

SAINTS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, February 23

Saint Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr

Friday, February 27

Saint Gregory of Narek, Abbot & Doctor of the Church

The Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the world's oldest Christian communities, originated from the teachings of Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, who evangelized Armenia in the first century AD. Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its religion in 301 after St. Gregory the Illuminator converted the son of King Khosrov.

This year's materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was put together by the Armenian Apostolic Church.

ST. GREGORY OF NAREK is revered as one of the greatest figures of medieval Armenian religious thought and literature. Born in the city of Narek about 950 A.D., he came from a line of scholars and churchmen.

Gregory received his education under the guidance of his father, Bishop Khosrov, author of the earliest commentary on the Divine Liturgy, and from Anania Vartabed, founder and abbot of Narek Monastery. Gregory and his two brothers entered monastic life at an early age. Gregory excelled in music, astronomy, geometry, mathematics, literature, and theology.

Gregory became a priest at 25 and dedicated himself to God. He lived most of his life in the monastery of Narek, where he taught at the monastic school. Gregory began his writings with a commentary on the "Song of Songs," commissioned by an Armenian prince. Despite reservations he was too young for the task, the commentary became famous for its clarity of thought and language, and its excellence of theological presentation.

Gregory also wrote a number of famous letters, sharagans (liturgical hymns), treasures, odes, melodies, and discourses. Many of his prayers are included in the Divine Liturgy celebrated each Sunday in Armenian Churches around the world.

His *Book of Lamentations* is considered St. Gregory's masterpiece. Comprised of 95 prayers, each of which is titled "Conversation with God from the depth of the heart." A central theme is man's separation from God, and his quest to reunite with Him. St. Gregory described his work: "Its letters like my body, its message like my soul." He called it an "encyclopedia of prayer for all nations." He hoped it would serve as a guide to prayer for people around the world. After the advent of movable type, the book was published in Marseille in 1673; it has been translated into

at least 30 languages. In 2015, Pope Francis declared th medieval mystic St. Gregory of Narek a Doctor of the Church, one of 36 people recognized for their theological and spiritual contributions.

Sources: <https://stgregoryofnarek.org/our-patron-saint-st-gregory-of-narek/>; <https://www.simplycatholic.com/st-gregory-of-narek/>; <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/resources-for-the-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2026>; https://www.saintforaminute.com/saints/saint_gregory_the_illuminator

Accept with sweetness
almighty Lord my bitter
prayers.

Look with pity upon my
mournful face.

Dispel, all-bestowing God,
my shameful sadness.

Lift, merciful God, my un-
bearable burden.

For you are glorified by all
creation, forever and ever.
Amen.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

We are blessed to have you worship with us as we nurture each other in faith. While visiting our community, we humbly ask you to consider investing in our parish offertory and Diocesan Appeal to ensure our parish and Diocese can be your partner in faith.

DIOCESAN APPEAL

As you plan your budget, consider a pledge. Use your bank's Bill Pay for auto-payments or use envelopes on the back table.

<https://thediocesanappeal.org/>

CURRENT STATUS: \$4,593 / GOAL: \$6,379



Holy Cross Parish

FEBRUARY 22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent, A

Genesis 2:7–9, 3: 1–7

Psalms 51

Romans 5:12–19

Matthew 4:1–11

A welcoming, vibrant community committed to growing in and sharing the love of Jesus

Jesus our peace, by the Holy Spirit you always come to us. And in the deepest part of our soul, there is the wonder of a presence. Our prayer may be quite poor, but you pray with us. —Brother Roger of Taizé

ENTERING THE DESERT: INNER LIBERATION IN LENT

The ancient path of the desert mystics invites us to disrupt the patterns of ego and empire through the courageous pursuit of inner liberation. Throughout Christian history, mystics and spiritual seekers have led radical movements of departure, leaving behind the ways of the world for the desert in search of union with God... They sought an interior martyrdom... [and] wanted to learn how to die to aspects of themselves that were preventing them from experiencing an intimate relationship with Jesus in a mystical dimension.

