



**ST. PETER & ST. PAUL
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
105 CLIFTON AVE
ANSONIA, CT 06401
Rectory Phone 203-734-3895
Church Hall 203-732-2414**



Fr. Ed Cell 413-218-6404

March 19, 2023

Web Site: www.stspucc.org

Very Rev. Archpriest Edward Canon Young, Pastor

Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast: St. John Climacus. The Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria (253-60) Great Fast Day 28. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated today. Hebrews 6:13-20; Mark 9:17-31. .

Epistles : Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel Mark 9:17-31. Tone: Sheet

DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE

WEEKDAYS: MONDAY–FRIDAY 10:00AM

SUNDAY: 8:30 AM (Ukr.) & 10:00 AM (Eng.)

Confessions are heard before each Divine Liturgy:

Sunday 8:00AM to 8:30AM and
9:30AM until 10:00AM

Religious Education – Saturday 10:00AM – 11:00AM

Sunday After 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy
Call Audrey Sokol 203-924-1184 for more information.

Preservation – Please use the form in church vestibule, mail it to the church or bring it to Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young or Robert Jaskilka.

Address or Name Change/New Phone Number

– Please update your records. See Michael Wysowski, Jr. to update this info. Returned checks are subject to a **\$35.00 fee**.

Bulletin Notices – Notices for the bulletin must be **in writing** by Wednesday @6PM to be included in that week's bulletin.

Parish Council meets every 3rd Wednesday of every month @7:15pm in the church hall.

Rectory Office Hours - Thursday 1:00 to 3:00 PM or by Appointment on other days

****Please Note ****

Mass Offerings, Sorokousty

Mother's Day, Father's Day

Checks must be made out to the Fr. Edward Young **not the Church** ! Thank You...

Baptism Arrangement for baptism is to be made personally at the Parish Office. Please call rectory for an appointment.

Marriage – Arrangements for marriage are to be made at least **6 months prior** to the Wedding date. Please call rectory for an appointment.

Sick Calls – To arrange for Sacraments for the elderly and sick at home, please call Parish Office Fr. Young at 203-734-3895, **Please advise the rectory of any hospitalization.**

In your Estate planning – Remember Sts. Peter & Paul Church in your will.

Stewardship - "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10). All Catholics, should give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church

Special Share in the Eucharist *– Bread & Wine offered for a week, month, or year. Donations: one week - \$20.00 Donors/intentions will be listed. Robert Jaskilka, Michael Wysowski, Jr or Fr. Edward Young

Eternal Light *– offered to light for a week \$10.00. Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

Virgin Mary's Lamp and Sacred Heart Lamp* also available for offering! Offered to light for a week is 10.00, each. Robert Jaskilka Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

All start on Monday to Sunday!

***Offering must be made when dates are reserved!**




A Welcome to St. Peter and St. Paul Parish to all who are worshipping with us today. If you are over twenty-one years of age and have not yet registered, have moved or will be moving, or have a new telephone number, please fill out the form below .Each household must be registered at St. Peter and St. Paul and every adult receives a set of stewardship envelopes. Registration also entails an annual dues to the parish. If a parishioner is not registered, it is difficult for church authorities to issue him or her a sponsor certificate, reference, or any other certification.

Name _____ Phone# _____ Email _____
 Address _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

The Kontakion of the Feast of the Annunciation, in Tone 8: O victorious leader of triumphant hosts, / We the servants delivered from all evil sing our grateful thanks to thee, O Theotokos, / as thou dost possess invincible might, set us from every calamity, /// So that we may sing: Rejoice, O unwedded bride! **Ikos:** A prince of the angels was sent from heaven to say to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!' And seeing Thee, O Lord, take bodily form at the sound of his bodiless voice, he was filled with amazement and stood still, and cried out to her: Rejoice, thou through whom joy will shine forth: / Rejoice, thou through whom the curse will cease. / Rejoice, thou restoration of fallen Adam: / Rejoice, thou redemption of the tears of Eve. // Rejoice, thou height hard to climb for the thought of man: / Rejoice, thou depth hard to perceive even for the eyes of angels. / Rejoice, thou that art the throne of the King: / Rejoice, thou who dost hold Him who holds all. // Rejoice, thou Star who dost make the Sun appear: / Rejoice, thou Womb of the divine incarnation. / Rejoice, thou through whom the creation is made new: / Rejoice, thou through whom the Creator becomes a newborn child. /// Rejoice, O unwedded Bride, O unwedded Bride!

