

FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – St. John Climacus

On the Fourth Sunday of the Fast, we celebrate the memory of our Holy Father John the author of the Ladder. In the Church services for the fourth Sunday the Holy Church offers us a great example of the life of fasting in the person of the Venerable John of the Ladder, who, "having overcome the flesh through fasting" and "by the sweat of his ascetic efforts quenched the fiery arrows of the enemy" and "renewed the strength of souls" and, "ascending to the height of virtues", "received in his soul the divine wealth of the Spirit, undefiled prayer, chastity, modesty, continuous vigil", "was deified through heavenly glory", "was revealed as a physician to those sick through sin" and was the author of the Ladder of Paradise.

According to the expression of the Holy Church, how the profoundly granted ascetic life of the Venerable John "gives us a pleasure sweeter than honey", and so his Ladder "brings to us the ever flowering fruits of his teaching, pleasing the heart with vigilant heeding: for souls are rising up the ladder from earth to heaven and abiding in glory".

The memory of Saint John the Ladder is celebrated on the 30th of March; but it is also celebrated today, perhaps because in monasteries it is customary to read The Ladder from the beginning of the Holy Fast.

Little is known about the life of St. John of the Ladder, or St. John Climacus. According to one source, he was born around the year 579; tonsured a monk prior to 599; became abbot of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai no later than 639; and died around 649.

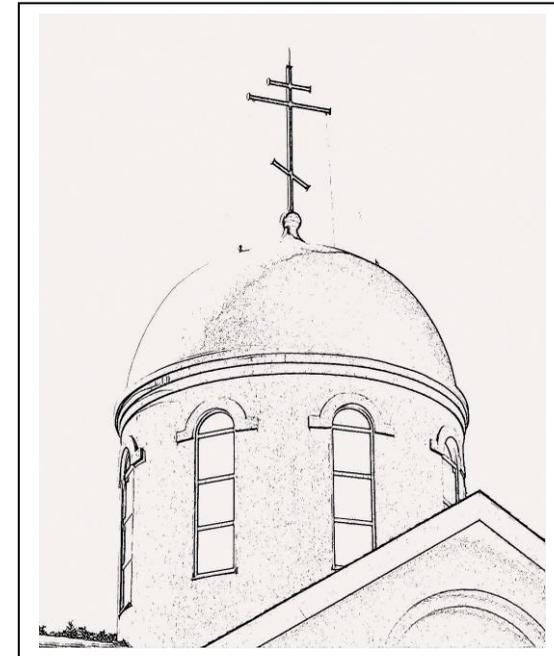
The Greek word "klimakos" means "ladder." The name was given to John because he wrote a popular book on asceticism, titled The Ladder of Divine Ascent. The book is divided into 30 chapters, or "steps on the ladder," describing the spiritual journey from sinfulness to entrance into God's Kingdom and perfection.

His 30 steps are regarded as falling into two sections; steps 1-26 mainly concern sins that must be overcome and suggestions as to how to do so; steps 27-30 speak of prayer, solitude, faith, hope and love—the virtues that are to be perfected in order to achieve communion with God.

John's work primarily was written for monastic communities, but it has proven valuable for readers outside the monastic life. He spent 40 years in solitude near a monastery church, ate and slept little, prayed much and wrote books. His life was dedicated to unceasing prayer, full of Christian humility and love for Christ.

*A Journey Through Great Lent
Very Rev. Stephen Belonick*

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Rev. Dn. Michael Pejovic, *Attached Deacon*

Tara Paxton, *Senior Warden*

Reader Matthew Hascha, *Choir Director*

March 29, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
St. John Climacus (of The Ladder)

Tone 8. Hieromartyr Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, Martyr Cyril the Deacon, of Heliopolis, and others who suffered under Julian the Apostate (ca. 364). Ven. John, Anchorite, of Egypt (4th c.). St. Eustathius the Confessor, Bishop of Bithynia (9th c.). St. Niketas of the Roslavl Forests (Russia—1793).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 and Ephesians 5:9-19

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31 and Matthew 4:25-5:12

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today @ 9:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday @ 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Saturday @ 6:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday @ 9:00am Divine Liturgy

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 and Galatians 3:23-29

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45 and Luke 7:36-50



*St. John Climacus (of
the Ladder)*

The Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors program is an essential vehicle for funding of our diocesan activities and programs. Please consider participating in the program. Brochures are located by the bulletin board in the parish hall. Information can be found at the diocesan website at www.nynjoca.org.

Special Prayers

We pray for all our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are: **Robert Vessio, Betty James, Manya Shark, Deryl Tczap, Reader John Economou, Meni Mari, Tom Collins, Tom Kopec, Alan Diaz, Ann Marie Gahr, Dennis Gahr, Dorothy Studier, Helen Ciurczak, Pauline Barnowsky, Elba Cinciarelli, and Catherine Ratushnuk.**

We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for coffee hour after the service. Please note that reception of the Holy Eucharist is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.

Annunciations

TODAY – Except for the Divine services, all in-person parish activities including **Church School classes, organizational meetings, baking sessions, etc.** are CANCELED until further notice. The scheduled services are being served and live-streamed at our parish Facebook page.

TOMORROW – The **Parish Council** will meet via Zoom at 7:00pm.

Please consider **mailing your regular donations** to the parish to the church address: 360 Van Zile Road, Brick, NJ 08724. We hope to have the ability to accept on-line donations sometime this week. Many thanks for continuing to support your parish in these difficult times.

We will continue to **serve** the Divine services and **live-stream** them via Facebook Live as long as we are able to do so. We are all looking forward to the day when we will be able to all return and worship together as a parish family. For now, we stay at home for the sake of our health and the health of our brothers and sisters.

A plan is being formulated for **Confessions and/or Communion** during this time of social distancing. When the plan is finalized, it will be communicated to our faithful.

The **pilgrimage to the Holy Land** that has been advertised here is being postponed.

From the Ladder of Divine Ascent...

The devil battles with those in obedience, sometimes to defile them with bodily pollutions and make them hard-hearted, and sometimes to provoke more than usual restlessness. At other times he makes them dry and barren, sluggish in prayer, drowsy and confused by spiritual darkness, in order to tear them away from their struggle by making them think they have gained nothing by their obedience but are only backsliding. For he does not allow them time to reflect that often the providential withdrawal of our imagined goods or blessings leads us to the deepest humility.

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.occa-brick.org.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Friday – Alexander Hascha

**Please pray for vocations
to the Holy Priesthood!**