One thread woven through such movements is the search for inner liberation and the cultivation of this freedom through contemplative spiritual practices. The search itself (and the practices that help to heighten one's awareness of their oneness with God) interrupts patterns of the heart and mind formed in the ways of the world, like the tantalizing forces of greed and power. Desert contemplation helps us to see things as they are, unclouded by what Thomas Merton called "unreality."

Twentieth-century authors like Merton and Henri Nouwen helped to reclaim the importance of this desert form of Christianity, forging a path for laypeople to experience the transforming way of contemplation, which had long been reserved for monastics and religious. Richard Rohr writes about why this ancient tradition still matters: "It is a unique window into how Jesus was first understood, before the church became an imperial, highly organized, competitive religion."

Practicing "letting go" in contemplation allowed the desert mystics—and allows us—to access our spiritual selves: A core principle of the desert—and something worth considering while cultivating our own inner freedom—was the notion of apatheia. Author Laura Swan explains: "Apatheia is purity of heart. The ammas [desert mothers] teach us to intentionally let go of all that keeps us from the single-minded pursuit of God: feelings and thoughts that bind us, cravings and addictions that diminish our sense of worth, and attachments to self-imposed perfectionism. Apatheia is nourished by simplicity grounded in abundance of the soul."

Such letting go can feel like emptiness. It can feel disorienting, crazy, nonlinear—terrifying even—as if we are like the desert fathers and mothers, leaving behind the comforts of the city for the vast emptiness of the desert. This powerful metaphor invites the disruption of our own unhealthy patterns, as we interrupt the ways that we are being controlled (sometimes unconsciously) by the ways of the world and our false selves to make room for something deeper to be born within us: For aspects of the true self to be discovered. For our awareness of the divine within us to grow. For love to expand. For the same spiritual truths that arose in the desert centuries before to dwell and deepen within our souls.

Adapted from <https://email.cac.org/t/d-e-gdjkyjk-tdduxulkd-w/>; <https://email.cac.org/t/d-e-gdiety-tdduxulkd-w/>

For Reflection

- ★ In what ways am I tempted to seek comfort, security, or control?
- ★ What can I learn from Jesus' obedience and trust in God?

<https://young-catholics.com/2400/1st-sunday-of-lent-year-a/#thoughts>

Holy Cross Parish

96-98 Main Street, PO Box 118

Morris NY 13808

<https://parishes.rcda.org/holycross/>

Facebook: [tiny.cc/HCMorris](https://www.facebook.com/tiny.cc/HCMorris)

Find our bulletin and Pastoral Council minutes on our website. If you have a notice for the bulletin, please email: holycrossRC-church@gmail.com

MISSION

To care for the poor, abandoned, and the marginalized.

SCHEDULE

Mass: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

Liturgy of the Word: Thursday, 10 a.m.

RECONCILIATION: St. Mary's Oneonta, every Saturday 4-4:45 p.m. Call the parish office (607-432-3920) for a different time.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pastoral Associate (Parish Leader)

Matthew Tabone (360) 559-4098

Trustees

Marguerite Webster (607) 263-5478

Richard Meyers (607) 263-5588

Parish Pastoral Council Chair

Kerry L. Mess (607) 386-1951

Parish Pastoral Council Members

Allen Dangca, Celine Francisco, Scott Kolbery, Chet McAdams, Jackie McAdams, Kerry L. Mess, Dana Mochovciak, Joe Tyson

Liturgical Ministry

Marguerite Webster (607) 263-5478

Faith Formation & RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults]

Matthew Tabone (360) 559-4098

Ministry to the Homebound

Matthew Tabone (360) 559-4098



Pope Leo XIV's February intention: May children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive necessary medical care, never losing strength.

Living Caring Community

HELP TO OFFER? NEED ASSISTANCE?

