

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Orthodox Church of America
A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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April 11, 2021

4th Sunday of Lent - Year 3
St. John Climacus

- 9:10 am - Hours
- 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy.
Heb. 6:13-20 Mark 9:17-31
Eph. 5:9-19 Matt. 4:25-5:12

Schedule of Services

Wednesday, April 14

- 5:45 pm - Confession
- 6:00 pm - Presanctified Liturgy.

Friday, April 16

- 6:00 pm - Akathist hymn to the Mother of God.

Saturday, April 17

- 5:00 pm - Great Vespers.

Sunday, April 18

St. Mary of Egypt

- 9:10 - Hours
- 9:30 - Divine Liturgy.



WEEKLY BIBLE MESSAGE

Saint John Climacus

St. John took his name Climacus or "ladder" from his book, The Ladder of Divine Ascent. The reader who climbed The Ladder ascended thirty steps to holiness. According to St. John, the goal was to reach a state of apatheia or passive disinterestedness in earthly life so as to anticipate the wonders of heaven.

Each step communicated some practical insight into Christian living that twenty-first-century readers will still find beneficial. Consider, for example, the tenth step on avoiding slander and judging others:

Slander is the offspring of hatred, a subtle yet crass disease, a leech escaping notice, wasting and draining away the lifeblood of love. I have rebuked slanderers, and in self-defense these evildoers claimed to be acting out of love. My answer was, "If, as you insist, you love that person, then don't make a mockery of him, but pray for him in secret, for this is the kind of love that is acceptable to the Lord."

Do not allow human respect to get in your way when you hear someone slandering his neighbor. Instead, say: "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. Do not make judgments, and you will travel no quicker road to the forgiveness of your sins. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged" (Luke 6:37 NJB).

If a man commits a sin before you at the very moment of his death, pass no judgment because God's judgment is hidden from us. Men have sinned greatly in the open but have done greater good deeds in secret.

A native of Palestine and possibly a disciple of St. Gregory Nazianzen, at sixteen, John entered a monastery in the Palestinian desert. After four years of training in a community, he lived forty years as a hermit. Like other desert fathers, he broke his near-total solitude only on Saturdays and Sundays to worship with other hermits and counsel his followers. Early in his monastic career John decided that as a mark of submission to God he would receive all criticism as true. Once, for example, some monks reproached him for wasting time in idle conversation. So to correct what he regarded as a serious fault, for a year John observed absolute silence. Only when his disciples insisted that they needed his spiritual teaching did the saint start speaking again.

When John was seventy he was elected abbot of the monastery at Mount Sinai. That was an appropriate choice, for many monks saw John as a Moses who had received Christian commandments from God and recorded them in his Ladder. After four years in office, John retired to his cell and died there around 649 at eighty years of age.



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, Barbara Bogart, Michael Bzik, Mary Ann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Barbara Kary, Margaret Kovalycsik, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Sytgen, Patricia Galley.

Birthday Greeting

Happy Birthday go out this week to **Valentina Szestawiska** - April 16. May God continue to enrich her life with the fullness of joy and happiness for many years - Mnogaya Lyeta!

Announcement

◆ The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is served on all five Sundays of Great Lent, as well as Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. In essence, it is just like the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, except that the Eucharistic prayers of the priest are substantially longer and intensely theological, summarizing the main tenets of Orthodox Christian belief. A variant Hymn to the Theotokos is sung.

◆ **The flowers** adorning the Holy Cross on the center tetrapod were given last Sunday by Maryann Stagen in memory of her family. We sincerely thank her with prayers for God's blessings always.

◆ **Holy Confession:** The Sacrament of Holy Confession has always been a central part of an Orthodox Christian's spiritual journey during the Great Lenten pilgrimage to Pascha. If you have not already done so, there are many opportunities this next two weeks for you to participate in this rite. Please **DO NOT** wait until Holy Week.

◆ The Assembly of Bishops has declared 2021 as the "Year of the Youth"! We are excited to announce that part of this is a monthly Zoom call for our youth with our Orthodox hierarchs! These Zoom calls have been organized by region, and we ask that you check out the information on the Diocese website. We're excited that our own hierarch, Archbishop Michael of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey will be on the first call which is for the Northeast region on Tuesday, April 13th at 7pm EST! Register here: <https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/ministries/year-of-the-youth/>

