

- FROM THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT of St. John:

The sun shines on all alike, and vainglory beams on all activities. For instance, I am vainglorious when I fast; and when I relax the fast in order to be unnoticed, I am again vainglorious over my prudence. When well-dressed I am quite overcome by vainglory, and when I put on poor clothes I am vainglorious again. When I talk I am defeated, and when I am silent I am again defeated by it. However I throw this prickly-pear, a spike stands upright.

Fire and water are incompatible; and so is judging others in one who wants to repent. If you see someone falling into sin at the very moment of his death, even then do not judge him, because the Divine judgment is hidden from men. Some have fallen openly into great sins, but they have done greater good deeds in secret; so their critics were tricked, getting smoke instead of the sun.

- PASCHA CANDLES:

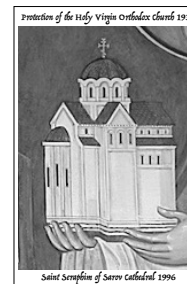
There will be a chance for the children to decorate their Pascha candles on Holy Friday afternoon from 1–2:30 PM (“Burial Vespers” begins at 3 PM). We would like to invite all the children to come—and anyone else that would like to decorate a candle for Pascha is also welcome. The kids can take their candle home and then bring it back for Pascha. After Pascha, the candle can be used on your home prayer altar. Younger children will need an adult with them to assist them. Please let me know if you will be coming, so we will have enough decorations and candles. We will have plenty of supplies for everyone, but, if you have something special to put on your candle, please feel free to bring it. —*Shannon-Agni Winterton*

- HOSPICE FOR CHILDREN:

On Sunday there will be a special offering to help the *St. Petersburg Hospice for Children* in Russia. This organization provides round-the-clock care for children with incurable diseases. The hospital/hospice is staffed with doctors social workers, therapists and clergy. His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin has asked that our parish join with other members of the Diocese of the West in supporting this worthy cause during Lent. Please mark your offering for the “2019 Lenten Appeal, St. Petersburg Children’s Hospice.”

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



April 7, 2019 ~ St. John of the Ladder



- RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overthrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

- TROPARION OF ST. JOHN, Tone One:

O John, our father, saint of God, thou wast revealed as a citizen of the desert, an angel in a body and worker of miracles. Through fasting, prayer and vigils thou hast received heavenly gifts of grace, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those that turn to thee with faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him that crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee grants to all men healing.

- KONTAKION OF ST. JOHN, Tone Four:

Truly the Lord has set thee as a fixed star in the firmament of abstinence, giving light to the ends of the earth, O Father John, our teacher.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, April 6: 10 AM, Retreat with Bishop Daniel
3:30 PM, Catechism *On Holy Unction*
4 PM, Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
6 PM, Parish Council Dinner with Bishop Daniel
- Sunday, April 7: 8:30 AM, Resurrectional Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tuesday, April 9: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
- Wednesday, April 10: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
5 PM, Confessions
6:15 PM, Presanctified Liturgy and Meal
- Thursday, April 11: 8 AM, Matins with the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete and the Life of St. Mary of Egypt (*about 3 hours*)
- Friday, April 12: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
6:15 PM, Matins of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

• WELCOMING OUR BELOVED BISHOP DANIEL:

Our Vladyka Daniel will be with us this weekend, in order to spiritually strengthen and inspire us in our Lenten struggles. On Saturday morning, His Grace will lead us in a Lenten Retreat, starting at 10 AM (registration and refreshments at 9:30 AM). His topic is the journey of Holy Week. Following Great Vespers, he will share a dinner with the Parish Council. On Sunday, he will preside at the Divine Liturgy (without the preliminary ceremony of vesting).

• THE FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT:

The observant Orthodox worshipper will notice—during the Fifth Week of Great Lent—that there are additional Church Services and that those Services take longer. Of course, this is by design, and helps us intensify our Lenten efforts of prayer, fasting and alms. If a parishioner is accustomed to

attending only the Sunday Liturgy during Great Lent, then the opportunity for a deeper Lenten experience will, alas, be missed. What should one expect this week? On Wednesday evening at the Presanctified Liturgy, the usual Psalms will be replaced by longer, more penitential Psalms. The usual hymns after *Lord, I Have Cried* increase from ten to twenty-four, all with the refrain "...before I perish utterly, save me, O Lord." It is as if the entire Lenten journey is being reviewed in hymn singing. On Thursday morning (some places it's Wednesday night) we will celebrate Matins, beginning at 8 AM. During this long (about 3 hours service) we will chant the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* in its entirety. see www.pravmir.com/the-whos-who-of-the-great-canon-of-st-andrew-of-crete/. This complex poem (a *Canon* has nine odes) was written in the early 8th century, and contains about 250 verses. The whole Canon is a kind of "Walk Through the Bible." Saint Andrew begins with Adam and Eve and goes all the way through, as he speaks to his soul, and to us, by applying the stories and characters of the Holy Bible. Father Alexander Schmemmann says about the Great Canon that "...The events of sacred history are revealed as events in my life, God's acts in the past as acts aimed at me and my salvation, the tragedy of sin and betrayal as my personal tragedy. My life is shown to me as part of the great and all embracing fight between God and the powers of darkness which rebel against Him... The Canon begins on a deeply personal note...one after another, my sins are revealed in their deep connection with the continuous drama of man's relation to God; the story of man's fall is my story." During this Matins service the Life of St. Mary of Egypt is also read, as a meditation on the nature of prayer, sin, repentance, Great Lent, the Holy Mysteries, the Theotokos, and as a celebration of the incredible holiness of St Mary.

On Friday evening at 6:15 PM, we will celebrate the very festive, unique and mystically beautiful Matins of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos. We hear the bright and wonderful refrain "Rejoice, O Bride unwedded," at the end of each stanza. The place of the Theotokos in Lent is significant, since without her there is no incarnation.

The intensity of the Fifth Week of Lent offers the worshipper spiritual therapy—just as most of us find we need it most. Those who have not yet attended Lenten Services, will find that the Fifth Week is a good time to begin. Be prepared to be tested and challenged, yet nourished and comforted by the spiritual therapy being offered to each person who comes. Don't let the week pass you by.