



# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ March 30th, 2025 + Sunday of St. John of the Ladder + 4th Sunday of Great Lent + St. Sophroný, Bishop of Irkutsk (1771)



## Hymns for Today's Service

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body, thou wast a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John. Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer, healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to thee by faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength! Glory to Him Who granted thee a crown! Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The

Savior has come to those in faith; enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

The Lord truly set thee on the heights of abstinence, to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe, O our father and teacher John.

### Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

## Epistle Reading - Hebrews 6:13-20

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

## Gospel Reading - Mark 9:17-31

Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him,

**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

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and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

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## This Week's Schedule

### DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

#### **THIS WEEKEND - Sunday of St. John Climacus**

**Saturday, March 29th**

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,

Saturday Work Day: Following Divine Liturgy

Orthodoxy 101 @ 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

*Confession available before or after Vespers*

**Sunday, March 30th**

Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School

**Lenten Potluck** (*Fasting food only*)

#### **THIS WEEK - 5th Week of Great Lent**

**Tues @ 4 PM:** Small Compline

**Wed @ 11-1:30:** Open Church

**Wed @ 6:00 PM:** Presanctified Divine Liturgy

**Thurs @ 11:00 AM:** Bible Study

**Thurs @ 6:30 PM:** Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew

**Fri @ 6:30 PM:** Akathist Hymn w/ Lity for departed

**Sat @ 9 AM:** Divine Liturgy

#### **NEXT WEEKEND - Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt**

**Saturday, April 5th**

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

*Confession available before or after Vespers*

**Sunday, April 6th**

Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School, Coffee Hour

**Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM**

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**Mission Vespers, April 6 @ 4 PM**

*All Saints Orthodox Church, Olyphant, PA*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### & UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

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+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

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**Bible Study** Thursdays at 11 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Acts of the Apostles with discussions.

**ORTHODOXY 101** Saturdays @ 3:30 PM: Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith. 1 hour followed by Great Vespers.

**Parish Potlucks** are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is March 30th (Lenten Food).

**Friends of the Poor** is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, April 12th after Liturgy

**Holy Trinity Parish Council** is usually the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is SUN, April 6th @ 11:30 AM - **NOTE: This month's meeting is the first Sunday of April.**

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**Confession Before Pascha:** A friendly reminder to make a confession before Pascha to receive Holy Communion. Anyone wishing to receive should go to confession at least once during Great Lent. If you have been away from Holy Communion be sure to make a confession before receiving. Confession is available before and after services throughout Lent as time permits and also on Wednesdays during our time of silent prayer.

**TODAY - Lenten Presentation on Divine Liturgy:**

TODAY @ 11:30 AM PDn Sergei Kapral will offer his final presentation on the Divine Liturgy. PDn Sergei walks us through each part of the Liturgy to help us gain a better understanding and deepen our experience of the Divine Liturgy. Questions and discussions to follow.

**Potato Pancake Sales:** Potato Pancake Sales every Friday during Great Lent. March 28 & April 4, 11. 11 AM - 5 PM. On Friday, April 11th at the Potato Pancake sale Carl Liskowski will be selling his **Pysanky Eggs** for \$10 each to support our Education fund. Show your support by buying Pysanky eggs. They make great Pascha gifts!

**Upcoming Parsh Work Days 3/29 & 4/12:** Attention all worker bees! We have two upcoming work days to help us prepare for Holy Pascha. Both work days we will work following our Saturday Divine Liturgy (*beginning around 10:30 am*). On **3/29** we will work inside the church and, beginning at Noon, we will remove branches from the fallen tree outside the rectory. On **4/12** we will clean, polish brass, and finish preparing the Church for Holy Week and Pascha. Many hands make light work and any amount of time offered is appreciated. Come offer your time and talent to help make your parish home beautiful for our Lord's resurrection.

**Bundle Palms and Pussy Willows:** Volunteers are needed to help bundle the palms and the pussy willows after Liturgy on Saturday, April 12 in the basement of the church for Palm Sunday. Please bring garden clippers if you have them. Thank you to Joli Dutko for organizing and heading up this project this year! And thank you everyone for your help!

**Great Lent Mission Vespers Schedule:**

**Sunday of Mary of Egypt (April 6 @ 4 PM)**

- All Saints Orthodox Church, Olyphant, PA

**The Blessing of Homes** continues for those who have rescheduled or by appointment. Check in with Fr. Innocent as to when there is availability for your visit.

**Please, No Parking or Driving on the Grass:** Please refrain from parking or driving on the grass on the property. The ground is very soft and easily damaged. We also do not want anyone to get stuck. Thank you for your help with this.



