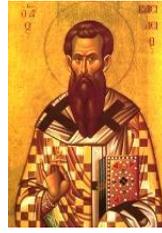


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
901 Sherman Drive, Utica New York 13501
Phone 315.732.4662 Email stbasilutica@gmail.com
Website www.stbasilutica.org



SUNDAY OF THE MEAT FARE
Saturday, February 6 & Sunday, February 7, 2021

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**WEEKLY SERVICES**

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday 8:30AM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM  
**Matins/Orthos:** Sunday 9:00AM  
**Holy Confession:** Monday 4-6PM  
**Vespers:** Saturday 3:00PM  
**Holy Rosary:** Sunday 10:30AM

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, John & Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**WEEKLY COLLECTIONS. THANK YOU!**

Weekly Collection Jan 30/31: \$ 400.00      Fuel Contribution: \$ 40.00

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SPIRITUAL ADVICE OF THE DAY

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9) “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

**THIS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Janet George  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Janet George  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Frank Calabrese  
† **Father Julien Eliane, 10<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Robert Lalli

**NEXT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Kevin & Ameena Copeland  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Ralph & Denise Fusco  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Francis Roy  
† **Abdallah Ghryeb**, By Hesham & Najwa Marji

**THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD TO THE HOLY TEMPLE**

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE DOWN your Christmas tree? In our society some people throw theirs out on December 26! In the Christian East, however, many wait until today, the feast of the Infant Christ’s Encounter with His people in the persons of Simeon and Anna. This feast celebrates the event recorded in St Luke’s Gospel: “*Now when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*” (Lk 2:22). While there they meet Simeon and Anna who recognize God’s decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah’s coming.

The passage brings several questions to mind.

**1 – What is “her purification”?** According to the Torah, “*The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over’*” (Lev 12:1-4).

In Jewish law any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood – the carrier of life – makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways.

**2 – Why is a child “presented to the Lord”?** Again, according to the Torah, “*Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem*” (Ex 13:13). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that everything comes from Him and belongs to Him. Children could be “redeemed” by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

**3 – Why do we stress “the Encounter”?** The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God’s saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, “*it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ*” (Lk 2:26). He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Canticle of Simeon: “*Now You shall dismiss Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word in peace; Because my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel*” (Lk 2:29-32). We repeat this canticle at the end of every day (Vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy as well as when any child is presented in church 40 days after its birth.

Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment “*and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem*” (Lk 2:38).

This Encounter celebrated the coming of the One for whom the Jews longed, the Messiah, and recognized that the Gentiles too would be enlightened through Him.

**Our Celebration of This Feast:** As might be expected, this feast originated in Jerusalem where the event it remembers took place. It likely began in the era of St Constantine the Great who sponsored the development of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Sermons on this Feast by the bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407) have come down to us.

Egeria, the Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, wrote about witnessing this feast: “The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honor, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter.

(Feb 2015 Leaflets)