



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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4TH SUNDAY OF LENT: ST. JOHN CLIMACUS (OF THE LADDER) April 14, 2024

TROPARION, KONTAKION & PROKEIMENON

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!”

Troparion – Tone 1

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body, thou wast a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John. Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer, healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to thee by faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength! Glory to Him Who granted thee a crown!// Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

Kontakion – Tone 4

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master,// He has risen on the third day!

Kontakion – Tone 4

The Lord truly set thee on the heights of abstinence, to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe,// O our father and teacher John.

Prokeimenon – Tone 4

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

V. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great!

Prokeimenon – Tone 7

Let the saints exult in glory; / let them sing for joy on their couches!

LITURGICAL COMMEMORATION

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

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John Klimakos, the author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent. In this book the Igoumen of Saint Katherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai bears witness to the great effort which is required for entry into God’s Kingdom (Matthew 10:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is difficult since it is “not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ...” (Ephesians 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, as the Lord has said, only “he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Saint John was born around the year 525, the son of devout and wealthy parents. He received a very good education, but at the age of sixteen, he forsook the world and went to Mount Sinai, subjecting himself to the spiritual guidance of Elder Martyrios. When he was nineteen years of age,¹ his Elder reposed. Then Saint John entered the arena of hesychasm, visiting the monastic communities of Skétē and Tabénnisē in Egypt. For another forty years, he lived in a cell at Thora in the Sinai Desert, which was a two hour (5 mile) walk from the Monastery of Saint Katherine.

Aflame with indescribable longing for God, he ate everything that was permitted by the monastic Rule, but only in very small quantities, and not unto satiety. By so doing, he overcame the vice of pride; and by eating just a little food, he humbled the stomach, which always wants more. He raised his body from death and paralysis by the remembrance of death, and he overcame the tyranny of anger with the sword of obedience.

Who can describe the fountain of his tears, which is now to be seen in very few individuals? He slept only as much as was necessary to prevent his mind from being distracted. Before going to sleep he prayed a great deal, and he also wrote books. This was how he subdued despondency. His entire life was spent in unceasing prayer, and incomparable love for God.

After writing The Ladder at the request of Igoumen John of Raithu Monastery, and leading a God-pleasing life, Saint John fell asleep in the Lord when he was about seventy-five years old (ca. 603). He is also commemorated on March 30.

The inscription on his icon is from Step 7:2. It reads: "Compunction is a perennial trial of the conscience, which brings about the cooling of the fire of the heart through mental confession. And confession is a forgetfulness of nature, since someone because of this forgot to eat his bread."²

¹ This was his monastic age. He was, in fact, thirty-five years old.

² Psalm 101:5 (Septuagint) "Him that speaks privily against his neighbor, him have I driven from me; he that is proud in look and insatiable in heart - with him I have not eaten."

EPISTLE & GOSPEL READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Epistle: Ephesians 5:9-19

(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 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!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter

him no more!” Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

Gospel: Matthew 4:25-5:12

Great multitudes followed Him – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK, CAREGIVERS, AND DECEASED

Dates are when the name was added to the bulletin; names will remain in four bulletins and then removed. To add the name again, please email Darice at daricekeyes@gmail.com.

For the Sick / Caregiver

Ann (3/24)
Lynne (3/24)
Bill (3/24)
Father Paul (3/24)
Matushka Mary (3/24)
Alexandra (3/24)
Constance (3/24)
Nicholas (3/24)
Maria (3/31)
Diana (3/31)
Robert (3/31)
Paul (3/31)

Julie (3/31)
Kelly (3/31)
Liam (3/31)
Dorothy (3/31)
Albert (3/31)
Carmine (4/7)
Marianne (4/7)
Melody (4/14)
Subdeacon Serge (4/14)
Michael (4/14)
Charlotte (4/14)
Vera (4/14)

For the Deceased

Stavroula (3/24)
Eva (3/24)
Demian (3/24)
Anna (3/24)
John (3/24)
Michael (3/24)
Lenore (3/24)
Awatif (3/31)

SERVICES

Service Schedule for the week of April 14

Sunday April 14 – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall
Wednesday April 17 – 5:30 PM Confession, 6:30 PM Pre-Sanctified Liturgy followed by Confession
Thursday April 18 – 6:30 PM Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
Friday April 19 – 8:30 AM Confession, 9:30 AM Pre-Sanctified Liturgy followed by Confession
Saturday April 20 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession
Sunday April 21 – **ST. MARY OF EGYPT** 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

DONATIONS

Weekly Giving

April 7 – 76 adults, 27 youth, \$4,941

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a FOCA meeting **today** during Coffee Hour.

The rescheduled Parish Council Meeting will be held this Tuesday **April 16** at 7:00 PM.

Father Volodymyr has arranged for a Lenten lecture, which will be held during Coffee Hour next Sunday **April 21**. Mother Abbess Christophora from the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA will be the guest speaker. All parishioners are encouraged to attend this special lecture.

The church will be cleaned on Lazarus Saturday **April 27** after services in preparation for Pascha. The pussywillow branches will also be prepared for Palm Sunday. Please help on Saturday.

The Easter Egg Hunt for the children will be held on **Pascha Sunday** after Paschal Vespers. All children aged 12 and under are invited to participate!

On Friday **June 21**, Father is planning an outdoor camping trip for youth over the age of 12 and adults of the parish. The camping sight will be near the (CORRECTION TO LAST WEEK:) Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA. More information will be provided later. If anyone has any questions, please contact Leon Brasowski.

