig) (MR): 7:00 pm Holy Day (MR) 9:00 am; (NS) 6:00 pm	Daily Divine Liturgy M-F (MR) 8:00 am Sat. (NS) 9:00 am.
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Holy Mystery of Reconciliation: Sat (MR): 3:15 to 3:40 pm & Sun (MR) 8:15 to 8:40 am.; (NS) 10:30 am

Holy Mysteries of Initiation: Contact Church Office for Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist.

Holy Mysteries of Anointing: Ask especially prior to surgery or any other time.

d. Personal Care & Hospitalized: Phone Church Office ASAP.

Sponsor of Christian Initiation: Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

Religious Education Classes: (MR) Coordinator: Subdeacon Luke Iyengar (412) 863-3285.

Carpatho-Rusyn Radio: Internet Sunday afternoon: Rusyn.fm at 3:30 pm. Archive: c-rsmedia.org.

Social Hall Rental: (MR) Contact Church Office.

New & Returning Parishioners: Welcome! Please register by phoning the Church Office.

Remember the Church in Your Will: Please be so kind to remember the Church in your last will and testament. This helps to secure its future & a Byzantine Catholic witness to all!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

March 15, 2026

Seasonal Christian Greeting: Volume XIV, Number 11

Glory to Jesus Christ! — Glory Forever!
Slava Isusu Christ! — Slava na Viki!



Liturgical Services for the Week

Date Time Intention Requested By

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

4th Sunday of The Great Fast — St. Basil Divine Liturgy

SUN., Mar 15 (28) 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes

11:00 a.m. (NS) + Sally + Andy Staskus Niece: Joan Senchyshyn

4:00 p.m. Deanery Penitential Vespers at SS. Peter & Paul Church, Braddock preceded by the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation by a Deanery Priest @ 3:30 p.m.

Mon, Mar 16 (29) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Elizabeth Poznak (birthday & 40th day) Anonymous

Tue, Mar 17 (30) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Mary + Anna Hrivnak Grandson & Nephew: Fr. Firko

REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat)

Wed, Mar 18 (31) 8:00 a.m. (MR) 1st & 3rd Penitential Greatfast Hours

6:30 p.m. (MR) Sorrowful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary

7:00 p.m. (MR) Presanctified Divine Liturgy



Penitential Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Thrs, Mar 19 (32) 8:00 a.m. (MR) Matins with Great Metanies

***1:00 p.m. (MR) + Monsignor Peter P. Tay Nephew: Jen0 & Nancy Lecci

REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat)

Fri, Mar 20 (33) 8:00 a.m. (MR) 6th & 9th Penitential Greatfast Hours

6:00 p.m. (NS) Presanctified Divine Liturgy w/Akathist



AKATHISTOS SATURDAY

Sat, Mar 21 (34) *** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Louise Georgevich Family

(1st ann of passing 2/27)

Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy St. Mary of Egypt Sunday — Fifth Sunday of The Great Fast

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Chester + Helen + Steven Rawski Niece-Cousin: Mike, Leyte & Mike

ST. MARY OF EGYPT SUNDAY

5th Sunday of The Great Fast — St. Basil Divine Liturgy

SUN., Mar 22 (35) 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes

11:00 a.m. (NS) + Michael Spontak (60th ann of passing 3/16) Grandson: Robert

4:00 p.m. Deanery Penitential Vespers at St. Pius X Church, Pittsburgh preceded by the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation by a Deanery Priest @ 3:30 p.m.

General Announcements

All Birthdays will be published in SOT each week so that prayers may be offered on these special occasions. Please advise the Church office if your special day does not appear or if you wish your name and date not to be published.

Note: Capitalized Names designate North Side parishioners

Mar 21 – Kenneth Krempasky.

Pray For the Ill, Infirm & Shut-ins of Our Parishes

HOME: Ted Babin, Margaret Belunas, Dolores & William Boras, Susan Fejka, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Michael Kachuta, Steve Kosko, Theresa Kundrat, ARLENE LATTA, KIRK LATTA, Monica Lemesh, BETTY LORINC, DEACON MICHAEL & CINDY MEADERS, John W. Oslick, Kurt Perschy, Cindy Saber, Anita Wolsko.

MAPLEWOOD PC HOME (461 Maplewood Ave. Ambridge, PA 15003): Doris Naughton.

HIGHLAND PARK CARE CENTER (745 North Highland Ave., Pgh, PA 15206): Linda Reiger.

THE RESIDENCE AT WILLOW LANE (30 Heckel Rd., McKees Rocks, PA 15136): Rosemarie Nazak.

