



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

4th Sunday of Great Lent + Sun, March 26th, 2023 + Sunday of St. John of the Ladder + Leavetaking of Annunciation



Hymns for Today's Service

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: "Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee!"

Gabriel, Commander of the heavenly hosts, we who are unworthy beseech thee: by thy prayers encompass us beneath the wings of thine immaterial glory, and faithfully preserve us who fall down and cry out to thee: "Deliver us from all harm, for thou art the Commander of the Powers on high!"

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Supreme Commander Gabriel, thou art the glorious intercessor and servant before the all-radiant, worthy, all-powerful, infinite and awesome Trinity. Ever pray now that we may be delivered from all tribulations and torments, so that we may cry out to thee: "Rejoice, protection of thy servants!"

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts! We, thy servants delivered from evil sing our grateful thanks to thee, O Theotokos. As thou dost possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: "Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!"

Please Sing Along!

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

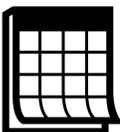
Epistle Reading - Hebrews 6:13-20

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.

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!

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, 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."



This Week's Schedule Doly TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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THIS WEEKEND - St. John of the Ladder Saturday, March 25th The Feast of the Annunciation

9 AM: Divine Liturgy, 5 PM: Great Vespers, Confession
6 PM: Lenten Movie Night - The Island (Ostrov)

Sunday, March 26th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Church School, Parish Potluck, Adult Education

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Parastas in Memory of Nancy Valletta

Offered by Clement & Nicolai Valletta

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THIS WEEK - 5th Week of Great Lent

WED, 11 AM-1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church

THIS WEDNESDAY @ Holy Trinity

Presanctified Liturgy @ 6 PM w/ Potluck

St. Mary's Antiochian Church and other area parishes
will be joining us for this week's Liturgy and Potluck.

Please bring a Lenten dish to share

THURS 6:30 PM: Great Canon w/ Life of St. Mary

FRI @ 6:30 PM: Akathist w/ Lity for Departed

SAT @ 9 AM: Divine Liturgy of St. John

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NEXT WEEKEND - St. Mary of Egypt

Saturday, April 1st

8 AM (Please note the time change for this week only):

Divine Liturgy, followed by Friends of the Poor

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confession

6 PM: Lenten Movie Night

Sunday, April 2nd

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Church School, Coffee Hour, Adult Education

Wilkes-Barre Deanery Mission Vespers

Sun, April 2nd @ 4 PM: All Saints Orthodox Church,
Olyphant w/ Lenten Meal



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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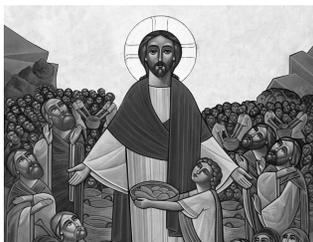
SATURDAYS: LENTEN MOVIE NIGHT: Saturday evenings following Great Vespers in the basement of the church Sherry Huntzinger will be hosting a Christian movie night. Popcorn will be provided.

LENTEN ADULT EDUCATION - The Orthodox Spiritual Life: Fr. Innocent will be presenting weekly Adult Education Class Sundays during coffee hour throughout Great Lent. Presentations will last 30

minutes followed by discussion and Q&A. This class will take the place of Orthodoxy 101 during Great Lent. Everyone is invited.

NEXT SATURDAY, APRIL 1st Holy Trinity Friends of the Poor

"Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance." + Saint John Chrysostom



According to the holy fathers of the Church, Great Lent is a time to complement our fasting with works of compassion, so that we might have our eyes opened and be granted the gift of repentance. Holy Trinity Friends of the Poor invites everyone to join us on **Saturday, April 1, 2023, following 8 AM Divine Liturgy**, on a pilgrimage to meet Christ in our poor neighbors in downtown Wilkes-Barre.

Everyone is encouraged to attend, singles, families, youngsters and oldsters. Let us open our hearts to the poor, that Christ may open our eyes to see Him everywhere. **A signup sheet is in the Narthex of the Church. Please sign up if you are intending to take part in this Lenten Mission outreach. We encourage as many as possible to attend.**

LENTEN FOOD SALE: A big thanks to all who helped at Friday's Lenten Food Sale. Please support & spread the word about our final sale - March 31 / 11AM - 5PM. Potato pancakes (3 for \$5) & soup (\$6 bowl/\$13 quart). Helpers are always needed & welcome. Volunteer sign-up sheet on the podium in the vestibule. Anyone who would be willing to donate a box of pancake mix (\$40) see Sandy.

BRING IN YOUR PUSSYWILLOWS: Anyone willing to harvest pussywillows from your yard or area for our Paschal celebration can now bring them to the church.

SAT APRIL 8th - ALTAR SERVER / PARISH CLEANUP FOR PASCHA: All are encouraged to come help prepare our beautiful church for Pascha. Parish altar servers, families, young and old, we are asking for help from youth and adults to help clean, dust, polish candles stands, etc. The day will begin with Divine Liturgy at 9 AM, followed by coffee, light snacks and cleaning. With enough help we should only have to work for a couple hours.



LENTEN & PASCHAL FLOWER DONATIONS

Donations towards adorning the church this Lenten season and Pascha are being collected so that our parish will be beautifully adorned for all of the feasts. General donations for flowers during lent are being accepted and will be used for the Feast of the Cross (flowers will adorn the cross) and Palm Sunday (Palms & Pussy Willows). Donations may be given to Deborah Mills. Please write "Flowers for Lent" in the memo. We will also continue our tradition of **Paschal Flower Donations** in memory and for the health of loved ones. 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

March Birthdays: Emma Lynn DiBatista (3/3), Abby Harvey (3/4), Lisa Marie Harvey (3/7), Isabela Sofrenovic (3/9), Dara Soljaga (3/11), Michael Polk (3/12) Nadine Breisch (3/13), Joshua Leonori (3/22), Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27), Jean Ann Hutz (3/31)

This Week's Birthdays: Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27), Jean Ann Hutz (3/31)

Ask Fr. Innocent: Do you have questions about the Orthodox faith? Submit your questions anonymously in the vestibule in the small black "Ask Fr. Innocent?" box. Questions will be answered during coffee hour and/or in the bulletin.

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Holoviak Family, Evelyn Kosmiski, Mat. Elizabeth, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Mary Ann Lepa, Mat. Delores Donlick, Vladimir & Marie Dutko, Alan, Cathy & Paul, Archpriest Vladimir, Tom & Joan Austin, Paul Berdy, Lilly, David, Elizabeth, George Krill, Lydia, John Zoranski, Melanie Bishop, Hannah Selick **Departed:**



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 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

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Last Week’s Collection/Donations (3/19) : \$5,530</p>
