



ST. MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

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CLERGY

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

His Grace Bishop THOMAS, Auxiliary Bishop of Charleston, Oakland & the Mid-Atlantic

Very Rev. Fr. George Alberts, Pastor

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. David Hester, Pastor Emeritus

Deacon Mark Makarios

Subdeacon William Obeid + Subdeacon N.D. Namey + Subdeacon John Moses Jr.

Sub-deacon David Rayahin + Subdeacon Kristopher (Cody) Vest

WELCOME to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. We are the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Christian Church whose roots trace directly back to the first century Antioch, the city in which the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Orthodox Church is the oldest and second-largest Christian group in the world. We are called by God, our Creator, to worship and follow Him and to proclaim to the world His message of love, peace and salvation.

God loves all mankind and desires that all human beings should believe in Him, know Him, abide in Him, and receive eternal life from Him. To accomplish this God Himself came into the world as a man in Jesus Christ --- becoming man that we might become like God.

The Parishioners of St. Mary Parish welcome you and are pleased that you have decided to worship Almighty God with our Parish family today. We encourage you to learn about our Orthodox faith and our Parish if you are not yet Orthodox.

Although the non-Orthodox may not receive Holy Communion, which may only be given to the Orthodox faithful, we invite you to come forward at the close of the Liturgy to receive a blessing from the Priest and blessed bread. Please also come downstairs to the Parish Hall join us for our fellowship hour.

Our Patronal Feast is the DORMITION (FALLING-ASLEEP) OF THE THEOTOKOS, which is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated each year on August 15. The Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, was "blessed amongst women," and she was chosen "to bear the Savior of our souls." Orthodox Christians consider her to be the Queen of all the saints and angels. Knowing she is eternally present at the throne of God interceding for mankind, we pray for her love, guidance, and protection.



PLEASE NOTE

All our services can be watched as they occur on our Parish Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/StMaryAO/>

COMMEMORATIONS

Today Holy Bread and Bulletin Offered/Sponsored by Bader Dahdal and Family in Loving memory of Nasser Dahdal, Sharifa Dahdal, Yousef Dahdal, Mariam Dahdal and Carlos Dahdal

SCHEDULE OF PARISH LIFE AT ST. MARY

Today	After Liturgy	Day in Damascus Meeting
Monday	April 12	Great Compline 6:00 pm *** Father George at the Church from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm (when Services begin)
Wednesday	April 14	Canon of St. Andrew of Crete & Life of St. Mary of Egypt at 6:00 pm
Thursday	April 15	Take Out Spaghetti Dinner from 4:00 to 6:00 *** Presanctified Liturgy at 6:00 pm *** Father George at the Church from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm (when Services begin)
Friday	April 16	The Akathist Service at 6:00 pm *** Father George at the Church from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm (when Services begin)
Saturday	April 17	Confessions from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm *** Great Vespers at 5:00 pm
Sunday	April 18	SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT *** 5 th Sunday of Lent *** Matins at 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy at 10:00

LOOKING AHEAD TO HOLY PASCHA

The following is a timeline for our Parish's journey to Pascha

Today	Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder;	
Sunday	April 18	Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt;
Saturday	April 24	Lazarus Saturday
Sunday	April 25	Palm Sunday;
<i>April 26 - 30</i>		<i>Holy Week;</i>
Sunday	May 2	Holy Pascha The Feast of Feasts- CHRIST IS RISEN!

SPECIAL COVID-19 INSTRUCTIONS

Please remember to maintain sufficient distance between your household and others. Your family may all sit together, if you live in the same house, but please keep six feet distance between yourself and members of other households. Remember too that masks are required. Be sure to wear them in a way that covers your nose and mouth fully. Not wearing masks or wearing them incorrectly makes other people feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Please refrain from hugging and

kissing each other Let us practice this important courtesy to others who may have health issues and for everyone's comfort and peace of mind.

Holy Communion is the "medicine of immortality," given "for the remission of sins, for healing of soul and body and for life everlasting." Please approach the chalice with mouth wide open and head tilted back. This will allow the priest or deacon to insert the spoon, turn it over in your mouth and pull it out without touching your tongue or lips.

Venerate icons or the gospel book or the cross with just a 'gesture,' but do not actually touch the item with your lips or hand. While the Greek word in the Bible for veneration literally means to "approach and kiss," for now, approach as if to kiss, but then back away. The same goes for the priest's hand. For receiving the antidoron (blessed bread) after Holy Communion and at the dismissal cup your hands together, and the priest (at dismissal) or an assistant (after Communion) will drop a piece of the blessed bread in them.



DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent + Commemoration of John Climacus, Author of "The Ladder"

Hieromartyr Antypas, bishop of Pergamum; Righteous Mothers Tryphaina and Matrona of Cyzicus

**** Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great ****

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father John Climacus, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF THE DORMITION

In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity and thy repose thou didst not forsake the world O Theotokos, for thou art the mother of life and thou didst pass over into life. And through thine intercessions from death thou dost redeem our souls.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

THE EPISTLE

The Lord will give strength to His people.

Bring unto the Lord, ye sons of God, bring unto the Lord glory and honor.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13-20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For people indeed swear by what is greater, and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. So when God, being minded to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He interposed it with an oath, that by two immutable things—in which it is impossible for God to lie—we might have a strong consolation, we, who have fled for

refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us; a hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into “that which is within the veil,” where Jesus entered as a Forerunner on our behalf, having become a High Priest “forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (9:17-31)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, “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 Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And Jesus 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 Jesus, 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 Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, 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 Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And Jesus 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 Jesus would not have anyone 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 after He is killed, He will rise on the third day.”

