

APRIL 6, 2014

ST. SPIRIDON ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

400 Yale Ave., Seattle, WA 98109



WEEKLY PUBLICATION

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Tone 8. St Mary of Egypt. St. Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople (582). St. Methodius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Archbishop of Moravia and Enlightener of the Slavs (885). St. Platonida (Platonis) of Nisibis (Syria—308). 120 Martyrs of Persia (344-347). Martyrs Jeremiah and Archilias the Presbyter (3rd c.).

ON THE LIFE OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

“Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation? But in thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 2.)

During Great Lent we remember and venerate Saint Mary of Egypt both on April 1 and the Fifth Sunday of Lent. With the Canon of St. Andrew, read in many churches during the first and fifth weeks of Lent, we uphold her as an icon of repentance, an example for every Orthodox Christian to emulate. Yet for many years, she lived a life of bondage to sexual passions. If St. Mary of Egypt were alive today, would we welcome her into our assembly?

“I confess to Thee, O Savior, the sins I have committed, the



wounds of my soul and body, which murderous thoughts, like thieves, have inflicted inwardly upon me.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 1, vs. 12.)

While we don’t know about the very early years of her life, we do know that she lost her

virginity at age twelve and ran away from home. For the next seventeen years she was a slave to her insatiable appetite for sexual perversions, including sexual encounters with “young men,” even against their will. This sounds very much like a victim of pedophilia who recoils and continues in her victimization by taking on the role of a predator herself, victimizing others in the process. Many adults who fall into the bondage of pedophilia are victims of sexual abuse as children. In a futile attempt to reconcile the horror of their own victimization, they try to regain control of their lives through exploitation, continuing to inflict wounds on their own souls and bodies.

“Like David, I have fallen into lust and I am covered in filth; but wash me clean, O Savior, by my tears.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 2, vs. 54.) “O Lady, thou hast brought forth our Joy: Grant me the spirit of mourning that in the coming Day of Judgment I may be comforted by God.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 9, vs. 327.) “For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

For seventeen years, Saint Mary of Egypt lived a lifestyle that isolated her from the community and God. Covered with filth amassed over the years, her heart yet longed for union with God. People in prison feel ostracized too, isolated from God and society, as they sit in shame in prison cells longing for the same tears of repentance that lead to joy and reconciliation.

“Christ became man, calling to repentance thieves and harlots. Repent, my soul: the door of the kingdom is already open, and Pharisees and publicans and adulterers pass through it before thee, changing their lives.” (The Canon of St. Andrew, Canticle 9, Vs. 342)

The healing of the venerable Saint Mary of Egypt was not instantaneous but required a rigorous and lengthy spiritual journey. Being led by the Holy Spirit, she retreated to the wilderness where she lived the life of a hermit for seventeen years, seeking freedom from bondage of the passions. She spent a further thirty years in the wilderness having obtained the true gifts of repentance, healing and freedom from the enslavement of sin.

Tone 8 Troparion *(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 Troparion *(St Mary of Egypt)*

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother,
for you took up the Cross and followed Christ.
By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes
away;
but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.//
Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with the
angels.

Tone 8 **Kontakion** *(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 3 Kontakion *(St Mary of Egypt)*

Having been a sinful woman,
you became through repentance a bride of Christ.
Having attained angelic life,
you defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross.//
Therefore O most glorious Mary, you are a bride of the
Kingdom.

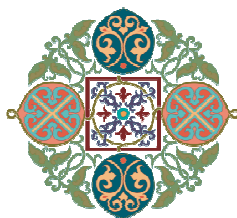
If you would like to become a member of St. Spiridon's Brotherhood
you may sign up with Fr. Yuri via email: iereiyuri@saintspiridon.org

During Great Lent, each of us seeks repentance, turning from our own vices and passions and setting our minds and hearts on God. Through the intercessions of the most Holy Theotokos, God grants us the gift of compunction to turn from our wounds and sins to find healing and comfort in Him.

redemption. During the remainder of this Lenten journey, may we pray to be freed from our imprisonment to the passions that enslave us. Let us also pray for strength for all of our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned in penitentiaries, for their struggles and their journeys to repentance.

Let us remember Saint Mary of Egypt and her wonderful

Patrick Tutella, Chaplain



LOOKING AHEAD

<i>Tonight:</i>	5:00pm Vespers @ St. Demetrios
<i>Wednesday April 9:</i>	6:30pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
<i>Friday April 11:</i>	9:00am 9th Hour 9:30am Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
<i>Saturday, April 12:</i>	9:30am Liturgy 6:00pm General Panikhida 6:30pm Vespers
<i>Sunday, April 13:</i>	9:30am Liturgy 6:30pm Matins