



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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GREAT LENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Amari Clark, Robert McKivitz, Cliff Dow, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

LAZARUS SATURDAY

Sunday, April 20

Divine Liturgy

10:30 AM

ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM—PALM & WILLOW SUNDAY

**VENERABLE GEORGE-BISHOP OF MITYLENE, MARTYR CALLIOPUS AT POMPEIOPOLISIN CILICIA,
MARTYRS RUFINUS-DEACON, AQUILINA, & 200 SOLDIERS AT SINOPE, VENERABLE SERAPION OF
EGYPT-MONK, VENERABLE DANIEL-ABBOT OF PEREYASLAV**

Tone 6

Philippians 4:4-9

John 12:1-18

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 06 APRIL 2008

**SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT
VENERABLE ZECHARIAH THE RECLUSE, SAINT ARTEMIUS-BISHOP OF
SELEUCIA, VENERABLE JAMES THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP OF CATANIA,
VENERABLE ZECHARIAH-THE ASCETIC OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

TROPARION—TONE 4

When the women disciples of the Lord
Learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection;
They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles:
Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 4

My Savior and Redeemer,
As God rose from the tomb
And delivered the earthborn from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of Hell,
And as Master, He has risen on the third day!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 4

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

READER: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works!

PEOPLE: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 4

Go forth and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

You love righteousness and hate iniquity.

a word from the desert

It happened in Siberia. The White Army under Kolchak was retreating. Eugene Nikolaevich, in spite of a severe wound suffered in the First World War, served in Kolchak's forces in the rank of first lieutenant. It was a harsh winter.

Entering some village, the partisans seized a peasant suspected of collaborating with the Reds. It was decided to execute him. Eugene Nikolaevich ordered the prisoner to be locked up.

That night, as the lieutenant was sitting alone writing out the accusation, there came a knock at the door. He opened it and in stepped an old man wearing a skoufia, like those worn by monks, and an old cassock. "Mister officer," he said, "you have an arrested peasant here. Don't kill him. He's innocent."

"And who are you?" inquired Eugene Nikolaevich.

"I am the rector of the local church, Fr. Nicholas," answered the old man, and left.

Eugene Nikolaevich thought it over and decided to release the prisoner. Early in the morning he ordered a sleigh to be harnessed, had the prisoner get in, took some bread, and told the escorts: "I'm going to shoot him." Once in the forest he untied the prisoner, gave him the bread, and said: "Into the woods with you, and don't cross our path again!"

Returning to the village, Eugene Nikolacyich went to the church. It was locked. He asked a peasant walking by: "Where does Fr. Nicholas live?... The Reds shot him long ago," came the reply. Eugene Nikolaevich was taken aback, but he decided to look around the church. Someone unlocked the door for him, and he went inside. Suddenly he saw to the right an icon of St. Nicholas and immediately recognized him as his nocturnal visitor; in the icon the wonderworking hierarch was depicted wearing the very same skoufia.

Alexandra Dabbart

"Novoye Russkoe Slovo"

St. Nicholas of Myra, the Wonderworker--commemorated 6/19 December

Troparion and icon at: <http://www.comeandseeicons.com/n/drz13.htm>

One must in every way flee from judging and pray in secret for those who have sinned. "This form of love is pleasing to God." Judging is bound up with impudence and is incompatible with true repentance: "To judge is to impudently appropriate to oneself the rank of God."

St. John Climacus

WHAT TEACHERS MAKE—*via Mike Holupka*

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education.

He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?"

He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers:

"Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach."

To stress his point he said to another guest; "You're a teacher, Bonnie. Be honest. What do you make?"

Bonnie, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, "You want to know what I make?"

(She paused for a second, and then began...)

"Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.

I make a C+ feel like the Congressional Medal of Honor.

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can't make them sit for 5 without an I Pod, Game Cube or movie rental.

You want to know what I make?" (She paused again and looked at each and every person at the table.)

"I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them apologize and mean it.

I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions.

I teach them to write and then I make them write. Keyboarding isn't everything.

I make them read, read, read. I make them show all their work in math. They use their God given brain, not the man-made calculator.

I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know English while preserving their unique cultural identity.

I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe.

I make my students stand, placing their hand over their heart to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, One Nation Under God, because we live in the United States of America.

Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life."

(Bonnie paused one last time and then continued.)

"Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, with me knowing money isn't everything, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant... You want to know what I make?

I MAKE A DIFFERENCE. What do you make Mr. CEO?"

His jaw dropped, he went silent.

Fight always with your thoughts and call them back when they wander away. God does not demand of those under obedience that their thoughts be totally undistracted when they pray. And do not lose heart when your thoughts are stolen away. Just remain calm, and constantly call your mind back.

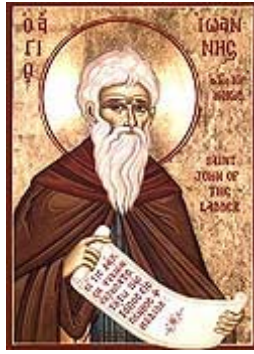
St. John Climacus

The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 4

A brother asked Abba Sisois, "I long to guard my heart." The old man said to him, "And how can we guard the heart if the tongue leaves the door of the fortress open?"

archived at: <http://wordfromthedesert.squarespace.com/>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Saint Sylvester Roman Catholic Church will hold its annual Dinner Dance on Saturday, April 19. Dinner will be served at 6:30 PM, after a Polka Mass at 5:30 PM. Music by The Larry Placek Combo will begin at 8:00 PM, continuing until 11:00 PM. Advanced tickets only—\$15.00 per ticket—please call 724-668-7394.



4th Sunday of Great Lent--St John Climacus (of the Ladder)

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to St John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The abbot of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt.10: 12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Eph 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt.24:13).

Venerable John Climacus of Sinai, Author of "the Ladder"

Saint John of the Ladder is honored by Holy Church as a great ascetic and author of the renowned spiritual book called *THE LADDER*, from which he is also called "of the Ladder" (Climacus).

There is almost no information about St John's origins. One tradition suggests that he was born in Constantinople around the year 570, and was the son of Sts Xenophon and Maria (January 26).

John went to Sinai when he was sixteen, submitting to Abba Martyrius as his instructor and guide. After four years, St John was tonsured as a monk. Abba Strategios, who was present at St John's tonsure, predicted that he would become a great luminary in the Church of Christ.

For nineteen years St John progressed in monasticism in obedience to his spiritual Father. After the death of Abba Martyrius, St John embarked on a solitary life, settling in a wild place called Thola, where he spent forty years laboring in silence, fasting, prayer, and tears of penitence.

It is not by chance that in *THE LADDER* St John speaks about tears of repentance: "Just as fire burns and destroys the wood, so pure tears wash away every impurity, both external and internal." His holy prayer was strong and efficacious, as may be seen from an example from the life of the God-pleasing saint.

St John had a disciple named Moses. Once, the saint ordered his disciple to bring dung to fertilize the vegetable garden. When he had fulfilled the obedience, Moses lay down to rest

under the shade of a large rock, because of the scorching heat of summer. St John was in his cell in a light sleep. Suddenly, a man of remarkable appearance appeared to him and awakened the holy ascetic, reproaching him, "John, why do you sleep so heedlessly, when Moses is in danger?"

St John immediately woke up and began to pray for his disciple. When Moses returned in the evening, St John asked whether any sort of misfortune had befallen him.

The monk replied, "A large rock would have fallen on me as I slept beneath it at noon, but I left that place because I thought I heard you calling me." St John did not tell his disciple of his vision, but gave thanks to God.

St John ate the food which is permitted by the monastic rule, but only in moderation. He did not sleep very much, only enough to keep up his strength, so that he would not ruin his mind by unceasing vigil. "I do not fast excessively," he said of himself, "nor do I give myself over to intense all-night vigil, nor lay upon the ground, but I restrain myself..., and the Lord soon saved me."

The following example of St John's humility is noteworthy. Gifted with discernment, and attaining wisdom through spiritual experience, he lovingly received all who came to him and guided them to salvation. One day some envious monks reproached him for being too talkative, and so St John kept silence for a whole year. The monks realized their error, and they went to the ascetic and begged him not to deprive them of the spiritual profit of his conversation.