Please remember to partake in the sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion prior to Pascha. If you need to schedule a specific time for Confession, please contact Father Volodymyr.

The Ladies Assumption Altar Society will hold a bazaar/flea market in Daria Hall - open to the public and parish on Saturday **June 22** and only for our parish **June 23**. Please bring gently used items and clothing to be sold; electric items must work; no rust or damaged items please. The items may be placed in the coat room or on the left side only of the stage in Daria Hall. Large empty boxes, newspaper, bubble wrap, and tissue paper are also needed. The ladies are looking for volunteers to help price items and set up, and also to help on Saturday June 22 during the bazaar. We would really appreciate some male volunteers for security detail on Saturday. See Alla with any questions.

Catechumen/Adult Education Classes are under way. If you wish to convert to Orthodoxy, it is mandatory to participate in these educational classes, which will be held in the church basement every Saturday after Vespers. There will be 10 to 11 classes, and in order to finish classes before Pascha - so the Catechumens have an opportunity to be Baptized and/or Chrismated before Pascha - there may be two classes on a few Saturdays, or possibly a class one evening during the week. Scheduled dates other than Saturdays after Vespers will be announced during the classes. The classes are not only for those interested in converting to Orthodoxy, but anyone who wants to further their Orthodox education. Instructors will be Father Volodymyr, Herman Meyer, Alan Berck, John Cassar, and Trudy Ellmore.

The Ladies Altar Society is creating and publishing the first Parish Cookbook – with your help! We are interested in your favorite recipes, ethnic recipes, recipes from your grandparents, parents, children, relatives and friends, and Lenten recipes. They can include Appetizers, Main Meals, Side Dishes, Soup, Salad, Dessert, and Beverages. In addition to recipes, the Cookbook will include a Helpful Hints section. In order for the Cookbook to be a success, we will need many recipes! Each recipe should include your name, who you may have received the recipe from, and your phone number (phone number is only if we have questions and will not be published in the Cookbook). Please give your recipes to Alla Strauss, Melody Stavisky, or Nancy Mitsos. Thank you!

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Thomas Plesa – April 14

Stephen Berck – April 15

Tony Villabon – April 17

Anna Chaikivska – April 20

Have a blessed birthday and may God grant you many years!

COFFEE HOUR

Hosts are responsible for providing and setting up the refreshments in Daria Hall at 9:00 AM and after Holy Communion, cleaning up after Coffee Hour including washing, drying and putting away dishes, taking out the trash, and cleaning up the Coffee Room including turning off and cleaning the coffee and tea pots. Hosts will be informed in advance if cream cheese, butter, or milk is needed. **PLEASE NOTE: Your assigned Coffee Hour Support Person will provide guidance, however, the Support Person will leave Daria Hall at 9:55 AM to attend church services. If you have arrived late or are not finished, you will be provided the key to lock the Hall when you are leaving for church services.** If you have any questions, please contact Melody Stavisky or Alla Strauss.

SUGGESTED MENU:

Bagels / Breads

Donuts / Pastries

Desserts are available to use from the two freezers in Daria Hall

Fruit

Salads

Tortilla chips & Salsa

Hummus

Sugar-free dessert

Oreos (non-dairy)

NOTE: Hosts may provide a luncheon for a specific event or holiday (panikhida, birthday, anniversary, holiday) **with advance notice to reserve the specific date to host the event.** The hosts will be responsible for all food preparation for such a luncheon.

- Apr. 14 **FAST** Corneliu & Florica Balasa, Viktoryia Baranova
Apr. 21 **FAST** Germain & Tahara Ortiz, Paul & Patty Denko
Apr. 28 **FAST** Alex & Brittani Brasowski, Anna & Leon Brasowski, Simeon Brasowski
May 5 **PASCHA – NO COFFEE HOUR**
May 12 Nina Schmidt, Alla & Perry Strauss
May 19 Carmen & Cezar Mateiescu, Valeria & Timothy Srock
May 26 Christina DiDonato, John Cassar
June 2 Alex & Rebeca Medina, Father Volodymyr & Matushka Oksana
June 9 Melody Stavisky, Cole Johnson
June 16 FOCA Club
June 23 Nina Laushell, Lynne Sheedy & Bill Hazelton
June 30 Ludwig & Paula Koerte, Nina Shafran
July 7 Madeleine Sekulich & Mark McDevitt, Ramazi Shubitidze
July 14 **ST. VLADIMIR DAY CELEBRATION**
July 21 Nicholas & Samantha Torrisi, Herman & Francine Meyer
July 28 Tamara Karkusova, Ekaterina & Stanislav Uritsky
Aug. 4 **FAST** Luwam Tesfa, Nebiat Tesfa
Aug. 11 **FAST** Nancy Mitsos, Darice Keyes
Aug. 18 Ladies Assumption Altar Society
Aug. 25 Alex Godun, Blake & Jessica Kilgore
Sept. 1 Tyler Burger, Awet Tesfa
Sept. 8 Olga & James Bates, Tanya & Walter Tribbey
Sept. 15 James & Monia Pitra, Anne Cheslock
Sept. 22 **ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC**
Sept. 29 Sami Bachir, Nour Ragab
Oct. 6 Virgiliu & Gabriela Plesa, Mihaela & Tiberiu Milosav
Oct. 13 Sophia Dumas, Melissa Braun
Oct. 20 Tony & Chris Villabon, Alan & Mimi Berck