

Holy Cross

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
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Weekly Bulletin

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Sunday, March 26, 2017

Commemorations Celebrated Today

The Sunday of St. John Climacus, Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel,
26 Martyrs in Crimea, Irenaeus the Hieromartyr of Hungary

Today is the fourth Sunday of Great Lent. This day is devoted to memory of Saint John of the Ladder. John of the Ladder was a great hermit, a great monk of Sinai monastery. He lived in the sixth century and by request of his brethren monks, wrote an instruction which is called the Ladder of Paradise. In this work he described the steps of man ascending to God, the degrees of spiritual perfection.

This book begins with the following words, "God is life and salvation for all whom is given free will as a gift". We, people, are given free will as a gift. And so at each moment of our life we choose where we are going. Are we ascending to God or going down?

One needn't do any efforts to go down. But to ascend to God one must do constant efforts. John of the Ladder tells us a lot and in detail about these efforts, what they consist of, and what they must be. And today I'd like to tell, as an example, about two things which are especially characteristic for people. About struggle with wrath and grief, about how these two passions defeat us.

Wrath as flame can burn the soul of a man in a minute. And grief, on the contrary, as a little grey mouse will eat away our heart till there is anything left from it. But the reason of both wrath and grief often come to us because of misunderstanding arising among people. We meet a man whom we may consider to be our friend, and suddenly he turns out to be an enemy. And it happens so because he tells about us such things in which we don't find any truth. And as a result we either get angry with this man or become sad.

But the situation can be quite different. Sometimes we ourselves notice in our neighbor qualities which cause great hostility in us. And again we either

become sad or get angry with this man. What shall we do with such feelings? First of all I think we must understand that what we are spoken about has nothing really to do with us. People praise us when we don't deserve it. People also scold us when we don't deserve it. The point is not what people tell about us. The point is that it is we ourselves who see in other people features which we want to notice. And this is very important because other people for us are like a mirror in which we can see ourselves.

There is such a spiritual rule that if anything in another man especially irritates and even anger you, then it is your own weak feature. You saw this feature in another man and hated it most of all. Because it is not his, but your weakness. It is you who must eliminate this weakness, learn to struggle with it.

We are told: love your neighbor and love your enemy. We always think: how can we love our enemy? Really, we can love our enemy only when we understand that the worst feature in our enemy is our own bad feature. And it is this that makes us angry or sad. So, in fact we don't like to stand in front of a mirror. We agree to stand in front of a mirror only when we are thankful and fine. Let's remember that we love our neighbor, must love him not only because he is an image of God but because he has an image of ourselves.

On these days we are making our way to Golgotha as the Word of God ascended Golgotha and the Love of God ascended Golgotha too. And we are going with God and learn this great love on days of Great Lent.

<http://www.orthodox-canada.com/the-fourth-sunday-of-great-lent/>

Quote From St. John Climacus

“To judge others is a shameless arrogation of the Divine prerogative; to condemn is the ruin of one's soul.” (Step 10, Section 14)

Hymns of the Day

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Grave Mode

Thou didst abolish death by Thy Cross; Thou didst open Paradise to the thief; Thou didst transform the myrrh-bearers' lamentation, and didst bid Thine Apostles to preach that Thou art risen, O Christ God, granting great mercy to the world.

Apolytikion for Annunciation of the Theotokos in the Fourth Mode

Today is the fountainhead of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery which was from eternity. The Son of God becometh the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel announceth the good tidings of grace; for this cause, let us cry to the Mother of God with him: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

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 through Your Cross.

Seasonal Kontakion in the Plagal Fourth Mode

O Champion General, I your City now inscribe to you, triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice O unwedded Bride.

This Week at Holy Cross

Today	Greek School Spaghetti Luncheon and Greek Independence Day Program
Monday	6:30 am Compline/Bible Study
Tuesday	7 pm Sts. Mary and Martha Group
Wednesday	4:30 pm Greek School 6 pm Presanctified Liturgy – GOYAns read Psalms then Dinner together at Sesame Inn following Liturgy
Friday	9 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm Akathist
Saturday	10 am - 2 pm Pre-Marriage Seminar 5pm Great Vespers/Confessions

Memorials

Mary Karakis – 9 Years

Theodore Carahalalis - 9 Years

Panorea Carahalalis

Ioannis “John” Carahalalis

Efthemia “Jenny” Carahalalis

Stalianos Keramedis - 33Years

Efstratios Keramedis -54Years

Asimina Keramidis - 25 Years

Mike Makris - 55 Years

James Fuller - 9 Years

Angeliki Tsourekis – 5 Years

*Altar Candles are sponsored by Jim Karakis in loving memory of His wife,
Mary Karakis.*

Altar Flowers are sponsored by Connie Carahalalis in loving memory of her husband Theodore Carahalalis and loved ones of Theodore Carahalalis and Connie Keramedis Carahalalis who have passed.