Bread and Wine Offering- None Offered

03/18	SATURDAY	9:30 AM 10:00 AM 3:00 PM	Confession English & Ukrainian 4 th All Souls Saturday Divine Liturgy offered for All the Faithfully departed followed by the reading of the names of our beloved. Deceased Mission Sermon Confessions Fr. Philip English & Ukrainian
03/19	SUNDAY	8:30AM 10:00 AM	Fr. Philip will be hearing confessions before and after the Liturgies. Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всix Парафіян +Mary Lou Malinak req. by Anne Malinak & Family
03/20	MONDAY		No Liturgy
03/21	TUESDAY	10:00 AM	+Thomas Francis Lillis req. by Robert Jaskilka
03/22	WEDNESDAY	6:00 PM	Stations of the Cross English
03/23	THURSDAY	10:00 AM	+THEODORE, MICHAELINA, ANN MARIE, WILLIAM, OLGA & JAMES ZACHARIEWICZ
03/24	FRIDAY	7:00 PM	The Vigil of the Annunciation BVM Holy Day of the Obligation СВЯТИЙ ДЕНЬ ОБОВ'ЯЗКУ +Tekla Zanowiak req. by Peter & Barbara Pysarchyk
03/25	SATURDAY	10:00 AM	Feast of the Annunciation Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God Holy Day of the Obligation СВЯТИЙ ДЕНЬ ОБОВ'ЯЗКУ Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всix Парафіян
03/26	SUNDAY	8:30AM 10:00 AM	Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всix Парафіян +Jaroslaw Kasprzyk req. by Melania Kasprzyk

ETERNAL LIGHT		<i>In loving memory of +Peter Symochko by John & Helen Zanowiak & Family</i>
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP		<i>In loving memory of +Peter Symochko by John & Helen Zanowiak & Family</i>
SACRED HEART of JESUS LAMP		<i>None Offered</i>

BREAD & WINE OFFERING RESERVED DATES 4/10/23-4/16/23	ETERNAL LIGHT LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 3/27/23-4/2/23 4/3/23-4/9/23 4/10/23-4/16/23 4/14/23-4/23/23 4/24/23-4/30/23 5/1/23-5/7/23 5/8/23-5/14/23 5/15/23+5/21/23 8/14/23-8/20/23 9/4/23-9/10/23 12/25/23-12/31/23	BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 3/27/23-4/2/23 4/3/23-4/9/23 4/10/23-4/16/23 4/24/23-4/30/23 5/8/23-5/14/23 5/22/23-5/28/23 6/26/23-7/2/23	SACRED HEART OF JESUS LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 4/3/23-4/9/23 4/10/23-4/16/23 4/24/23-4/30/23
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2023 & Past Church Dues (Blue Book) (Kollekt)

During Lent & every Sunday dues current & past will be collected in the church hall after 8:30 AM & 10AM Sunday Liturgies.

Please bring your dues book to the **church hall** dues will not be collected in the rectory

Back on January 25, 2005 the Parish Council voted to increase the yearly dues to \$75.00 per member. ,

Do not place dues in your weekly envelope offering !

Please remember - this is not our church but YOUR church!

Please fulfill your responsibility to your Church!!

TODAY



Sunday, at 9:30 AM there will be the Recitation of the Holy Rosary of Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. One of the intentions for our prayers will be for our parish, and the needs for Ukraine. In this time of Foreign Invasion prayers are needed for we are hearing of the deaths of some many Soldiers and Civilians each day. Please Pray for USA and Ukraine in this time of Great NEED!
God Save and Protect! Боже спаси і О Хорони!



PRAYER FOR OUR NATION Lord, we pray for peace and unity in our nation today. Keep us in peace, O Christ our God, under the protection of your Holy Cross; save us from our enemies, visible and invisible, that we may glorify You with thanksgiving, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. We pray that You would inspire this nation to be a nation under God. Give us your hope. Give us your peace. Amen

The Light of God ~ surround us. The Love of God ~ enfold us.

The Power of God ~ protect us. The Presence of God ~ watch over us.

The Mind of God ~ Guide us. The Law of God ~ direct us.

