April 2024 * Volume 48, Issue 4

holytrinity@htgocnj.org

908-233-8533

holytrinitywestfield.org

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

(579 A.D. - 649 A.D.)

♦ his year the Theosis Class at Holy Trinity is studying "Thirty Steps to Heaven", a condensed version of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" by St. John Climacus.

St. John is one of the greatest Christian writers in the world and is a celebrated saint of both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. The Orthodox Church celebrates his memory twice each year, on March 30 and the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. This year, The Fourth Sunday of Lent is April 14.

Born in the sixth century, John spent the first sixteen years of his life in Palestine, the ancient Holy Land of his birth. His early ambitions were realized when he went to the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, the oldest Christian monastery in the world. There he became one of the most scholarly monks in Christendom. The site of St. Catherine's was conducive to prayer and meditation, for there the scene of the burning bush took place and there Moses received the word of God himself. Moreover, to this place the grieving St. Helen, mother of St. Constantine the Great, came on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land some three hundred years before.



John is remembered not only as the author of the masterful "Ladder of Perfection" or "Divine Ascent" but also as the originator of hesychasm, the divine quietness that leads one to God through constant prayer, the prayer which has come to be known as the pure or intellectual "Jesus Prayer." Regarding this John wrote: "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath,

Continued on page 3 ⇒

Holy Week Schedule
APRIL 28, PALM SUNDAY Orthros8:30am
Divine Liturgy9:30am The Bridegroom Service6:30pm
APRIL 29, HOLY MONDAY The Bridegroom Service 6:30pm
APRIL 30, HOLY TUESDAY Presanctified Liturgy9:30am
The Bridegroom Service Hymn of Kassiani
MAY 1, HOLY WEDNESDAY Sacrament of Holy Unction 3:00pm
The Bridegroom Service with Unction annointing6:30pm
MAY 2, HOLY THURSDAY
Divine Liturgy of the Mystical Supper9:30am The Holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The Twelve Gospels and the Crucifixion
MAY 3, HOLY FRIDAY
Veneration of the Cross9:00 am–3:00 pm Imperial Hours9:30 am
Apokathelosis Vespers, Unnailing, Descent from the Cross and
Burial of Christ
MAY 4, HOLY SATURDAY

Vesperal Divine Liturgy...... 9:30 am

Resurrection Vigil11:15 pm

Divine Liturgy...... 12:00 am

Divine Liturgy...... 12:00 am

Agape Vespers11:00 am

MAY 5. THE GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA



Dates in the Life of Our Church

April 2024

APRIL	IO 9:30 AM TOTs	2O 10:00 AM Parish Lenten Project
2 11:00 AM Trinity Circle	6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	2I Fifth Sunday of Lent
4:00 PM Greek School	7:45 PM Theosis	8:15 AM Orthros
5:00 PM Lenten Vespers	II 4:00 PM Greek School	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7:00 PM Marriage Prep	I 2 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	22 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	7:45 PM Lenten Meal	23 4:00 PM Greek School
7:45 PM Theosis	I3 11:00 AM Baptism	24 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
4:00 PM Greek School	I4 Fourth Sunday of Lent	7:45 PM Theosis
6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	8:15 AM Orthros	25 4:00 PM Greek School
7:45 PM Lenten Mealt	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	26 9:30 AM TOTs
Veneration of the Holy Cross	I 6 4:00 PM Greek School	27 Saturday of Lazarus
8:15 AM Orthros	5:00 PM Lenten Vespers	8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	7:30 PM Parish Council	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
1:00 PM Baptism	8:00 PM NNJYC State Youth Mtg.	11:00 AM Palm Tying
5:00 PM Great Compline	I 7 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	28 Palm Sunday
) Metropolis Clergy/Laity	7:45 PM Theosis	8:15 AM Orthros
4:00 PM Greek School	18 4:00 PM Greek School	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Mtg	I 9 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	No Religious Education Classes

St. John Climacus

← Continued from page 1

and then you will know the value of hesychia." John's love for Jesus was like a deep well, ever drawing him in and quenching his spiritual thirst.

