



Welcome!

Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

- Monday, April 8**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Tuesday, April 9**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Wednesday, April 10**
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Lenten Fellowship Meal
- Thursday, April 11**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Friday, April 12**
7:00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God
- Saturday, April 13**
9:30 am Liturgy and Retreat at St Mary, Southside
4:30 pm Confessions
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil
- Sunday, April 14 – St Mary of Egypt**
9:00 am Adult Education
10:00 am Divine Liturgy

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org
April 7, 2019

Announcements

➤ **Our Lenten Effort:** In addition to increased prayer and almsgiving, the Church prescribes that we refrain from eating meat and dairy products throughout the entirety of Lent and Holy Week. While it is understood that some find the prescription challenging, **everyone is encouraged to do something, and not to ignore the fast, which is both unchristian and unorthodox.** Most importantly, we are also to “fast from sin as we fast from food.” May God strengthen you in your Lenten journey to enter the Lord’s Pascha.

➤ Please consider supporting our **annual Easter Basket for Families in Need.** You will see the flyer in today’s bulletin. Please see Donya Yewisiak with any questions and to participate. God bless you for your generosity! **We are in great need of monetary donations! Deadline is next Sunday!**

➤ **“Spiritual Self-Care: Warming Up Our Parishes”** is a Lenten retreat on **Saturday, April 13** at St Mary Orthodox Church (OCA) in the Southside led by Mother Christophora of Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Ellwood City. Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 am followed by a Lenten brunch. The talk begins at 11:30 am and the retreat will end around 1:00 pm. The event is free and open to the public.

- **Reminder:** Our services for Holy Pascha are:
 - **Saturday April 27 9:00 pm**
Nocturn w/ procession/Matins/Divine Liturgy
Blessing of Baskets and Paschal fellowship following services
 - **Sunday, April 28 12:00 pm Noon**
Paschal Vespers

For the full Holy Week and Paschal schedule, consult the online calendar.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be Hospitalized;* Jack Saban (VA). *Home:* Georgiann Robes. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Olga Bednar, Garnette Kerchum, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

Vigil Lights from Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Michelle Bittner. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha and Michelle Bittner. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, (cousin) Michael Wasilko and Leonard Soroka; for the health of Fr. Igor Soroka. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of (sister) Barbara and Michelle Bittner. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family; Happy Birthday & Many Years to Fr. Igor! **From Michelle Bittner** for the health of Jack Saban, Sasha Bittner and Greg (awaiting kidney transplant); special intentions. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servant, Reader Leonard; for the health of Michelle Bittner and Fr. Igor Soroka (on his birthday). **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the health of my family; special intentions. **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for the departed servant, William Mamay; for the health of our grandchildren.



Thank you

To **Matushka Nancy Mell and Gregory Mell** for sponsoring the bulletin and all donation categories (\$210 total) in memory of Deacon Joseph Mell. God bless you!

St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Ladder of Divine Ascent

Today we commemorate St John “Climacus” (which means “The Ladder”). His classic book, **“The Ladder of Divine Ascent,”** detailed 30 steps necessary for anyone who loves God to draw closer to Him. The book is classic because it speaks very plainly and insightfully about the state of the lives of humans and how they can become spiritually whole. These are a few quotes from his book:

“Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly the angel who guards you will honour your patience. While a wound is still fresh and warm it is easy to heal, but old, neglected and festering ones are hard to cure, and require for their care much treatment, cutting, plastering and cauterization. Many from long neglect become incurable. But with God all things are possible [Mt 19:26].” (5:30)

“The first stage of this tranquility consists in silencing the lips when the heart is excited. The second, in silencing the mind when the soul is still excited. The goal is a perfect peacefulness even in the middle of the raging storm.” (8:4)

“Remembrance of wrongs is the consummation of anger, the keeper of sins, hatred of righteousness, ruin of virtues, poison of the soul, worm of the mind, shame of prayer, stopping of supplication, estrangement of love, a nail stuck in the soul, pleasureless feeling beloved in the sweetness of bitterness, continuous sin, unsleeping transgression, hourly malice. This dark and hateful passion, I mean remembrance of wrongs, is one of those that are produced but have no offspring. That is why we do not intend to say much about it. He who has put a stop to anger has also destroyed remembrance of wrongs; because childbirth continues only while the father is alive.” (9:2-4)

Hymns and Readings for Today

Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

Troparion of St Nicholas Tone 4

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence. Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you! Because of your poverty riches were granted to you! O holy Bishop Nicholas, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Troparion of St John Climacus Tone 1

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body, You were a wonder-worker, O our God-bearing Father John! You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: Healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith. Glory to Him who gave you strength! Glory to Him who granted you a crown! Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

Kontakion of St John Climacus Tone 4

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

Kontaion of the Theotokos Tone 6

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our intercessions and to intercede for us, O Theotokos

For you always protect those who honor you.

Prokeimenon (Psalm 104) Tone 4

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Epistle of the Sunday (Heb 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 of the Sunday (Mk 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."

And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Communion Hymn (Ps 148)

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! The light of Thy countenance has shown on us, O Lord!

Having passed half the distance of this Holy Fast, let us strive, rejoicing with steadfastness, to its end. Let us anoint ourselves with the oil of charity, that we may be worthy to adore the noble Passion of Christ our God, and attain His most honored and holy Resurrection!