Wherever we are God ~ be our strength.
PRAY FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE AND THE WORLD: MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS, THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL, SPREAD YOUR OMOPHOR ~ WE IMPLORER YOUR PROTECTION OVER UKRAINE AND BEG THAT YOU INTERCEDE WITH OUR LORD TO GRANT PEACE.




PRAYER FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF UKRAINE IN TIME OF INVASION: O Lord God of powers, and God of our salvation, O God, who alone work wonders: look down with mercy and compassion on





Your humble servants, and out of love for mankind hearken and have mercy on us and on the land of Ukraine. For, behold, enemies have once more gathered together, in order to cause division and enmity. But You who know all things, understand that they have risen up righteously, and that it will be impossible to oppose their multitudes unless You show us Your help. Therefore, we who are sinful and unworthy pray unto You in repentance and with tears: Help us, O God, our Savior, and deliver the land of Ukraine for the sake of the glory of Your Name, that the enemy may not say: "Their God has forsaken them, and there is none to deliver and save them." But let every nation understand that You are our God, and we Your people are always protected under Your dominion.



Church Donation - \$1,000.00 in memory +Pyrh Family by Jo Anna R. Holden

The League of Ukrainian Catholics
Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the US




Reflections for Great Lent


Online Spiritual Retreat
Sunday, March 19th, 2023
4:00 pm EST





- * **Hope:** Understanding To What God Has Called Us
- * **Forgiveness as The First Step:** Healing Wounds & Trauma
- * **Love Instead of Fear:** Attention To The Poor and Marginalized
- * **Joy & The Gift of Family:** Nurturing the Domestic Church

Register at LeagueofUkrainianCatholics.org
or scan the QR code 

REFLECTIONS FOR GREAT LENT

Ukrainian Catholic Bishops in the United States of America



Archbishop Borys Gudziak

Bishop Paul Chomnycky

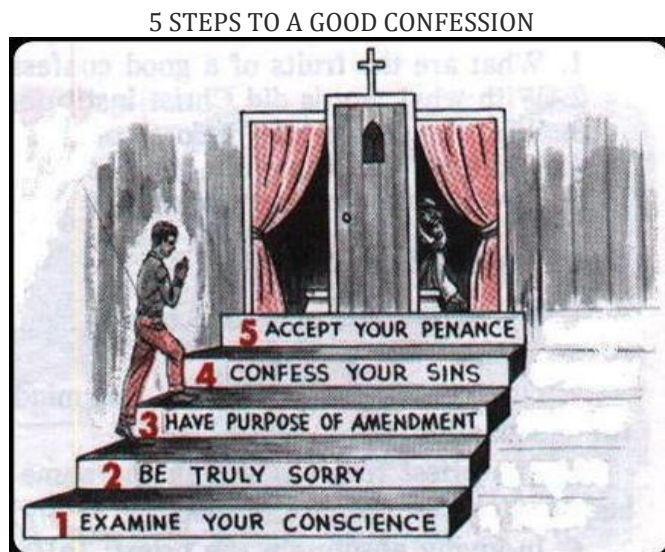
Bishop Benedict Aleksyichuk

Bishop Bohdan Danylo

PROGRAM



<p>4:00 pm WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND OPENING PRAYER Father Marijan Procyk, National Spiritual Director, League of Ukrainian Catholics</p> <p>4:15 pm HOPE: Understanding To What God Has Called Us Bishop Bohdan Danylo Eparchy of St. Josaphat, Parma</p> <p>4:30 pm FORGIVENESS AS THE FIRST STEP: Healing Wounds & Trauma Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak, Archeparchy of Philadelphia</p> <p>4:45 pm LOVE INSTEAD OF FEAR: Attention To The Poor and Marginalized Bishop Paul Chomnycky Eparchy of Stamford</p> <p>5:00 pm JOY & THE GIFT OF FAMILY: Nurturing the Domestic Church Bishop Benedict Aleksyichuk, Eparchy of Chicago</p> <p>5:15 pm Reflections, Discussions, Questions, Answers</p>	<p><i>May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, how rich is the glory of the heritage he offers among his holy people (Eph 1:17-18).</i></p>
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The link to register:
[Blog – League of Ukrainian Catholics of America](http://Blog - League of Ukrainian Catholics of America)
or directly to Google forms:
<https://forms.gle/h24a6bsVpS2vWbVG8>
or the QR code:





Ukraine Spring - A benefit for World Kitchen Ukraine

 Date and time	 Location
Sun, March 26, 2023, 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM EDT	Church of the Assumption 61 North Cliff Street Ansonia, CT 06401

Suggested donation of \$35.00
Pay as much or as little as you like.
Donations will support World Kitchen feeding Ukraine's citizens

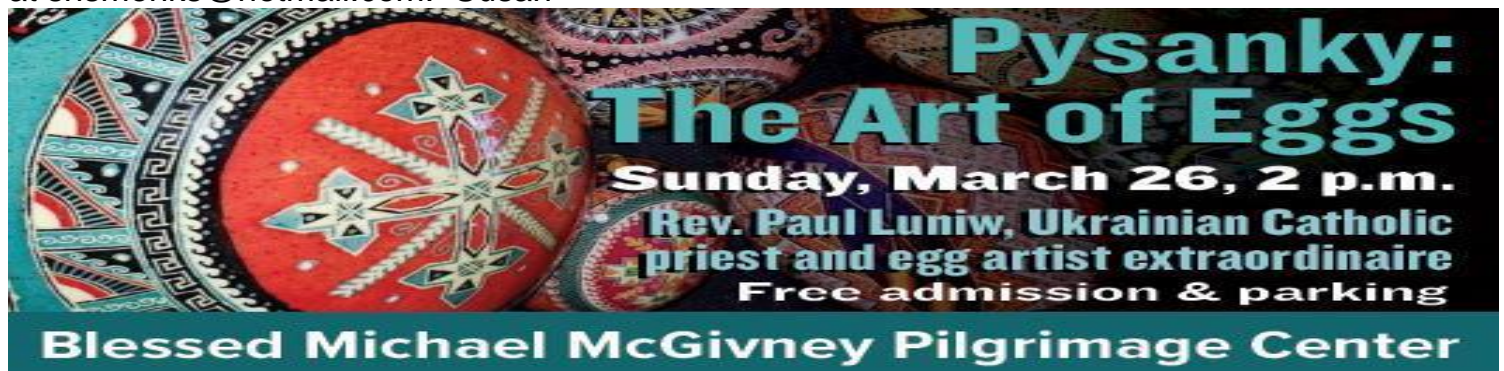
Soprano Saxophonist Paul Winter
Vocalist Theresa Thomason
Pianist Henrique Eisenmann
Ukrainian Bandura Master Julian Kytasty
Singer, Songwriter, and Bassoonist Jeff Boratko
Organist Anthony Burke
Vocalist Montana Smith
Chamber Choir directed by Marika Kuzma

TO PURCHASE TICKETS: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/565339113507>
Tickets are also available at the door.

All proceeds of this concert go to World Kitchen Ukraine, a non-profit that endeavors to provide fresh and nourishing meals to the communities that need them most. World Kitchen Ukraine is focused on getting both fresh meals and food kits that can sustain families for several days to the most vulnerable residents in the eastern part of the country. World Kitchen Ukraine is reaching recently liberated cities as well as getting meals to people displaced by the attacks.

MORE INFO: visit www.paulwinter.com/, email keegan@paulwinter.com, or call (860) 484-9423

Dear Parishioners, A recent letter from the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, Lviv, has identified many items that are needed to care for Ukrainian military personnel and civilians. Father Young suggested that our parish focus on specific items: Socks and underwear (including sport bras and undershirts) for all ages. Please bring your new/gently used items to church and place in the side pews by the Blessed Virgin Mary statue. This humanitarian drive will end on April 16. Thank you for your continued support. For any questions, contact me at shsmoaks@hotmail.com. Susan



**Pysanky:
The Art of Eggs**
Sunday, March 26, 2 p.m.
**Rev. Paul Luniw, Ukrainian Catholic
priest and egg artist extraordinaire**
Free admission & parking
Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center



Russian American Citizen's Club invites you to

Come see *Moses* live on stage at the Sight & Sound Theater Lancaster, PA

\$140 (non-member)

\$55-Child ticket (ages 3-12) Ticket includes:

- Round trip coach bus transportation from Shelton, CT to/from Lancaster, PA
- Buffet Lunch at the Bird-In-Hand Restaurant
- Show ticket

MAY 20, 2023

- Complimentary on bus snacks
- All taxes and gratuity

Trip Itinerary

- 6:30 AM: Board bus at municipal parking lot located at 100 Canal St E, Shelton, CT 06484
- 7 AM SHARP: Bus departs
- 12:15-1:45 PM: Buffet lunch at The Bird-In-Hand Restaurant
- 2:00 PM: Arrive at Sight & Sound Theater
- 3:00 PM: *Moses*
- Bus departs PA following the play

Contact Stephanie Dytko 203-736-7026 for more information or to purchase tickets.

