



St John of the **LADDER** *Orthodox Church*

Weekly Bulletin

Important Dates:

There will be no Matins or Jesus Prayer on Tuesday, April 19!

April 24th: Palm Sunday

May 1st: Pascha

Friday Services During Lent:

Friday, April 15 at 5:30pm an Akathist will be held. Please plan on attending if possible.

Liturgical Service:

Reader (Divine Liturgy):
Hubbard

Prospora (Divine Liturgy):
Sue Riddle

Coffee Hour:
Team 3

For the Week of Sunday,

April 17th, 2016

Thursday, April 14, 5:30 pm THE GREAT CANON with the Life of St. Mary of Egypt.

This is a long poetic composition by St. Andrew of Crete, in which he calls us to repentance by meditation on many Biblical characters and stories. We read part of the canon each evening the first week of Lent; On the 5th Thursday we read all of it (usually) with Matins and the Life of St. Mary of Egypt. This is a long service (about two and a half hours). But it is one of the deepest and most powerful experiences of our church and I urge all to come. If you have to leave early, do so, but come. You can read the Life of St. Mary here: <http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/reading/st.mary.html>

Note: This year we will read the Great Canon (in full) with Compline, as we did during the first week of Lent, rather than with Matins. This will make the overall service a little shorter and we hope more people can stay to hear it all.

Friday, March 27, 5:30 pm AKATHIST TO THE THEOTOKOS

Confessions both evenings beginning 4:00 pm.

Note about Confession:

The last day for confessions before Holy Week and Pascha will be Friday, April 22. Please see the calendar for scheduled times (generally at 4 pm before scheduled weekday evening services, and following Great Vespers on Saturday). Fr Marcus is available by appointment as well through April 22.

About the Great Canon of St Andrew

The Great Canon of St Andrew, Bishop of Crete, is the longest canon in all of our services, and is associated with Great Lent, since

Quotes from the Saints:

"To St. Mary of Egypt: With all eagerness and love thou didst run to Christ, abandoning thy former way of sin. And being nourished in the untrodden wilderness, thou didst chastely fulfill His divine commandments."

-The Great Canon of St. Andrew

"Having been a sinful woman, you became through repentance a bride of Christ. Having attained angelic life, you defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross. Therefore O most glorious Mary, you are a bride of the Kingdom."

-Kontakion 3

the only times it is appointed to be read in church are the first four nights of Great Lent (Clean Monday through Clean Thursday, at Great Compline, when it is serialized) and at Matins for Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent, when it is read in its entirety (in this latter service, the entire life of St Mary of Egypt is also read).

There is no other sacred hymn which compares with this monumental work, which St Andrew wrote for his personal meditations. Nothing else has its extensive typology and mystical explanations of the scripture, from both the Old and New Testaments. One can almost consider this hymn to be a "survey of the Old and New Testament". Its other distinguishing features are a spirit of mournful humility, hope in God, and complex and beautiful Trinitarian Doxologies and hymns to the Theotokos in each Ode.

The canon is a dialog between St. Andrew and his own soul. The ongoing theme is an urgent exhortation to change one's life. St Andrew always mentions his own sinfulness placed in juxtaposition to God's mercy, and uses literally hundreds of references to good and bad examples from the OT and NT to "convince himself" to repent.

A canon is an ancient liturgical hymn, with a very strict format. It consists of a variable number of parts, each called an "ode". Most common canons have eight Odes, numbered from one to nine, with Ode 2 being omitted. The most penitential canons have all nine odes. Some canons have only three Odes, such as many of the canons in the "Triodion" (which means "Three Odes").

This is generally sung, and each Irmos has a reference to one of the nine biblical canticles, which are selections from the Old and New Testament, which can be found in an appendix in any complete liturgical Psalter (book of Psalms, arranged for reading in the services). A variable number of "troparia" follow, which are short hymns about the subject of the canon. These are usually chanted, and not sung. After each troparion a "refrain" is chanted. At the end of each Ode, another hymn, called the "Katavasia", either the Irmos previously sung, or one like it is sung.

