

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
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Remember How Long Your Heart Was Hard

Father John Climacus' memory is celebrated on March 30.

This saint is known as a worker of miracles and as the writer of the "Ladder of Divine Ascent" in which he showed how a person can work step by step to come closer to God. The "steps" or rungs like those on a ladder were based on his own experience of prayer and asceticism.

Because he did work hard to come close to God, Saint John was given spiritual insight. He could see that even someone who has repented of sin can be led into the trap of sinning again by judging another person. He wrote: "He who is inwardly proud of his own tears and condemns in his own mind those who do not weep, is like a man who begs weapons from the king against the enemy and kills himself with them."

The "Prologue from Ochrid" offers this comment on Saint John's words: "If your heart has been softened either by repentance before God or by learning the boundless love of God towards you, do not be proud towards those whose hearts are still hard. Remember how long your heart was hard."

On March 30 we read Genesis 18: 20-33, which begins with God telling His plans to Abraham. God says, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis 18: 20-21).

Abraham is a person whose heart has been softened by "learning the boundless love of God towards" him. His and

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Mary Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

Sarah's son Isaac, born in their old age after years of prayer and tears, is living proof of that love. So Abraham is ready to intercede even for the notoriously wicked people of Sodom. Having wept over his own sins, he will not "condemn in his own mind those who do not weep."

Standing before God, Abraham draws near and asks a very bold question: "Wilt Thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?" He even proposes terms on which God might base a change of mind: "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"

Abraham has perfect confidence that his own merciful instincts have their source in the Lord to whom he is standing so close. So he says, "Far be it from Thee to do such a wicked thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" His confidence is rewarded when God agrees to spare Sodom if even ten righteous inhabitants can be found.

Sodom proves too evil to be spared. But Abraham's intercession is the action of a once-hard heart that has been softened. As a result, it seeks only mercy for others.

Birthday Greetings

Our best wishes to **Diana Neherecki**, who celebrates her Birthday today, and **Michael Bzik**, this Tuesday. May God grant each of you and all those celebrating a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Многая Лета!



Announcements

◆ The last **joint Mission Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** this year with His Eminence Archbishop Michael presiding will be this this coming Wednesday, March 29 at Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus, NJ at 7:00PM.

◆ The last **Deanery Mission Vespers** this year will be next Sunday, April 2nd at Holy Spirit Church, 102 Rte. 284, Wantage, NJ. Bright Wednesday Vespers – April 19 at 7:00pm, at Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ **Winter weather alert:** in case of necessity to cancel or delay any particular service at the church due to weather conditions, the information about cancellation will be posted on the parish website as well as on the Facebook page at least 1 hour before the scheduled time. If the weather is bad and you are not sure if the service will be served, please call rectory to verify.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.



March 26, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
St. John of The Ladder (Climacus)
Leavetaking of the Annunciation
Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
Epistles: Heb. 6:13-20; 2:11-18
Gospels: Mk. 9:17-31; Lk. 1:24-38
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.
- **5:00pm** - Deanery Mission Vespers

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, MARCH 31

6:00pm - Akathist to the Theotokos

SAT., APRIL 1 - SATURDAY OF THE AKATHIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

1:30pm – 3pm - Parish Confessions

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 2

9:00am - Divine Liturgy