For more than seventy years, John of the Ladder practiced his love for Jesus in the confines of his desert monastery. He achieved such a reputation for piety and wisdom that men from all walks of life were drawn to his side and came from all over the east to make a pilgrimage to his retreat. From John's strong faith and fervent prayer came the power of healing through the divine intervention of the Jesus. (They become one through theosis.) If nothing else, St. John's visitors would leave with a serenity which they had never before experience and with a sense of fulfillment that would last a lifetime. *

"Prayer is the mother and daughter of tears. It is an expiation of sin, a bridge across temptation, a bulwark against affliction. It wipes out conflict, is the work of angels, and is the nourishment of everything spiritual."

- St. John Climacus

AGAPE FUND

Support a Mission Priest

t's unbelievable how a small thing can grow into a tremendous success when our hearts are in the right place. The Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) Agape Fund raised awareness of OCMC's (Orthodox Christian Mission Center) efforts. Holy Trinity with her parishioners is now supporting some seven priests. Glory to God for this!

The Support a Mission Priest Program provides a subsidy to help priests in the Orthodox Church of Africa (Patriarchate of Alexandria) share the Faith, care for their communities, and provide for their families.

Parish contributions are helping the following clergy.

Fr. Martin Bayang (Cameroon); Fr. Joseph Mukadi (Democratic Republic of the Congo); Fr. John Okello (Uganda).

In addition, Fr. Peter and Presvytera Victoria committed to support His



Deb Efthimion and Presvytera Victoria promoting OCMC with Fr. Peter

Grace Bishop Neofitos of Kenya. There are another four parishioners supporting a mission priest in our parish. If you or your family would like to be part of

extraordinary effort, please contact Father Peter, he will get you connected so that you can Support a Mission Priest. �



His Grace Bishop Neofitos of The Diocese of Eldoret And Northern Kenya



Joseph Mukadi Samp Priest Serving in The Diocese of Kananga, DRC



John Okello Samp Priest Serving in the Diocese of Gulu, Uganda



Fr. Martin Bayang of Cameroon

THE LADDER

he "Ladder of Divine Ascent" describes how to lift one's soul heavenward towards God through the acquisition of ascetic virtues. This is a lifelong process that is only achievable through extended prayer, fasting, and liturgical worship of the Trinity.

This book is a guide for those practicing a life entirely devoted to God. This

is why it is so important for monastics and the faithful as well.

The metaphor of a ladder is used to describe an ascent. Interestingly enough, the name "Climacus" means ladder in Greek. Since Holy Scripture is at the center of a Christian's life, John uses the Old Testament image of Jacob's Ladder as the framework for his spiritual teaching.

"Jacob dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven, and the Angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord leaned upon it and said: 'I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; be not afraid.... And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places wither thou goest.'"

(28:12-13, 15—Septuagint).

The importance of this heavenly ladder is to visualize God's care that He does not abandon or leave us as orphans. And although we might not physically see God, He is constantly present protecting us, encouraging us, helping us come closer to Him. The "ascent" is our journey towards Him. As we climb the ladder, His angels guide and protect us as we get closer to Him. But as the icon depicts there are pitfalls along the way.

Besides angels, there are others who help us with our spiritual ascent. The

Panagia, the Ever-Virgin Mary, is the first and foremost to help. Symbolically, she is the ladder whom Jacob sees in his dream. The Virgin Mary is the one who allowed Christ to descend from heaven into this world, and thus she is the one who always allows us to ascend bringing us toward Him.

As one begins an ascent, he must work against the elements of this world. In the physical world, gravity pulls us down. In the spiritual world, the demons do the same. The icon shows the demons' insidious activity. These fallen creatures tempt us and seek to do us harm. Therefore, any ascent requires effort on our part. We must work against the elements of the fallen world to rise higher and higher. The devil wants to pull us down so that we fall from God's grace. In our struggle, we acquire strength to rise higher. By putting our faith in God, His ministering spirits will aid us, as will all the saints.

