

# Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

139 Horseheads Blvd, Elmira Heights, NY 14903

Fr James Worthington, Acting Rector 315-706-6185

Stephen Cheplick, Warden Warden@HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

## MARCH 18, 2018

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 8. Repose of St. Nikolai of Zhicha** (1956). **St. John Climacus** (of *The Ladder*). St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem (386). Martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus of Nicomedia (ca. 300). Ven. Aninas of the Euphrates.

**EPISTLE:** EPHESIANS 5.9-19: Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.

HEBREWS 6.13-20: The hope we have in God is the sure anchor of our soul.

**Gospel:** MATTHEW 4.25-5.12: Christ gives us the Beatitudes.

MARK 9.17-31: Prayer and fasting are mighty tools in overcoming evil and sickness.

**LEGACY FUND:** It was decided by the Parish Council Meeting to establish a Legacy Fund. This is a fund to honor the work of the last 100 years, and provide a stable foundation for the next century in the life of our beloved parish. This designated fund will be for capital improvements and for furthering the ministries of the Parish. Please consider supporting this effort in your giving and estate planning.

**WELCOME VISITORS!** We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community.

**PASCHA FLOWERS AND DONATIONS:** To contribute to the purchase of flowers to adorn the church for Pascha, there are envelopes available at the information stand.

**RECTOR'S SABBATH:** Each Monday, Fr James takes his day off for the week. Please save parish business for the rest of the week. If any serious need or emergency should arise, he can always be contacted on this day.

**LENTEN REFLECTIONS:** His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon offers a series of reflections on the themes contained in the Triodion hymns sung on Monday of each week during Great Lent.

Each reflection, running a few minutes in length, will be posted at the beginning of every week. They can be found at [www.oca.org/media/video](http://www.oca.org/media/video).

**COUNTERS SOUGHT:** The Treasurer is seeking to create several teams of counters to help with processing the weekly collection. If you would like to assist in this capacity, see Fr James or Toni.

**VIGIL AT THE TOMB:** It is a tradition to keep watch at the tomb of our Lord from after services on Holy Friday Evening through the beginning of the Paschal services. If you would be interested in being part of this, please see Fr James to claim your time.

**CONFESSIONS:** In this time of the year, it is good for us to partake of the sacrament of Confession. Please have your confession heard by the Vigil of PASCHA. Appointments can be made at any time that is convenient, or before and after most services. Call Fr James at 315-706-6185 to schedule an appointment.

## FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE

**March 18:** Dudek & Payzant

**March 25:** Lenten Potluck

**April 1:** Haluszczak and Plummer

**April 8:** PASCHA

## READERS SCHEDULE

**March 17:** Alexander C

**March 24:** Sdn S Michael

**March 31:** Toni M

**April 7:** Rdr William

## PRAYER LIST

### LIVING:

Archpriest Jason  
Archpriest Herman  
Mat. Katherine  
Rdr. Thomas  
Rdr. David  
Kathleen  
Infant Hannah  
Abigail  
Infant Justus  
Anna & Family  
Leon  
Kate

Elizabeth

Kristen  
Katherine  
Nadezhda  
Errin  
Helen  
Larissa & Family  
Janet

**CATECHUMEN:** Theresa P  
(Tess)

**BIRTHDAYS:** None

**ANNIVS:** None

**NAMESDAYS:** None

**TRAVELLING:** Anna

### REPOSED:

Archpriest John U  
Archpriest Stephen  
Priest John B  
Deacon Mark H.  
Rdr Gregory  
Parker  
Lindsay  
Lucinda  
Hannah  
Katerina  
Child Anthony C

**NEWLY REPOSED:** Amanda (2-14), Mat Barbara (2-16), Peter (2-22), Emilita (2-25), Ronin (3-1)

**ANNIVERSARIES:** None

**BY THE NUMBERS:** Last Collection: \$1038. Weekly Budget: \$1100.  
MTD: \$3469. Monthly Budget: \$4360. February -\$295

## SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME.

**SUNDAY OF THE LADDER, MARCH 18:** 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour, Youth Education

4 PM Lenten Mission Vespers at St Mary's Church in Painted Post

**MONDAY, MARCH 19:** Rector's Sabbath

**TUESDAY, MARCH 20:** 8 AM Daily Lenten Matins

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21:** 8 AM Daily Lenten Matins

