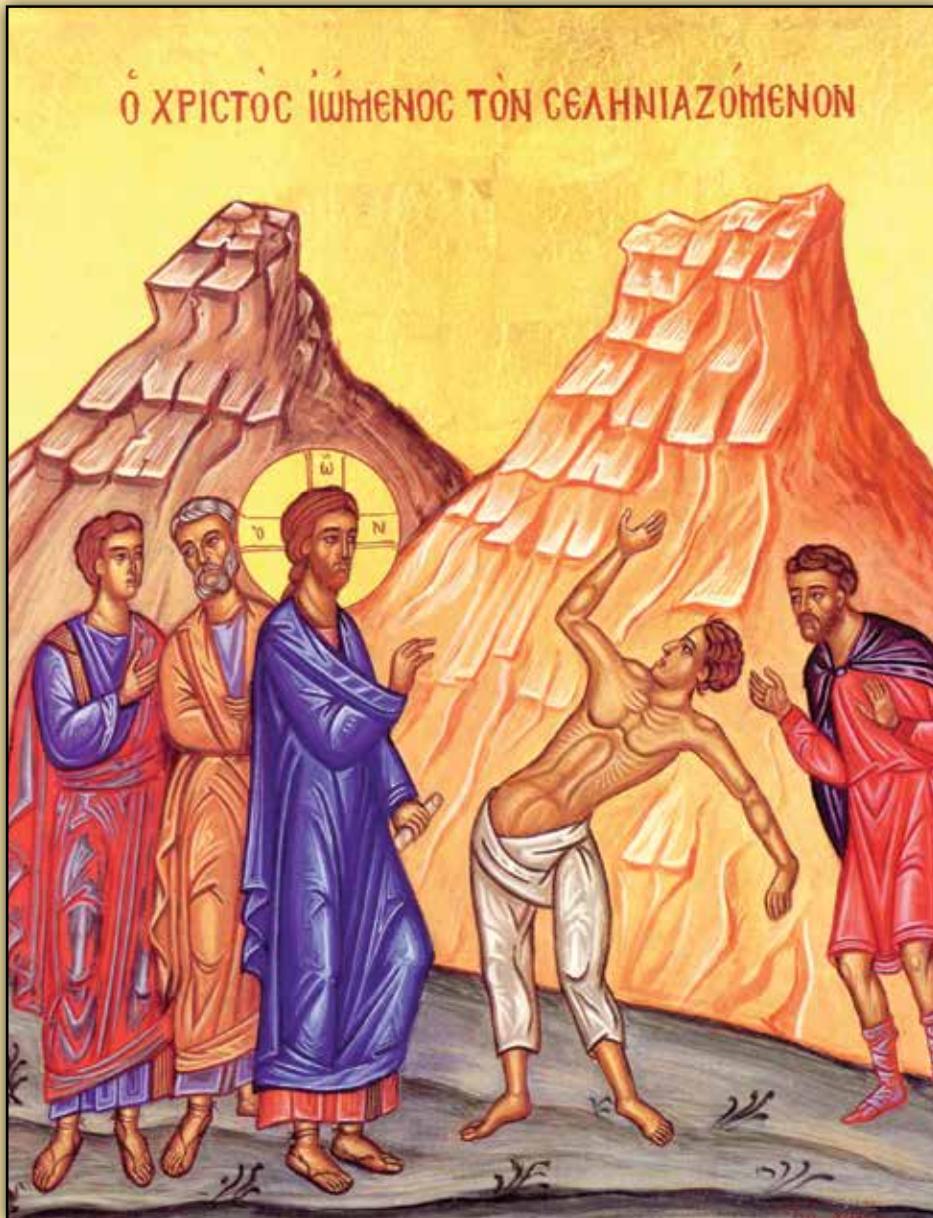


FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS



*Icon of Healing the Boy with a Demon*

## **March 15, 2026: Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast**

Epistle: Heb. 6: 13-20

Gospel: Mk. 9: 17-31

**This Weekend**      4:00 pm + Elinor Chowanec (Family)  
10:30 For Our Parishioners

**Mon., March 16**    9:00    Intention Available

**Tues., March 17**    9:00    + Dolly Daniels (Bill & Jane Granza)

**Wed., March 18**    6:00 pm Stations; Sorokousty

**Thurs., March 19**                    **No Divine Liturgy Today.**

**Fri., March 20**      6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

**Sat., March 21**                    **No Morning Divine Liturgy**  
2:00 pm Confessions  
4:00 pm + Jennifer Wisniewski (Mother)

**Sun., March 22**      10:30 For Our Parishioners

### **MEDITATION FOR THE**

### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST**

Jesus cures a sick boy telling his father, “Everything is possible to one who has faith” (Mk. 9 23). Jesus observed that this type of cure could only come about through prayer. The disciples were men of faith but could not cure the boy. Jesus seems to become impatient with them when he says, “How long will I endure you” (Mk. 9:19). Even Jesus’ closest apostles needed to be reminded of the power of prayer, and the need to nurture it. The Great Fast invites you and me to nurture the power of faith with steadfast

and honest prayer with Jesus. It involves our reflecting on our priorities in life as we stand before Jesus. Recall the parables which speak of the Kingdom of God as a treasure found in a field, or as a pearl of great value. Those who find it sell all that they have in order to possess it. Are we zealous in nurturing the value of our precious faith? Do we do and give what we can to see that the faith is valued, taught and shared? The journey of Great Fast leads you and me to nurture our faith in steadfast prayer and with acts of charity

with the hope that Jesus Christ will not ask “How long must I endure you”, but rather rejoice in the powerfully liv-

ing of our faith. Join with others in the parish to nurture your faith as a family of God.

## **THE SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS**

Though details of the life of St. John Climacus are sketchy, it is known that he was born in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and entered the monastic life at an early age. After 40 years of living as a hermit, he was elected abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. Because of his reputation for wisdom and piety, pilgrims traveled from all over the East to visit him.