The ladder has thirty steps or rungs, which correspond to the age of Jesus at His baptism and the beginning of His earthly ministry. Each step deals with a separate spiritual subject. Within the general framework of a 'ladder', Climacus' book falls into three sections. The first concerns itself with the virtues necessary for an ascetic life. The middle section gives instruction on overcoming vice and building their corresponding virtues. And the final steps concern the higher virtues that exist beyond prayer, stillness and dispassion. The final rung is an experience of God's love.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I recommend reading this book as a Lenten spiritual exercise. It will provide us insight in how to govern our lives so that we may ascent heavenward.



Capital Campaign Dollars at Work

How your donation is making a difference

You can see first-hand how your donation to the Capital Campaign was used. Thank you for your contribution to this important campaign.



New Air Conditioning Systems for Church and Administration Offices

Removal and arrival of new system, April 1

Installation to begin May 6



New Church Boiler System

To heat and maintain temperature in the Church and Administration Offices



Church Dome

Work and new protective membrane covering the dome.



Parking Lot Milling & Paving

Paving of the church's parking lot in front and back of the church is completed.





On Monday, April 1 contractors removing old air conditioning units and placing new units on church office roof

Palm Cross Preparation

Please join us after liturgy on Saturday, April 27 in the Bouras Center to tie Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday distribution. No experience is necessary. Your Stewardship and Fellowship are important components helping to make Holy Week special. The more hands we have the better and faster the process goes. The Saturday of Lazarus, for all intents and purposes, is the beginning of Holy Week. By helping, you start off Holy Week on an uplifting note. ❖



The Metropolis of New Jersey New Facebook Page

The Metropolis of New Jersey introduces its new Facebook page. For latest news, information, and pictures of Metropolis activities, please visit and subscribe. •



GOYA



he Youth of Holy Trinity is thrilled that our hard work and dedication paid off in Sights & Sounds, allowing us to secure fifth place overall. We thrived in many of our group and solo categories and won awards for some awesome sights! We are very proud of everyone! We would like to thank our coaches, advisors, parents, and volunteers all who helped to make Sights & Sounds as memorable and enjoyable as it always is. At the post-show we presented the Good Friend Award to Mrs. Roula Iouannou. We are beyond grateful for all she has done for

us these past few years. Our costumes for the play, and the decorations for the Harvest dance we hosted last year were fantastic because of her. If you would like to get involved in the event in the future please reach out to the advisors; there are categories for everyone, even if you don't play an instrument, or are an artist or singer!

Several of us prepared to participate in the 40th annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival on Sunday, March 31. Although only one participant is selected to continue in the competition for each of the junior and senior categories, we were all thrilled to delve deeper into our religion and the topics we selected. I personally enjoyed incorporating my own research and opinion into my speech and loved hearing my fellow GOYAN's responses as well. We wish the finalists from Holy Trinity the best moving forward!

Our outreach committee is planning an activity for us to provide Easter treat bags to children in a Plainfield school. We anticipate future state-wide events like Olympics and GOYA Prom, and other activities within our own GOYA in the next few months. *







52nd Annual Sights and Sounds



oly Trinity's signature youth event, Sights and Sounds, celebrated their 52nd Anniversary of this momentous event on Saturday, March 2, 2024. There was much to celebrate as this year's festival brought together GOYANs from 15 parishes from the Northern Metropolis of New Jersey to compete in the areas of literature, art, music, theater, and dance. This year we hosted over 600 youth, advisors, chaperones, judges, priests, presvyteres, and Westfield volunteers.

The endless downpour of rain throughout the day could not stop the excitement, nervousness, and anticipation of the performers. After many months of practices and rehearsals, everyone was ready to display their Godgiven talents and the Bouras Center was decorated with their spectacular artistry.

It was a wonderful event for all who were involved, and it was inspirational to see our youth members share their talents with each other in Christian unity. All of the youth performers and participants should be congratulated for their dedication, passion, and efforts which made this event so enjoyable and worthwhile.

