

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Seraphim	Evdokia
Anthony	Pauline	Nadja	Jerry
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Tatiana	Travis	Jason
Susan Mary	Clint	John	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	Sophia
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	Efthalia	Denny

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Grant
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Michael C.
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Travis, Jr.	Alma	Constance K.
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Genevieve	Carla and family	Constance G.

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Metropolitan Nicholas (+3/13)

Laura Crikis (+3/17)

Michael Baker (+3/26)

Michael Pilja (+4/7)

Christine Henn (+4/24)

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21 Facts about St. Mary of Egypt

1. Her life was recorded by St. Sophronios of Jerusalem, who served as Patriarch of Jerusalem from 634 to 638. He says St. Mary lived within his lifetime and he heard the tale from a fellow monk of St. Zosimas himself.
2. One third of the Life is of Mary's first-person account to Zosimas of her sinful youth, conversion, and flight into the desert.
3. Mary left home at 12-years-old, was a "prostitute" in Alexandria for 17 years, and at the age of 29 converted and left for the desert. During the entire time she was a "prostitute", she never actually received payment for her sexual favors, but survived by begging and by "spinning coarse flax fibers". Her

"prostitution" was merely to gratify her sexual appetite.

4. Mary must have been baptized as a child, since there is no record of her having been baptized after her conversion. And in her story to Zosimas, she says: "I am protected by Holy Baptism." Furthermore, we can assume she had some sort of Christian education in her youth, since her first prayer of repentance was addressed to the Virgin Mary.

5. Mary's conversion occurred on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which was on September 14th. We know that in 614 the Persians stole fragments of the Cross from Jerusalem, and it wasn't returned until after the Persian Campaign by Emperor Heraclius himself in 629.

6. The Icon of the Virgin Mary before which Mary of Egypt prayed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was displayed "on a raised place" in the courtyard before the Church of Constantine; it is mentioned, for example, by the Piacenza Pilgrim (ca. 570) and by Epiphanius the Monk (8th century). Epiphanius states explicitly that he saw "on the left side of Saint Constantine ... the icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, who forbade Saint Mary to enter the church on the day of the Exaltation." St. John the Damascene references this icon which St. Mary of Egypt prayed before in his defense of holy icons.

7. Before going into the desert Mary received Holy Communion in the Church of St. John the Baptist near the Jordan River. The church, built by the emperor Anastasios I (491–518), was located approximately 8 km north of the Dead Sea (and about 30 km from Jerusalem), at the traditional site of Christ's baptism by John the Baptist.

8. St. Euthymios the Great in the early 5th century was the first to introduce the practice of monks going into the innermost desert of Palestine alone for 40 days. However, he established for it to be done on January 14th following the feast of Epiphany, in imitation of Christ who spent 40 days in the desert following His baptism. Through prayer and fasting they thus prepared themselves for Easter. A few decades later St. Savas the

Sanctified moved the date of the retreat to after the celebration of the feasts of Sts. Anthony and Euthymios (17 and 20 January). Soon after it was placed to the first week of Great Lent.

9. Mary lived 47 years in the desert, and never encountered a human being all those years. Thus when she encountered Zosimas, she was 76-years-old. Zosimas was 53-years-old when he encountered Mary in the desert, having lived in a monastery since infancy. Mary died when she was approximately 78-years-old. Zosimas died when he was nearly 100-years-old.

10. Mary encountered great temptation in the desert for 17 years, which is the same number of years she lived a licentious lifestyle in Alexandria.

11. Since Mary was illiterate, the writing on the sand where her dead body lay must be looked upon as miraculous.

12. Mary died on April 1st, which was a Holy Thursday. This means that Easter that year was April 4th. If one consults a perpetual calendar that is keyed to the Julian Calendar (the one in use at the time), one finds that there are 24 years in the relevant centuries on which April 1 occurs on a Thursday. Of these, the years on which Easter would fall on April 4 according to the Julian Calendar are: 443, 454, 527, 538, and 549. We must incur from all the evidence of dates and ages mentioned above, that only the last two or three years are candidates for the date of the death of Mary of Egypt.

13. The earliest manuscript of the Life of Mary of Egypt dates to the ninth century.

14. Paul the Deacon translated the Life of Mary of Egypt to Latin in the 8th century.

15. In the National Library of Athens alone, 27 manuscripts of the Life of Mary of Egypt are preserved. 37 manuscripts are in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and numerous others in the libraries of Athos, Mt. Sinai, the Vatican, Oxford and Cambridge. The great number indicates the popularity of the text in both the

East and West.

16. While the Orthodox Church celebrates Mary of Egypt's feast on the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent and on April 1st, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates her feast on either April 2, 3, 9, or 10, depending on the local tradition and which calendar they follow. The Coptic Church celebrates her on April 1st.

17. There is a chapel dedicated to Mary of Egypt at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, commemorating the moment of her conversion.

18. The Temple of Portunus in Rome was preserved by being rededicated to Saint Mary of Egypt in 872.

19. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says that "relics of the saint are venerated at Rome, Naples, Cremona, Antwerp, and some other places."

20. In Goethe's *Faust* Mary of Egypt is one of the three penitent saints who pray to the Virgin Mary for forgiveness for Faust. Her words are set by Mahler in his 8th Symphony as the final saint's appeal to the Mater Gloriosa.

21. Scholars who only view such texts as the Life of Mary of Egypt as literature often try to prove that the life of Mary of Egypt was based on previous accounts of a certain woman named Mary who lived in the Judean desert, as described by St. Cyril of Skythopolis and St. John Moschos. But St. Sophronios both in the beginning and at the end of his text goes to great length to dissuade people from such thinking, assuring his readers that what he wrote had never been recorded before and that he had heard the tale from a monk of the monastery in which Zosimas lived and circulated the tale. He also assured the reader that he would never make up such a holy tale, which he believed would incur judgment upon him. To say that he borrowed from other accounts, therefore, is highly improbable.

--John Sanidopoulos