

Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



*Sunday of the Ladder*

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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## ***Scripture Readings:***

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

***A very warm welcome to everyone, and especially to our visitors  
this morning! Please join us for some fellowship after in the  
Parish Hall!***

## **Services, Events & Announcements**

- + Church **open** for prayer/Confession – Tues April 16<sup>th</sup> - 7-9:30am
- + **Presanctified Liturgy** – Weds April 17<sup>th</sup> – ***Ninth Hour & Liturgy*** at 5:20) - *Lenten potluck* fellowship following in the Hall.
- + Church **open** for prayer/Confession – Thurs April 18<sup>th</sup> - 7–9:30am
- + **Great Canon of St Andrew** – Thurs April 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30
- + **Akathist to the Holy Theotokos** – Fri April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30
- + Sat April 20<sup>th</sup> – ***Community Luncheon*** 10 - Noon
- + Sat April 20<sup>th</sup> – ***Choir Practice*** at 4
- + Sat April 20<sup>th</sup> - ***Great Vespers*** at 5
- + Sun April 21<sup>st</sup> - ***Hours & Divine Liturgy*** at 9:40 – Lenten fellowship following in the Hall.
- + *Fr Seraphim is available for Confession before Presanctified Liturgies, Great Vespers or see him for an appointment.*

## ***Our Giving – April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024***

Tithes/Offerings - \$2,080.00 / Online Giving - \$260.00  
Candle Offerings – \$91.00 / Memorial - \$100.00

***Thank you all for your generosity!***

**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. 😊

***Homily on St John of Climacus  
by Metropolitan Sotirios of Pisidia***

The idea of classifying the virtues as ascending steps for the Christian to reach heaven was inspired by Jacob's famous vision, where he saw a ladder resting on the earth which reached heaven and had the angels descending. It is a simple measure of where a Christian is in the spiritual life. As St. John writes, anyone with faith can climb the ladder to Heaven, step by step. A person reflects on their passions and the virtues that God has given to them, seeing what rung they are on. It is a non-stop process, for the Christian is always striving upwards to the next level. St. John urges patience for those who are just beginning, as it is a constant and never-ending struggle. Just as you would climb a regular ladder carefully, step by step, so it is with this spiritual ladder. There is no rush or skipping rungs. Thirty steps to the Heavenly Kingdom. Don't be tempted by the thought of doing it by your own power or will or discouraged by the height. You will not be alone, but the Holy Angels will be with you, helping you. At the top is Christ, giving you strength.

Let's look at some of these thirty virtues (corresponding to Christ's years on earth until His ministry began), which are not only for monastics, but for all Christians. As St. John notes, before a person can even begin the ascent, there are some basic virtues that must be nurtured:

***Humility.*** Humble yourself, and you will see how much easier it is to take that first step. True humility requires actions, not words. St. Paul the Apostle says of himself: "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*" (1 Timothy 1:15). It was in this humility that the Lord saved him.

**Obedience.** To obey God first in our lives. Because Adam and Eve failed to do this, they lost Paradise, and all the evils came into the world. With our free and unselfish obedience to God, we will regain Paradise. This obedience includes the people who lead us to God, who are responsible for the care of our souls. It even extends to those in our family and society. The man listens to his wife and the woman listens to her husband. Brothers and sisters listen to each other.

Other virtues mentioned by Saint John are **Repentance, meekness, forgiveness, kindness, fasting, mental and physical purity, almsgiving, discernment**; we must act accordingly in our lives. **Prayer** unites us with God. On the last steps are **faith, hope, and love** for God and man. That's where the thirty-step ladder ends. One of these virtues alone will not save us. A ladder that is missing rungs is impossible to climb. It is like a royal crown, which is adorned with diamonds of different sizes, pearls, and other precious gems. All of these virtues come together in a glorious crown.

St. John encourages us all: "*Go up, brethren, go up willingly and rejoice in this angelic ladder, that we may come to the mountain of the Lord, to His high throne.*" Amen

([www.pemptousia.com/2020/03/homily-on-st-john-of-climacus/](http://www.pemptousia.com/2020/03/homily-on-st-john-of-climacus/))

### **Prayers For the Health and Salvation of those in need: Many Years!**

His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, Priestmonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel & Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Archpriest Michael (Evans), Archpriest Antony (Hughes), Archpriest Gregory (White), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Pres. Rosy (Tanveer), Mat. Mary Lynn (Henry), Anastasia Linnehan & Sarah Gunter (children to be born of them), Paul Beard, Evelyn Chabal, James Larson, Mary Lamprinos, Michael Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Elias Ciaccio, Elizabeth Wadsworth, Sebastian Fillar, Isaac Bannister, Christine Perrin, Elizabeth Yonkin, Michael Lazorchak, Brian Gunter, Vladimir Kerkendall, Alec Litchard, Zina Dimirkow, Patricia Brown, & those suffering from the wars in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East

### **Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal!**

Archpriest Anthony Karbo +3/19, Archpriest Herman Schick +3/17, Madeline Minarich +3/22, Edward Hojnicky +4/4 & those who have lost their lives in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East