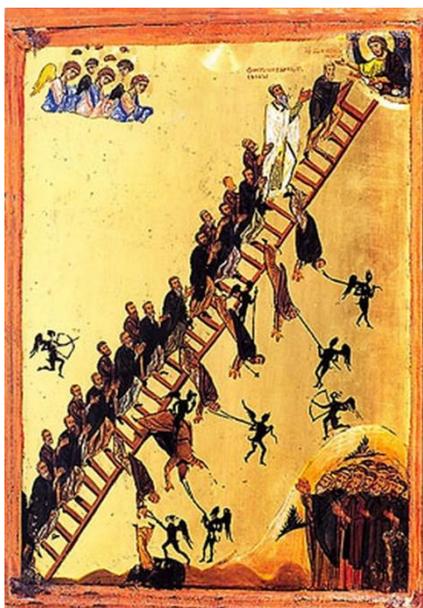


Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



St. John Climacus

“Of the Ladder”

4th Sunday of Great Lent

March 29th, 2020

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

1725 Holy Cross Ln
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-2749

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Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: St. Mark 9:17-31

Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning via our live streaming! You are most welcome to be with us anytime!

Services, Events & Announcements

****Services are being streamed live on our Facebook page****

++Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – Wed. Apr 1st @ 6pm (Hours @ 5:45)

++Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – Fri. Apr 3rd @ 6pm (Hours @ 5:45)

++Great Vespers – Sat. Apr. 4th @ 5pm

++Divine Liturgy – Sun. Apr 5th @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40)

****In accordance with Archbishop Mark's directive, ALL Services and gatherings (Church School, Council, etc . . .) and Fellowship Hours are suspended until further notice. As soon as any schedule changes happen, they will be posted.**

Our Giving –Mar 22nd, 2020

Tithes/Offerings - \$405.00

Candles - \$56.00

From Your Pastor . . .

During this time of crisis in our community and nation, let us remember to reach out to those who might need a helping hand, if even a phone call, a card, a text or email. It has been

good to hear of those in our Parish reaching out to others and helping. If you know of someone who needs help, and you need my assistance, please let me know. It will certainly be good to see everyone again! May the Lord bless y'all for your many kindnesses!

+ Fr. Seraphim

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER
9 April 1989

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Lent is a time of repentance, a time when our heart of stone must be made by the power of God into a heart of flesh, from insensitive to become perceptive, from cold and hard to become warm and open to others, and indeed, to God Himself.

Lent is a time of renewal when like spring, everything become new again; when our life that had gone into a twilight becomes alive with all the intensity which God can communicate to us, humans, by making us partakers of His Holy Spirit, by making us partakers, through the Holy Sacraments and the direct gift of God, of the Divine nature.

It is a time of reconciliation, and reconciliation is a joy: it is God's joy, and it is our joy; it's a new beginning.

Today is the day of Saint John of the Ladder, and I want to read to you a few phrases of his which are relevant to the particular time of the year in which we live:

“Repentance, that is our return to God is renewal of our baptism; it is our effort to renew our covenant with God, our promise to change our life. It is a time when we can acquire humility, that is peace; peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with all the created world. Repentance is born of hope and rejection of despair. And one who repents, is one who deserves condemnation - and yet, goes away from the tribunal without shame, because repentance is our peace with God. And this is achieved through a worthy life, alien to the sins we committed in the past. Repentance is cleansing of our conscience. Repentance implies carrying off all sadness and pain.”

And if we ask ourselves how we can achieve it, how we can come to this, how we can respond to God Who receives us as the father received the prodigal son, a God Who has waited for us, longingly, Who, rejected, never turned away from us - how can we respond to Him? Here is a short word about prayer:

“Don't use in prayer falsely wise words; because it is often the simple and uncomplicated whispering of children that rejoices our heavenly Father. Don't try to say much when you speak to God, because otherwise your mind in search of words will be lost in them. One word spoken by the publican brought Divine mercy upon him; one word filled with faith saved the thief on the cross. The use of the multiplicity of words when we pray disperses our mind and fill it with imaginations. One word spoken to God collects the mind in His presence. And if a word, in thy prayer, reaches you deeply, if you perceive it profoundly - dwell in it, dwell in it, because at such moments our Angel guardian prays with us because we are true to ourselves and to God”.

Let us remember what Saint John of the Ladder says, even if you forget the short comments (which I introduced) to make his text more readily understandable. Let us remember his words because he was a man who knew what it means to turn to God, to stay with God, to be God's joy and to rejoice in Him. He is offered us in this time, when we are ascending towards the days of the Passion, he is offered us as an example of what grace Divine can do to transform an ordinary, simple human being into a light to the world.

Let us learn from him, let us follow his example, let us rejoice in what God can do by His power in a human being, and let us confidently, with faith, with an exulting and yet serene joy follow the advice, listen to God begging us to find a way of life and telling us that with Him, in Him we will be alive, because He is the Truth but also the Way and also Life eternal. Amen.

“If you cannot be merciful, at least speak as though you are a sinner. If you are not a peacemaker, at least do not be a troublemaker. If you cannot be assiduous, at least in your thought be like a sluggard. If you are not victorious, do not exalt yourself over the vanquished. If you cannot close the mouth of a man who disparages his companion, at least refrain from joining him in this.” +St. Isaac the Syrian