

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

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Sunday, April 11, 2021

4th Sunday in Great Lent – Saint John of the Ladder

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – Tone 3. St. John Climacus (of *The Ladder*). Hieromartyr Antipas, Bishop of Pergamum, disciple of St. John the Theologian (92). Ven. Jacob (James), Abbot of Zheleznobórovsk (1442), and his fellow ascetic, James. St. Varsonúfii (Barsanuphius), Bishop of Tver' (1576). Martyrs Processus and Martinian of Rome (1st c.). Ven. Pharmuthius, Anchorite, of Egypt (4th c.). Ven. John, disciple of Ven. Gregory of Decapolis (9th c.). St. Callinicus of Cernica, Bishop of Rimnicului in Romania (1868). The Appearance of the “FOOTPRINT” Icon of the Mother of God at Pochayev.

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2021/04/11>

We are two-thirds of the way through Great Lent!

Lenten Confessions: Great Lent is ongoing. Each and every Christian should participate in the saving Sacrament of Holy Confession during the Lenten season, as part of his or her own “Lenten journey.” If you have not already done so, please contact Fr. John now to make your Confession appointment, even if you want your appointment to take place later on during Lent. Please make your Lenten confession before the end of Great Lent, that is, by Friday, April 23. By the time we reach Holy Week and Pascha, every member of the Parish should have participated in the Sacrament of Confession in the Lenten season.

(NOTE: Even if you are not regularly attending in-person services at this time, because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, it is essential for you to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. If special arrangements need to be made to meet your particular needs, please contact Fr. John Hopko directly. Fr. John can be best reached, by voice or text, at his cellphone number, which is 860-944-3486.)

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Mitred Archbishop Basil Summer—acquaintance of the Hopkos	d. 3/26/2021
Archpriest Antonio Perdomo—Priest in Texas	d. 4/1/2021
Archpriest Vladimir Lecko—native of Terryville	d. 3/16/2021
Ramona—prayed for at request of Frank G.	d. 3/30/2021

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Nestor Kott-Helson	4/11/1952
Theofan Pavelchak	4/12/1931
Anthony Ostapchuk	4/12/1946
Nicholas Shafstruck	4/13/1957
Metro Kowalesky	4/13/1964
Maria Sholtis	4/14/1941
Archpriest John Semanitsky	4/14/1963
Nikita Panasuk	4/14/1966
Mildred Shafstruck	4/14/1969
Jason Pikul	4/15/1947
Daniel Lyga	4/15/1972
Olga Toropilo	4/16/1927
Vasili Hmelpi	4/16/1937
Michael Nimchek	4/16/2001
Rosalia Macibora	4/17/1965
Samuel Glowa	4/17/1971

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael K.—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
Archpriest Peter P.—former pastor in Waterbury; very unwell
Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
Donna—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
Dayrl—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
MaryEllen—Louine K.'s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington's Disease
Yelena "Lenna" M.—overcoming, by God's grace, serious health challenges
Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage
Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer

Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support
James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell
Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
Michael "Mike" L.—ongoing health issues
child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
Paula—friend of Jim L.; struggling with cancer
Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
Thomas—Patty N.'s nephew; battling cancer
Wayne—Donna O.'s father
Sarah—a young woman for whom we have been asked to pray (D.B.)
Richard—a man struggling with cancer, for whom we have been asked to pray
Jody—Jacob J.'s father; recovering from significant back surgery
Sue—acquaintance of the Hopkos; unwell and requiring prayers
Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recently injured in fall, now in PA with family
Joanne—acquaintance of the Hopkos; slow recovery from recent illness
Stephen—family member of a parishioner; quite ill and in need of prayers
George K.—our fellow parishioner; unwell at this time
Lorraine—friend of Joan M.; cancerous blood disease
Joseph—friend of Jeanne M.; in need of prayers
Joan—dear and close friend of Carolyn P.; back surgery
Marcia—wife of newly departed Thomas M.
Antonio—brother-in-law of a parishioner; suffering with COVID-19
Joseph—prayed for at the request of Jeanne M.
Elaine H.—recovering from hip replacement surgery; our fellow parishioner
Dianna—Jennifer W.'s mother; suffering some health problems
Wayne—prayed for at the request of Carolyn P.; upcoming surgery
Thomas—fighting cancer; father of a friend of the Parish
Genevieve ("Gen")—prayed for at the request of John K.; facing serious illness

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.'s brother; suffering permanent effects of stroke
Dolores—Bob M.'s mother; resident in long-term eldercare

Expectant Mothers

Katherine and the child to be born of her—Fr. John's nephew's wife and her child

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Fr. James Parnell, Chaplain (MAJ)—deployed with the CT ARNG
Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman ("medic")
Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John's; U.S. Army officer and pilot
Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
Ian H.—Fr. David K.'s son-in-law; overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

NONE THIS WEEK

News and Notes

NO Bible Study Sessions, until after Pascha: Our schedule of liturgical activities, combined with needing some additional time to schedule the hearing of confessions, and to accomplish other necessary activities and tasks leading up to Holy Pascha, means that our weekly Bible Study is going on hiatus until after Holy Pascha. Please, watch this space in the bulletin for information about the return of Bible Study, after Pascha.

