

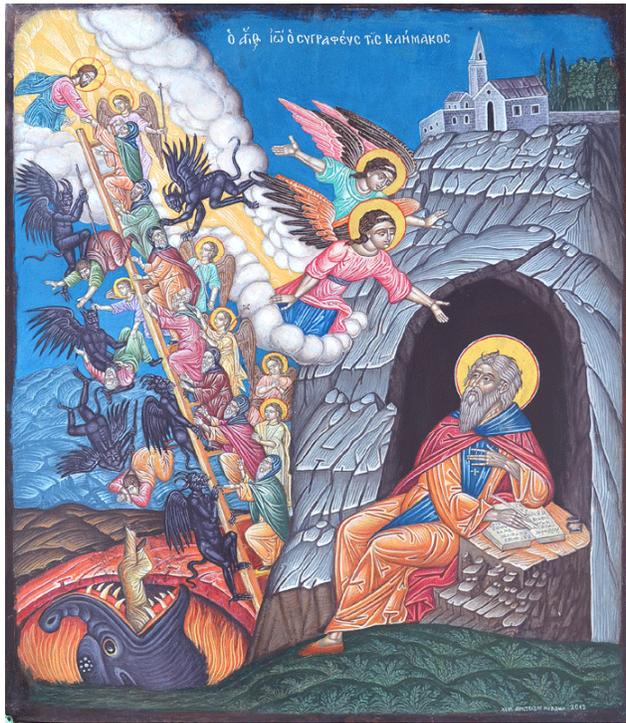
Holy Cross

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
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Fr. Michael Kallaur
Fr. Dan Korba
Dn. Frank Dickos

Weekly Bulletin

Sunday April 10, 2016



Sunday of St. John Climacus

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. He is celebrated today because his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

Hymns of the Day

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Fourth Mode

Having learned the joyful proclamation of the Resurrection from the Angel, and having cast off the ancestral condemnation, the women disciples of the Lord spake to the Apostles exultantly: Death is despoiled and Christ God is risen, granting great mercy to the world.

Apolytikion for Sun. of St. John Climacus in the Plagal Fourth Mode

With the streams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold in labours; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O John our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Apolytikion for the Church in the First Mode

Save, O Lord, Your people, and bless Your inheritance. Grant victory to the faithful against the adversaries of the faith. And, protect Your people by the power of Your Cross.

Seasonal Kontakion in the Plagal Fourth Mode

To you, Theotokos, invincible Defender, having been delivered from peril, I, your city, dedicate the victory festival as a thank offering. In your irresistible might, keep me safe from all trials, that I may call out to you: "Hail, unwedded bride!"

This Week at Holy Cross

Monday	6:30 pm Compline/Bible Study
Tuesday	7 pm Saints Mary & Martha Group
Wednesday	4:30 pm Greek School 6 pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
Thursday	5:30 pm Senior Greek Dance 7 pm Chant Class
Friday	9 am Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:30 Akathist GOYA Retreat at Antiochian Village
Saturday	5 pm Vespers and Confession
Sunday	8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Memorials

Altar flowers are donated in loving memory of:

Michael Andrews (2 Years)

From his loving wife Aliko Andrews, George Andrews, and Kimon Andreos Families.

Altar Candles are donated in loving memory of:

Tessie (Anastasia) Karakitsos - 3 Years
Peter (Pateleimon) Karakitsos - 24 Years
Lee (Leonidas) Vaseliades - 2 Years

Janet Conomos' Mother, Father, and Brother-in-law, by John and Janet Conomos.

Going forward, altar candles are \$25 and altar flowers are \$50.

Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20.

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to 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.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Mark 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "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 him, 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."

A Note from Philoptochos

The Philoptochos sponsored Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon tickets will be presold next Sunday, April 17 at coffee hour. The tickets will be available at the door on April 24. If unable to purchase on April 17, please email or call Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net or 412 344-7046 to reserve your tickets. Advance sales help us to determine how much food to prepare! Adult and teen volunteers are needed to serve and clean-up for the Palm Sunday luncheon on April 24. Please contact Elaine Sofis at 412 344-7046 or esofis@comcast.net if able to help.

Elaine Sofis
Philoptochos President

Welcome

We warmly welcome all visitors and seekers in our midst today, trusting that your experience here will be an uplifting and enriching one. The Greek Orthodox Churches are the ancient and native Christian communities of the biblical world, with centers in the Holy Lands, Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor, and by extension in Greece, Cyprus and throughout the world. Like the ancient Christians, we engage the whole person, heart, mind and all senses in Divine Worship. This experience has been so powerful to seekers in the past that it was often said “We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. We knew only that there God dwelt among human beings.” (Russian Primary Chronicle) That communion experience of heaven on earth and God in our midst forms the heart of all Orthodox worship. It culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion, which not only unites us with the Divine, but also expresses the deep unity in faith and life between all Orthodox believers. Since Holy Communion expresses that deep unity in belief and practice alike, it is reserved for observant Orthodox Christians. This does not mean, however, that non-Orthodox are ‘excluded’ – rather, the Orthodox choose not to make an external display of unity when actual unity does not exist. While working to restore the full communion that did exist in antiquity, today we offer the sign of the blessed bread at the service’s conclusion as a symbolic gift of hospitality and growing unity that is offered to all present. If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox way of life, or have any questions about worship or Holy Communion, please approach Fr. Michael or one of the clergy following services.

