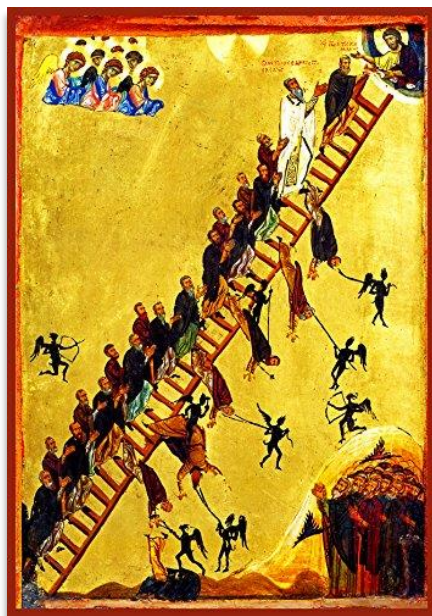


Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



*St. John Climacus (of the
Ladder)*

4th Sunday of Great Lent

April 3rd, 2022

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19; Hebrews 6:13-20
Gospel: St. Matthew 4:25-5:12; St. Mark 9:17-31

A warm welcome to everyone this morning! Please join us for some fellowship after in the Parish Hall!

Services, Events & Announcements

- + **Presanctified Liturgy** – Wednesday April 6th @ 5:30 (9th Hour @ 5:20) Lenten potluck following
- + **Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete** – Thursday April 7th @ 5:30
- + **Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos** – Friday April 8th @ 5:30
- + **Great Vespers** – Saturday April 9th @ 5pm
- + **Divine Liturgy** – *Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt* – April 10th @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40), a Lenten fellowship following in the Hall.
- + Please let Fr Seraphim know when you would like to go to confession during this Lenten Season, before Holy Week.
- + Michael Juran wishes to thank everyone who had a part in helping him (and Catherine Mann) get settled in his home.

Our Giving – March 27th, 2022

Tithes/Offerings – \$1,327.00 / Online Giving – \$125.00
Candle Offerings – \$83.00 / Love Offerings – \$20.00

Regarding Holy Communion: Only those faithful who are Orthodox Christians and have properly prepared themselves by fasting, prayer [i.e., *Prayers Before Communion*], recent confession, and who were *at least present for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel* should approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. ***We should all be at peace with everyone too.*** If you have any questions about Communion, please see Fr. Seraphim. 😊

Sunday Four in Great Lent by Blessed Metropolitan Philaret

It is necessary to remember this. People forget that the path of Christianity is indeed an ascetical labour. Last Sunday, we heard how the Lord said: "He that would come after Me, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow Me." The Lord said this with the greatest emphasis. Therefore, the Christian must be one who takes up his cross, and his life, likewise, must be an ascetic labour of bearing that cross. Whatever the outward circumstance of his life, be he monk or layman, it is of no consequence. In either case, if he does not force himself to mount upwards, then, of a certainty, he will fall lower and lower.

And in this regard, alas, people have confused thoughts. For example, a clergyman drops by a home during a fast. Cordially and thoughtfully, they offer him fast food (i.e., food prepared according to the rules of the Fast), and say: "For you, fast food, of course!" To this, one of our hierarchs customarily replies: "Yes, I am Orthodox. But who gave you permission not to keep the fasts?" All the fasts of the Church, all the ordinances, are mandatory for every Orthodox person. Speaking of monastics, such ascetics as St. John of the Ladder and those like him fasted much more rigorously than the Church prescribes; but this was a matter of their spiritual ardour, an instance of their personal ascetic labour. This the Church does not require of everyone, because it is not in accord with everyone's strength. But the Church DOES require of every Orthodox the keeping of those fasts which She has established.

Oftentimes have I quoted the words of Saint Seraphim, and once again shall I mention them. Once there came to him a mother who was concerned about how she might arrange the best possible marriage for her young daughter. When she came to Saint Seraphim for advice, he said to her: "Before all else, ensure that he, whom your daughter chooses as her companion for life, keeps the fasts. If he does not, then he is not a Christian, whatever he may consider himself to be." You see how the greatest saint of the Russian Church, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, a man who, better than we, knew what Orthodoxy is, spoke concerning the fasts?

Let us remember this. Saint John Climacus has described the ladder of spiritual ascent: then let us not forget that each Christian must ascend thereon. The great ascetics ascended like swiftly-flying eagles; we scarcely ascend at all. Nonetheless, let us not forget that, unless we employ our efforts in correcting ourselves and our lives, we shall cease our ascent, and, most assuredly, we shall begin to fall. Amen.

From St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), pp. xxxi - xxxiii.

Prayers For the Health and Salvation of those in need: Many Years!
His Eminence Archbishop Mark, Priestmonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel & Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Archpriest Moses (Berry), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Presbytera Rosy (Tanveer), Helen Maybo, Paul Beard, Evelyn Chabal, Phoebe Davis, Michael Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, & those suffering in the Ukraine.

Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal!
Protodeacon Sergius Miller +3/16 & those who have lost their lives in the Ukraine.