

5 2nd Street  
Herminie, PA 15637  
<http://pokrov.iksnazul.com/>

Cantor  
Joseph Luzanski

Liturgical Schedule

**Divine Liturgy**

Sunday: 8:30 am  
Holyday: 9:00 am

Confessions

One half hour before  
the divine liturgy or  
by appointment

Served By

Father Vasyl Yakubych  
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**WATCH THE PUSSY WILLOWS !!**

With the warm weather we have been having  
the pussy willows may bloom too early.

They can be cut and stored in a cool dark place  
until Palm Sunday.

**Second Sunday of the Great Fast / St Gregory  
Palamas**

Previously, Churches using the Byzantine rite  
celebrated St. Polycarp of Smyrna, who was  
ordained bishop by St. John the Evangelist, on the  
second Sunday of Lent. That commemoration has  
been replaced by that of St. Gregory Palamas, the  
famous defender of hesychasm in the 14th century.  
Replacing such an ancient commemoration as that of  
Polycarp gives us an idea of just how important the  
hesychast controversy was.

The monks of Mount Athos had been condemned  
by the monk Barlaam, an Italo-Greek monk from  
Calabria in Italy, who favored education over  
contemplation, and who emphasized that God is

**Second Sunday of the Great Fast  
(St. Gregory Palamas)**

**Tone 6**

St. Conon Martyr, a poor Christian gardener of  
Nazareth in Galilee, who in Pamphylia (Aisa  
Minor), or on the Island of Cyprus, was martyred  
A.D. 250 by Governor Pomplius. With nails driven  
through his ankles, he was forced to run before a  
chariot till he fell dying to be crushed under its  
wheels.

Fasts & Feasts

**March**

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| March 11 | Third All Souls Saturday   |
| March 12 | Third Sunday of the Great Fast<br>(Veneration of the Cross)                                    |
| March 18 | Fourth All-Souls Saturday  |
| March 19 | Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast<br>(St. John of the Ladder)                                    |
| March 25 | Annunciation of the Theotokos<br>Solemn Holy Day / No Fast-<br>ing                             |
| March 26 | Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast<br>(St. Mary of Egypt), Synaxis of the<br>Archangel Gabriel     |
| March 31 | End of the Holy Forty Day's Fast (at<br>sunset or after Vespers or<br>Presanctified on Friday) |

**Divine Liturgy Intention**

Living & deceased members of the parish.

**Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts**

Wednesday @ 9 am

unknowable in this life. The monks taught hesychasm, using the Jesus Prayer and certain body postures or breathing, so as to draw very close to God, and for some, to see the Divine Light in this lifetime. In this, they were following the practices of the Desert Fathers of old. The Jesus Prayer is one of the most ancient in the Church: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

The monks recommended certain breathing techniques, or positions of the body, while reciting the Prayer. This rigid use of the body postures was repeatedly – and rightly condemned by many saints and writers as people could end making the physical position and breathing more important than the Prayer. Gregory himself emphasized that such physical practices had to be done only with the guidance of a true spiritual elder.

The Jesus Prayer, so central in our spirituality, when used well, has a profound effect so that: He who is in prayer experiences the fullness of the divine presence, of Life Itself, of Life abundant and unfathomable, then his own life strikes him as a tiny drop in comparison to the boundless ocean. That is what the righteous and long-suffering Job felt as he attained the height of spiritual perfection. He felt himself to be dust and ashes; he felt that he was melting and vanishing as does snow when struck by the sun's burning rays (Job 42:6) (Orthodox Life, vol. 28, no. 5, 1978).

Further, St. Gregory taught that the mystic, even without education, could have greater knowledge of God than others, but he made the crucial distinction between energies of God, and the essence of God. Essentially, God can not be known in His essence by any human, but His energies (what God sends forth in His creation), can be known. In this, he quoted the ancient Cappadocian Fathers. These energies are mediated to mankind. That is, how God acts in forgiving and spiritual healing. Grace is the working of God himself, not a created substance of any kind. As for the body postures and breathing, since the person is body and soul, uses of the body can affect the soul. In the end, he wrote that hesychasm teaches that one can see the Light of God, but only with repentance, interior conversion, constant prayer,

and spiritual direction. This invitation to union with God is open to every Christian.

### St Polycarp of Smyrna

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (modern Izmir), disciple of Saint John the Apostle and friend of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, was a revered Christian leader during the first half of the second century. He was baptized as an infant circa 66 AD, and died in the arena as a martyr on February 23, 156 AD, at the age of 86. The Asia Minor Churches recognized Polycarp's leadership by choosing him as a representative to discuss with Pope Anicetus the date of the Easter celebration in Rome—a major controversy in the early Church. Only one of the many letters written by Polycarp has been preserved, the one he wrote to the Church of Philippi in Macedonia. He was arrested during the persecution under Emperor Antoninus Pius and condemned to being burned at the stake for not worshipping the emperor and the pagan gods. To the surprise of the crowds, the flames did not harm him, but rather formed an arch around his body. Finally, he was killed by a stab to his heart with a dagger. The proconsul ordered the saint's body burned, but his remaining bones were preserved as relics. The "Acts" of Polycarp's martyrdom were sent around the Empire's churches and are the earliest preserved, fully reliable account of a Christian martyr's death. Before his martyrdom, Polycarp spoke this prayer, "Lord God Almighty, Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and powers, of the whole creation and of the whole race of the righteous who live in your sight, I bless you, for having made me worthy of this day and hour, I bless you, because I may have a part, along with the martyrs, in the chalice of your Christ, to resurrection in eternal life, resurrection both of soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. For this and for all benefits I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom be to you with him and the Holy Spirit glory, now and for all the ages to come. Amen."