

PETRA NEWS



SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

WEEK OF APRIL 11TH 2021

WEEKLY SERVICES

MONDAY, APRIL 12

Great Compline _____ 6pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14

Presanctified Liturgy _____ 5:30pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 16

Presanctified Liturgy _____ 9am

Akathistos _____ 6pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 17

Great Vespers _____ 5pm

LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL

We celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil on the Sundays during Great Lent. The supplemental prayers are available in the Church Narthex for you to prayerfully participate with the clergy and chanters.

PRAYER FOR THE CATECHUMENS

“Lord our God, Who dwells on high and watches over the humble, You sent forth Your only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race. Look down upon Your servants, the catechumens, who have inclined their necks to You, and grant them at a proper time the baptism of rebirth, the remission of sins, and the garment of incorruption. Unite them to Your holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and number them among Your chosen flock.”

Baily, Chad, Natasha, Yehor, Kate

HYMNS FOR THE SAINT OF THE LADDER

RESURRECTIONAL HYMN (3RD TONE)

*“Let all things above in heaven rejoice,
and let all things below on earth be glad.
With all the might and strength of His arm
an eternal deed the Lord did perform.
Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death,
and first born of the dead has He become.
From the womb of Hades has He delivered us,
and to all the world has granted His great redeeming mercy.”*

HYMN FOR SAINT OF THE LADDER

*“With the rivers of your tears
you made the barren desert bloom;
and with your sighs from deep within,
you made your labors bear their fruits a hundredfold;
and you became a star,
illuminating the world by your miracles,
O John, our devout father.
Intercede with Christ our God,
for the salvation of our souls.”*

HYMN FOR STS PETER PAUL

*“O Leaders of the Apostles,
and teachers of the world,
intercede with the Master of all that
He may grant peace unto the world,
and to our souls His great mercy.”*

KONTAKION FOR GREAT LENT

*“O Champion General, I your City now inscribe to you
* triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude,
* being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos.
* Inasmuch as you have power unassailable,
* from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you
* I may cry aloud: Rejoice, unwedded Bride.”*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he

interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the



father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

SUNDAY OF ST JOHN CLIMACUS OF THE LADDER

On March 30 and on the Fourth Sunday of Holy Lent the Orthodox Church commemorates our Righteous Father John Climacus. He is called Climacus due to his authorship of the great spiritual work *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. His commemoration is designated by the Church on one of the Sundays of Lent as his life and writings affirm him as a supreme bearer and proponent of Christian asceticism. The ascetic example of this great Saint of the Church inspires us in our Lenten journey.

Saint John Climacus was probably born in the second half of the sixth century; but his country and origins are alike unknown because, from the beginning of his renunciation of the world, he took great care to live as a stranger upon earth. "Exile," he wrote, "is a separation from everything, in order that one may hold on totally to God." We only know that, from the age of sixteen, after having received a solid intellectual formation, he renounced all the pleasures of this vain life for love of God and went to Mount Sinai, to the foot of the holy mountain on which God had in former times revealed His glory to Moses, and consecrated himself to the Lord with a burning heart as a sweet-smelling sacrifice.

Setting aside, from the moment of his entry into the stadium, all self-trust and self-satisfaction through unfeigned humility, he submitted body and soul to an elder called Martyrios and set himself, free from all care, to climb that spiritual ladder (klimax) at the top of which God stands, and to "add fire each day to fire, fervour to fervour, zeal to zeal." He saw his shepherd as "the image of Christ" and, convinced that his elder was responsible for him before God, he had only one care: to reject his own will and "with all deliberateness to put aside the capacity to make [his] own judgement," so that no interval passed between Martyrios' commands, even those that appeared unjustified, and the obedience of his disciple. In spite of this perfect submission, Martyrios kept him as a novice for four years and only tonsured him when he was twenty, after having tested his humility. Strategios, one of the monks present at the tonsure predicted that the new monk would one day become one of the great lights of the world. When, later, Martyrios and his disciple paid a visit to John the Savaite, one of the most famous ascetics of the time, the latter, ignoring the elder, poured water over John's feet. After they had left, John the Savaite declared that he did not know the young monk but, under

the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he had washed the feet of the Abbot of Sinai. The same prophecy was confirmed by the great Anastasios the Sinaite (April 21), whom they also went to visit.

In spite of his youth, John showed the maturity of an elder and great discernment. Thus one day, when he had been sent into the world on a mission, and finding himself with lay-people, he had preferred to give in somewhat to vainglory by eating very little, rather than to gluttony; for, of these two evils, it was better to choose that which is less dangerous for beginners in monastic life.

