



SS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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March 25, 2012

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
ANNUNCIATION OF THE
MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS**

(Fish, wine and oil are permitted today)

- 9:10am – Hours, Confessions
- 9:30am – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Epistles: *Heb. 6:13-20*
Heb. 2:11-18

Gospels: *Mk. 9:17-31*
Lk. 1:24-38

- Church School

Schedule of Services

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 28

5:00pm – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
7:00pm – Joint Presanctified Liturgy at St. Mary's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church.

FRIDAY, MAR. 30

6:00pm – Akathist to the Most-Holy Theotokos with prayers for the health.

SATURDAY, MAR. 31

9:30 – Divine Liturgy offered by Wanko Family
6:00pm – Great Vespers, Order of Confession

SUNDAY, APR. 1

8:50am – Order of Confession
9:30am – Divine Liturgy
4:00pm – Deanery Lenten Vespers

How Long Your Heart Was Hard

Father John Climacus' memory is celebrated on March 30.

This saint is known as a worker of miracles and as the writer of the "Ladder of Divine Ascent" in which he showed how a person can work step by step to come closer to God. The "steps" or rungs like those on a ladder were based on his own experience of prayer and asceticism.

Because he did work hard to come close to God, Saint John was given spiritual insight. He could see that even someone who has repented of sin can be led into the trap of sinning again by judging another person. He wrote: "He who is inwardly proud of his own tears and condemns in his own mind those who do not weep, is like a man who begs weapons from the king against the enemy and kills himself with them."

The "Prologue from Ochrid" offers this comment on Saint John's words: "If your heart has been softened either by repentance before God or by learning the boundless love of God towards you, do not be proud towards those whose hearts are still hard. Remember how long your heart was hard."

On March 29 we read Genesis 18: 20-33, which begins with God telling His plans to Abraham. God says, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis 18: 20-21).

Abraham is a person whose heart has been softened by "learning the boundless love of God towards" him. His and Sarah's son Isaac, born in their old age after years of prayer and tears, is living proof of that love. So Abraham is ready to intercede even for the notoriously wicked people of Sodom. Having wept over his own sins, he will not "condemn in his own mind those who do not weep."

Intercessory Prayer

THE LIVING:

Eva Benda, Valentina Benda, Cathryn Christensen, Olga DeMay, Marianne Guagenti, George Hook, Peter Mazula, Walter Milk, Helen Pirniak, Stephen & Lillian Sokol, Faith Verona, Elizabeth Zuber, Olga Stecher.

THE DEPARTED:

Peter Kalada, Benedict Benda, Georgette Saba, Matilda Skripak, Andrew Bacsik, Helen Pawlush, Mary Milk, Antonina Rotko, Helen Cotrone, June Bianchini, Marianne Benda.

Standing before God, Abraham draws near and asks a very bold question: "Wilt Thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?" He even proposes terms on which God might base a change of mind: "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"

Abraham has perfect confidence that his own merciful instincts have their source in the Lord to whom he is standing so close. So he says, "Far be it from Thee to do such a wicked thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" His confidence is rewarded when God agrees to spare Sodom if even ten righteous inhabitants can be found.

Sodom proves too evil to be spared. But Abraham's intercession is the action of a once-hard heart that has been softened. As a result, it seeks only mercy for others.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to Steve Sokol, Diana Nehrebecki, and to all who celebrate their Birthdays in the month of March. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

Today's Memorial Offering



- *St. John's Cross* – in memory of Steven Pirniak, on the Anniversary of his Birth – by the Pirniak Family.
- *St. Nicholas' Chross* – for the health of Diana Nehrebecki, on her 25th Birthday.

Announcements

❖ **Next Sun. April 1** our parish will host **Deanery Lenten Vespers** at 4:00pm. If you would like to bring a Lenten dish for the fellowship that will follow – please sign up at the candle desk.

❖ Today and the next Sunday at the end of the Liturgy we will have a **collection to help Rev. Adam Sexton**, his matushka Angie and their eight children (some of them are adopted) who are displaced due to a fire at the church rectory of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Nanticoke, PA on Sunday, March 4, 2012. Luckily, no one was hurt, but they lost everything they had and now temporarily stay at the Host Inn in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

❖ Mark your calendars! On **Tuesday, Apr. 3 at 7:00pm** there will be **Holy Unction** service at the Transfiguration Church (35 Sickletown Rd., Pearl River, NY 10965)

❖ **Food Pantry** donations are always accepted. Place your non-perishable items in blue bins downstairs.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.