6 PM Great Canon of St Andrew

**THURSDAY, MARCH 22:** 8 AM Daily Lenten Matins

**FRIDAY, MARCH 23:** 8 AM Daily Lenten Matins

6 PM Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten potluck supper

**SATURDAY, MARCH 24:** 5 PM Great Vespers, Confessions

**ANNUNCIATION AND MARY OF EGYPT SUNDAY, MARCH 25:** 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour, Youth Education

### Inner Unity of the Triodion: On the Sunday of the Ladder

On this day is commemorated *St. John Climacus*, abbot of Sinai (sixth-seventh century), who is assigned a special Sunday in Lent because, by virtue of his writings and his own life, he forms a pattern of the true Christian ascetic. St. John is the author of *The Ladder of Paradise*, one of the spiritual texts appointed to be read in church during Lent. His memorial, like that of St. Theodore, has been transferred to the movable from the fixed calendar, where he is remembered on 30 March. The first Canon at Mattins on this Sunday is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-5): the repentant Christian is likened to the man who fell among thieves.

### Structure and Purpose of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

The aim of the treatise is to be a guide for practicing a life completely and wholly devoted to God. The ladder metaphor—not dissimilar to the vision that the Patriarch Jacob received—is used to describe how one may ascend into heaven by first renouncing the world and finally ending up in heaven with God. There are thirty chapters; each covers a particular vice or virtue. They were originally called *logoï*, but in the present day, they are referred to as "steps." The sayings are not so much rules and regulations, as with the Law that St. Moses received at Sinai, but rather observations about what is being practiced. Metaphorical language is employed frequently to better illustrate the nature of virtue and vice. Overall, the treatise does follow a progression that transitions from start (renunciation of the world) to finish (a life lived in love).

# Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

## Elmira Heights, New York



SUNDAY, MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2018  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT  
SUNDAY OF ST JOHN OF THE LADDER

## ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE

I arise today through a mighty strength,  
the invocation of the Trinity,  
through belief in the Threeness,  
through confession of the Oneness of the Creator  
of creation.

I arise today through the strength of Christ with His  
Baptism,  
through the strength of His Crucifixion with His  
Burial,  
through the strength of His Resurrection with His  
Ascension,  
through the strength of His descent for the  
Judgment of Doom.

I arise today through the strength of the love of  
Cherubim,  
in obedience of Angels, in the service of the  
Archangels,  
in hope of resurrection to meet with reward,  
in prayers of Patriarchs, in predictions of Prophets,  
in preachings of Apostles, in faiths of Confessors,  
in innocence of Holy Virgins, in deeds of righteous  
men.

I arise today through the strength of Heaven:  
light of Sun, brilliance of Moon, splendour of Fire,  
speed of Lightning, swiftness of Wind, depth of Sea,  
stability of Earth, firmness of Rock.

I arise today through God's strength to pilot  
me:  
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to  
guide me,  
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear  
me,  
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to  
guard me,  
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to  
protect me,  
God's host to secure me:  
against snares of devils,  
against temptations of vices,

against inclinations of nature,  
against everyone who shall wish me ill,  
afar and anear, alone and in a crowd.  
I summon today all these powers between me  
(and these evils):  
against every cruel and merciless power that  
may oppose my body and my soul,  
against incantations of false prophets,  
against black laws of heathenry,  
against false laws of heretics,  
against craft of idolatry,  
against spells of witches and smiths and  
wizards,  
against every knowledge that endangers  
man's body and soul.  
Christ to protect me today  
against poison, against burning,  
against drowning, against wounding,  
so that there may come abundance of reward.

Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ in breadth, Christ in length, Christ in height,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of  
me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear  
that hears me.

I arise today through a mighty strength,  
the invocation of the Trinity,  
through belief in the Threeness,  
through confession of the Oneness of the Creator  
of creation.  
Salvation is of the Lord.  
Salvation is of the Lord.  
Salvation is of Christ.  
May Thy Salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.