CEDAR HILL REHAB CENTER (951 Broadhead Rd., Coraopolis, 15108): Nancy Wauthier

HIGHLAND HILLS POST ACUTE (1105 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237): Bernice Herrick.

FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE SOUTH HILLS (1290 Boyce Rd., Upper St. Clair, 15241): Bea Stempkowski.

UPMC PASSAVANT (9100 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237): PAUL BODNARCHUCK

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. I've been forgiven in confession of certain sins but find myself dwelling on them. Should I confess them again? **A. Answer by Catholic Apologist:** If you feel compelled to confess these absolved sins anew because you experience renewed feelings of guilt, we encourage you not to. Through the ministry of his priest, God has indeed absolved you of these past sins. However, absolution doesn't necessarily mean you will automatically be freed from all of the pain and guilt associated with those sins. When that pain and guilt resurfaces again, simply pray to God that you renew your sorrow for these sins, thank him for his forgiveness, and ask his continued help in your moving forward in the right direction. And persist in thanking God for his absolution when bad memories resurface. Again, the reality of God's forgiveness of our sins is not necessarily accompanied by an automatic and permanent feeling of peace. But with the help of God, his priests and related sacramental graces, and the help of others, you will in time more deeply experience his peace (see John 14:27).

This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

Continue to burn before the real presence of our Lord, God & Savior Jesus

March 15 — March 21, 2026

(MR): **In memory of Fr. Michael G. Pipi**

offered by Fr. Firko

(NS): **In memory of Mary & Anna Hrivnak**

(MR) FEW AVAILABLE FOR 2026 offered by Grandson & Nephew: Fr. Firko (NS) FEW AVAILABLE 2026



General Announcements

McKees Rocks & North Side

(MR) **GRATITUDE EXTENDED** — A very BIG thank you is extended to all who were present for the 3rd Deanery Penitential Vespers that our Parish hosted last Sunday afternoon. It was the most attended liturgical celebration the Deanery had thus far. A special thank you goes out to all those who put together the meatless soups and bread and served the meals to our guests. They were especially appreciated by all in attendance. Our Holy Ghost Parish came through again in feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty. God bless you for your sacrifice!



(MR) **PIROHI PROJECT RESUMES THIS WEEK** — Our Pirohi Project continues orders/ sales this week. The Friday Sales are **Mar. 20, & 27 (no sales on Great Friday)**. We would appreciate additional volunteers especially pinchers! **Remember, all orders must be placed on the Wednesday prior to the sale date between 9:00 a.m. & 12:00 noon. Call: (412) 331-5155. If you can place advertising posters, please take a few by the Church entrances. It will be greatly appreciated!**



BYZAN-TEEN CANDY SALES CONTINUE — Our Byzan-TEEN Youth Group is continuing its fund-raising event to prepare for the 2026 Youth Rally in Cleveland. Sarris Candy bars are available following the weekend Divine Liturgies this week for **\$2.00 (Carmel - \$3.00)**. Also, you may purchase candy from their website: www.sarriscandies.com and click on the **Fundraising** tab. **Type in the Group ID # 10-**



3617. The Organization name is Holy Ghost Youth Group. A packaging fee will be applied. Let's assist them by purchasing candy bars! Last day is March 22.

(MR) & (NS) **PUSSY WILLOWS CONTINUE TO BE NEEDED FOR PALM SUNDAY** — We are going to need Pussy Willows for our Palm (Flowery) Celebration on the **weekend of March 28-29**. Hopefully they will be ready to be harvested. We could always use additional single branches app. 12" in length. If you can help us out, please phone the MR Church Office. **Please do not purchase them.** They are expensive and usually are not nice looking as wild branches grow to be.

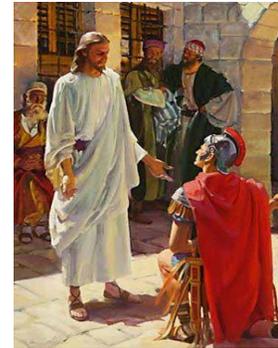


(MR) & (NS) **YOUTH** (7th grade through High School) and **YOUNG ADULTS** (18-39 y.o., single, married) to **CONVERGE! 2026 – the Annual Gathering of Teens and Young Adults in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh**. If you are wondering why we call this event **CONVERGE!** come and join us—we will talk more about it during the event! The gathering will take place at **Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church** (104 Shaffer Street, **Sykesville, PA 16865**) on **Saturday, April 11, 2026**. The day will begin with the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Archbishop Metropolitan William C. Skurla, followed by lunch, a keynote address, and separate activities and interactive sessions for teens and young adults. The registration fee is \$5.00.