He thus passed nineteen years in the blessed freedom from the care that obedience gives, freed from all conflict by the prayer of his spiritual father and on "a safe voyage, a sleeper's journey," moved towards the harbor of impassibility. On the death of Martyrios, he resolved to continue his ascension in solitude, a type of life suitable for only a small number, who, made strong on the rock of humility, flee from others so as not to be even for a moment deprived of the "sweetness of God." He did not commit himself to this path, one so full of snares, on his own judgment, but on the recommendation of the holy elder George Arsilaites, who instructed him in the way of life proper to hesychasts. As his exercise ground, he chose a solitary place called Tholas, situated five miles from the main monastery, where other hermits lived, each not far from the others. He stayed there for forty years, consumed by an ever-increasing love of God, without thought for his own flesh, free of all contact with men, having unceasing prayer and vigilance as his only occupation, in order to "keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body," as an angel clothed in a body.

He would eat all that was compatible with his monastic profession, but in very small quantities, thus subduing the tyranny of the flesh while not providing a pretext for vainglory. By living in solitude and retreat, he put to death the mighty flame of greed, which, under the pretext of charity and hospitality, leads negligent monks to gluttony, the door to all passions, and to the love of money, "a worship of idols and the offspring of unbelief." He triumphed over sloth (acedia), that death of the soul which attacks hesychasts in particular, and laxity, by the remembrance of death. By meditating on eternal rewards, he undid the chain of sadness; he knew only a single

sadness: that “affliction which leads to joy” and makes us run with ardor along the path of repentance, purifying the soul from all its impurities.

What still prevented him from arriving at impassibility (apatheia)? He had long since conquered anger by the sword of obedience. He had suffocated vainglory, that three-pointed thorn which forever harasses those who battle for holiness, and which entwines itself with every virtue like a leech, by solitude and even more by silence. As a reward for his labors, which he took care to season constantly with self-accusation, the Lord gave him the queen of virtues, holy and precious humility: “a grace in the soul, and with a name known only to those who have had experience of it, a gift from God.”

As his cell was too near the others, he would often withdraw to a distant cave at the foot of the mountain, which he made an antechamber of heaven by his groans and the tears which fell effortlessly from his eyes like an abundant spring, transfiguring his body as with a “wedding garment.” By this blessed affliction and these continual tears, he “did not cease to celebrate daily” and kept perpetual prayer in his heart, which had become like an inviolable fortress against the assaults of evil thoughts (logismoi). Sometimes he was ravished in spirit in the midst of the angelic choirs, not knowing if he was in the body or out of it, and then with great simplicity he asked God to teach him about the mysteries of theology. When he came out of the furnace of prayer, he sometimes felt purified as if by fire, and sometimes totally radiant with light. As for sleep, he allowed himself just the measure necessary to keep his spirit vigilant in prayer and, before sleeping, he prayed at length, or wrote down on tablets the fruit of his meditations on the inspired Scriptures.

He took great care over many years to keep his virtues hidden from human eyes, but, when God judged that the time had come for him to transmit to others the light he had acquired for the edification of the Church, He led a young monk named Moses to John, who, thanks to the intervention of the other ascetics, succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the man of God, and was accepted as his disciple. One afternoon, when Moses had gone a long way away to find earth for their little garden, and had lain down under a large rock to rest, Abba John, in his cell, received the revelation that Moses was in danger, and he immediately seized the weapon of prayer. In the evening, when Moses returned, he told John that in his sleep he had,

all of a sudden, heard the voice of his elder calling him, at the very moment when the rock began to break away from its moorings and threatened to crush him.

Saint John’s prayer also had the power to heal visible and invisible wounds. It was thus that he delivered a monk from the demon of lust, which had pushed him to the point of despair. On another occasion, he made rain fall. Yet it was above all in the gift of spiritual teaching that God manifested His grace in him. Basing his teaching on his personal experience, he generously instructed all those who came to him on the snares which lay in wait for monks in their battle passions and against the prince of this world. This spiritual teaching, however, attracted the jealousy of some who then spread around calumnies about him, accusing him of being a conceited chatterer. Although his conscience was clear, Abba John did not attempt to justify himself but, seeking rather to take away any pretext from those who sought one, he stopped teaching for a whole year, convinced that it was better to do some slight harm to his friends rather than to exacerbate the resentment of the wicked. All the inhabitants of the desert were edified at his silence and by this proof of humility, and it was only at the insistence of his repentant calumniators that he agreed to receive visitors again.