**★ LAST DAY TO BUY TICKETS
APRIL 10, 2023**

ST. PETER & ST. PAUL PARISH FAMILY EASTER DINNER - SUNDAY APRIL 16, 2023

ALL PARISH MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE INVITED TO PARTAKE IN THE PARISH EASTER DINNER THAT WILL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY APRIL 16, 2023 IN THE CHURCH HALL AFTER THE 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY.

BUFFET DINNER MENU: CHICKEN CUTLETS, MEATBALLS, ZITI, ROASTED POTATOES, MIXED VEGETABLES, GARDEN SALAD, BREAD & BUTTER, DESSERTS, COFFEE, TEA AND SODAS.

**TICKETS GO ON SALE SUNDAY MARCH 19, 2023 AFTER EACH LITURGY UNTIL SUNDAY APRIL 9, 2023.
NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR!!!**

ADULTS: \$20.00 CHILDREN: FREE TO 18

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE PARISH ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE EASTER DINNER ACTIVITIES.

DONATIONS OF BAKED GOODS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

BEATA GEBUZA @ 203-988-5203

JOSEPHINE SEMBRAT @ 203-929-4813

DONNA WRIGHT @ 203-278-2374



TIME TO MAKE PYSANKY. COME AND JOIN US IN MAKING PYSANKY (COLORING UKRAINIAN EASTER EGGS) ON SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST STARTING AFTER THE EASTER EGG HUNT, AROUND 11:00 AM. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL JOLANTA KOWAL AT 203 278-1288.

Ukrainian Quilt and Sunflower Pillow a benefit for Ukraine!!!

A beautiful quilt with the colors of the Ukrainian flag and stitched "Peace for Ukraine" and "Support Ukraine" messages has been donated by Beth Johnsen to raise money to benefit the people of Ukraine. The quilt, along with the note from the donor organization, and the sunflower pillow donated by our parishioner Donna Wright, are on the display at the entry to the church. Tickets for this fundraiser will be sold before and after each Sunday liturgy, till April 16th. The drawing will occur on April 16th, during the Easter Dinner event.

For any questions, please contact:

Beata Gebuza @ 203-988-5203,

Josephine Sembrat @ 203-929-4813,

or Donna Wright @ 203-278-2374



Children's Liturgy, Egg Hunt, and Luncheon

On **Saturday April 1, 2023**, there will be a Children's Confessions 9:30 AM and Liturgy at 10:00 AM. It is now the Sacred Time of the Year. We are hoping that **ALL** children of our parish will be in attendance with their parents, those in our Saturday and Sunday CCD classes, along with any other children of our parish. After the Egg Hunt, there will be a pizza lunch for children and parents. Our hope is that all our parents and their children will be present throughout these events on Lazarus Saturday April 1, 2023.

Following the luncheon: Come and join us in making pysanky (coloring Ukrainian Easter eggs) on Saturday, April 1st starting after the Easter Egg Hunt and luncheon around 11:00AM.

March 31, 2023 The Last Day of Lent

– V. Rev. Archpriest Bohdan Tymchyshym, Rector St Basil & Seminarists

6:00 PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

April 1, 2023 Lazarus Saturday

9:30 AM Children Confessions Fr, Albert Forlano

10:00 AM Children Liturgy with Sermon by Fr. Albert

Following Divine Liturgy there will be the Easter Egg Hunt

FOR PASKA ORDERS: IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF A PASKA FOR EASTER. PLEASE FILL OUT THE FROM AND RETURN THE FROM BY NEXT SUNDAY 26 MARCH 2023. NO, ADDITIONAL PASKA WILL BE BAKED

Easter Paska Bake Sale

Orders can be placed for Easter Paska.

Place your order by filling out the form below and return it to the box at ramp entrance to church.

