



**Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Bulletin  
And Holy Transfiguration Chapel**  
A Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA  
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople  
870 Forest Street  
Dover, Delaware 19904  
Website: [www.snicholasuoc.org](http://www.snicholasuoc.org)



Father Stephen Hutnick  
(302) 798-4455  
E-mail: [otche10@gmail.com](mailto:otche10@gmail.com)

Mailing Address: 870 Forest Street  
Dover, DE 19904

We would like to welcome all of our visitors and friends to Saint Nicholas Orthodox Parish. We would like to ask all of our new visitors to please sign our register so that we might be able to keep in contact with you about Parish celebrations and events. Through the intercession of Saint Nicholas we hope and pray that our community might continue to grow in numbers and in service to the Lord. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and in love.

In case of an emergency, please call Father Stephen day or night at the above telephone number.

**April 14, 2024**  
**Volume 17: Number 15**  
**Celebrating our 17<sup>th</sup> Year of Serving the Lord**  
**Schedule of Services and Activities**

Sunday, April 14 – Fourth Sunday of the Fast – Tone 4  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Thursday, April 18  
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy – All Souls

Sunday, April 21 – Fifth Sunday of the Fast – Tone 5  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Thursday, April 25  
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy – All Souls

Sunday, April 28 – Palm or Willow Sunday – Tone 6  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Holy Wednesday, May 1  
2:00 PM – Anointing of the Sick – Father Stephen

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**SCRIPTURAL READINGS**

**4th Sunday of the Fast:** Matins: John 20:11-18 Liturgy: Hebrews 6:13-20; Mark 9:17-31;

**St. John of the Ladder:** Ephesians 5:9-19; Matthew 4:25-5:12.

**Monday** – Genesis 13:12-28; Proverbs 14:27-15:4; Isaiah 37:33-38:6

**Tuesday** - Genesis 15:1-15; Proverbs 15:7-19; Isaiah 40:18-31

**Wednesday** - Genesis 17:1-9; Proverbs 15:20-16:9; Isaiah 41:4-14.

**Thursday** - Genesis 18:20-33; Proverbs 16:17-17:17; Isaiah 42:5-16

**Friday** - Genesis 22:1-18; Proverbs 17:17-18:5; Isaiah 45:11-17

**Saturday** - Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 8:27-31; God-Bearer - Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Fast** - Matins John 20:11-18; Liturgy: Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 10:32-

**45; St. Mary of Egypt:** Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 7:36-50.

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**ARE WE CLIMBING THE LADDER OF PERFECTION?**

On the 4th Sunday of Lent, the Church always honors the memory of St. John of the Ladder (Climacus) who was born about the year 525 and died in the in the year 606. He was a great teacher of religion. At the age of 16 he climbed up Mt. Sinai to offer himself

to God as a living sacrifice. He lived 40 years in the service of God practicing self-mortification, abiding in the desolate wasteness of Sinai, praying, meditating and perfecting a method of sanctification.

He received his name from the well-known book of spiritual exercises which he wrote. The book was called **THE LADDER OF PERFECTION**, and contained 30 chapters for attaining the 30 steps of religious perfection. It was designed as a means for Christians to climb spiritually, as up a ladder, from earth to heaven.

In setting before us the example of such persons as St. John, the Church calls upon us to "Seek first the Kingdom of God" and then all that is necessary for our life will be granted unto us.

The Church, during Holy Lent, expects that we depart from the vanities of this world and seek in silence and contemplation the glory of Christ and eternity. It is so difficult for us to do so in this day of great activity and distraction. There is always the radio, television, automobile and telephone. There are so many claims to our attention and our time.

But Lent **MUST** be different. We **MUST** attempt to follow in the footsteps of the warriors of God.

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### **THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY**

Suffering and glory are intertwined in Mark's Gospel. Jesus has just warned his disciples that he will lead them to the Cross; now, in a moment of glory on the mountaintop, he reveals the victory on the other side of that cross. Moses and Elijah appear with him to confirm that this Jesus is indeed the culmination of God's plan, the one toward whom both the law and the prophets had pointed.

Even after witnessing the Transfiguration, the three disciples do not fully understand what Jesus says to them or even how to respond to what they have seen (verses 6 and 10). Returning to the other disciples and the crowd that has gathered around them, Jesus meets even more evidence of unbelief and misunderstanding. The disciples have proved unable to exorcise a possessed boy. They are apparently confused and frustrated, the scribes have seized the opportunity to start another argument, and the poor man who brought his son for healing is ready to give up.

If Jesus had waited to be born until all humanity, or even his chosen disciples, were able to reach perfect understanding and faith in him, the world would still be awaiting its Savior. But as the conclusion of the story makes clear, Jesus is not bound by our imperfect response. "I do believe," cries the father, "Help my lack of belief." That is enough for Jesus.

For reflection: Is my faith weak or uncertain at times? Have I experienced moments of total assurance and confidence in God followed by intense doubts and questioning? How does today's reading speak to me?

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

by Kosmas Damianides

How much it must grieve a father or a mother to see his or her child suffering without reason. To undergo pain and confusion -- for what? Where is God in our plight -- we may often ask ourselves. Where is God in all this pain and confusion?