Many miracles were attributed to St. John during his lifetime. 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. This spiritual teaching, however, attracted the jealousy of some who then

spread evil rumors about his character. Although his conscience was clear, Abba John 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 detractors that he agreed to receive visitors again. He passed to the Lord on March 30, about 649. Throughout Lent, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, the spiritual classic authored by St. John is read in monasteries. The reading of this book is completed on this, the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, and so we honor him on this day.

## **ST. ANDREW, ARCHBISHOP OF CRETE**

St. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, was born in the city of Damascus into a pious Christian family. Up until seven years of age the boy was mute and did not talk. However, after communing the Holy Mysteries of Christ he found the gift of speech and began to speak. And from that time the lad began

earnestly to study Holy Scripture and the discipline of theology.

At fourteen years of age he went off to Jerusalem and there he accepted monastic tonsure at the monastery of St. Savva the Sanctified. St. Andrew led a strict and chaste life, he was meek and abstinent, such that all were amazed

at his virtue and reasoning of mind. As a man of talent and known for his virtuous life, over the passage of time he came to be numbered among the Jerusalem clergy and was appointed a secretary for the Patriarchate -- a writing clerk. In the year 680 the locum tenens of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Theodore, included archdeacon Andrew among the representatives of the Holy City sent to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and here the saint contended against heretical teachings, relying upon his profound knowledge of orthodox doctrine. Shortly after the Council he was summoned back to Constantinople from Jerusalem and he was appointed archdeacon at the church of Hagia Sophia. During the reign of the emperor Justinian II (685-695) St. Andrew was ordained bishop of the city of Gortineia on the island of Crete. In his new position he shone forth as a true luminary of the Church, a great hierarch -- a theologian, teacher and hymnographer.