Payment should be made with your order in the provided envelopes.

Last day for orders is Sunday, March 26, 2023 PLEASE

Orders may be picked up

Only on Sunday, April 2, 2023 After Divine Liturgy

NAME:

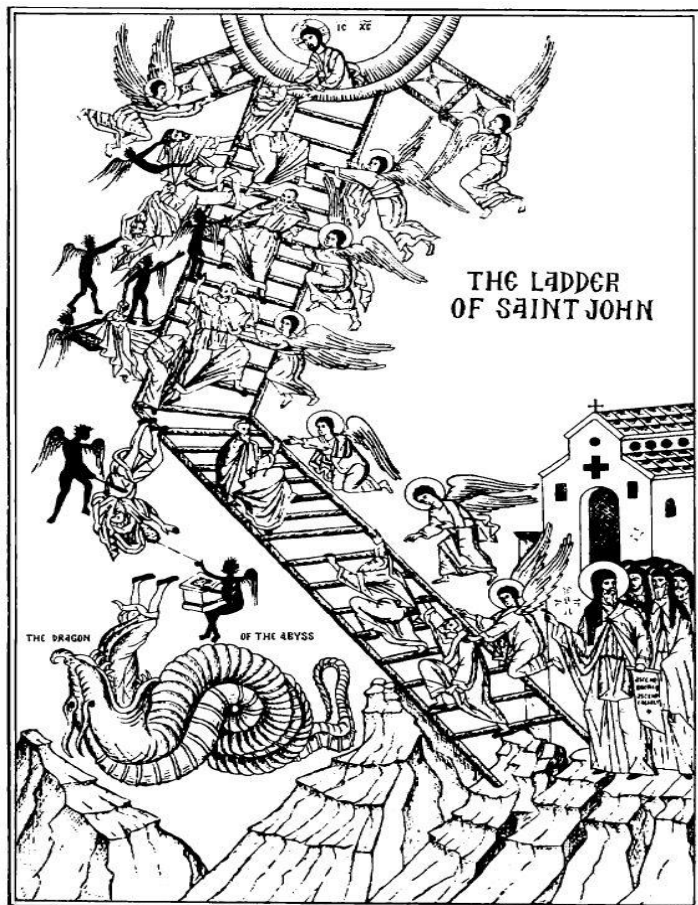
PHONE:

PLEASE CLEARLY SPECIFY IF "with RAISINS"

	PRICE	Plain	w/Raisins	Sub-Total
Large	\$15.00	_____	_____	_____
Medium	\$13.00	_____	_____	_____
Children	\$7.00	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL DUE		_____		



FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
COMMEMORATION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS OF THE LADDER
EPISTLE - HEBREWS 6: 13 - 31 GOSPEL - MARK 9: 17 - 31 TONE 8



What leaps out in this morning's Gospel in its Lenten context is this: "After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, the spirit came out of him, and the boy became so much like a corpse that the crowd said, 'he has died!' But Jesus took hold of him by the hand and raised him up and he arose."

Can you see in this Gospel the icon of the resurrection? Jesus takes hold of the boy by the hand just as he takes hold of Adam and Eve by the hand and raises them up. This Gospel shows that the death and resurrection of Christ is not just a religious story; it is a spiritual reality that is active in the everyday life of those who have united themselves to Christ. It follows last Sunday's Gospel of the Cross, when Jesus commands those who would follow him to deny themselves and to take up their cross in order to find themselves and live.

Today we arrive at the fourth week of the Great Fast. In today's Gospel reading we heard of a father who was on his last hope. His son was possessed by a certain spirit from childhood, which was causing his son pain and confusion. Not even Jesus' disciples could cure the boy. He brought his son to Jesus, who upon hearing of the father's plight became exceedingly upset at the whole crowd and expressed these strong and direct words "Oh you faithless generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you." The Child

was immediately brought close to Jesus and the spirit convulsed him instantly. As we know the child was eventually healed. But at what price one may ask? The father accepted and confessed his unbelief and beseeched God with tears to make his faith complete? This is the price, the fulfilment of our faith — paid by Christ himself yet we must pray and beseech Him as well.