Thank you for joining us, and again, we welcome you all.

Stewardship at a Glance

As of April 10, we have received 323 pledge cards, for a total pledge amount of \$396,238, making the average 2016 pledge thus far \$1,229.

About Stewardship

To be a member in good standing, it is necessary to submit a pledge card. Although pledge envelopes are mailed out to everyone, we still need you to submit your 2016 pledge. That is what stewardship is. It is making a commitment in support of our Holy Cross community. We base our budget on the pledge income and this determines what we can, and cannot do. You can pick up a pledge card in the narthex of the Church, pledge on-line at www.holycrosspgh.org or call Nena in the church office at 412-833-3355. If you have already turned in a pledge card, please try to stay current. We depend on your support.

Thank you.

Ted Sofis, Stewardship Chair

Community News

FOCUS Food Drive

There will be a food drive for FOCUS on Sunday, April 3rd, 10th & 17th. Please place your non perishable food items (no glass, please) in the boxes provided in the narthex. Your donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your generosity.

Dianne Babb

Myrrh bearers

Attention parents of JOY age girls; grades 2-6. Please contact Laura Zervos if your daughter would like to participate as a miroforos for the Good Friday evening service. Laura Zervos--412-287-5679 Laura_jz@msn.com

Scholarship Opportunity

2016-2017 UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

NEW YORK – Applications and instructions for three scholarships administered by the Department of Philanthropy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America are available for awards to be made for the 2016- 2017 academic year. The George & Naouma (Gioule) Gioles Scholarship and the Katina John Malta Scholarship are for undergraduate studies, and the Paleologos Scholarship is awarded for graduate work of a non-theological nature. Each of these scholarships was established through generous gifts from dedicated Greek Orthodox Christians who wanted to provide financial assistance towards the education of young people from our Orthodox Christian community.

Applications can be accessed by visiting the [scholarship web page](#).

For more information, please email scholarships@goarch.org or call 212-774-0283. The deadline for submitting an application for any of these scholarships is May 6, 2016.

Save the Date

The **St. Photios Banquet** will be Saturday May, 7th. Ad sponsorships are due by April 15th and reservations for the dinner are should be in by April 20th. Call Mary Doreza at [412-877-3415](tel:412-877-3415) to make reservations.

Golden Club Members: On May 17, 2016, our Golden Club members will be traveling to St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church in Millvale for a conducted tour of the elaborate murals by artist Maxo Vanka (1890-1963). The murals tell the story of the Croatian peasants who left their native farm lands at the turn of the 20th century to seek a better life in the post-industrial United States of America. The evocative murals also capture Vanka's strong belief about the futility of war and his sadness about the destruction of the motherland. Prior to the tour, we will be stopping for lunch. Please see the May Cross Roads and Sunday bulletins for further information regarding this event. Contact either Rene Koett or Cynthia Kostelnik for reservations. We hope to see you all there!

Golden Club Membership: We encourage all parishioners, 50 years of age and older, to join our lively group as we share in fellowship and explore our region's venues, including historical sites, churches, concerts, plays, movies, opera and museums, just to name a few. Membership is only \$10 per year! Events are planned once a month from January through May and resume again in September through the end of the calendar year. If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact Rene Koett at 412-831-3142 (rjkoett@yahoo.com) or Cynthia Kostelnik at 412-833-9423 (cakostelnik@yahoo.com). We hope you will consider joining The Golden Club of Holy Cross!