The troparia of the Great Canon in all its twelve Odes are usually chanted by the priest in the center of the church, with the choir singing the Irmos and Katavasia. There are varying traditions about bows and prostrations. Some prostrate and some make the sign of the cross and bow three times after the Irmos and each troparion.

General Themes of the Great Canon.

How we should think about ourselves

Where shall I begin to lament the deeds of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, for my present lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me release from my falls (Monday:1.1).

Desire to change—dialogue with the soul

Come, wretched soul, with your flesh, confess to the Creator of all. In the future refrain from you former

brutishness, and offer to God tears of repentance (Monday:1.2).

Recognizing Reality.

The end is drawing near, my soul, is drawing near! But you neither care nor prepare. The time is growing short. Rise! The Judge is at the very doors. Like a dream, like a flower, the time of this life passes. Why do we bustle about in vain? (Monday:4.2)

How to pray - Laments and supplications to God

Thou art the Good Shepherd; seek me, Thy lamb, and neglect no me who have gone astray. (Monday:3.5).

OT and NT examples of righteousness and unrighteousness, for the purpose of emulation or avoidance. Do not be a pillar of salt, my soul, by turning back; but let the example of the Sodomites frighten you, and take refuge up in Zoar.(Genesis 19:26) (Thursday: Ode 3:5)

I have reviewed all the people of the Old Testament as examples for you, my soul. Imitate the God-loving deeds of the righteous and shun the sins of the wicked (Tuesday: Ode 8)

The most important thing to know about the Great Canon

The Great Canon was written by a holy man to teach himself the right way to live. We cannot benefit from it unless we make it a priority to stand in prayer, in the church, and listen to it, with a great desire and expectation for God's grace to teach us and heal us. Our theology is first and foremost—experienced and prayed, and not only "studied".

Saint Mary of Egypt - The Mercy of God

The Life of St. Mary of Egypt, celebrated on this weekend in Great Lent, is often cited as an example of a great spiritual athlete. St. Mary indeed spends many decades in the desert, fasting, praying, repenting. She is transformed from a drunkard and prostitute into one of the greatest saints of the Church. But it is very easy to miss the point of her life.

She responds to the call of God with every fiber of her being. But the true point is God's call. She had no interest in changing her life when she made her way to Jerusalem from Egypt. Indeed, we are told that she "corrupted" many of the men who were on the boat that took her. The whole gambit of visiting the Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was nothing more than a game or a lark for her.

It is God, through the intervention of the Mother of God in her icon, that reaches out to St. Mary. It is God who brought her to her senses. It is God who directed her into the desert. It is God who poured out His grace on her, making her repentance possible.

The message to us is that there are none so corrupt or lost that they cannot be reclaimed and found. The Scripture says, "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." We are nearing the end of our Lenten Fast. It is never too late to hear the kindness of God and to accept His mercy. May God draw us to Himself and grant us the grace of salvation!

(from Fr Stephen Freeman)

Choir Info as we approach Holy Week and Pascha

Sunday, April 17th, 2016



5th Sunday of Lent: St Mary of Egypt

Readings:

Hebrews 9:11-14 (Epistle)
Mark 10:32-45 (Gospel)

Troparion Tone 8

The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Mother,
for thou didst take up the Cross and followed Christ.
By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for it passeth
away;
but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.
Therefore thy spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoiceth with the angels.

Announcements

Easter Egg Hunt: May 1, 2016 at Noon

Please consider contributing to the SJOTL Easter Egg Hunt to be held after Paschal Vespers (May 1 at noon). Donations by check are appreciated (please mark your check "Easter Egg Hunt"), as are contributions of plastic eggs and candies. Please buy only fruit candies, as chocolate ones will melt in the sun. If you stuff the eggs yourself, please keep candies that are appropriate for only older children (hard candies) separate from candies that all ages can have (gummies, jelly beans, etc.). If you don't wish to stuff the eggs, you can bring your packages to church and leave them on the counter in the kitchen.

