

*** THE LADDER ***

One of the great teachers of spirituality in the Eastern Church was **ST. JOHN CLIMACUS**. Having been born in the 6th century, his life is closely associated with the Monastery at Mt. Sinai. Located in an isolated area, this monastic community traces its history back to the Old Testament, for it is said that there God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush. During the days of St. John, however, the monks lived in cells scattered throughout the desert places, and would come together Saturday evening for all-night prayer, and then assemble in the monastery church built by Empress St. Helena to receive the Holy Mysteries.

It was at the request of the neighboring Monastery of Raithu, that John drew up the spiritual work for which he is most noted. This book, called "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," contains in its thirty chapters the rules for attaining the thirty steps in growth to spiritual perfection. The thirty steps correspond to the thirty years of Christ's life.

The Ladder has been a treasured book for ages. There is a 12th century copy in existence. It contains many instructive anecdotes which reflect the monastic life of the times. The work contains aphorisms – short phrases of rich meaning. John writes, for instance, "Humility is the door to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it leads there those who draw near to it." "Beat the foes with the name of Jesus, for there is no stronger weapon whether in heaven or on earth." It is written in a simple style, drawing from Scriptural, ecclesiastical and secular sources. One can recognize the influence of the spiritual fathers of the Church, yet John's own experiences add color and intimacy to the work.

Its title might have come from the initial request that such a work be written. It is said that the head of the neighboring monastery, in asking John for such a guide, requested "a book like the divinely written tablets of Moses, for the instruction of the New Israelites," a work which "like a ladder set up, will lead aspirants to the gates of Heaven."

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.



Welcome our Visitors! We invite you to venerate the cross at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. However, only Orthodox Christians who are in good standing and who have prepared by prayer, fasting, and Confession may receive Holy Communion.

A Gift of Blessing
Visit the Church Gift Shop.
See the Beautiful Icons, Crosses & Home Censers

2709 Washington St. Vicksburg, MS 39180
Parish Office: 601-636-2483 Fr. Gabriel's cell: 713-357-8871
Email: stgeorge2709@gmail.com web page: www.stgeorgevicksburg.org

Church Calendar: Check the Link. <http://www.stgeorgevicksburg.org/service.html>



SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Very Rev. Father Gabriel Karam, Pastor

Saturday Great Vespers 6:00 p.m. - Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. - Confessions: By Appointment

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026

TONE 8 / EOTHINON 8

FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

COMMEMORATION OF JOHN CLIMACUS, AUTHOR OF "THE LADDER"

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father John Climacus, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliver of Captives: And defender of the Poor, Healer of the Infirm, champion of Kings, Victorious Great Martyr George, Intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

We Celebrate Today

On March 22 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate **Hieromartyr Basil of Ancyra**; and **Martyr Kallinika of Rome**.

On this same day, the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we make remembrance of our godly father, John, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (or Climacus).

Verses

John, dead in the flesh and also living,

Liveth eternally, even though appearing dead and without breath.

Leaving letters, a ladder for the journey upwards,

He showeth forth his pursuit of the journey upwards.

The celebration of his feast on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his lessons. John describes the method of elevating the soul to God as ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares,

and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. John of the Ladder came to Mount Sinai at age 16 and remained there, first as a novice under obedience, then as a recluse, and finally as abbot until his eightieth year. One time, his disciple, Moses, fell asleep under the shade of a large stone. John, in prayer in his cell, saw that his disciple was in danger and prayed to God for him. Later, when Moses returned, he fell on his knees and gave thanks to his spiritual father for saving him from certain death. He related how, in a dream, he heard John calling him and he jumped up and, at that moment, the stone tumbled. Had he not jumped, the stone would have crushed him. John Climacus died on March 30, 606.

Through his intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Healing & Recovery Fr. Paul Yerger. Fr. Leo. Deacon Terry. Kh. Janet Henderson. Joy Logue. Dolores Nosser. Rick Collins. George Michael Nasif. Lynne Abraham. Pam Smith. Irene Tzotzolas. Maha Habeeb. Michael Farris. Athena. Georgia. Andrea Simon. Chuck Abraham. Drew Anderson. Jackson ballinger. Carla Leese.

+Birthdays & Anniversaries. Mar: Will Mackay (23), Paula Shaw (25), Tea & Scott Blackburn (26). Peggy Thomas (27), Jeff West, Chris Maxwell (28), Kaylee Wright (29). Madeline Hull (31).

+Keep in your prayers. Our Catechumens, Cole Gary, Jacob Milliken & John Morgan Mcright. Who are preparing themselves for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism & Chrismation.

+Feast of The Annunciation Great Vespers; Tuesday March 24 @ 6pm.

Orthros & Divine Liturgy; Wednesday March 25 @ 5:30pm.

+Save the Date. Thur. March 26. A Family Night will be hosted at the house of Buddy & Janice Stricklan, @ 6pm. The Crucifixion, Biblical, Historical and Scientifical facts.

+Great Holy Lent The traditional fasting discipline (no poultry, meat, eggs, dairy, fish, wine) is observed Monday through Friday with katalysis for wine on Saturday and Sunday (on March 25th [Annunciation] and April 5 [Palm Sunday] there is also katalysis for fish.) No eating from Midnight till noon every day except on the weekend.

+Next Week's Lenten Prayers @ 6:00pm. Monday, and Thursday **Great Compline.**

Friday Akathist Service for the Theotokos.

The Church Fathers Teach

See what fasting does: it heals illnesses, drives out demons, removes wicked thoughts, and makes the heart pure. If someone has even been seized by an impure spirit, let him know that this kind, according to the word of the Lord, "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21)— Saint Athanasius the Great---

By fasting it is possible both to be delivered from future evils and to enjoy the good things to come. We fell into disease through sin; let us receive healing through repentance, which is not fruitful without fasting.

— Saint Basil the Great---

DIVINE LITURGY MARCH 22, 2026

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

COMMEMORATION OF JOHN CLIMACUS, AUTHOR OF "THE LADDER"

THE EPISTLE

Makes your vows unto the Lord and perform them.

God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13-20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For people indeed swear by what is greater, and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. So when God, being minded to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He interposed it with an oath, that by two immutable things—in which it is impossible for God to lie—we might have a strong consolation, we, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us; a hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into "that which is within the veil," where Jesus entered as a Forerunner on our behalf, having become a High Priest "forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (9:17-31)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And Jesus answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us." And 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!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And Jesus said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus would not have anyone know it; for He was teaching His Disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and after He is killed, He will rise on the third day."