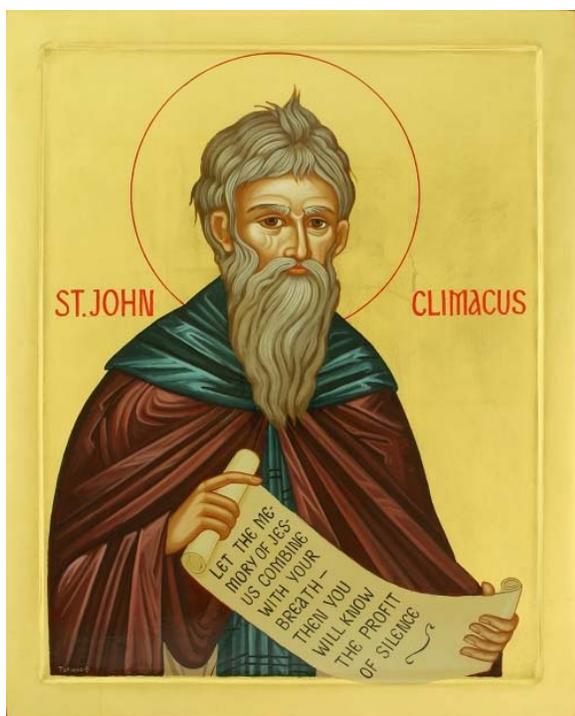
Holy Cross Today

Coffee hour today is sponsored by the Conomos, Jahn, Kurcherawy and Andrews families in honor of the loved ones memorialized today.

Please sign up for coffee hour. Check the calendar online: www.holycrosspgh.org, click "Events", then "Coffee Hour", then scroll down to calendar, click on date to see if someone has taken it.

Then email holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org or call the church office to request date

St. John Climacus is honored by the Church as a great ascetic and as the author of a remarkable work entitled, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, and therefore he has been named "Climacus," or "of the Ladder."



There has been very little information preserved about his origin. Tradition tells us that he was born in around the year 570, and was the son of Sts. Xenophon and Maria, who are commemorated on January 26/February 28. St. John came to the monastery on Mt. Sinai at age sixteen. Abba Martyrius became his spiritual father and mentor. After four years of living on Mt. Sinai, John was tonsured a monk. One of the fathers present at his tonsure foretold that John would become a great luminary of Christ's

Church. St. John labored in asceticism for nineteen years in obedience to his spiritual father. After the death of Abba Martyrius, St. John chose the life of reclusion, departing to a desert place called Thola, where he lived forty years in silence, fasting, prayer, and repentant tears. It is not by chance that St. John speaks so much of repentant tears in *The Ladder*. "As fire burns and destroys dead wood, so do pure tears cleanse all impurity, both inwardly and outwardly." His prayer was strong and effective—this can be seen in the following example of the great ascetic's life.

St. John had a disciple, Monk Moses. One day St. John sent his disciple to spread soil on the garden beds. As he was fulfilling his obedience, Monk Moses became weary from the fierce summer heat and reclined under the shade of a large cliff. St. John was in his cell at that moment, resting a bit after his labor of prayer. Suddenly a man of venerable countenance appeared and woke the ascetic, reproofing him: "John, why are you resting peacefully here while Moses is in danger?" St. John immediately arose and began praying for his disciple. When Moses returned that evening, the saint asked him if anything had happened to him that day. The monk answered, "No, but I was in serious danger. A large rock broke off from a cliff under which I had fallen asleep at midday and nearly crushed me. Fortunately I was having a dream in which you were calling me, and I jumped up and ran; at that moment a huge rock fell with a crash upon that

very place where I was..."

It is known from St. John's life that he ate what was allowed by the rule of fasting, but within measure. He did not go without sleep at night, although he never slept more than was needed to support his strength for ceaseless vigilance, and so as not to negatively affect his mind. "I did not fast beyond measure," he said of himself, "and I did not conduct intensified night vigil, nor did I sleep on the ground; but I humbled myself..., and the Lord speedily saved me." The following example of St. John's humility is notable. Gifted with a strong, sharp mind that was made wise by deep spiritual experience, he taught everyone who came to him and guided them to salvation. But when certain others out of jealousy accused him of loquaciousness, which they said sprung from vainglory, St. John took a vow of silence in order not to tempt anyone, and remained thus for a year. His enviers admitted their error and begged the ascetic not to deprive them of his beneficial instruction.

To hide his ascetic labors from people, St. John would sometimes depart to a solitary cave, but fame of his holiness spread far beyond his enclosure, and people from all walks of life would come to him seeking a word of edification and salvation. When he was seventy-five years old, after forty years of ascetic labors in solitude, the saint was chosen to be abbot of Sinai. St. John Climacus ruled the holy monastery for four years. The Lord granted the saint many gifts of grace toward the end of his life, including clairvoyance and miracle-working.

During St. John's abbacy, another St. John, abbot of Raithu Monastery (commemorated on the Saturday of Cheesefare week) asked him to write the famous Ladder—instructions for the ascent to spiritual perfection. Knowing

of the saint's wisdom and spiritual gifts, the abbot of Raithu asked on behalf of all the monks of his monastery for "true instruction for those who seek unwaveringly, and a kind of steadfast ladder that will take those who desire it to the Heavenly gates..." St. John, who had a humble opinion of himself, first balked at the task but then set about writing the treatise out of obedience to the request of the Raithu monks. He thus called the work, *The Ladder*, explaining his choice: "I have built a ladder of ascent... from earth to holiness... In honor of the thirty years of the Lord, I have built a ladder of thirty steps, which if we climb it to the age of the Lord, we will be righteous and safe from falls." The aim of this treatise was to teach us that the attainment of salvation requires difficult self-denial and intense ascetical labor. *The Ladder* first suggests the cleansing of sinful impurity, the uprooting of vices and passions of the "old man"; second, it shows the restoration of God's image in man. Although the book was written for monks, any Christian who lives in the world will find it a reliable guide on the ascent to God. Pillars of spiritual life such as St. Theodore the Studite, St. Sergius of Radonezh, St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, and others continually referred to *The Ladder* as the best book for soul-saving instruction.