It is perhaps important to stress here that this miracle account nowhere refers to the spirit by any title such as demon, or devil. It is perhaps because this spirit is in reference to the spirit of this world, the enemy of Christ. It is the spirit of this generation well rooted in society; it is passed on to our children like a virus. Brethren remember these words well — it is the spirit of this generation which throws our youth about like the child with the spirit we heard earlier today. It smashes them to the ground, it throws them into the fire to be burnt, it throws them into the water to be drowned — today its drugs, alcohol, gambling, anything to distort the image and likeness of God, within them.

This spirit has a very old history going way back to primordial Man, Adam and Eve. It is firmly established and cannot come out by anything — except, as our Lord instructed Moses, as our Lord instructed his disciples, as our Lord instructs us today, by beseeching God through prayer and fasting.

The Lord said to His Apostles about the evil spirits, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mk. 9:29). Here is a new aspect of fasting! Fasting is acceptable to God when it is preceded by the great virtue of mercy; fasting prepares a reward in heaven when it is foreign to hypocrisy and vainglory; fasting works when it is joined with another great virtue—prayer. How does it work? It not only tames the passions in the human body, but it enters into battle with the spirits of evil and conquers them.

"Why could we not cast it out", his disciples asked their master in shame. We also must ask why can't we cast this spirit out from our lives and our children's lives? Brethren, because as our Lord tells us "This kind can come out by nothing except prayer and fasting". This is the key to contrite repentance. this twofold formula which treads on the head of this serpent of old and yields our first step towards heaven — contrite repentance.

It is no coincidence then that the first and second steps of Saint John's 30-chapter book "THE LADDER (OF DIVINE ASCENT)" are concerned with the renunciation of this life, this world we live in and detachment from all its pleasures. We honor Saint John of the Ladder today as a great Saint of our church who reminds us that going to

heaven is not as easy as getting into an elevator and pressing a button. On the contrary, it is a long and hazardous climb which is impossible to scale fully unless we beseech God for assistance. May God grant us all fullness of faith, peace, and joy on our climb to heaven.

Christ our Pascha: # 523 - Exorcism ~ God only allows diabolical possession because of a sinful and unrepentant life or because of other reasons, such as a person's willingness to become physically or psychologically dependent on "the wiles of the Evil One." But even if the devil gains power over the body and the will of a possessed person, the devil can never obliterate the image of God in them. Thus, by the prayers of the Church, the possessed can always be freed from the power of the devil.



**MARCH 25 - FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY, THEOTOKOS**

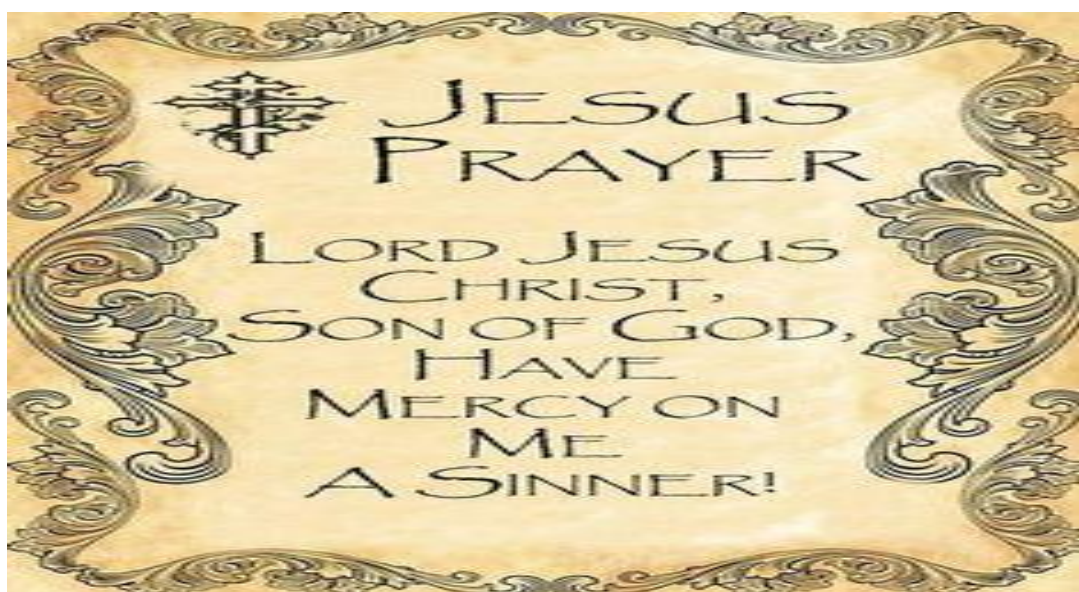
! HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION !

!СВЯТИЙ ДЕНЬ ОБОВ'ЯЗКУ !

"Hail, full of grace, the LORD is with thee"

We celebrate the Feast Day of the Annunciation on March 25; nine months before the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. We read about the event in the Gospel of Luke 1:24-38.

Today is the beginning of salvation! At this moment the Theotokos shows her utmost trust and willingness to work with God in the plan of salvation. May we all be moved in our lives to be so open and willing to live according to His will, even if that might sometimes mean turning our own plans for our lives upside down.



A HYMN
on the
ANNUNCIATION

from the Syriac Christian Tradition



The Father wrote out a letter
and sent it, at the hands of a Watcher, to Nazareth,
to a virgin, Mary, in whom He was well-pleased
and so chose her to become mother to His Only-Begotten
when He descended to deliver all worlds.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

From amidst the fiery legions,
from the thousands and myriads who stand ready,
from the choirs of fire, the ranks of flame,
was Gabriel sent
to the Virgin, to announce that she was to conceive.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

God gave Gabriel the command
and he flew down amidst great commotion,
bearing that letter full of fair tidings,
to bring peace to those in a state of wrath,
seeing that reconciliation had taken place
between God and the world.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

The messenger learnt the secret
and fluttered down, arriving at Nazareth.
As he beheld the Virgin, he bowed down in reverence,
then stretched out his hand and gave her the letter of peace
that had been sent from above.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'Peace be with you, O daughter of humanity,
for you have been chosen to become the tabernacle
to the Lord of Majesty who is coming down from on high
to visit the depth below
and to raise Adam up to the Garden.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'Salutation to you, who are filled with grace,
my Lord is with you, O palace of the Most High,
for in you will the King reside,
and in you shall the Light shine out.
From you there shall come forth into creation
that Hero who will deliver the world:

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

The maiden heard this salutation
from the man of fire who announced
her senses were perturbed her thoughts were dismayed
she stood there in amazement
and said secretly to herself,

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'Whence comes this man of fire?
Why should a spiritual being come to visit me?
Who is he? To what place does he belong?
Who is "his Lord"; that he said to me,
"My Lord is with you"? He has upset and perturbed me.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

The Watcher spoke to the maiden,
'Do not be upset, Mary; salutation to you,
for you shall conceive and give birth to the Wonderful;
from your womb the Sun shall shine forth
and He will drive out the world's darkness:

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

Mary says to the angel,
'Explain to me, O fiery being, what you mean.
Your appearance is weighty, your raiment is of flame,
your lips are fire as they utter.
Who is able to speak with you?

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'Your exalted manner of speech belongs elsewhere:
why do you speak like us and with us?
Your appearance is exalted and not of this earth;
if there is some race of fiery beings
then it is to it that you belong, O fearsome hero.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'O offspring of flame, explain to me
the matter concerning which you speak,
for you have announced a birth — yet I have known no man.
Your message is fearsome, like yourself:
your voice and your words are just like your appearance.

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

'How can there be a conception without a man?
How can a virgin give birth?
Who has ever beheld a crop without any seed?
Explain to me what it is you are saying,
how all this can possibly take place.'




Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

The Watcher replied, 'It is the Holy Spirit
who will come to you and make holy your womb;
then the Power of the Most High shall descend and reside in you.
From your womb shall Riches shine out
— to pay all your debts of the world.'

Blessed is that mouth which announced to Mary!

FOR REFLECTION:

1. Read the account of the Annunciation in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:26 - 38). Which references to the scripture passage do you recognize in the hymn? Are there other references to scripture aside from the account of the Annunciation?
2. What titles of the Mother of God are found in this hymn? Are any of them new to you?
3. Think about the ways that St. Gabriel is referred to in this hymn, and then consider the icon of the Annunciation. How are these characteristics portrayed in his depiction in the icon?
4. What is it that St. Gabriel says at the conclusion of the hymn that resolves Mary's qualms about what he is telling her?
5. This hymn was meant to be sung! Try chanting it with any melody you are familiar with from church, or on one note. What difference does singing it versus reading it make to you?

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