THE SYNAXARION

On April 11 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Hieromartyr Antypas, bishop of Pergamum; Righteous Mothers Tryphaina and Matrona of Cyzicus. On this same day, the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we make remembrance of our godly father, John, the author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent (or Climacus).

*John, dead in the flesh and also living,
Liveth eternally, even though appearing dead and without breath.
Leaving letters, a ladder for the journey upwards,
He showeth forth his pursuit of the journey upwards.*

The celebration of his feast on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his lessons. John describes the method of elevating the soul to God as ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. John of the Ladder came to Mount Sinai at age 16 and remained there, first as a novice under obedience, then as a recluse, and finally as abbot until his eightieth year. One time, his disciple, Moses, fell asleep under the shade of a large stone. John, in prayer in his cell, saw that his disciple was in danger and prayed to God for him. Later, when Moses returned, he fell on his knees and gave thanks to his spiritual father for saving him from certain death. He related how, in a dream, he heard John calling him and he jumped up and, at that moment, the stone tumbled. Had he not jumped, the stone would have crushed him. John Climacus died on March 30, 606.

Through his intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.





*Please remember all of us should receive the Sacrament of Confession during
Great Lent prior to Pascha.*

PARISH NEWS

- ✘ Please remember that even though we are now past the half-way point of Great Lent, it is never too late to begin fasting, to begin attending the weekday services or to receive the Sacrament of Confession.
- ✘ We are having services this coming week on Monday (the Great Compline), Wednesday (Canon of St. Andrew of Crete & Life of St. Mary of Egypt), Thursday, (the Presanctified Liturgy) and Friday (the Akathist Service). All services begin at 6:00 pm. We also celebrate Great Vespers on Saturday at 5:00 pm.
- ✘ Our “Day In Damascus” Committee is meeting today following the Divine Liturgy.
- ✘ Food For Hungry People (FFHP) collection boxes are in the Vestibule of the Church. Please take one, place your donations in the box and return it to the Church before or during Holy Week so that we can send in the total amount collected right after Pascha.
- ✘ SAVE THE DATE! The Parish Golf Outing/Tournament is scheduled for Friday August 20, 2021 at the Sand Springs Country Club in Drums. Start planning now for a foursome and perhaps a sponsorship. We are slowly emerging from the black cloud of this evil pandemic and returning to some semblance of normalcy ... please help us back by getting together a foursome or if you don't golf, sponsoring a hole.
- ✘ Father George will be at the Church Monday, Wednesday and Friday this week from 4:30 pm until 6:00 pm (when the services begin) for those who would like to come for Confession, say a prayer, light a candle or receive Holy Communion from the Reserve Sacrament. He will be in the Church the next week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm each day before services on those days begin. As always please call ahead if planning on receiving Holy Communion so Father can be prepared and also (if coming early) kindly come to the office door.
- ✘ Father will be hearing Confessions 1/2 hour prior to each of our Lenten services. All of us should be receiving the Sacrament of Confession during Great Lent in preparation to celebrate the Holy Resurrection of Christ.
- ✘ Our next Take Out Spaghetti Dinner is on Thursday April 15 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Please tell your friends and neighbors.
- ✘ We hope and pray everyone will continue to protect themselves and others from this insidious and evil pandemic. Many of us are experiencing some amount of “pandemic fatigue” that might cause us to leave down our guards. It is however most important that we continue to fight the fight and abide by the recommendations of the CDC and continue to socially distance from each other as necessary and appropriate and of course wear a mask when out in public.
- ✘ Please take note there are just a few 2021 calendars in the Narthex (vestibule) of the Church. Please take one and if you are aware of a Parishioner who has been homebound because of COVID please take one for them.
- ✘ Please let us know if there is anyone who can be removed from the prayer list. Please contact either Father George or Subdeacon Norman.

Fourth Sunday in Lent: St. John of the Ladder



Let us honor John, that pride of ascetics, that angel on earth, that man of God in heaven, that adornment of the world, and that bliss of virtues and good deeds; for, planted in the house of God, he flourished with justice; and, like a cedar tree in the wilderness, he caused the flock of Christ to grow, those sheep endowed with speech, in righteousness and justice.

-Vespers of the Feast

On the fourth Sunday in Lent we commemorate St. John, the great seventh-century ascetic and author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. As we continue the Lenten fast, we recall St. John's account of the labors necessary to approach God, and we take comfort in the Lord's words: "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 24:13).

The lessening of evil breeds abstinence from evil; and abstinence from evil is the beginning of repentance; and the beginning of repentance is the beginning of salvation; and the beginning of salvation is a good resolve; and a good resolve is the mother of labors. And the beginning of labors is the virtues; and the beginning of the virtues is a flowering, and the flowering of virtue is the beginning of activity. And the offspring of virtue is perseverance; and the fruit and offspring of persevering practice is habit, and the child of habit is character. And good character is the mother of fear; and fear gives birth to the keeping of commandments in which I include both Heavenly and earthly. And the keeping of the commandments is a sign of love; and the beginning of love is an abundance of humility; and an abundance of humility is the daughter of dispassion; and the acquisition of the latter is the fullness of love, that is to say, the perfect indwelling of God in those who through dispassion are pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And to Him the glory for all eternity. Amen.

(from Step 26)