Fourth Sunday of THE GREAT FAST

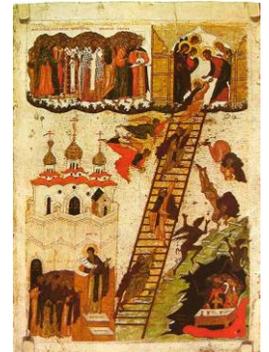
Encouragement Sunday: Necessity of Prayer & Fasting (Mk. 9: 17-31)

"I do believe! Help my lack of trust!" The healing of the possessed boy is one of the longest miracle stories in Mark's Gospel (only the expulsion of the demons in 5:1-20 is longer). It is also one of the more detailed stories, becoming a bit complicated in the repetition of some of those details (e.g., in v. 22 the father of the boy tells Jesus what he has *already* told him in v. 18; the crowd gathers twice within the same story. Despite its length and detail, there is a very clear and simple message that Mark wishes to convey: **Anything is possible to one who trusts, and trust is deepened by prayer and fasting!** Although Jesus is the one who heals the boy, it is the father's profession of faith that Mark holds up for his readers to imitate. Even in the most desperate moments, when prayer and trust seem useless, Jesus invites his followers to go one step further and pray like the boy's father: "I do believe! Help my lack of trust!"



The Ladder of Divine Ascent

The **Sunday of St. John of the Ladder (Climacus)** is the fourth Sunday of The Great Fast It commemorates St. John Climacus (+ 649 a.d.), the author of the work The Ladder of Divine Ascent. Each of the Sundays of The Great Fast has a special theme. This Sunday's theme is St John's witness to the real spiritual struggle needed for entrance into God's Kingdom. It also is **encouragement** for the faithful to keep the goal of their Lenten efforts, for according to the Lord, *only "he who endures to the end will be saved"* (Mt 24:13). The Ladder describes how to raise one's soul and body to God through the acquisition of ascetic virtues. Climacus uses the analogy of Jacob's Ladder as the framework for his spiritual teaching. Each chapter is referred to as a "step", and deals with a separate spiritual subject. There are thirty Steps of the ladder, which correspond to the age of Jesus at his baptism and the beginning of his earthly ministry. Within the general framework of a 'ladder', Climacus' book falls into three sections. The first seven Steps concern general virtues necessary for the ascetic life, while the next nineteen (Steps 8-26) give instruction on overcoming vices and building their corresponding virtues. The final four Steps concern the higher virtues toward which the ascetic life aims. The final rung of the ladder—beyond prayer, stillness, and even dispassion is love. **Do you know where this icon is in our (MR) Church?**



**LENT IS A TIME TO ATTEND CHURCH MORE OFTEN!
IT'S A GREAT SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT!!**

Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 18.... LENTEN WEDNESDAY: (MR) 1st & 3rd Greatfast Hours @ 8:00 am; (MR) Rosary @ 6:30 pm; (MR) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 7:00 pm
March 19 St. Andrew of Crete Penitentiary Can w/Great Metanies (MR) 8:00 a.m.; DL @ 1:00 p.m.
March 20 LENTEN FRIDAY: (MR) 6th & 9th Greatfast Hours @ 8:00 am; (NS) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 6:00 p.m. followed by the chanting of the Akathistos Hymn
March 21... Akathistos Saturday imploring aid of the Theotokos in our ascetical practices (MR) 9:00 a.m.
March 25 Feast of the Annunciation — (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 6:00 p.m.
March 27.....**The Final Day of The Holy & Great 40 Days Fast & Final Day of Pirohi Sales.**
.....**Final Lenten FRIDAY:** (MR) 8:00 a.m. 6th & 9th Penitential Greatfast Hours.
..... (NS) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 6:00 p.m.
March 28 Lazarus Saturday (MR) 9:00 a.m.
March 29 Palm (Flowery) Sunday — All weekend Divine Liturgies commence 15 minutes earlier for Solemn Blessing of Palms & Pussy Willows.
... Passion Vespers inaugurating Holy Week @ 2:00 p.m. followed by Confessions.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE (March 30 through April 4)

