

Sunday March 29, 2020

4th Sunday of Lent – St. John Climacus

Mark, Bishop of Arethusa; Cyril the Deacon and his companions.

HYMNS FOR THE DAY: (Found in red hymnal book)

8 – Εξ υψους κατηλθες ο ευσπλαγγωος/From on high You descended

124 – Ταις των δακρυων/With the rivers of your tears

134 – Του Σταυρου σου τον τυπον/The sign of the Cross in the sky

234 – Τη Υπερμαχω/To you the Champion

READINGS: **Orthros Gospel:** John 20:11-18

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

(For further information go to Archdiocese website at: goarch.org or

The Metropolis of Chicago website at: chicago.goarch.org.)

THE NICENE CREED & LORD'S PRAYER are found on pages 52-54 and 71 of your blue service book. Everyone is encouraged to recite them out loud in both Greek & English.

PRE & POST-COMMUNION PRAYERS: The Pre-Communion prayers are found on pages 76-80 in your blue service book. The first four will be read in Greek and the next four in English. **Please recite them out loud as a congregation.** The Post-Communion prayers are found on pages 98-100 in Greek and pages 101-102 in English. These should be read by those who have received Holy Communion when they return to their seats.

COUNCIL CANDLE DUTY: Elias Ploutis

MEMORIALS

9 days – Christos Vlahos

7 years – George Christakis

17 years – Evangelia (Eve) Inest

SERVICE SCHEDULE: There are no weekly Lenten Services or Sunday Services open to the public for this week by the directive of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago until further notice. Monday night's Compline and Friday night's Akathist Hymn will be lived streamed beginning at 5:30 p.m. both evenings. The Cathedral will be open this Sunday, 9:30-10:30 a.m. for anyone wishing to come, say a prayer and light a candle. Please be aware according to CDC and Indiana Government Restrictions that no more than 10 people at a time will be allowed inside the church, and that because of these restrictions no loitering will be allowed.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life. But we can decide what happens in us – how we can take it, what we do with it – and that is the test of living. Life is an adventure of faith, if we are to be victors over it, not victims of it. Faith in the God above us, faith in the little infinite soul within us, faith in life and our fellow souls – without faith, the plus quality, we cannot really live.

RESPONSIBILITY: It's easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities.

NOTE FROM ARCHBISHOP NIKITAS OF GREAT BRITAIN: Many of the faithful of our community have asked us about Archbishop Nikitas of Great Britain, how he is and what is happening to him and his archdiocese during this pandemic. Printed below is a note he sent to Fr. Ted.

Good morning from London:

Since I received so many calls, emails and messages of concern, I have decided to send another email and ask that you share this with others, so you and they might know about our situations here.

As the days pass, the understanding of what a "ghost town" means and is has become a reality. As I waited for Fr. Nikodemos to pick me up and go to the office, six buses passed me. There were two passengers on the buses (all combined). The streets are empty, for the most part. In some rare instances, people have gathered in the parks or other places (as they try to sit in the sun or exercise) and the police asked them to disperse. Sadly, these sort of gatherings raise the risk factor for all. As I follow the news and read about events in the USA and other places, I see that similar events are taking place elsewhere. I was saddened to hear a young woman say - "we have healthy immune systems". Obviously, she does not comprehend the seriousness of the situation and she and her friends think they are "above the law". There are those who speak to me about their rights and freedoms, even in regard to the Church and worship. I think these people do not understand the limits that exist, even on human rights and freedom in a time like this.

As for me, daily life goes on as before. What I mean by this is that the office (Archdiocese) is open and we try to deal with the issues facing the communities and the people. In England, funerals are still allowed - but the number of people who can attend is very limited and restricted. Only the closest of relatives may be present. All baptisms, weddings and other sacramental services have been canceled/postponed. This is a regulation that was put in place by the Prime Minister and the government. We are reminded - "Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives". I believe that there is an honest effort being made by the great majority of the people to follow the guidelines.

This evening, people will go out on the balcony and applaud and cheer - applaud the health care workers and those who are putting themselves at risk, for the sake of others. Of course, such actions have already been seen in other cities and places around the world. It is a necessary action, as too often we forget to say thank you and recall that these people are making great sacrifices for the rest of us. For some strange reason, the image of Tinkerbell and Peter Pan comes to mind. In one of the older versions there was a scene when children who were watching the movie on television were asked to applaud and pray for Tinkerbell. I am sure the older people reading this might recall the scene, just as they might remember the results. Hopefully, the simple applause of the people this evening will give strength and courage to the doctors, nurses, and all those serving the suffering people.

