

# THE LADDER

of  
Divine  
Ascent



Volume 11, Issue 7

The Newsletter of St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

March 2010

## The Sunday of the Cross 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent [March 7<sup>th</sup>]

Together with the Holy Scriptures we proclaim that our Lord Jesus Christ is King, Prophet and High Priest of all Creation. And the Lord has told us that in the Christian Church and in the Kingdom, a King is not one who overpowers others to exact from them unconditional and slavish obedience, but He is the one who serves and gives His life for others. St. John Chrysostom teaches us that anyone can rule, but that no one but a king gives his life for his people, because he so identifies with his people that he has no existence, no life, no purpose but to serve them with all his life and if necessary with his death.

When we keep the Feast of the Cross we can realize with new strength, perceive with new depth what the Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ means. It means a love for us so complete, so total that He can forget Himself ultimately, without any reservation, forget Himself to the point of existing, of living and of dying for us and together with us; forgetting Himself to such an extent, and identifying Himself with us in such a way that in His humanity He accepts the loss of the perception of His oneness with God, with the source of life eternal - indeed, with life eternal within Himself, and become one with our deadness, with our mortality. This is the love that makes our Lord Jesus Christ our worthy King; this is a Kingship which makes every knee to bow before Him. And it is because He is such that He can also be the High Priest of all Creation. The high priests of the pagan world as well as the High Priests of Israel brought forth as a sacrifice victims with which they identified only metaphorically, symbolically, ritually. The Lord Jesus Christ brought as a victim His own Self, although there was nothing in Him that condemned Him to the death He has taken upon Himself. Doesn't He say in His High-priestly prayer, talking to His disciples that the adversary is coming near, but there is nothing in Him - in Christ - that belongs to him. There is nothing in Christ which belongs in the realm of death and of sin. And to His Father He says: I sanctify Myself for them, I bring Myself as a holy offering for My people. The High Priest who brings Himself frees thereby all other creatures from the horror of blood-offering, but confronts us with an immensity, a depth of love divine which otherwise we could not even fathom: life accepting to be quenched, light accepting to go out, eternity accepting to die the mortality of a fallen world.

And that is why the Word of God can speak to us as a Prophet. A prophet is not one who foretells the future; a prophet is one who speaks for God. One of the prophets of old says that a prophet is one with whom God shares His thoughts. Christ, the Word of God, Christ, the perfect image of Love divine, Christ who not only speaks for God, but who acts, enacts in His life and in His death the Love of God, sacrificial, total, perfect, given ...

And this is why the Feast of the Cross is such a wonder in the experience of the Church. We will never be able to experience what it meant for Him to die upon the Cross, even our own death cannot disclose to us what His death was: how can Immortality die? But what we can learn, what we can discover by communing ever more deeply, ever more perfectly through a daring, wholehearted endeavor with the life, and the teaching, and the ways of Christ - what we can learn is to love in a way that approximates more and more to that love divine, and discover in this love the quality which unites death as forgetfulness of self, ultimate and perfect, with the victory of love, Resurrection and eternal life. Amen.

*From a Homily of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (23 March 1984)*  
Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh Library <http://www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru/eng/>

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### Financial Snapshot

| 2010      | Income | Expenses      |
|-----------|--------|---------------|
| YTD (Jan) | \$9526 | not available |
| YTD       | \$9526 | not available |
| Charity   | \$3851 | not available |

Other restricted income for January: \$3309 earmarked for building, icon, vestment funds, etc.

**St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church**  
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**Schedule of Services**  
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**March 2010**