Filled with all the virtues of action and contemplation, and having arrived at the summit of the holy ladder through victory over all the passions of the old man, Saint John shone like a star on the Sinai peninsula and was held in awe by all the monks. He thought himself no less of a beginner for all that and, avid to find examples of evangelical conduct, undertook journeys to various Egyptian monasteries. He visited in particular a great coenobitic monastery in the region of Alexandria, a veritable earthly paradise which was governed by a shepherd gifted with infallible discernment. This brotherhood was united by such charity in the Lord, exempt from all familiarity and useless talk, that the monks had scarcely need of the warnings of the superior, for they mutually encouraged each other to a most divine vigilance. Of all their virtues, the most admirable, according to John, was the way they were especially careful never to “injure a brother’s conscience” in the slightest. He was also very edified by a visit to a dependency of this monastery, called “The Prison,” where monks who had gravely sinned lived in extreme asceticism and gave extraordinary proofs of repentance, straining by their labors to receive God’s forgiveness. Far from appearing as hard and intolerable,

this prison seemed rather to the Saint to be the model of monastic life: “A soul that has lost its one-time confidence and abandoned its hope of dispassion, that has broken the seal of chastity, that has squandered the treasury of divine graces, that has become a stranger to divine consolation, that has rejected the Lord’s command ... and that is wounded and pierced by sorrow as it remembers all this, will not only take on the labors mentioned above with all eagerness, but will even decide devoutly to kill itself with penitential works. It will do so if there is in it only the tiniest spark of love or of fear of the Lord.”

When the Saint had sojourned these forty years in the desert, he was charged by God, like a second Moses, to be at the head of this new Israel by becoming abbot of the monastery at the foot of the holy mountain (c. 650). It is recounted that, on the day of his enthronement, six hundred pilgrims were present, and when they were all seated for the meal, the great prophet Moses himself, dressed in a white tunic, could be seen coming and going, giving orders with authority to the cooks, the cellarers, the stewards and the other helpers.

Having penetrated into the mystical darkness of contemplation, this new Moses, having been initiated into the secrets of the spiritual Law, and coming back down the mountain impassible, his face transfigured by divine grace, was able to become for all the shepherd, the physician and the spiritual master. Carrying within him the Book written by God, he did not have need of other books to teach his monks the science of the sciences and the art of arts.

The Abbot of Raitho, who was also named John, having been informed of the wonderful manner of life of the monks of Sinai, wrote to Saint John, asking him to explain briefly but in a methodical way what those who had embraced the angelic life should do in order to be saved. He who did not know how to go against the wishes of another, thus engraved with the stylus of his own experience the Tablets of the Spiritual Law. He presented this treatise as a Ladder of thirty steps, that Jacob, “he who supplanted the passions” contemplated while he was lying on the bed of asceticism (Genesis 28:12). In his Orthodox Summa of the spiritual life, which has remained for centuries the outstanding guide to evangelical living, both for monks and for lay people, Saint John does not institute rules but, by practical recommendations, judiciously-chosen details and short pithy maxims and riddles often full of

humor, he initiates the soul into spiritual combat and the discernment of thoughts. His “word” is brief, dense and tapered, and it penetrates like a sword to the depths of the soul, uncompromisingly cutting out all self-satisfaction, and tracing hypocritical asceticism and egoism to their roots. Like that of Saint Gregory (January 25) in the theological domain, this “word” is the Gospel put into practice, and it will lead most surely those who let themselves be impregnated by it through an assiduous reading to the gates of heaven, where Christ awaits us.

At the end of his life, the blessed John designated his brother George, who had embraced the hesychast life from the beginning of his renunciation, as his successor at the head of the monastery. When he was about to die, George said to him: “So, you are abandoning me and leaving! I prayed, however, that you would send me to the Lord first, for without you I cannot shepherd this brotherhood.” But Saint John reassured him, and said: “Do not grieve and do not be afraid. If I find grace before God, I shall not let you complete even a year after me.” And it was so: ten months after John’s falling asleep, George departed in his turn to the Lord.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Updated 4/4/2021 The revised Colorado Safer-at-Home guidelines set forth by the Governor of Colorado allow Sts Peter Paul to 45 people in Church during the services.

PLEASE NOTE: MASK IS REQUIRED AND TO BE PROPERLY WORN AT ALL SERVICES, INCLUDING ALL WEEKDAY SERVICES.

Please sign up for one of the following services:

Presanctified Liturgy, Wednesday, April 14
Sunday Divine Liturgy, April 18

Please be considerate and allow others to sign-up if you have already attended either the Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy or Sunday Divine Liturgy. If at the end of the week (Saturday Evening), and the Sunday list is not filled, then please sign-up. If you did not sign-up for Sunday, and we have reached the maximum number allowed by the county, you are welcome to participate from the exonarthex (outside entrance into the church). There are chairs placed at the outside entrance of the church. The parish hall will be open to accommodate the overflow of people. Those outside and in the hall are welcome to come inside the church at the end of service for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ORTHODOX FAITH SERIES

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 12 NOON
TOPIC: SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The Orthodox Christian Faith Class will meet today after the Divine Liturgy. Class will begin at (12 noon). We will be meeting in the parish hall (upstairs classroom). If you are interesting in learning about the Orthodox Christian Faith and/or becoming an Orthodox Christian, please join us for class. Father Jordan will be leading, and providing the reading material. If you have any questions, please contact Father Jordan @ frjordanbrown@gmail.com or 303-581-1434.