St. Andrew composed many inspired writings, including the Great

Canon of Repentance which is sung on Monday through Thursday of the first week of Lent. The Great Canon of Repentance includes 250 troparia within its 9 Odes. Before each Tropar of the Canon, we make the Sign of the Cross and bow and sing "Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me." On Thursday of the fifth week, the Great Canon is sung continuously in its entirety.

St. Andrew has also composed the Canon for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, three Odes for Compline of Palm Sunday, and also in the first four days of Passion Week, as well as verses for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and many other Church hymns.

Church historians are not of the same opinion as to the date of death of the saint. One suggests the year 712, while others -- the year 726. He died on the island of Mytilene, while returning to Crete from Constantinople, where he had been on church business. His relics were transferred to Constantinople.

## **SPIRITUAL REGULATIONS FOR THE GREAT FAST**

Although our Church traditionally prescribed abstention from meat and dairy products in days gone by for

the entire duration of the Great Fast, the following are the minimal Lenten regulations today:

Abstinence from meat and all dairy products on the First Day of the Great Fast and on Good Friday.

Abstinence from meat only on all Fridays of the Great Fast as well as Holy Saturday. It is also traditional to abstain from meat on Wednesdays during the Great Fast.

Everyone should receive the Holy Mysteries of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist during the period from the onset of Great Fast to the Wednesday before Ascension Thursday.

The Fasting and Abstinence regulations are not binding on persons 60 or older, the very poor, sick, nursing or pregnant women, children below

the age of 14, and those who engage in physically very hard labor. However, all are urged, if able to do so, to observe the fasting and abstinence regulations.

All the faithful are urged to attend the Lenten services such as the Pre-sanctified Liturgy, and the Commemoration of the Deceased (Sorokousty).

Such good deeds as almsgiving, visitation of the sick, Bible reading and praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life are most earnestly recommended to all the Faithful. Families are especially urged to pray together in the mornings and evenings.

## **LENTEN SERVICES**

Four weeks of Great Lent are now over. Two more to go until Flowery (Palm) Sunday and Holy Week. Have you made the effort to come to church for our weekday Lenten services? This

week offers several golden opportunities for you to come to church. Make it your plan to attend more of these services before Easter. Take extra care about your spiritual well-being!

## **ON WINTER CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

Winter sometimes brings stormy weather. We kindly ask our parishioners to use good judgment and common sense by not driving when conditions are dangerous. As weather varies from place to place, it may be that services will be held as scheduled, despite the fact that conditions in your area are

difficult. Please prioritize your safety and that of others by assessing the situation before venturing out.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in these matters. Let us all do our part to ensure a safe and healthy winter season.

## **PUSSY-WILLOWS**

Flowery (Palm) Sunday is just two weeks away! Once again this year, we turn to our Parishioners to help in procuring our pussy-willows. If you have any bushes, please share

them with us. You can either bring them in or arrangements can be made to have them picked up. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

## **EASTER FLOWER FUNDRAISER**

St. Cyril's is holding an Easter Flower Fundraiser, offering a variety of plants for sale to support church activities. The fundraiser features flowers supplied by Corky's Garden Path, including lilies, tulips, hyacinths, mums, gardenias, calla lilies, hydrangeas, azaleas, daffodils, and miniature daffodils.

To place an order, call (Please be kind: call between the hours of 9 am to 8 pm and if you reach voicemail, please leave your name): Judy (570) 780-5244; Carol (570) 766-0596; or

Jeanne (570)489-0733.

Deadline is March 16<sup>th</sup> with checks made payable to St. Cyril's, either mailed or dropped in collection boxes, indicating the purpose and sender's name.

Pickup is scheduled before Holy Thursday and Good Friday services at the church vestibule in Olyphant. The sale encourages donations to the church for Easter.