Great & Holy Monday (MR) Bridegroom Matins @ 8:00 a.m. & (MR) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 7:00 p.m.
Great & Holy Tuesday (MR) Bridegroom Matins @ 8:00 a.m. & (NS) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 6:00 p.m.
..... (NS) Confessions @ 6:30 a.m.
Great & Holy Wednesday (MR) Bridegroom Matins @ 8:00 a.m. & (MR) Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 7:00 p.m.
Great & Holy Thursday ... (MR) Betrayal Matins @ 8:00 a.m. & (MR) Vespers & St. Basil Divine Liturgy @ 7:00 p.m.
Great & Holy Friday . (MR) Passion Matins w/12 Passion Gospels @ 8:00 a.m. — (MR) Royal Hours @ 12:00 noon

(MR) CHURCH WILL REMAIN OPEN FROM 12:00 NOON UNTIL 3:00 pm FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

(NS) Entombment Vespers w/Procession @ 5:00 p.m. & (MR) Entombment Vespers w/Procession @ 7:00 p.m.

ALL NIGHT VIGIL BEFORE THE TOMB (Please Signup)

Great & Holy Saturday (MR) Sepulcher (Jerusalem) Matins w/Procession @ 8:00 a.m. — (MR) Great Vespers w/St. Basil Vigil Divine Liturgy @ 2:00 p.m.

Great & Holy Sat. Evening (NS) Resurrectional Matins & Solemn Blessing of Paschal Foods @ 5:45 p.m. — (MR) Resurrectional Matins & Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom followed by Solemn Blessing of Paschal Foods @ 7:45 p.m.

APRIL 5 – EASTER SUNDAY — THE RADIANT RESURRECTION — THE GREAT DAY
(MR) 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom followed by Solemn Blessing of Paschal Foods — (NS) 11:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom followed by Solemn Blessing of Paschal Foods.

Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary: Wednesdays during the Lenten Season (MR) @ 6:30 p.m. Join us in this Byzantine-Ruthenian Tradition to the Theotokos!

PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGIES this week — (MR) Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.; (NS) Friday @ 6:00 p.m.

SPECIAL LITURGICAL SERVICES THIS WEEK

THE GREAT CANON OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE W/GREAT METANIES

The Matinal (Morning) Prayer of the Church containing the Canon of this beloved Saint of the Byzantine Church is celebrated on the 5th Thursday of The Great Fast. It is a poetic (cont.) lamentation of a Christian soul who discovers how much God loves him. Several Great Metanies are made while saying **“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me!”** The

General Announcements

The beautiful liturgical service assists us in expressing our love to God and sorrow for our sins. The soul is purified in this penitential service. Come and join us as we pray together glorifying our Great & Holy Triune God.



REMAINING TWO SUNDAYS: SCHEDULE OF THE DEANERY PENITENTIAL VESPERS — *The Great Fast Deanery Vespers* are celebrated, each Sunday during The Great Fast Season at 4:00 p.m. preceded by The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation @ 3:30 p.m. The remaining churches are hosting this liturgical event: **(4) March 15 – Saints Peter & Paul Church, Braddock, PA – Homilist: Very Reverend Fr. Frank A. Firko; and (5) March 22 – Saint Pjisi X, Pittsburgh, PA.**



This is a great opportunity to exercise a penitential practice of prayer & self-denial if you wish to take it upon yourselves. Please make an effort to join us. Fellowship of meatless soups and bread will be served following the liturgical services.

VIGIL TOMB WATCH SIGNUP SHEET NOW READY — It has always been a long-standing custom that following the Entombment Vespers on Holy & Great Friday, the Church remains open up to the Resurrectional Matins Holy Saturday evening to venerate the Most Pure Body of Our Savior in the Tomb. In today's environs, we must be very careful that the Church is protected from vandalism. The McKees Rocks Parish will attempt to carry on this beautiful and solemn practice IF we can get enough of people to keep vigil before the Tomb, especially throughout the night. A special poster will soon be available for signatures. This vigil is open and encourages both Parishes to participate. If you select a time slot, and someone else has signed, you may also sign in the same slot. It would be nice if a few individuals and/or families would share the same slots for safety reasons. If there aren't enough to register throughout the night, the Church will discontinue this tradition. So, please sign early so that we may know if this activity will become a true reality.

MEN NEEDED TO HOLD CANDLES DURING PASSION GOSPELS — On Holy & Great Friday morning during the Passion Matins w/reading of the Twelve Gospels, the tradition of the Church always had 12 men holding candles as the Passion of the Lord Jesus was being proclaimed. We sure would like to keep this meaningful and sacred custom alive. It is open to all men of both parishes to participate. **Please register your name on the special sheet in the MR side vestibule or phone the Church Office.** Let us honor Our Lord for all that He endured for our salvation and redemption. This demonstrates the love for Our Lord Who suffered the Passion & gave His Life for us!

