

ST. NICHOLAS BULLETIN Sunday, April 3rd 2022

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – Tone 8. St. John Climacus (of The Ladder)

Ephesians 5:9-19 (Saint); Hebrews 6:13-20 (Epistle)

Matthew 4:25-5:12 (Saint)Mark 9:17-31 (Gospel)

Please join us following Divine Liturgy for coffee hour and fellowship downstairs.

Blessings to you on this final week of Lent. Keep the Fast with joy! Mission Vespers tonight in Weirton at 5pm. Also note the Holy Week schedule in the back. You are encouraged to adjust your schedule as much as able, to attend divine services that week.

Paschal candles for basket blessings will be available this coming week. Apologies for the delay.

The ideal times for confessions are following services throughout the week (i.e. services for Lazarus Saturday, pre-sanctified Liturgy, etc.), or by scheduled appointment. Ideally, try to come before Holy Week, which is a very busy time. *Members in good standing are expected to give confession and receive Holy Communion at Holy Pascha.*

Services and events this week

TONIGHT

5:00pm – Mission Vespers @ St. Nicholas in Weirton (608 Colliers Way, WV)

Tuesday

6:30pm-- Moleben for Peace (final one for the season)

Wednesday

6:30pm –Presanctified Liturgy (here)

Friday

6:00pm – Vespers for Lazarus Saturday

Lazarus Saturday

9:30am – Divine Liturgy

6:00pm – Great Vespers, followed by confessions

Palm Sunday

No akathist

9:40am 3rd & 6th Hours;

10:00am – Divine Liturgy, followed by coffee hour

Prayer list Apr. 3rd

Mary Behanna – in memory of parents Andy & Petrina Gernat (Virgin Mary Kiot)
Deacon Rodion & family – for health of Deacon Rodion, Nicholas & Christina/ for health of Dennis Carroll/ for health of Anastasia and the child to be born of her
Janine Shepler – in memory of sister, Becky/ memory of father, John/ memory of brother/ memory of mother, Julia/ health of son Billy & wife Jodi, Mat. Nadia and the child to be born of her/ health of brother-in-law, Mike/ health of husband Bill/ health of sister, Tammy/ special intentions

Tom & Elaine Backstrom – for special intentions/ memory of Mom & Dad/ God’s healing hand be upon sister Michele/ God’s blessings on grandchildren, Sydney, Luke, Freddy & Madison/ for health of family

Dr. Dimitri & Pauline Petro – for health of Kyra, Adam, & Will/ in memory of Uncle Michael Drake/ for health of Christina & Alex/ for health of Russell and Shelley/ for health of Jonah & Catherine/ for health of Natalie & Rob/ for health of Giada Montini/ for health of Matushka Nadia/ for health of Noah

Jim & Vera Hays – Health of all parishioners/ health of Dennis Carroll/ Peace in Ukraine

Vlad Kash – in memory of Fr. Igor Soroka

Sandy Carroll – in memory of dad, Pete Ruev, on the 30th anniversary of his repose (4/3/1992)/health of husband Dennis/for health of cousin, Justin Smith

Mark Soroka – in blessed memory of beloved father and mother, Fr. Igor and Mat. Irene
Michael Horan – in memory of my loving wife, Rebecca/ for health of Cindy/for special intentions/ for health of friend Manny Rodriguez / for health of sister, Janine Shepler

Ken Behanna – for health and welfare of our church

Geraldine Rozik – for health of brother, Gerald/ for peace in Ukraine

Sandy Klizas – in memory of Michael Drake/ in memory of Stephen & Helen Drake/ in memory of Frank & June Drake/ special intentions

Rob & Natalie Montini – for health of niece, Giada Montini

Lazarus Saturday

The Beginning of the Cross

“Having fulfilled the Forty Days...we ask to see the Holy Week of Thy Passion.” With these words sung at Vespers of Palm Friday, Lent comes to its end and we enter into the annual commemoration of Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection. It begins on Saturday of Lazarus. The double feast of Lazarus’s Resurrection and the Entrance of the Lord to Jerusalem is described in liturgical texts as the “beginning of the Cross” and is to be understood, therefore, within the context of the Holy Week. The common troparion of these days explicitly affirms that “by raising Lazarus from the dead Christ confirmed the truth of the general resurrection.” It is highly significant that we are led into the darkness of the Cross by one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. Light and Joy shine not only at the end of Holy Week but also at its beginning; they illumine darkness itself, reveal its ultimate meaning.