ICONS FOR GREAT LENT

The Church offers special icons during the Great and Holy Lent. If you would like to help with donating an icon for the Lenten Season, please see Father Jordan. The icons are from the Life Giving Women's Monastery located in Dunlap, California.

Icons needed for Great Lent:

Sunday of Orthodoxy, St Gregory Palamas, Crucifixion of our Lord, St John of the Ladder, St Mary of Egypt, Palm Sunday, Raising of Lazarus, Resurrection. (suggested donation \$400) Questions, please contact Father Jordan @ frjordanbrown@gmail.com.

2021 PHOTO DIRECTORIES

2021 Photo Directories have arrived! See Nicole Tsiouvaras after Liturgy for your copy. One copy per family please. Directories will also be delivered to families that cannot make it to church. Watch your email for more information.

HOLY WEEK FLOWERS

The church is accepting donations for the Holy Week Flowers. There is a special offering basket in the Narthex. Thank you



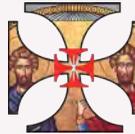
YOUTH MINISTRY, APRIL SCHEDULE:

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS RETREAT
APRIL 24, 9 AM - 12 NOON.

We are planning a special retreat for our youth on the Feast of Lazarus. The Divine Liturgy will begin at 9am. The children will prepare the palm crosses for Palm Sunday. A Lenten Pancake Breakfast will be offered.

HOLY FRIDAY YOUTH RETREAT
FRIDAY, APRIL 30

We are planning a special youth retreat for Holy Friday. The children will help with the decorating of Christ's tomb. The retreat will begin at 11am, and end with the Taking down of Christ, at 2pm.



PHILOPTOCHOS

2021 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Our annual membership drive has begun! If you would like to join this amazing charitable organization or renew your membership, fill out the membership form (available in the Narthex or by the south exit) and return it to Lis Troicky or Julie Powers by Sunday May 9. If you have any questions, contact Lis at etroick@aol.com, 720-771-7786

PASCHA BAKE SALE FUND RAISER

Philoptochos of Sts Peter & Paul is happy to announce their Pascha BAKE SALE Fund Raiser. Place your order for Greek specialty cookies (baklava, koulourakia, kourebeithes, paximathia, finikia) or a loaf of Tsourekis by Sunday April 18th for pick up Sunday April 25th. Suggested cookies donation \$20, Tsourekis donation \$15. Order forms are available in the Narthex and the south exit.



SAINTS PETER & PAUL GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

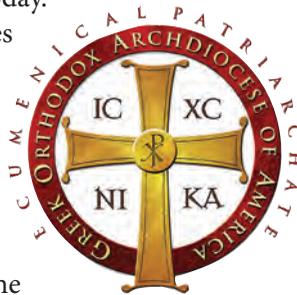
5640 Jay Road, Boulder, CO 80301
303.581.1434 • stspeterandpaulboulder.org

Icon of the Theotokos “Sweet-Kissing”
by Ileana Barbu

ABOUT OUR PARISH

We welcome visitors worshipping with us today. Our diverse church family encompasses many converts to the Orthodox Christian Faith, as well as Greek, Arab, Romanian, Serbian and Russian Orthodox Christians. The foundation of the Orthodox Church are the teachings and Holy Tradition of Jesus Christ. We follow the first Christians who began to worship Jesus Christ after the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Please introduce yourself to our priest and members of our community. We also encourage you to join us for our fellowship after services in the parish hall and visit our bookstore. If you are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian faith, please visit with our priest, Fr. Jordan Brown.



HOLY COMMUNION IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Holy Communion is reserved only for baptized and/or chrismated Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared by prayer, fasting, and confession.

The Orthodox Church understands the reception of Holy Communion to be the highest expression of our faith. Both Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike are invited to receive the ‘antidoro’ (blessed bread) at the end of the Divine Liturgy.



PRIEST

Reverend Father Jordan Brown
frjordanbrown@gmail.com

PARISH COUNCIL

Nick Kallan - President
Steven Dzilvelis - Vice President
Brian Gregory - Treasurer
Philip Haratsaris - Secretary
Michael Bateh
Oliver Huskey
Kostas Pagratis
George Saliba

PHILOTOCHOS

Presidents - Dana Gall and
Sharon Dzilvelis
Treasurer - Julie Powers

YOUTH / GOYA

Fr. Jordan Brown

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Presbytera Marika Brown

RECURRING SERVICES

Orthros - Sundays, 8:15am
Divine Liturgy - Sundays, 9:30am
Great Vespers - Saturdays, 5pm
Confession by appointment.