Coffee Hour Today is sponsored by the Poutous, Palonis, and Cywinski families.

If you are interested in sponsoring a 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.

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

Pascha Bread, \$10, will be baked tomorrow, Wednesday, March 29. You may purchase the freshly baked bread in the community center after 4PM. The bread may be purchased on Sundays, April 2 and April 9 after Liturgy.

Galatobouriko will be prepared this Tuesday, March 28 beginning at 9AM. Late arrivals are always welcome!

Palm Sunday Luncheon tickets will be presold next Sunday, April 2 at coffee hour. Tickets will also be available at the door. See today's bulletin for more information.

Volunteers are needed to serve and clean-up on Palm Sunday, April 9.

Our next Philoptochos meeting will be Tuesday, April 4 at 7PM.

Elaine Sofis, Philoptochos President

FOCUS Food Drive

We continue the Pascha food drive for FOCUS families today as well as next Sunday, April 2nd. Please place your non perishable donations in the boxes provided in the vestibule. No glass please. Thank you for your support and generosity.

Dianne Babb

Greek Dance Soup Fundraiser

The Holy Cross Greek Dance Group will be selling Lenten soup this TODAY!

The Soup is 5 dollars a container and can be purchased in the carpeted area of the Community Center and the Vestibule of the Church following Liturgy. Proceeds will help with the purchase of new costumes. A variety of soups are available -lentil, fasoulada (bean), vegetable and fava (split pea).

The Greek Dancers greatly appreciate your support!

Today is the last Sunday to buy tickets for the Syrian Relief Dinner, which will be sold during coffee hour today. The event is April 2, 2017 Sunday at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland.

Tickets are \$50 and \$20 (7-18 years old). Donations will also be accepted. It is sponsored by the IOCC Pittsburgh Metropolitan Committee, St. Nicholas Philoptochos and Antiochian Orthodox community. Checks can be made out to IOCC.



Important Food Festival Updates

Please note the date for Galatobouriko has been updated to this Tuesday, March 28th from 9am-4pm. If we need more time to finish, we'll be finishing on Thursday, March 30th. Call Galatobouriko chair Domenica Morante at +128123208 with any questions.

Spanakopita will be prepared Monday, April 3rd and Tuesday, April 4th from 9am-4pm. This is an especially intensive dish so any and all help is appreciated!

Be sure to join the Facebook group "Holy Cross Parish Updates" to easily stay up to speed and sign up to volunteer.

Letter Writing Mission

JOHNNY ZARRAS is a 5 year old boy who is hospitalized in Pittsburgh at the Children's Hospital Rehab Unit.

Here is what the family has to say about this young boy: "Johnny . . . was born with a genetic condition that causes delays, he was thriving up until 5 weeks ago. He came down with the flu, went into cardiac arrest and had to be air lifted to the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital. Unfortunately the virus impacted his weak body so much that he has brain damage and it is not clear if he will regain his ability to eat, talk, or even sit up again. It is hard to believe that six months ago he was giggling, chatting and running around on the playground and now his family is making plans to get wheelchair ramps, learn how to feed with a feeding tube and install appropriate housing adjustments for his wheelchair."

This is not a request for financial assistance, just a hope to "flood his room with love." If you are interested writing a note it can be sent to:

Johnny Zarras
Children's Hospital Rehab Unit
5324 Pennsylvania Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Please remember, all information one wishes to have appear in the weekly bulletin must be submitted to Jonathan McClish **NO LATER that 11:59pm on the Wednesday prior of the bulletin in which they wish to have the information. Please email all requests to mcclish.jonathan@gmail.com **

Friday April 7th

6:00 pm

In the Old Social Hall

Come help cut and separate palm leaves
for the making of palm Crosses the next
day,
Food will be provided!

(Sign up with Jonathan McClish so the correct amount of food can be
ordered)

Saturday of Lazarus April 8th

Orthros – 8:30 am

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 am

Potluck Luncheon Following Liturgy

(See Jonathan McClish to sign up lunch item you will bring)

Volunteers will help make Palm Crosses and
clean the church.

Acolytes will help clean and polish in the Altar.

During this time confession will be available.

Sign up or questions? Contact Jonathan McClish

mcclish.jonathan@gmail.com

330.612.2676



**Palm Sunday
Fish Luncheon
April 9, 2017**

Sponsored by Philoptochos

**Please join us after Liturgy for
Baked Cod, Rice, Salad, bread and Green Beans.
A cherry or apple cobbler for dessert.**

**Adults \$10 ~ Children 5-12 are \$5
4 and under/ free, served peanut butter and jelly
sandwiches, applesauce, chips and Oreo cookies**

**Ticket sales will be on Sunday, April 2 at coffee
hour and at the door on Palm Sunday, April 9.**

**To reserve by email contact Elaine Sofis at
esofis@comcast.net or 412 344-7046**

**Please reserve in advance so that
we can determine how much food to prepare!**