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday   |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|
|  | <b>01</b>  | <b>02</b>   | <b>03</b><br>Confessions<br>4:30 – 6:00 pm<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 – 6:00 pm<br><b>Presanctified Liturgy</b><br>6:00 pm                       | <b>04</b> <i>fast</i><br>OCF<br>Clemson University<br>7:00 pm<br>Furman University<br>6:30 pm  | <b>05</b>   | <b>06</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Inquirers' Class<br>Confession<br>4:30 pm<br><b>Great Vespers</b><br>6:00 pm  |
| <b>07</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent<br>Sunday of the Cross<br><b>Divine Liturgy</b><br>9:30 am<br>Slavonic Molieben<br>12:30 pm                           | <b>08</b><br>Kursk Root Icon   | <b>09</b>   | <b>10</b><br>Confessions<br>4:30 – 6:00 pm<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 – 6:00 pm<br><b>Presanctified Liturgy</b><br>6:00 pm                       | <b>11</b><br>OCF<br>Clemson University<br>7:00 pm  | <b>12</b>   | <b>13</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><u>Workshop</u><br>'A Christian Ending'<br>4:00 pm<br><b>Great Vespers</b><br>6:00 pm   |
| <b>14</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent<br>St John of the Ladder<br>Festal Brunch<br>'Ask the Priest'<br>w/ Dn Mark Barna<br><b>Divine Liturgy</b><br>9:30 am | <b>15</b>  | <b>16</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste                            | <b>17</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Confessions<br>4:30 – 6:00 pm<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 – 6:00 pm<br><b>Presanctified Liturgy</b><br>6:00 pm | <b>18</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><b>Matins with the Canon of St Andrew</b><br><b>7:00 am</b><br>OCF<br>Furman University<br>6:30 pm  | <b>19</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>S'burg Area 'Small Group' Fellowship<br>7:00 pm        | <b>20</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><b>Akathist</b><br><b>8:00 am</b><br>Pre-Pascha Spring Cleaning Day<br>9 am – 1 pm<br>Inquirers' Class<br><b>Great Vespers</b><br>6:00 pm |
| <b>21</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent<br>Sunday of the Venerable Mary of Egypt<br><b>Divine Liturgy</b><br>9:30 am  | <b>22</b>  | <b>23</b>   | <b>24</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Forefeast of Annunciation<br>Confessions<br>4:30 – 6:00 pm<br><b>Vespers</b><br>6:00 pm                       | <b>25</b> <i>fish, wine &amp; oil</i><br><b>Festal Matins</b><br><b>7:00 am</b><br>Annunciation<br>Confessions<br>4:00 – 6:00 pm<br>Choir Rehearsal<br><b>Vesperal Liturgy</b><br>6:00 pm  | <b>26</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel<br>End of Great Lent! | <b>27</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><b>Divine Liturgy</b><br><b>9:30 am</b><br><b>Lazarus Saturday</b><br>Panikhida for Elaine Simon<br><b>Vigil of the Palms</b><br>6:00 pm  |
| <b>28</b> Palm Sunday<br>Entry of the Lord<br><b>Divine Liturgy</b><br>9:30 am<br>Beginning of Passion Week<br><b>Bridegroom Matins</b><br>~ 12:30 pm                | <b>29</b> Holy Monday<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>6:00 pm<br><b>Bridegroom Matins</b><br>7:00 pm | <b>30</b> Holy Tuesday<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>6:00 pm<br><b>Bridegroom Matins</b><br>7:00 pm | <b>31</b> Holy Wednesday<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>6:00 pm<br><b>Holy Thursday Matins</b><br>7:00 pm   | <b>A Word from the Desert</b><br>Where there is humility, there also is the grace of Christ; and this grace is the Kingdom of Heaven.<br>~~~ an Athonite Staretz<br>(quoted in <i>A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain</i> ) |   |  |

Fellowship and Goffee Hour: Sundays immediately following Divine Liturgy.

Church School: Sundays before Divine Liturgy at 9:00 am prompt !!!

Confessions on Saturdays following Great Vespers and other days as scheduled above.

There will be no confessions during Holy Week --- the final opportunity for confession is following the Vigil of Palms.

**With the voice of the archangel, we cry aloud to you, O pure Virgin:  
 'Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with you!'**

## A Christian Ending...

*A Workshop with Dn Mark and Matushka Elizabeth Barna*

**Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

The 'traditional' American funeral is unique in world history and has greatly impacted how modern Christians view death. The funeral industry continues to profit greatly from many myths and misconceptions regarding legal matters, health and sanitation, and environmental concerns. Also, many people have turned to cremation as an answer to the high cost of dying in America.

**Is cremation the answer for Orthodox Christians?**

**What is a traditional Orthodox funeral?**

**How did the ancient Church deal with death and funerals?**

**What can our community do to return to our own traditions?**

Deacon Mark and Matushka Elizabeth Barna have been studying these questions for many years and will be on hand to explode the myths and explore solutions. They have guided many people through the maze of the funeral industry and performed several funeral preparations themselves at no cost to the family. After a short introduction they will leave plenty of time for questions on any facet of the subject from the history of burial, preparing necessary legal papers and dealing with a funeral home, to the preparation of a body for burial and how to organize and conduct a funeral vigil. They will be as broad or as detailed as your interests and questions dictate.

*Dn Mark and Mat Elizabeth will also be available during the 'Ask the Priest' session on Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, during the Coffee Fellowship time.*

**'As Many as have been baptized  
into Christ...'**

*'Do Thou, O Lord God Almighty, the Source  
of all good things, the Sun of  
Righteousness, compassionate King of  
kings, grant also unto Thy servants the  
seal of the gift of Thy Holy, and Almighty,  
and Adorable Spirit and participation in the  
holy Body and precious Blood of Thy  
Christ...'*