The content of one of the steps of *The Ladder* (No. 22) discusses the labor of uprooting vainglory. St. John writes, "Like the sun, which shines on all alike, vainglory beams on every occupation. What I mean is this: I fast, and turn vainglorious. I stop fasting so that I will draw no attention to myself, and I become vainglorious over my prudence. I dress well or badly, and am vainglorious in either case. I talk or I remain silent, and each time I am defeated. No matter how I shed this prickly thing, a spike remains to stand

up against me.

A vainglorious man is a believing idolater. Apparently honoring God, he actually is out to please not God but men. To be a showoff is to be vainglorious. The fast of such a man is unrewarded and his prayer futile, since he is practicing both to win praise. A vainglorious ascetic doubly cheats himself, wearying his body and getting no reward....

The Lord frequently hides from us even the perfections we have obtained. But the man who praises us, or, rather, who misleads us, opens our eyes with his words and once our eyes are opened, our treasures vanish.

The flatterer is a servant of the devils, a teacher of pride, the destroyer of contrition, a ruiner of virtues, a perverse guide. The prophet says, Those who honor you deceive you (Isa. 3:12).

Men of high spirit endure offense nobly and willingly. But only the holy and the saintly can pass unscathed through praise....

No one knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit within him (cf. 1 Cor. 2:11). Hence, those who want to praise us to our face should be ashamed and silent.

When you hear that your neighbor or your friend has denounced you behind your back or indeed in your presence, show him love and try to compliment him.

It is a great achievement to shrug the praise of men off one's soul. Greater still is to reject the praise of demons.

It is not the self-critical who reveals his humility (for does not everyone have somehow to put up with himself?).

Rather it is the man who continues to love the person who has criticized him....

Our neighbor is moved by nothing so much as by a sincere and humble way of talking and of behaving. It is an example and a spur to others never to become proud. And there is nothing to equal the benefit of this....

The Lord often humbles the vainglorious by causing some dishonor to befall them. And indeed the first step in overcoming vainglory is to remain silent and to accept dishonor gladly. The middle stage is to restrain every act of vainglory while it is still in thought. The end—if one may talk of an end to an abyss—is to be able to accept humiliation before others without actually feeling it....

When those who praise us, or, rather, those who lead us astray, begin to exalt us, we should briefly remember the multitude of our sins, and in this way, we will discover that we do not deserve whatever is said or done in our honor.

This and other sayings that we can find in The Ladder serve as an example of that holy zeal for our salvation that is necessary to everyone who wishes live a pious life; and this written treatise, which is the fruit of abundant and subtle observation over his own soul along with very deep spiritual experience, is a great benefit and guide along the path of truth and goodness.

The steps of The Ladder are the ascent from strength to strength on the human path to perfection, which can only be attained gradually and not suddenly; for, in the words of the Savior, The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Mt. 11:12).

From "Proslavie": 2013 - Translated from the Russian by OrthoChristian.com

Deposit from Week of 4/3	
Account Name	Deposit
Pledges from 2015	
Pledges for 2016	\$11,997
Bulletin	
Candles	\$453
Donations – Unspecified	
Flowers/Communion Wine	\$500
Loose Offerings	\$88
Greek School	
Sunday Church School	
Vacation Church School	
Special Envelopes	
Holy Week Envelopes	
Christmas Cards	
Baptismal Candles	
Socials/Special Projects	
Golf Outing	
Art Group	
Investment Club	
Hall Deposits for 2016	
Hall Deposits for 2017	
Hall Rental Income	
Caterers	
Miscellaneous Income	
Total Deposit	\$13,038

Mini Capital Campaign Update

	Pledged	Received	Balance
Matching Donors	\$75,000	\$62,000	\$13,000
Donations from Parishioners	\$64,745	\$65,745	
Total	\$139,745	\$127,745	
Disbursements Made to Date			\$22,115
Building Fund Balance			\$139,568

Financial Snapshot based on \$2,075.33 per day operating cost

Date	Weekly Collections	Weekly Collections Total	Estimated operational needs to following Sunday	Difference
Total through Mar.	\$173,191.73	\$173,191.73	\$195,081.02	-\$21,889.29
4/3	\$13,038	\$186,229.73	\$209,608.33	-\$23,378.60