We were honored and especially blessed once again with the arrival of His Eminence, Metropolitan Apostolos, who engaged with the youth and addressed the GOYANs after watching several performances in the Bouras Center as well as some individual solos in our other performance rooms. We were so elated to have His Eminence join us later that evening for vespers and the awards ceremony where he congratulated the GOYANs for their artistic achievements and dynamic performances. He encouraged them to continually grow in their faith as young Orthodox Christians and to be grateful for the artistic talents that God has bestowed upon them.



It goes without saying that Sights and Sounds requires many months of preparation. This event is blessed to have a dedicated Host Committee who self-lessly give of themselves because of their love and appreciation for the event that Holy Trinity founded over 50 years ago. The committee extends a very special thank you to all of the many volunteers of our parish who assisted during the event. We pray that God will continue to bless Holy Trinity. We are honored to serve as chairman of this wonderful and amazing event.

We note the following recognitions: Chairs: Peter and Alexandra Boutsikaris

Our Host Committee: Marigo Markos, Ellen Manos-Athenson, Yiana Leichtling, Maria Kanaras, Roula Ioannou, Keli Leunes, Christina Colonias, George Colonias, Ron Cerini, Andrea Cerini, Stephen Ladas, Debbie Vlahakis, Ellen Conti, Maria Tarhanidis, and Sophia Saketos. ❖









Sunday of Orthodoxy March 24























Greek School March 25 Celebration Program





Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Westfield

Annual Lenten Project

Volunteers Needed!

Join us in our meal-packing

Support us:

- Volunteer: Sign up @ Philoptochos Table
- Donate any amount to help offset costs

http://events.riseagainst hunger.org/HolyTrinity2024

Saturday, April 20, 2024 10-12pm 250 Gallows Hill Road Westfield, NJ







Scan this code to open our page!

We need your help!

For more information, please stop by Philoptochos table or Kathy Maglaras at maglaraskeyahoo.com



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31st Annual

The Spirit of Lent Concert

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Ryan J. Kiel, Director E. Hope Demitry, Organist

Friday, April 26, 2024 7:30 p.m.

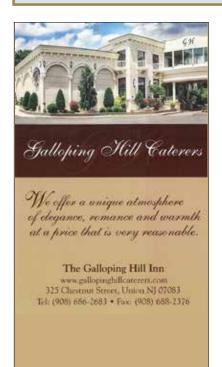




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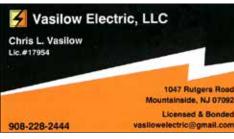
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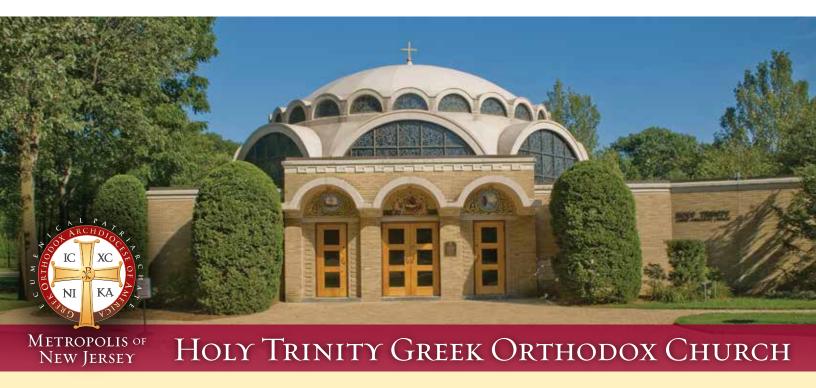
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Phone 908-233-8533

Fax 908-233-0623

E-mail HolyTrinity@htgocnj.org

Web site holytrinitywestfield.org

Presiding Priest Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizis

E-mail FrPeter@htgocnj.org

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Weekdays Sundays

8:30 AM Orthros 8:15 AM

9:30 AM 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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