

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Have Mercy on Me O God, Have Mercy on Me.

March 30, 2014		Sunday of Saint John of ‘the Ladder’	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
April 2	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm	
April 3	Thursday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm	
April 4	Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God	6:00 pm	
April 5	Saturday	Praises of the Mother of God	Divine Liturgy	9:00 am
	Saturday		Great Vespers	4:00 pm
April 6	Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt		Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Venerable John (Climacus) of Sinai, author of The Ladder (649). Saint Sophronius, Bishop of Irkutsk (1771). Prophet Joad (I Kings 13:11 -10c. BC) who dwelt in Bethel. Holy Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Cephas, Caesar, and Epaphroditus, of the Seventy (1st c.). Saint Eubula, mother of Saint Panteleimon (304). Venerable John the Silent of Saint Sabbas Monastery (558). Venerable Zosimas, Bishop of Syracuse (662). Saint John II, Patriarch of Jerusalem (5 c). Hieromartyr Zacharias, Bishop of Corinth (1684). Saint Virgin Osburga of Coventry, (1015). Translation of the relicts of the Martyr-King Edmund of East Anglia. Venerable John the Hermit of Cilicia (4 c). Saint Fergus of Downpatrick, Bishop (6 c.) Saint Patto (Pacifcus) of Werden, Bishop (768). Saint Regulus (Rule) of Scotland (of Saint Andrews), Abbot (6 c.). Saint Tola, Bishop (c. 733).

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and the Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Jacobus, Leonid, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela and all Myrrhbearers, Shirley, Emil, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archpriest Leonid, Diane, Peter, Adam, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Hideo Takahashi, Thomas Slosky, Terence Joseph Dunn and Peter Witiak were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Protopresbyter Taras Chubenko, Drs Magdy and Milia Ghaly, Emil and Shirley Skocypec, Nettie, Ed and Anita Anderson, Florence, and Peter Witiak were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of newly-departed Archpriest Alexander Atty were offered at Liturgy and Litiya last Sunday and today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of newly-departed Father George Giannaris were offered at Liturgy and Litiya last Sunday at the request of Father John Udics.

May his memory be eternal! The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, with great sadness, announces the passing unto life eternal of His Eminence the Most Reverend Metropolitan +PHILIP, Archbishop and Metropolitan of New York. Prayers for his repose were offered at Liturgy and Litiya last Sunday and today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Archpriest Alexander Marciniuk, Metropolitan +THEODOSIUS of Tokyo, Mitred Archpriest Vasili Takeoka and Archpriest Samuel Sulich were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Pre-Pascha church cleaning is scheduled for Saturday, April 5, after Liturgy.

The Altar Society are planning on making Pascha Breads for Easter. Anyone interested in ordering bread please call Nancy Richards at 315-865-5382 and/or sign the order sheet to be posted on the wall outside the kitchen. We are only be making breads for our parishioners, and will not be advertising to the general public. Please also note that there will not be a Spring Bazaar this year and we are only taking pre-orders for the bread. Cutoff date for bread orders: April 6 – next Sunday.

A word from the desert. We shall be blessed with clear vision if we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, for He, as Paul teaches, is our head, and there is in Him no shadow of evil. Saint Paul himself and all who have reached the same heights of sanctity had their eyes fixed on Christ, and so have all who live and move and have their being in Him. As no darkness can be seen by anyone surrounded by light, so no trivialities can capture the attention of anyone who has his eyes on Christ. The man who keeps his eyes upon the head and origin of the whole universe has them on virtue in all its perfection; he has them on truth, on justice, on immortality and on

ALMS GIVING

During Great Lent, we are called upon to fast, pray, confess our sins, and turn doing good instead of evil. We do that by giving alms, or help to the poor.

We hear in the Divine Liturgy that "Every good gift and perfect gift comes down from Thee, the Father of Lights..." All of the things we 'give' to one another are patterned after the One True Gift – Our Lord's giving Himself to the world, at His voluntary crucifixion. You may think that Christmas gifts, Birthday gifts, Baptism and Wedding gifts are personal gifts between yourself and the recipient, but in fact, if they are true, genuine and wholesome gifts, they're patterned on the Lord's self-sacrifice.

The Lord's sacrifice is repeated in the Divine Liturgy. Offered on the altar is His body and His blood, which He gives to us continually. This gift is pure, holy, self-less, and eternal.