We have no shortage of food, thank God. The sinful sickness of hoarding food has passed and shelves and markets are being stocked once again. This allows for those who are in need to purchase food and other supplies. As I had previously mentioned, the "goodness" in humanity is evident. People are shopping and sharing what they purchase with others. I see small bags of groceries left outside the doors and communities rallying to help the needy. The National Federation of Cypriots in the UK has stepped forward to assist members of our community. What a wonderful thing - and, what a true expression of Christian love. I am sure that the same things are happening in the US and around the world.

As I said in the letter to my clergy - "we are not in need of heroes". Do not take chances and be careful. Pray that God will send grace upon the world and may He also guide the professionals who struggle to find a cure.

With love and prayers from London,

+ *Nikitas*

GOD HOLDS US RESPONSIBLE, not for what we have, but what we could have; not for what we are, but for what we might be.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES have been cancelled for this year.

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS: Classes are canceled until further notice. E-learning will be offered for the next four weeks beginning March 20th.

PHILOTOCHOS NEWS: **Monthly Meeting** for our St. Helen's Philoptochos on Monday April 6th, has been canceled.

The Annual Palm Sunday Luncheon and Bake Sale has been canceled.

PLEASE NOTE that these plans may change according to future developments with the COVID-19 crisis.

GOYA LAMB RAFFLE: Our GOYA will be raffling off 3 lambs this year for Easter. Tickets for the Raffle are available from individual Goyans or may be purchased on Sunday after church in the lobby. Tickets are \$5.00 each or 3 for \$10.00. The raffle will be held on Palm Sunday, April 12th. Please support the efforts of our GOYA.

THE VESPERS FOR ST. SAVVAS OF KALYMNOS on Saturday, April 4th has been cancelled per directive of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathanael.

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS: Applications for the AHEPA, GOYA, Cathedral, Chion Society, Panagiotis Proimos and Novak Family Scholarships, are available in the church office. Deadline for applications is Sunday, May 1st.

JR. OLYMPICS UPDATE: Youth ages 8-18 are encouraged to participate in an assortment of sporting events and activities at this year's Metropolis of Chicago Jr. Olympic Program on May 24th-26th in Palos Hills, IL. Coaches, advisors and chaperones are needed. So please offer your time and talent. Contact Pete Georgiadis at 219-308-4921 or email massow15@comcast.net to sign-up.

FOOD PANTRY: The call to remember the hungry and needy of the world is a continuous call by our Lord Jesus Christ. Donations of a ham for Easter as well as pasta, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, canned meats, canned tuna, canned fruits, canned vegetables, dry beans, lentils are all needed. Other things needed are personal hygiene items, shampoo, and toothpaste, cleaning products, hand soap, dish soap, toilet paper and other paper goods. Cash donations are always welcome.

At this time the Food Pantry will remain open on Fridays, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. However, instead of our regular parishioner crew working it, volunteers from the Ross Township office will. If there is anyone 18-40, without any medical conditions who would like to volunteer and work during these times is asked to contact Karen Petalas at the Township Office or Patty Makarounas through the church office.

OCMC MISSION APPEAL: Our Sunday School students have been given Mission Boxes and we ask them to be returned to the Sunday School office by Palm Sunday, April 12th. Your support is vital in helping to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ throughout the world.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, grant that I serve others with love and kindness, rather than want to exercise authority, that Your name might be glorified. Amen.

"I BELIEVE; HELP MY UNBELIEF!" In today's Gospel Lesson Jesus performs two miracles. He not only healed the epileptic boy: He also increased the father's faith. From saying, **"If you can do anything,"** the desperate father reached the point where he could say, **"I believe."** And yet it was not a change from unbelief to complete belief, His one-sentence prayer, **"Help my unbelief"** showed that he did not possess complete and absolute faith. He expressed and acted on the faith he had, but he did not hide his doubt. He was honest with Christ. No person believes perfectly. In every person there is a mixture of faith and doubt. But the important thing is whether we let ourselves be controlled by faith we have or by our doubts. Miracles happen not because of perfect faith, but rather because of imperfect faith in the perfect Christ.

