

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.

April 14, 2013	Sunday of Saint John of 'the Ladder'	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
April 17	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
April 18	Thursday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	6:00 pm
April 19	Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God	6:00 pm
April 20	Saturday	Praises of the Mother of God	Divine Liturgy <u>9:00 am</u>
	Saturday		Great Vespers 4:00 pm
April 21	Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am, and our LENTEN RETREAT	
April 24	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts with Bishop MICHAEL	6:00 pm

Saints of the Day: Venerable John of "The Ladder," Abbot of Sinai. Saint Martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome (655). New Martyr Sergius (Trofimov) of Nizhni-Novgorod and one with him (1918). New Hieromartyr Priest Alexander Confessor, (1941). Martyrs Anthony, John and Eustathius of Vilnius (Lithuania) (1347). Martyr Ardalion the Actor, who suffered under Maximian (3 c.). Martyr Azat the Eunuch and 1,000 Martyrs in Persia (341). Monk-martyr Christopher of Mar Sabbas (797). Saint Cyriacus, Bishop of Jerusalem (4 c.). Apostles Aristarchus, Pudens, and Trophimus of the Seventy. New Martyr Demetrius of the Peloponnesus, who suffered at Tripoli (1803). Saint Euthymius the Wonderworker. Saint Ruadan of Lothra, Abbot (584). Saint Mundus of Argyle, Abbot (962). Saint Padarn of Vannes, Bishop (c. 500).

Please remember in your prayers: Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacon Philip. Mother Raphaela, Sister Deborah. Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, 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,

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of David Blaire, Priest Rick (Ralph) Campbell and Michael Zaugg were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Rose Sokol were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Barbara Kehn.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of newly-departed Anna McCartney were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Patriarch ALEXEI I of Moscow and Archpriest John Platko were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Walter Jovorsky, Walter Jovorsky Jr and Theodosia Kluka were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

Sunday of Saint John of "The Ladder" (Climacus) by +Metropolitan ANTHONY of Sourozh, 29 March 1987

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Saint John of "The Ladder" whose memory we keep today says in one of his writings: "We shall not be judged, brothers, we shall not be condemned for not having worked miracles or spoken words of prophecy; but we shall be condemned for not having bewailed our sins throughout our life."

What is there in sin which should cause us such broken-heartedness that all our life should be -- not darkened but inspired by this pain in our hearts? We tend to define sin as breaking of the moral law, or acting in a way which is contrary to our duty or to what is right, but there is something more fundamental in sin, which should indeed cause us sadness and more than sadness: a deep pain.

Sin is disloyalty, sin is unfaithfulness; it is unfaithfulness and disloyalty towards God because it means that what ever He says matters little to us, although when He spoke to us, He spoke with all His human love and all His love divine; and indeed, to show us how much we matter to Him, how deeply He values us, He gave all of His life and all of His death to save us, and for us to believe in love divine!

To sin means to turn away from One who loves us unto life and unto death; and it means by implication that His life and death are too little for us, too little for us to respond by love, to respond by faithfulness and loyalty. Indeed, this attitude results in our breaking in a multitude of ways those laws of life which are conducive to life eternal; those laws of life that would make us truly, perfectly human in the way in which Christ was perfectly human, in the total harmony between God and us.

But these concrete sins which we commit all the time, this coldness to one another, this indifference, the ease with which we judge and condemn, the way in which we turn away from the need of others, the way in which we care nothing for the love which is offered us: all that results from the coldness of our hearts.

It is not in vain that Christ says today in the Gospel, "This demon, this spirit is cast out only by prayer and by fasting": fasting, in the sense of turning away from all those things which are beguilement, which take us away from love, from loyalty, from faithfulness, from integrity, that destroy our wholeness; and prayer, as communion with the Living God, who is love, and in whom alone we can find the strength and power to love.

So it is not surprising that when the man who had brought his child, sick with epilepsy, to the disciples, turned to Christ saying "They were unable to heal him," He said, 'Bring him to Me!' Unless we are brought to Him, all other things are in vain.

We may ask ourselves, "Are we so separated from God that we should bewail this separation all our life?" Indeed, who of us would dare say that at every moment his heart is warm, his heart is deeply moved by the sense of being with God, of God being close, of being in communion with Him?