Concealing his ascetic deeds from others, St John sometimes withdrew into a cave, but reports of his holiness spread far beyond the vicinity. Visitors from all walks of life came to him, desiring to hear his words of edification and salvation. After forty years of solitary asceticism, he was chosen as igumen of Sinai when he was seventy-five. St John governed the holy monastery for four years. Toward the end of his life, the Lord granted him the gifts of clairvoyance and wonderworking.

At the request of St John, igumen of the Raithu monastery (Commemorated on Cheesefare Saturday), he wrote the incomparable LADDER, a book of instruction for monks who wished to attain spiritual perfection.

Knowing of the wisdom and spiritual gifts of St John of Sinai, the igumen of Raithu requested him to write down whatever was necessary for the salvation of those in the monastic life. Such a book would be "a ladder fixed on the earth" (Gen. 28:12), leading people to the gates of Heaven.

St John felt that such a task was beyond his ability, yet out of obedience he fulfilled the request. The saint called his work THE LADDER, for the book is "a fixed ladder leading from earthly things to the Holy of Holies...." The thirty steps of spiritual perfection correspond to the thirty years of the Lord's age. When we have completed these thirty steps, we will find ourselves with the righteous and will not stumble. THE LADDER begins with renunciation of the world, and ends with God, Who is love (1 John 4:8).

Although the book was written for monks, any Christian living in the world will find it an

unerring guide for ascending to God, and a support in the spiritual life. Sts Theodore the Studite (November 11 and January 26), Sergius of Radonezh (September 25 and July 5), Joseph of Volokolamsk (September 9 and October 18), and others relied on THE LADDER as an important guide to salvation.

The twenty-second step of THE LADDER deals with various forms of vainglory. St John writes: "When I fast, I am vainglorious; and when I permit myself food in order to conceal my fasting from others I am again vainglorious about my prudence. When I dress in fine clothing, I am vanquished by vanity, and if I put on drab clothing, again I am overcome by vanity. If I speak, vainglory defeats me. If I wish to keep silence, I am again given over to it. Wherever this thorn comes up, it stands with its points upright.

A vain person seems to honor God, but strives to please men rather than God.

People of lofty spirit bear insult placidly and willingly, but only the holy and righteous may hear praise without harm.

When you hear that your neighbor or friend has slandered you behind your back, or even to your face, praise and love him.

It is not the one who reproaches himself who shows humility, for who will not put up with himself? It is the one who is slandered by another, yet continues to show love for him.

Whoever is proud of his natural gifts, intelligence, learning, skill in reading, clear enunciation, and other similar qualities, which are acquired without much labor, will never obtain supernatural gifts. Whoever is not faithful in small things (Luke 16:10), is also unfaithful in large things, and is vainglorious.

It often happens that God humbles the vainglorious, sending a sudden misfortune. If prayer does not destroy a proud thought, we bring to mind the departure of the soul from this life. And if this does not help, let us fear the shame which follows dishonor. "For whoever humbles himself shall be exalted, and whoever exalts himself shall be humbled" (Luke 14:11). When those who praise us, or rather seduce us, start to praise us, let us recall our many sins, then we shall find that we are not worthy of what they say or do to honor us."

In THE LADDER St John describes the ascent toward spiritual perfection, which is essential for anyone who wishes to save his soul. It is a written account of his thoughts, based on the collected wisdom of many wise ascetics, and on his own spiritual experience. The book is a great help on the path to truth and virtue.

The steps of THE LADDER proceed gradually from strength to strength on the path of perfection. The summit is not reached suddenly, but gradually, as the Savior says: "The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mt.11:12).

St John is also commemorated on the fourth Sunday of Great Lent.

Abba Poemen said concerning Abba Pior that every day he made a new beginning.
Abba Pambo said, "If you have a heart, you can be saved."

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If you want to overcome the spirit of slander, blame not the person who falls but the prompting demon. No one wants to sin against God, even though all of us sin without being compelled to it.

I knew a man who sinned openly but repented in secret. I denounced him for being lecherous but he was chaste in the eyes of God, having propitiated Him by a genuine conversion.

Do not allow human respect to get in your way when you hear someone slandering his neighbor. Instead, say to him, "Brother, stop it! I do worse things every day, so how can I criticize him?" You accomplish two things when you say this. You heal yourself and you heal your neighbor with the one bandage.

St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 10