Flyers are available in the vestibule of the Church

## **ST. JOSEPH DAY BREAKFAST**

The Women's Society of St. Joseph Melkite Catholic Church on N. St. Frances Cabrini Avenue, West Scranton, is sponsoring its annual St. Joseph Day Breakfast, Sunday, March 22, 2026. Eat In or Take Out. Our abundant meal includes Eggs, scratch pancakes, Home Fries, Olives, HoneyBaked Ham, Breads,

juice & coffee. 9 am - 1 pm. Adults \$12.00 and children age 6-10 \$6.00. Take Out \$10/\$6 with no beverages. Our fragrant St. Joseph Bread available in two loaf packages for \$6 until sold out. Tickets at the door. For more information 570-343-6092, melkite.scranton@gmail.com, facebook or melkitescranton.org.

## SHOPA DAVEY POST 6082 AUXILIARY'S FUNDRAISER FOR LENT IS "POCONO CHEESECAKE."

Shopa Davey Post 6082 Auxiliary's, Peckville, PA., fundraiser for Lent is "Pocono Cheesecake." Available for pick-up on April 1<sup>st</sup>, Wednesday, and April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Thursday. Each cheesecake is 6" and \$16.00 per cake. Available in Original flavor, Oreo, Peanut Butter cup, and Raspberry Swirl.

Deadline to pre-order is March 18 (Wednesday). Pre-orders call Pete at 570-335-5551. Pre-payment is appreciated at the Post House 123 Electric Street, Peckville, PA. Pick up on Specific days, Noon- 5:00 p.m. A very limited quantity is available on the day of.

*(As per received email)*

## LAUGH4LIFE

We're counting down to Laugh4Life - and we're thrilled to welcome our National Headliner, David Kaye, to Scranton!

If you've been waiting for a reason to plan a night out, this is it: a comedy showcase that supports Pennsylvanians for Human Life while giving you a fun, feel-good evening with friends.

### Event Details

- Saturday, March 28, 2026
- Waldorf Park Banquet Room | Scranton
- Doors 5:30 PM |  Show 7:00 PM
- \$30 advance / \$35 at the door
- 21+ only

Phone orders/info: 570-343-5099

Thank you for supporting our mission — and for bringing a friend along for the laughs.

## ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Olyphant Borough Alert: On Saturday, April 4th at 1 PM Olyphant Borough will be hosting the Annual Easter Egg

Hunt at Wargo Park! Hope to See you there!

## COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM

The Collection Processing Team for the month of March 2026 is Team #3:

Marlene Zelno, Cheryl Matuszewski, and Carol Zadarosni.

**Sunday Collection for March 7 & 8, 2026: \$**

## **Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church**

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451

Web Site: [stcyrils.weconnect.com](http://stcyrils.weconnect.com)

E-Mail: [olyphant@ukrcatholic.org](mailto:olyphant@ukrcatholic.org)

Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

### ***Journeying to Pascha***

Jesus continues today his work of healing and exorcism, and that is appropriate for this time of Lent, because Lent is a time for healing and exorcism. It is a time for us to heal the wounds of our souls – self-inflicted wounds due to our complacency and laziness and self-indulgence. It is time to get rid of those demons of our own sinful habits and anything that keeps us away from God and from living that abundant life that Christ came to give us.

We start to make our way toward Jerusalem. At the end of today's Gospel already there is the prediction of the passion, the death and the resurrection of Christ, giving a little hint in the Gospel that the course of Lent is moving now towards Jerusalem. We have gone through several weeks now of spiritual preparations, Scripture texts, prayers and activities. Now our focus

is starting to turn towards Jerusalem. That will be made more explicit in next Sunday's Gospel, but we are already getting a hint of it now.

There are only three weeks now until Easter, two weeks until Palm Sunday, when we are really liturgically accompanying Christ into the mystery of His Passion.

So it is coming soon, and we have to start turning towards Jerusalem. We have to get focused, we have to get recollected, we have to really revive our Lenten prayer and fasting so that we can make the rest of this journey and be fruitful and overcome the demons and find healing for the wounds of our souls – and go with Christ to his Passion and, through the mystery of His Cross, come to that great, transfiguring, glorious celebration of His Resurrection.