Today in Church School

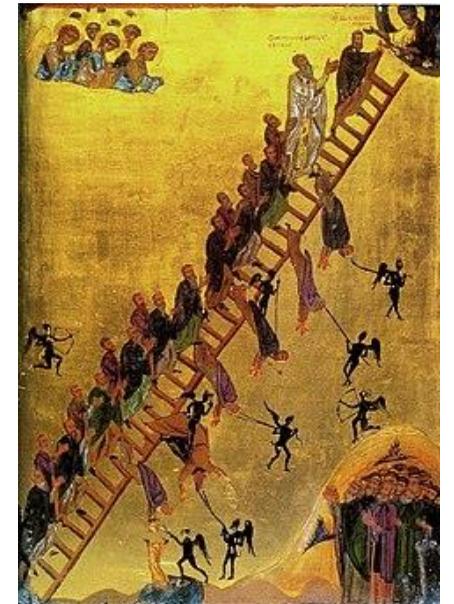
Today's lesson: Hesychasm and Saint Gregory Palamas

Questions to ask/review:

- Who was St. Gregory?
- What did St. Gregory teach about God and prayer?
- What does hesychasm mean? What prayer is commonly used to practice it? What is this prayer called?
- Who was Balaam? What did he teach? Why was he wrong?
- When does the church remember St. Gregory for his significant teachings?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Teach your children to learn the Jesus prayer (below). Practice silent prayer, even if for just a few minutes. Encourage the children to repeat the Jesus prayer silently. Discuss the importance of silence in bringing us closer to God.
- Create doves from construction paper or paper plates.
- Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."





EASTER FOOD BASKETS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES 2019

Please review the list of food items and indicate on the form the food item or monetary donation which you have selected to donate for the Easter Basket project. Please make checks payable to "St. Nicholas Orthodox Church." Acknowledgements for donations will be issued for tax purposes. Donations will be accepted through **Sunday, April 14, 2019**

Please submit completed form to Donya Yewisiak at your earliest convenience.

- ~~12 Hams (fully cooked—whole/semi-boneless)~~
- ~~12 Rings of Kielbasi~~
- 12- Five pound bags of potatoes**
- ~~12 Five pound bags of flour~~
- 12- Five pound bags of sugar**
- ~~12 Cans of vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, sliced beets, etc.)~~
- ~~12 Jars of applesauce (24 oz.)~~
- ~~12 Jars of pickles~~
- ~~12 Cans of black olives~~
- ~~12 Cans of fruit (pineapple slices)~~
- ~~12 Boxes of Jell-O~~
- ~~12 Boxes of pudding~~
- ~~12 Boxes of cake mix~~
- 12- Cans of cake icing**
- ~~12 Three pound cans of coffee~~
- 12- Bottles of salad dressing**
- ~~12 Jars of horseradish~~
- ~~12 Two liter bottles of soda~~

Additionally, monetary donations will be accepted in lieu of perishable and miscellaneous items. Eggs, cheese, milk, bread, fresh fruit, vegetables, and children's Easter baskets will be purchased for the recipient families. Distribution of the baskets will be coordinated through the Holy Family Institute of McKees Rocks, PA. Thank you,

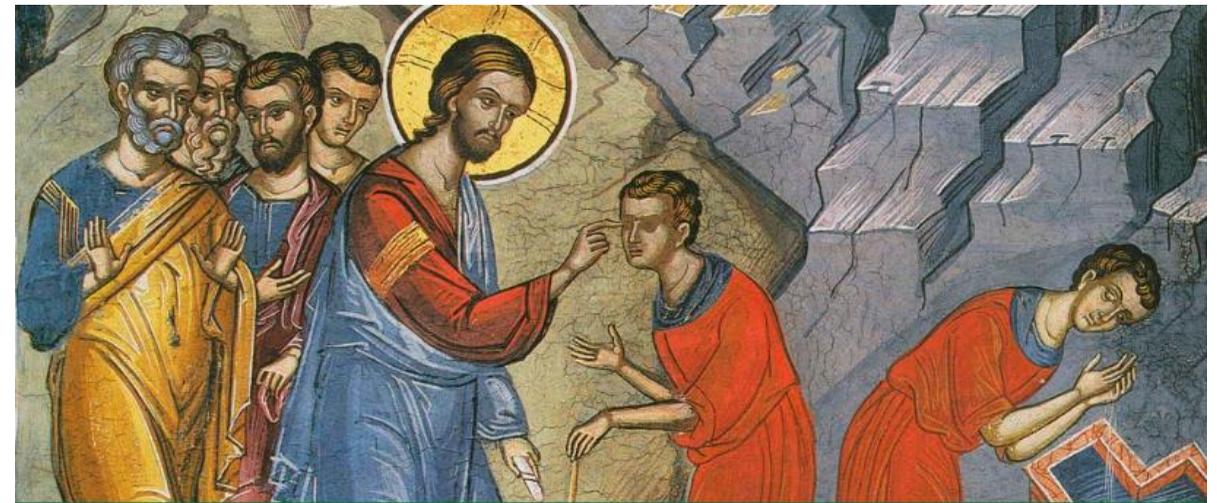
Donya Yewisiak
Project Coordinator
412 848 7513 cell

Easter Food Baskets for Needy Families 2019

Name _____

I would like to donate _____
(Please indicate number and type of item.)

I would like to make a monetary donation in the amount of \$ _____.



MOTHER CHRISTOPHORA
ABBESS OF THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE: WARMING UP OUR PARISHES

Saturday, April 13, 2019

9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed by Lenten Brunch

11:30am to 1:00 pm Presentation by Mother Christophora

ST MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH
105 S 19TH STREET, PITTSBURGH PA 15203

*Free off-street parking available in the school parking lot
behind the church off of Carey Way*

This event is free and open to the public. Sponsored by the Northwest Deanery of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, OCA.