Volunteer(s) Needed!

We need a person or persons to deliver non-perishable food items collected at SJOTL to United Ministries at: 606 Pendleton St. Greenville, SC 29601. This person would need to take the donations to the above location whenever the bins or vestibules are full. Ideally a few people could rotate doing this on an "as needed" basis. Please speak with Margie Wamboldt if you are interested in volunteering.

Please Sign Up!

A sign-up sheet to provide meals after presanctified liturgies is in the kitchen, as well as sign-up sheets for flowers during Great Lent and at Pascha, and other Parish events during Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha.

Praying the Psalms for Lent

Matushka Natalia would like to invite everyone to please join us for another wonderful season of prayer during the upcoming fast. During the Lenten season, we will be praying one Kathisma per day.

From now on, the sign-up for prayers will be coordinated through a new website. Sign up and find more information at www.prayersinsc.blogspot.com

Note to mobile users: you may not see the form or other instructions and options on the mobile site. From a desktop computer, the form to sign up is visible, as are other pages on 'How to pray the Psalter', etc.

Before the fast begins, your starting Kathisma and a prayer list will be posted. See the directions in the 'Resources' section on the right-hand sidebar for more details on how to pray the Psalter.

DOS Assembly 2016

The new DOS Assembly Website is Live at dosconferences.com!

Building on the theme of Expanding the Mission from last year's All-American Conference, our theme this year is Mission Possible: Making Faith Significant in an age of Religious Irrelevance, and our keynote speaker will be Sister Vassa (Larin), world renowned expert in liturgical theology, and host of the popular YouTube Channel, "[Coffee with Sister Vassa](#)."

As announced previously, the 2016 Assembly of the DOS will be held in Wilmington, NC, and hosted by St. Basil Mission. There are many positive changes this year, and there are many reasons to begin making plans now:

- There are many events that your parishioners will enjoy attending - the events of the week (along with the historic, coastal location) makes this an ideal vacation. Encourage as many of your parishioners to attend as possible!
- Registration will be online at the dedicated conference site: <http://www.dosconferences.com/>
- There is travel and planning information online.
- Hotel reservations are open now - book soon so that we know if we need to seek another hotel for overflow rooms.
- There will be childcare provided during two major events, and a list of drop-in childcare options will be provided for other times when it might be needed.
- There will be a large exhibitor hall with SVS Press books, devotional items, liturgical goods and more for sale - send your bookstore stewards prepared to stock up!
- Ministries such as YES and the OCMC will be on hand to help parishes learn about ministry and mission opportunities.

Please use the [registration section](#) at the bottom of the main page, and read the instructions carefully! There are many things to register for, and this is intended to facilitate the laity picking their events a la carte.

The DOS Youth Conference:

The youth conference, which will run concurrently with the assembly, and it will be an amazing week for the young people in our diocese!

- We are bringing in two staff members from Youth Equipped to Serve (YES), part of FOCUS North America, to lead the older group (13-18) in an immersive ministry event. There will also be an event for the 7-12 year olds during this time.
- Lots of time to laugh, play and have fun at the beach!
- Our retreat master is Father John Cox, who will help the youth to apply what they learn during the week.
- More details will be added to the [Youth Conference section](#) of the conference website.
- Registration is FREE (but you have to register on the main conference page by June 15).

We hope that you will take Father Gerasim's admonition to use this conference as a time to draw our parishes, families and youth into broader work of the diocese and the Church. Please register soon so that the host committee can adequately prepare for the event.

Should you have any questions at all about registration, schedule, et al, feel free to contact Fr Peter Robichau at fatherpeter@wilmingtonoca.org