**Please join us in receiving into the Church**

**Jason and Christine Davis**

**together with their children**

**Patrick, Janessa, Anya, Scott,  
Ransom, Malachi, and Theodore**

**through the Sacrament  
of Baptism and Chrismation**

**Lazarus Saturday  
March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 9:30 am**



## The Sundays of Great Lent

The Sundays of Great Lent have commemorations assembled piously over the past centuries to guide us vigilantly through the season toward Holy Week and Pascha, or Easter.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Great Lent (February 21st this year) is the Sunday of Orthodoxy, when we give thanks for those who laid down their lives in defense of the Apostles' teachings. The annual procession of icons that day commemorates the Ecumenical Councils that upheld Orthodox Christianity against the innovations of heretics, and it provides the laity an annual review of basic Trinitarian & Christological doctrine.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> in Great Lent (February 28th this year) is the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, who teaches us the most intimate form of prayer. A 14th-century theologian & Archbishop of Thessalonica, he explains God's work in miraculous ways in the lives of those who love Him, and particularly through "prayer of the heart"—those occasions when we meet God in "quiet prayer" ("hesychasm" in Greek), or prayer without words.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Great Lent is the Veneration of the Precious & Life-Creating Cross, reminding us of the instrument of our salvation. It is the only occasion during the year when prostrations are made on a Sunday morning (except for the one year in seven when the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14th, falls on a Sunday).

The 4<sup>th</sup> is the Sunday of St. John of the Ladder, or St. John Climacus, who teaches us spiritual discipline. A sixth-century monk of Sinai, from his ascetic experience he described the thirty steps toward conforming one's life to Christ's, in his renowned work "The Ladder of Divine Ascent."

The 5<sup>th</sup> and final Sunday in Great Lent is that of St. Mary of Egypt, who teaches us repentance. The incomparable story of her life in the sixth century is familiar and unforgettable to the Orthodox, as perhaps the most profound example of the worst of sinners being led by God to repentance from basest depravity, and then through many years to a complete & unsurpassed holiness.

Finally at the beginning of Holy Week is Palm Sunday (March 28th this year, and one of the twelve Great Feasts), celebrating the bittersweet Royal Entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into the Holy City of Jerusalem.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

■ **ALMS SUNDAY**

March 14<sup>th</sup> is our Alms Collection Sunday. Please remember to bring foodstuffs and personal items. Baskets are in the vestibule as you enter the church. These items and money collected support the following (among other occasional) charitable needs: **United Ministries, OCMC Missionaries Floyd and Ancutsa Frantz, two St Vladimir's Seminarians, the Carolinas Deanery fund, a widowed priest's wife and her two children.** Thanks to all who continue to give so generously to our outreach efforts!

■ **ALL ARE INVITED!!!**

**Sam and Jeanette Hubbard** are hosting a dinner for **Will and Hannah Vasquez** at their home on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, at 7 pm. Will and Hannah will be passing through on their way to spring training in Florida. They are expecting their first child in the summer! Will played for the Greenville Drive during the 2008 season. RSVP 864 963 8234

■ **SIGN-UP SHEETS FOR LENTEN MEALS, FESTAL FLOWERS**

**Sign-up** sheets are posted in the fellowship hall to **provide meals** after Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies and to **offer Easter Lilies and flowers** for other feasts.

**A Reminder and a Hearty 'Thank You'!**

**March Fellowship and Coffee Hour**

March 7<sup>th</sup> Team 5  
March 14<sup>th</sup> Festal Brunch  
March 21<sup>st</sup> Team 6  
March 28<sup>th</sup> Team 7

**Celebrating Birthdays in March**

Angie O'Shaughnessy and Adele Webb (3<sup>rd</sup>), Kirsten Small (6<sup>th</sup>), Jamie and Jaye Levitsky (6<sup>th</sup>), Alexandra Karfer (8<sup>th</sup>), Christian Evangelista (10<sup>th</sup>), Elizabeth Simon (12<sup>th</sup>), Tony and Ana Satcher (13<sup>th</sup>), George Middleton (15<sup>th</sup>), Sarah Middleton (16<sup>th</sup>), Florina Nicolae (18<sup>th</sup>), Miriam Little (20<sup>th</sup>), James Freeman (27<sup>th</sup>), Smilian Miletkov (28<sup>th</sup>), Harry Bobotis, Ken O'Shaughnessy and Kandice Crawford (29<sup>th</sup>), Jack Levitsky (30<sup>th</sup>), Andrew Wood (31<sup>st</sup>)

**From the Lenten Triodion**

**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal Resurrection, O Christ God. Like the children, with the palms of victory, We cry out to Thee, O vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**  
*(from the Festival of Palms: Lazarus Sat & Palm Sunday)*

**St. John of the Ladder**



**Orthodox Church in America**

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Rev Fr Marcus C Burch, Rector  
Rev Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Assistant

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

**Schedule of Services**

Vespers, Wednesday, 6:00 pm  
Great Vespers, Saturday, 6:00 pm  
Divine Liturgy, Sunday, 9:30 am

Let your prayer be completely simple.  
For both the Publican and the Prodigal Son  
were reconciled to God by a single phrase.

St John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 28*



PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

**March 2010**