- ☼ Butternut Valley Food Pantry
166 Marion Avenue, Gilbertsville NY
(607) 783-2267
Thurs., 3-5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- ☼ The Lord's Table & Food Pantry
305 Main Street, Oneonta NY
(607) 432-1458
Mon./Weds./Fri., 4-5:30 p.m.
- ☼ The Magic Closet
158 East Main Street, Morris NY
(607) 263-5116 or (607) 263-5859
Weds./Sat. 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- ☼ My Neighbor's Closet
3097 County Highway 11, Hartwick NY
(607) 431-8320/cooperstownangel@gmail.com
Tues/Sat: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. / Weds: 4-7 p.m.
Contact if you need someone to shop for you and coordinate getting you items.
- ☼ Helios Grief Support
Group counseling for adults in Otsego, Schoharie, Delaware counties. See helios-care.org; call (607) 432-5525.
- ☼ Friends of Recovery, Delaware/Otsego
Grassroots addiction recovery by, about, for individuals and families in recovery
22 Elm Street, Oneonta NY
(607) 267-4435
Mon/Tues/Fri: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Weds/Thurs: 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- ☼ Holy Sews
Sew burial layettes for infants: (607) 432-5125; holysewsoneonta@yahoo.com
- ☼ Oneonta Community Health Center
No-cost healthcare services for uninsured adults (607) 433-0300
Office hours: Tues. 6-8 p.m.

Upcoming Events

- 02/22: SPECIAL COLLECTION: Black, Native American & Latin American Mission Pastoral Council
- 02/26: Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
- 02/27: Stations of the Cross, 4 p.m.
- 03/01: Christian formation after mass
- 03/04: Penance Service, 12:10 & 6:30 p.m., St. Mary's Oneonta
- 03/05: Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
- 03/06: Stations of the Cross, 4 p.m.
First Friday Devotion, 2:30 p.m., St. Mary's Oneonta
- 03/07: First Saturday (Fatima) devotion, 9 a.m., St. Mary's Oneonta
- 03/08: Coffee Hour after mass
- 03/12: Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
- 03/13: Reconciliation, 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.
- 03/15: SPECIAL COLLECTION: Catholic Relief Services Annual Appeal Rosary after mass
- 03/19: Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
- 03/20: Stations of the Cross, 4 p.m.
Knights of Columbus fish fry,
- 03/26: Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
- 03/27: Stations of the Cross, 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2026

Mass Attendance: 46

Collection: \$1,353.00

Ash Wednesday Attendance: 34

Collection: \$151.00

FEBRUARY 22, 2026

Celebrant

Rev. Chris Welch

Greeters: Deb Newell and Marie Goupil

Deacon: Paul Cerosaletti

Lector: Maureen Joy

March 1

Greeter: Joe Tyson

Lector: Kerry L. Mess

Eucharistic Minister: Jen Spivey

Mass Intention

FOR THE SOUL OF EILEEN GERTRUDE PALME

If you would like to request an intention for a mass, call Kerry (607) 386-1951 with the intention, your name, and call back number OR use the parish email (see left panel).

Pray for

- ✠ for the sick, their caregivers, and all who asked for our prayers, especially Sr. Theresa Ahern MSBT, Kathleen Barry, Jo Franklin, Sarah Grogan, Agnes Huff, Maureen Joy, Jim Lee, Michelle Lee, Fred Lemister, Carol and Jessica MacCumber, Doris Mensch, Jeffrey Meyers, Kelly Meyers, Teresa Meyers, Rich Morley, Mark Muller, Clara Murphy, John Neary, Diane Neczesny, John O'Brien, Kathy Osborne, Maria Papendrea, Scarlett Parry, Evelyn Rowe, Martin Smith, Mike Stensland, Joe and Carol Tyson, Janet VanZandt, John Zaleski
- ✠ for all those in our parish family serving in the military and all first responders and emergency personnel: Ryan Barry, Jim Barry, Meghan Barringer
- ✠ for the deceased members of our parish and their families and friends
- ✠ in thanksgiving for Joe Tyson, who reminds us that miracles happen every day and for all those who stayed to share their own experiences; may we be open to God's miraculous love surrounding us at all times.