Today we arrive at the fourth week of Lent. 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 fulfillment 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 can not 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. "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 it's 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 --- Amen.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**REDNER FULL SALE SLIPS** – are still being collected. Please save the whole slip.

**READER MINISTRY:** April 14 - Margaret Perkins, April 21 – Subdeacon Kevin Minnich; April 28 – Christina Mentis

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL** – Metropolitan Antony, Father Geroge Bazylevsky, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Constantine Christo, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Mark Leisure, Father John Nakonachny, Father James Norton, Father Paul Pappas, Father John Perich, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Pani Matka Lilly Lemar, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Jamison, Wakako Alexander, Theresa Barnes, Paul Calistor, Rita Cook, Dmitra Cookson, Davis William Doty; Steve Forte, Thomas Holt, Norma Husnick, Walter Katolic, Judith Kocinski, Denise Kolosky, Kristina Koutsoudes, Olympia Koutsoudes, Frederick McCarthy, Bruce McGloan, Patricia McGloan, Stephen McNulty, Chritina Mentis, Connie Mentis, Olga Moniodes, Margaret Perkins, Barbara Perrigina, Michael Previte, Sandra Ramondi, Carolyn Ritter; Jim Saturno, David Scharba, Clay Seman, Gail Sherman, Lorraine Sherman, Gerald Sovinski, Diane Staples, Nicholas Taylor, Kathy Theodorakos, Merryl Trader, Ralph Vurgich, Cheryl Zabowski, Edward Zabowski, Markos Zerefos.

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### PASKA ORDER FORM – ORDER BY APRIL 21

\_\_\_\_\_ Small Round (\$8) \_\_\_\_\_ Large Round (\$12) \_\_\_\_\_ Butter Lamb (\$5)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

( ) With Raisins

( ) Without Raisins

**Please give to Father Stephen this slip with payment  
Paskas will be delivered for pickup Sunday, April 28**

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## OUR HOLY WEEK AND PASKA SCHEDULE

### **Sunday, April 28 – Palm Sunday**

8:30 AM – Confessions  
9:15 AM – Hours  
9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy for the Faithful  
Coffee Hour – Easter Egg Hunt  
5:00 PM – Lenten Vespers

### **Holy and Great Monday – April 29**

**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
7:00 AM – Matins  
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

### **Holy and Great Tuesday – April 30**

**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
7:00 AM – Matins  
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

### **Holy and Great Wednesday – May 1**

**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
7:00 AM – Matins  
8:00 AM – Presanctified Liturgy  
**St. Nicholas – Dover, DE**  
2:00 PM – Anointing of the Sick  
**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
7:00 PM – Anointing of the Sick

### **Holy and Great Thursday – May 2**

7:00 AM – Matins  
7:30 AM – Vespers/Liturgy of St. Basil  
6:00 PM – 12 Gospels

### **Holy and Great Friday – May 3**

**Saints Peter and Paul**  
8:00 AM – Royal Hours  
**Holy Trinity – Whaleyville, MD**  
1:00 PM – Vespers/Shroud  
**St. Nicholas – Dover, DE**  
4:00 PM – Vespers/Shroud  
**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
7:00 PM – Vespers/Shroud  
9:00 PM – Jerusalem Matins

### **Holy & Great Saturday – May 4**

**Saints Peter and Paul**  
8:00 AM – Vesper/Liturgy St. Basil  
**Holy Trinity - Whaleyville**  
4:00 PM – Service at the Tomb -  
Resurrection Matins Liturgy  
Bless Baskets  
**Sts. Peter and Paul**  
11:00 PM – Service at the Tomb  
Resurrection Matins

### **Sunday, May 5**

**Resurrection of Our Lord**  
12 Midnite – Divine Liturgy  
Bless Baskets – Coffee Hour  
**St. Nicholas**  
8:00 AM – Resurrection Matins  
Divine Liturgy – Bless Baskets  
**Saints Peter and Paul**  
10:00 AM Pro Liturgy – Communion  
Agape Vespers  
Bless Baskets – Coffee Hour

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## **“ASCEND THE LADDER OF THE VIRTUES”**

**O**n the 4th Sunday of Lent, we annually commemorate a 7th century monastic saint: ST. JOHN CLIMACUS. He is best remembered today for his spiritual writing entitled the “Ladder of Divine Ascent.” In this marvelous work, he compares the quest for spiritual perfection with climbing a 30-step ladder, with each rung corresponding to a year in the life of Christ that was hidden from the world. Even today, many Orthodox monasteries will begin the season of Great Lent with a public reading of Climacus’ book.

While the “Ladder of Divine Ascent” was written primarily for those living a monastic life, it offers wonderful spiritual advice from which we can all benefit. Listen to some of John’s profound comments in his spiritual work:

**“In a meek heart, the Lord will find rest.”**

**“Humility is a divine shelter to prevent us from seeing our achievements.”**

**“Those who wish to learn the will of God must first suppress their own will.”**

**“Run from places of sin as from the plague, for when fruit is not present, we have no frequent desire to eat it.**

**“Let your prayers be completely simple. Remember that both the Publican and the Prodigal Son were reconciled with God by praying only one phrase.”**