The gifts we give are often less than pure, as they're given in an effort to bribe someone, to put our controls on them, to make them beholding to us. Those gifts are not given without the hope of getting something in return. Often, someone gives something to the Church, but puts their name on a plaque or inscribe the gift itself or request that it be announced in the Bulletin. Those are gifts which people think they can control, they think they can demand them back when things don't go their way.

Donations to the Church are always given to the Church, not to individuals. God loves a cheerful giver, but He also does not favor gifts which were not given freely, not given without strings attached, not given from the heart. The only true and valuable gifts are those things we have worked hard to earn. Gifts which we did nothing to earn are not genuine. For example, a real gift would be something which we make ourselves, as opposed to something we buy or pay for, or give from money earned by 'money-changers' or bankers – money earned from interest, and not from the sweat of our brow.

Remember the words of the Divine Liturgy, "We offer unto Thee Thine own of thine own on behalf of all and for all"? This is the key to understanding donations. We offer to God what is His, what we used, like those three men who received 10 and 5 and 1 talent when their Master went away on a journey? We use those talents to make more talents. We do NOT offer to God what we did not earn. The first servant earned 10 talents more, the second earned 5 talents more, but the third one simply buried the talent he was given in the earth and earned nothing. The master said, 'Worthless and lazy servant! At the very worst you could have given the money to the bankers who would have returned interest on the talent – but you didn't even do that.' (Matthew 25:28). The Master didn't recommend that the money be given to the bankers, but as a last resort, the servant could have at least done that much.

Isn't it a more wonderful gift when we know it was made especially for us by loving hands and heart?

"The Lord loves a cheerful giver" "Each of us should give what we have decided in our hearts to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7). No gift which comes from trying to show someone up by giving a better or larger or richer gift is a worthy or meaningful gift.

Do not be afraid to give to someone you think may be a thief or charlatan because the Lord blesses your intention. And your gift may be the one which changes the black hearted man into an angel of good.

Brothers and sisters, Holy Scripture tells us: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up". (Galatians 6:9) "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them. (Hebrews 6:10) We must be tireless in struggling to live good and holy lives, and even more, to give 'until it hurts' to those who ask of us (aloud and silently) and are in obvious need.

THE VENERABLE JOHN CLIMACUS is the author of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." John came to Mount Sinai as a sixteen year old youth and remained there, first as a novice under obedience, and afterwards as a recluse, and finally as abbot of Sinai until his eightieth year. He died around the year 563 A.D. His biographer, the monk Daniel, says about him: "His body ascended the heights of Sinai, while his soul ascended the heights of heaven." He remained under obedience with his spiritual father, Martyrius, for nineteen years. Anastasius of Sinai, seeing the young John, prophesied that he would become the abbot of Sinai. After the death of his spiritual father, John withdrew into a cave, where he lived a difficult life of asceticism for twenty years. His disciple, Moses, fell asleep one day under the shade of a large stone. John, in prayer in his cell, saw that his disciple was in danger and prayed to God for him. Later on, when Moses returned, he fell on his knees and gave thanks to his spiritual father for saving him from certain death. He related how, in a dream, he heard John calling him and he jumped up and, at that moment, the stone tumbled. Had he not jumped, the stone would have crushed him. At the insistence of the brotherhood, John agreed to become abbot and directed the salvation of the souls of men with zeal and love. From someone John heard a reproach that he talked too much. Not being angered by this, John however remained silent for an entire year and did not utter a word until the brothers implored him to speak and to continue to teach them his God-given wisdom. On one occasion, when six hundred pilgrims came to the Monastery of Sinai, everyone saw an agile youth in Jewish attire serving at a table and giving orders to other servants and assigning them. All at once, this young man disappeared. When everyone noticed this and began to question it, John said to them, "Do not seek him, for that was Moses the Prophet serving in my place." During the time of his silence in the cave, John wrote many worthwhile books, of which the most glorious is "The Ladder." This book is still read by many, even today. In this book, John describes the method of elevating the soul to God, as ascending a ladder. Before his death, John designated George, his brother in the flesh, as abbot. George grieved much because of his separation from John. Then John said to him, that, if he [John] were found worthy to be near God in the other world, he would pray to Him, that, he, [George], would be taken to heaven that same year. And, so it was. After ten months George succeeded and settled among the citizens of heaven as did his great brother, John.