## LENTEN & PASCHAL FLOWER DONATIONS

Donations towards adorning the church this Lenten season and Pascha are being accepted so that our parish will be beautifully adorned for all of the feasts. General Donations for Palm Sunday may be given to Deborah Mills or left at the Candle stand. Please write "Flowers for Lent" in the memo. If you would like to honor a loved one by making a donation for Holy Pascha flowers "In Memory of" or "For the Health of" a loved one, please sign up in the Church Vestibule/Narthex. Please leave donations at the candle stand, mail them to the Church, OR drop it off in the rectory mailbox attention Deborah Mills. The names of your loved ones will be listed in the Holy Pascha Church Bulletin and remembered in prayer. If you wish to have your offering listed in the Holy Pascha Bulletin, your loved ones name(s) and donation must be received by Palm Sunday.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**April Birthdays:** Miriam Clark (4/6), Marie Dutko (4/6), Pearl Tutko (4/8), Andy Dutko (4/9), Alec Breisch (4/9), Alex Holoviak (4/9), Leigh Storey (4/17), Vladimir Holoviak (4/19), Eli King (4/21), Jordan Dutko (4/23), Debbie Greenward  
**Anniversaries:** Fr. Innocent & Mat. Melanie Neal (4/22), Eva & Stephen Nealon (4/29)

**This Week's Birthdays:** Jean Ann Hutz (3/31) Delores Voda (3/31)

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## Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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### Sunday of St. John of the Ladder

*from antiochian.org.au*

This Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, also known as the Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder (in reference to his most well-known work "The Ladder of Divine Ascent"). The Holy Church has allocated the fourth and fifth Sundays of lent to the Saints John Climacus and Mary of Egypt; two

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**PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound** - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, Marsha, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice **Sick & Suffering** - Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Bob Lutzick, Leann, Gregory Krevko, Tom Vaskalis, David, Delores Tressa, Sylvia Dreater, Patricia Sohoski, Natalie Gripp **Departed:** Jerzy

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shining examples of the pillars of this holy season: fasting, prayer, and repentance.

The celebration of St John on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his book. St John likens the method of elevating the soul to God to ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility.

The biblical reading on this Sunday is from Mark 9:17-31, and begins with a man approaching Jesus, prostrating and asking Him to heal his son, who has a “dumb spirit” within him. This father describes the symptoms that have plagued his son as the same of being possessed by Satan. To us, reading of these specific symptoms like “falling unconscious, foaming and grinding of teeth, and becoming stiff” it would be completely plausible to assume the boy was suffering from epilepsy or the results of a mental illness such as insanity. But according to Christ, there was no doubt that the son was possessed by an “unclean spirit”. He was not in control of his body and its movements, but was subjected to external power, the power of the “evil one”. This “dumb and deaf spirit”, the enemy of “all that is good”, was hurting the boy, “as it often threw him in the fire, and in the water to perish him.”

This incident was evidence of Satan’s existence. Satan or “evil spirit” are not just illusions or mere symbolic ideas, but a true being in existence. The Lord Jesus himself declared to the disciples: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

Jesus rebuked the “unclean spirit” within the boy, saying: “I command you to get out of him and not to interfere with him,” proving His dominion over evil spirits, which was one of the signs of the approaching Kingdom of Heaven.

The Gospel says that when Jesus asked his disciples to bring the boy to him, and when he saw Him “immediately the spirit overcame him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and frothing”. At that moment, the “wicked spirit” realised that he stood before the Lord of the Hosts with His glory and took to flopping; he realised that his end was close, and he acted as a predatory monster with a fatal injury, and by flopping about, he tried one final attempt to attack and hurt the boy.

It seems clear that lack of faith was the reason why the Disciples were unable to cast out this “unclean spirit.” For this reason, the Lord Jesus tells the father of the boy, “If you can believe, everything is possible for the believer”. The attitude of the father is one of the most beautiful examples of humility and faith. He answered Christ with warm tears: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief”. With another word, he said: I believe, O Lord, but perhaps my faith has been shaken on some occasions by the horror of the trials and their difficulty, but thou strengthen my faith and shore it on the rock of confessing Thee.

The Disciples asked their Master, “why couldn’t we get him out?” He said, “This kind can only come out with prayer and fasting.” It appears from this teaching that prayer and fasting are necessary conditions for overcoming the war against Satan, they are essential in spiritual life and faith and not as superfluous or added value to our spiritual struggles. Fasting and praying are not exclusive to monks and nuns, but to everyone, even though the way and level of practice differ between laypeople and monks. The Lord Jesus Himself fasted forty days before His trials and it is stated in the Gospels that He was always parting from the Apostles to pray (Luke 22:39) and (Mark 1:35). Amen! + Met Basilios

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*“He who truly loves the Lord has first loved his brother, because the second is a proof of the first.”*

**St. John of the Ladder**



## **The Treasury**

*“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. + Jesus Christ*

<p><b>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305</b> <b>Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840</b> <b>Last Week’s Collection (3/23/25) :</b></p>
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