

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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Climbing the Ladder Together

"Can the writing of a hermit and monk who lived 1500 years ago say something to us today?"

Pope Benedict asked this question around this time of the year few years ago at a general audience in Vatican City. The monk he referred to was Saint John Climacus, whom we celebrate on this fourth Sunday of Great Lent. The Pope answered his own question by saying that Saint John's great work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, most certainly has something to say because it teaches us to be humble and charitable, both necessary attributes for Christians.

Saint John lived in a monastery on Mount Sinai in the sixth century, and was known for his piety and wisdom. Having long been urged to write his thoughts on spiritual growth, he finally did so in this book. "Climacus" means "of the ladder," and Saint John chose to divide the book into thirty chapters, each of which is a step on the ladder, guiding us in practicing a particular Christian virtue. One virtue leads to another, again like the steps of a ladder, taking us closer to communion with God.

The book was written for John's fellow monks, but as part of the first step of the ladder, he addresses those who live in the world and might protest that the life he describes is impossible for them because "we have wives and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the solitary life?" He replies:

"Do all the good you can; do not speak evil of anyone; do not steal from anyone; do not lie to anyone; do not be arrogant towards anyone; do not hate anyone; do not be absent from the divine services; be compassionate to the needy; do not offend anyone; do not wreck another man's domestic happiness, and be content with what your wife can give you. If you behave in this



April 10, 2016

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
St. John of The Ladder (Climacus)**

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Epistle: Heb. 6:13-20
Eh. 5:9-19 (Saint)

Gospel: Mk. 9:17-31
Mt. 4:25-5:12 (Saint)

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, APRIL 15

6:00pm - Akathist to the Theotokos

SAT, APRIL 16 - SATURDAY OF THE AKATHIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy
12:00pm - Baptism of Brielle Anderson
1:30pm - 3:00pm – Parish Confessions
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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, Edward Fedush, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

way, your will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

Centuries before Saint John Climacus wrote, another John – the great Chrysostom – also asserted, but with his typical forcefulness, that every Christian, monastic or lay, must strive to live a godly life. He particularly applied his words to those raising children:

"Don't say, 'Bible reading is for monks; am I turning my child into a monk?' No! It isn't necessary for him to be a monk. Make him into a Christian! Why are you afraid of something so good? It is necessary for everyone to know Scriptural teachings, and this is especially true for children. Even at their age they are exposed to all sorts of folly and bad examples from popular entertainments. Our children need remedies for all these things!"

(From Homily 21 on Ephesians 6: 1-4 in St. John Chrysostom on Marriage and Family Life, trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson, SVS Press, 1986.)

So, according to all three of these men of the Christian Church, from very different eras, it doesn't matter whether we live in the world or in the monastery. Our climb on the ladder and our glorious destiny are the same.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Walentyna Szeszawicka**, who celebrates her birthday this Saturday. May God grant you and all who celebrate their birthdays this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **"O" Club meeting** will be today following Coffee Hour. All members please plan to attend.

◆ Next **Sunday, April 17**, all **choir members** are asked to stay for a brief meeting after the Liturgy.

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers** (beginning at 4:00pm):

April 10 - Holy Assumption Church, Clifton, NJ.

April 17 - Holy Trinity Church, 120 Dover-Chester Rd, Randolph, NJ.

Wed. May 4, Bright Wednesday, **7:00pm** - Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ **Pre-Sanctified Liturgies** during this Great Lent (starting 6:00pm):

Apr. 13 - joint service at Holy Assumption Church, Clifton (at the end of the service a collection will be taken to support St. Tikhon's Seminary)

Apr. 20 - our own service, followed by potluck dinner (bring a dish to share if you wish).

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.