Tuesday evening, April 13, 6:30 PM, Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council: The Monthly meeting of the Terryville Parish Council will take place on Tuesday evening, April 13, beginning at 6:30 PM. This meeting will be convened online, via video teleconference ("Zoom"). The necessary Zoom link will be sent out closer to the time of the meeting.

Wednesday evening, April 14, at 6:30 PM, Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts: On Wednesday evening, April 14, beginning at 6:30 PM, we will serve, in-person, at Church, the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday evening, April 14, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Preparation to Receive Holy Communion at Evening Liturgies: Please, be reminded that preparation for receiving Holy Communion at the evening celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts includes, among other things, both observing the Lenten fast in general and, also, completely abstaining from all food and drink for at least six hours before the beginning the actual Liturgy. (The actual discipline, historically, is to not eat or drink *all day long* before receiving Holy Communion at an evening celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts.) If you have any questions or concerns, or require clarification regarding these matters, please, contact Fr. John Hopko directly and promptly. Thank you.

Thursday morning, April 15, at 8:00 AM, Lenten Prayers with the Chanting of Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete: On Thursday morning April 15, at 8:00 AM, in-person, at Church, we will offer Lenten Prayers with the Chanting of the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, as is customary on the 5th Thursday of Great Lent. There is no pre-registration necessary in order to attend this service.

Friday evening, April 16, at 7:00 PM, ONLINE, The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God: On Friday evening, April 16, we will convene online, via video teleconference (“Zoom”) to chant The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God, as is customary at the end of the fifth week of Great Lent. The necessary link will be sent out via email, closer to the time of the service.

Saturday, April 17, at 6:30 PM, Great Vespers: On Saturday, April 17, beginning at 6:30 PM, we will celebrate Great Vespers, in-person, at Church. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Great Vespers on Saturday evening, April 17, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Sunday, April 18, at 9:15 AM, Divine Liturgy: On Sunday, April 18, beginning at 9:15 AM, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy, in-person, at Church. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, April 18, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation “button” (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal’s fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

(literally, John “of the Ladder”)

Commemorated on the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

St. John of the Ladder (c. 579-649 AD) was the abbot of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai Peninsula. During his lifetime he wrote a famous “handbook” for monastics (that is, monks and nuns) entitled “The Ladder of Divine Ascent,” (which is why he is called “of the Ladder.”)

In that book St. John compares the spiritual life of a person to the process of climbing a ladder, step by step. Indeed, in St. John’s book the thirty chapters—each of which refer to another step in the process of a person’s growth and development as a Christian—are called “steps.” The first three deal with learning how not to be attached to the passing material things of this world. The next four steps deal with developing certain fundamental virtues. Steps 8 through 23 deal with overcoming the so-called “passions.” Passion is word that in St. John’s vocabulary (and the Church’s vocabulary, too) indicates certain sins to which we are passionately attached or in which we passionately engage to the detriment of our development as Christians. Steps 24, 25, and 26 deal with the development of the “higher virtues” and the final four steps deal with the attainment of union with God through stillness, prayer, dispassion and love.

While the book is written primarily for monks and nuns, for fourteen centuries people “in the world” (that’s St. John’s phrase for people living outside of the monastic life—all of us in our parish!) have been reading St. John’s book with profit. Indeed, people still read it today.

However, as far as we know, only in Step 1 of “The Ladder” does St. John directly engage in advising those living “in the world.” This is what he says:

“Do whatever good you may. Speak evil of no one. Rob no one. Tell no lie. Despise no one and carry no hate. Do not separate yourself from the church assemblies. [In St. John’s vocabulary “church assemblies” means the weekly, Sunday morning celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Eucharist.] Show compassion to the needy. Do not be a cause of scandal to anyone. Stay away from the bed of another, and be satisfied with what your own spouses can provide you. If you do all this, you will not be far from the kingdom of heaven.”

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, on which we commemorate especially the memory of St. John of the Ladder

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (Heb. 6:13-20)

Brothers and Sisters: when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark (Mk. 9:17-31)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