LADDERS: "Climb the ladder of success" or "Moving up the Corporate Ladder" are terms we often hear in our lives. But there is another ladder – the "Ladder of Perfection," which the Church gives us. It was written by St. John Climacus back in the 6th Century. Each year on the 4th Sunday of Great Lent we dedicate the day to St. John Climacus and his book, which is called **The Ladder of Perfection**. The book is used by man as a meditative guide during Great Lent. It gives thirty steps leading toward the spiritual perfection of man.

St. John contented that divine grace can only be achieved through Jesus Christ. He brought out the virtues in 30 steps listed in his book. Today, we observed the memory of this Saint and recommend his books for reading during this holy season. The book **The Ladder of Perfection** is available in our book store as are other interesting readings for Great Lent and Easter.

WISDOM OF THE FATHERS – SAYINGS OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS:

"The tears that come after baptism are greater than baptism itself, though it may seem rash to say so. Baptism washes off those evils that were previously within us, whereas the sins committed after baptism are washed away by tears. The baptism received by us as children we have all defiled, but we cleanse it anew with our tears. If God in His love for the human race had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed and hard to find."

"Repentance is the daughter of hope and the denial of despair."

"If anyone could see his own vices accurately without the veil of self-love, he would worry about nothing else in his life but to repent from his sinful self."

CHUCKLE – NO ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES: There is a story told of a young soldier in Italy during World War II who jumped into a foxhole just by the seat-of-his-pants ahead of a bullet. Crouching and digging in a bit deeper, his hand touched metal, and he brought up a silver crucifix, left no doubt, by a former resident. A moment later another leaping figure landed beside him as shells exploded nearby. When the soldier got a chance to look, he saw his companion was an army chaplain. Holding out the crucifix, the soldier gasped, "Am I glad to see you! How do you work this thing?"

MEDITATION: Don't worry about anything, but in your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God's peace which is far beyond human understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. (Read Philippians 4:6-7)

STEWARDSHIP: Every parishioner should be a supporting member, a steward, of our Cathedral. Everyone should contribute what they can. We all need to have the willingness to make a commitment of faith and to “go on record” as being a believer and a supporter of God’s work through His Church. Since the Coronavirus Pandemic hit the income of our parish has been cut by 90%. If some of you have not yet returned your 2020 Pledge Form to the church office, please, do so without delay. Also, keep current in your payments. Stewardship pledge should be at least one quarter paid as of April. To make giving easier for all our faithful, we have established an online program called [Tithe.ly/give](https://tithe.ly/give). This will allow those who have internet accessibility to continue to make offerings for stewardship payments, candles, Helping Hand, Food Pantry and other donations that help cover the costs of operating our parish with just a click of your computer keys. Read on below and check out the link listed. It is a symbolic profession of faith when we all work together and helps our church to better plan for its various financial needs and expenditures. Thank you.

During this difficult situation and time of separation, we are working hard to make sure you can stay connected to your church. Services are being streamed. Bible studies and youth groups are being held on Zoom. And now, you can support the church from your home! Click the following link to access the Cathedral's online giving page. Make sure you select what type of donation you want to make and if you'd like to cover our processing fees. You also have the ability to enter your stewardship number (listed on your stewardship envelopes) which would help our office a ton!

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=1385847>

ORTHODOX STUDY HOUR: Virtual Gatherings for Spiritual Growth and Encouragement. Here are the topics and links for this week's online sessions.

Tuesday, March 31, 3:00 p.m. Bible Study Topic: Faith & Grace.

<https://zoom.us/j/828087339>

Wednesday, April 1, 5:30 p.m. Family Night Topic: The Little Church (pt. 2)

<https://zoom.us/j/877876564>

Thursday, April 2, 3:00 p.m. Topic: Life of St. Mary of Egypt

<https://zoom.us/j/902990774>

SAINT OF THE DAY – MARK, BISHOP OF ARETHUSA: During the 4th century reign of the Christian Emperor Constantine, Mark, destroyed pagan temples, replacing them with churches, hospitals or buildings for the poor. When Julian the Apostate became emperor, the tides turned and idol worship once again flourished. Pagans demanded that Mark, who was now old, rebuild the temple or give a large sum of money to replace it. When he refused, he was beaten, his ears cut off, he was stripped, covered with honey, tied to a tree, and left for the insects to eat. Because he endured patiently, they began to admire him, and they continually lowered their money demands of him, until finally they released him and came to him for Christian instruction.