## THE RUNGS OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

1. On renunciation of the world
2. On detachment
3. On exile or pilgrimage; concerning dreams that beginners have
4. On blessed obedience (in addition to episodes involving many individuals)
5. On painstaking repentance which constitutes the life of the holy convicts; and about the Prison
6. On remembrance of death
7. On joy-making mourning
8. On freedom from anger and on meekness
9. On remembrance of wrongs
10. On slander or calumny
11. On talkativeness and silence
12. On lying
13. On despondency
14. On that clamorous mistress, the stomach
15. On incorruptible purity and chastity, to which the corruptible attain by toil and sweat
16. On love of money, or avarice
17. On non-possessiveness (that hastens one Heavenwards)
18. On insensibility, that is, deadening of the soul and the death of the mind before the death of the body
19. On sleep, prayer, and psalmody with the brotherhood
20. On bodily vigil and how to use it to attain spiritual vigil, and how to practice it
21. On unmanly and puerile cowardice
22. On the many forms of vainglory
23. On mad pride and (in the same Step) on unclean blasphemous thoughts; concerning unmentionable blasphemous thoughts
24. On meekness, simplicity, and guilelessness which come not from nature but from conscious effort, and about guile
25. On the destroyer of the passions, most sublime humility, which is rooted in spiritual perception
26. On discernment of thoughts, passions and virtues; on expert discernment; brief summary of all aforementioned
27. On holy stillness of body and soul; different aspects of stillness and how to distinguish them
28. On holy and blessed prayer, the mother of virtues, and on the attitude of mind and body in prayer
29. Concerning Heaven on earth, or Godlike dispassion and perfection, and the resurrection of the soul before the general resurrection
30. Concerning the linking together of the supreme trinity among the virtues; a brief exhortation summarizing all that was said at length in this book.

## FROM: SOME REFLECTIONS ON CONFESSION

By Fr Alexander Schmemmann



Can a truly Orthodox view and practice of confession be restored? Yes, if we have the courage to deal with the problem at its roots and not with mere externals. The starting point of this restoration is in *preaching* and *teaching*. To some extent all Christian preaching and teaching is a call to repentance, to the *metanoia*, the change of mind, the reevaluation of all values in the light of Christ. There is no need to preach constantly on "sin," to judge and to condemn. It is when a man is challenged with the real "contents" of the Gospel, with its Divine depth and wisdom, beauty and all embracing meaning, that he becomes "capable of repentance," for the true repentance is precisely the discovery by the man of the abyss that separates him from God and from His real offer to man. It is when the man sees the bridal chamber adorned that he realizes that he has no garment for entering it. Too much of our preaching is in the form

of abstract imperatives: the Church prescribes to do this and that; but commanding is not preaching. Preaching implies the desire to convey to people the positive, the Divine *meaning*, for it is only this meaning that makes "prescriptions" significant, life-giving, saving. Christian teaching should also include a deep and constructive criticism of the secularistic philosophy of life, an evaluation of the culture in which we live. Christians must always fight idols – and there are plenty of them today: "success," "materialism," "security," "money-centeredness," etc.

Confession, then, must be replaced in the perspective of the sacrament of penance. And each sacrament implies at least three equally essential elements: *preparation*, *liturgical order*, and *fulfillment*. If the whole life of the Church, but especially preaching and teaching are, as we have seen, preparation for repentance in a broad sense, there is room and need for special preparation. The Church has set apart special periods of repentance: Lent, Advent, other fasts. Here the liturgy itself becomes a "school of repentance" (*cf.* for example the inexhaustible riches of the Lenten Triodion), and it is the proper time to center preaching on the sacrament of penance itself. The order of Gospel readings, the Psalter, the hymns and prayers supply us with abundant material, the purpose of preaching being to "apply" all this to men, to their life, to their actual situation. The goal is to provoke in them the *penitential mood*, to make them examine their life not only in terms of isolated sins and transgressions, but in their deepest motivations. Where is the real treasure of their hearts? What guides them in their life? How do they "feel" the precious time given them by God? What is the meaning of this rapid progression to the unescapable end? A man who questions the deep motivations of his life, who has understood, be it just once, that life in its totality can and must be referred to Christ, is on his way to repentance, which is always a *conversion*, a change of mind, a renewed vision, a decision to return to God. The preparation must, of necessity, include an explanation of confession, – its order, prayers, meaning.

## BLESS MY ENEMIES O LORD BY ST NIKOLAI OF ZICHA AND S CANAAN

*Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.*

Enemies have driven me into your embrace more than friends have.

Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an un hunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath your tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world.

They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself.

They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments.

They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself.

They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord, Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish.

Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf.

Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand.

Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep.

Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of your garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me:

so that my fleeing to You may have no return;

so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs;

so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul;

so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins, arrogance and anger;

so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven;

ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself.

One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends.

It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.

Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and enemies.

A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands.

For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life.

Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.