All those familiar with Orthodox worship know the peculiar, almost paradoxical character of Lazarus Saturday services. It is a Sunday, i.e. a Resurrection service on a Saturday, a day usually devoted to the liturgical commemoration of the dead. And the joy which permeates these services stresses one central theme: the forthcoming victory of Christ over Hades...Death in its universal power, for that unescapable darkness and destruction that wallow all life and poison with its shadow the whole world. But now – with Lazarus’s resurrection – “death begins to tremble.” For there begins the decisive duel between Life

and Death and it gives us the key to the entire liturgical mystery of Pascha. In the early church Lazarus Saturday was called "announcement of Pascha": it announces and anticipates, indeed, the wonderful light and peace of the next – the Great and Holy Saturday, the day of the Lifegiving Tomb.

Let us first of all understand that Lazarus, the **friend** of Jesus personifies the whole mankind and also each man, and Bethany, the **home** of Lazarus the Man, is the symbol of the whole world as home of man. For each man was created friend of God and called to this Divine Friendship: the knowledge of God, the communion with Him, sharing of life with Him. "In Him was life and Life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4). And yet this Friend who God loves, whom in love He has created, is destroyed and annihilated by a power which God has not created: death. God encounters in His own world a power which destroys His work and annihilates His design. The world is but lamentation and sorrow, tears and death. How is this possible? How did this happen? These are the questions implied in John's slow and detailed narrative of Jesus's coming to the grave of His friend. And once there, "Jesus wept" (11:35). Why does He weep if He knows that in a moment He will call Lazarus back to life? Byzantine hymnographers fail to grasp the true meaning of these tears. They ascribe them to His human nature, whereas the power of resurrection belongs to God in Him. But the Orthodox Church teaches that all actions of Christ are "theandric", i.e. both Divine and human, are actions of the one and same God-man, the Incarnate Son of God. He who weeps in not only man but also God and He who calls Lazarus from the grave is not God alone but also Man. But then His very tears are Divine. Jesus weeps because He contemplates the triumph of death and destruction in the world created by God. "It stinketh" say the Jews trying to prevent Jesus from approaching the corpse and this awful warning applies to the whole world, to all life. God is Life and the Giver of Life. He called man into the Divine Reality of Life and behold "it stinketh"...The world was created to reflect and proclaim the glory of God and "it stinketh." At the grave of Lazarus God encounters Death, the reality of anti-life, of destruction and despair. He meets His enemy, who has taken away from Him His World and become its prince. And we who follow Jesus as He approaches the grave, we enter with Him into that hour of His, which He announced so often as the climax and fulfillment of His whole work. The Cross, its necessity and universal meaning are announced in the shortest verse of the Gospel: "and Jesus wept"...

We understand now that it is because He wept, i.e. loved His friend Lazarus, that Jesus had the power of calling him back to Life. The power of resurrection is not a Divine "power in itself" but power of love, or rather love as power. God is Love and Love is Life, Love creates Life...It is Love that weeps at the grave and it is Love that restores life. This is the meaning of the Divine tears of Jesus. In them love is at work again – recreating, redeeming, restoring the darkened life of man: "Lazarus, come forth!..." And this is why Lazarus Saturday is the beginning of both: the Cross, as the Supreme sacrifice of love, the Resurrection, as the ultimate triumph of love.

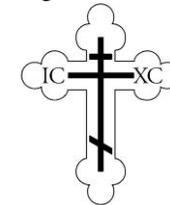
-Fr. Alexander Schmemmann



***"The memory of insults is the residue of anger. It keeps sins alive, hates justice, ruins virtue, poisons the heart, rots the mind, defeats concentration, paralyzes prayer, puts love at a distance, and is a nail driven into the soul."*—St. John Climacus**

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