We should be with regard to God in the condition of one who is in love, who at every moment, day and night, waking or sleeping is aware that his heart is exulting and tremulous with a love that fills him to the brim, that is joy, that is exultation, that is peace and serenity, and strength, and courage, and a love that allows us to look around and see everyone in a new light, that allows us to see the image of God shining in each person whom we meet, rejoicing in it,

If we ask ourselves how far we are from God, and cannot measure the distance between us because our experience of being close to Him is so small, let us ask ourselves, "How far am I from the people who surround me? How little love, how little loyalty, how little gift of self, how little rejoicing in my neighbour there is in me. How much there is of judgement, of indifference, of coldness, of forgetfulness". And then we will be able to say, if I am like that it means that I am not God-centered, that God is not the King reigning supreme in my heart and mind and my whole being and life. And when we think of ourselves and see ourselves divided between the call of God, the desires of our fallen humanity and the beguilement of evil, then we can again say, "How far I am." And until we have found harmony with God, we will be divided and broken within ourselves, until we have found harmony with God, we will be divided one from another.

This is why Saint John of "The Ladder" calls us to give absolute centrality to the way in which we relate to God, because everything else will depend upon it. God is like the key of harmony that allows a tune to be read and sung. He is, as another writer says, the thin string that keeps together flowers which otherwise would fall apart - even flowers, even virtue, even beauty, even truth fall apart if there is not that wonderful love, exultation and joy which is given only by our communion with God, because He is love, He is life, He is truth, He is joy and light and exultation.

Let us therefore turn to repentance in the sense in which Saint John of "The Ladder" sees it: not an empty bewailing of our past, not a useless, barren regret at our not being what we wish we were, but a cry to God, "Come, Lord, and come soon!" And if we cry with all our heart, all our mind, all our need, then God will come, then we will find ourselves in communion with the Living God and all things will become beauty; we will have entered into the Kingdom of God. Amen.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

• **Fasting for the Presanctified Liturgy:** It is the discipline of the Orthodox Church to fast the entire day for the evening Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. The Holy Synod of Bishops has decreed that for those unable to fast for the entire day, a complete fast must be observed from the noon day meal hour.

• **April 20: THIS SATURDAY:** 10:15 am – *Pre-Pascha Church Cleaning*

• **April 21, 2013: Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt.** In the presence of the Myrrh-Streaming Icon of Saint Anna, Archimandrite Athanasios of Saint Tikhon's Monastery will lead us in a **Lenten Retreat** after Liturgy.

• **April 24, Wednesday,** Presanctified Divine Liturgy. **His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL** will celebrate.

"**A Christian Catastrophe** - Islamist 'cleansing' in the Mideast" very enlightening article - we don't hear much about this in the general media. especially since most Christians just celebrated Easter it's a reality check...
http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/christian_catastrophe_IX4yqB48KfKyKuUgQPreDM

Orthodox Church in America - Diocese of New York and New Jersey

New Video: Lessons in Our Faith: "Great Lent (Our Spiritual Life): 7 Questions & 7 Answers"

A new installment of the highly acclaimed video series *Lessons in Our Faith* is now available for viewing! Using his popular "7 Questions and 7 Answers" format, Bishop Michael presents a series of talks on matters of faith, belief, and the teachings of the Church. These instructional videos are concise and "to the point," offering Orthodox Christians much-needed information, helpful advice for their spiritual journey, and assistance in answering questions that may come from non-Orthodox friends or acquaintances. The goal is that we might better know and better live our faith. This marks the 11th lesson in the video series. Each lesson (only 8-15 minutes in length) is viewable in video format and also may be listened to in a convenient audio format.

Previous lessons include:

LESSON 10: **Angels**

LESSON 9: **Marriage**

LESSON 8: **Questions from Campers at Saint Andrew's Camp**

LESSON 7: **Baptism of Infants**

LESSON 6: **Sacrament of Chrismation**

LESSON 5: **Sacrament of Baptism**

LESSON 4: **Sacramental Confession**

LESSON 3: **Fasting**

LESSON 2: **Time, Talents, and Treasure**

LESSON 1: **The Theotokos**

The entire "*Lessons in Our Faith*" series is easily accessible at: nynjoca.org/lessons_in_our_faith.html