

March 22, 2026

Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of Saint John of Sinai,
Author of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent"

*On March 22nd we commemorate:
Hieromartyr Basil of Ancyra.*



Saint John Klimakos and the Ladder of Divine Ascent

Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission

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Great Vespers, Saturday Evenings at 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am (Hours at 9:05 am)
Paraklesis, Most Wednesday Evenings at 6:00 pm
Very Reverend Archpriest Luke Uhl, Retired, Interim Rector

*Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission
is a Parish in the Diocese of the West
of the Orthodox Church in America
Under the Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of
Bishop Vasily of San Francisco and the West*



SUNDAY EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS 2

Epistle for the Fourth Sunday of the Fast, (314) Hebrews 6:13-20

BRETHREN, When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Epistle for Saint John Klimakos, (229) Ephesians 5:9-19

BRETHREN, Walk as children of the light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of the Fast, (40) Mark 9:17-31

AT THAT TIME, There came to Jesus a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him" *Continued on page 3*

3 SUNDAY EPISTLE & GOSPEL READINGS (CONTINUED)

Continued from page 2 ☩ who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

Gospel for Saint John Klimakos, (10) Matthew 4:25-5:12

AT THAT TIME, There followed Jesus great multitudes of people – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”



REFLECTION ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

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Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

“*God made a promise to Abraham, ... saying, ‘I will bless you and multiply you.’ And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise.*”

From today’s Epistle we learn that the promise from God did not alone result in its fulfillment. Rather, in addition to the divine promise and assurance, Abraham needed to “patiently wait.” This shows that often the fulfillment of a promise is thwarted by faintheartedness. Likewise, God promises us eternal salvation – but this alone will not assure us of a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. We must also “patiently endure.” Moreover, struggle (asceticism) is necessary in this life if we are to be found worthy of receiving that promise.

In the early centuries of the Church, there was a heresy which proposed that in the end all creatures would be gathered into heaven. This is not so: Christ says that “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” (*Matthew 7:21*) And He taught that some people “will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (*Matthew 25:46*)

Yet, we nonetheless have hope in the promise of eternal blessedness. For as surely as God was faithful and fulfilled His promise to His servant Abraham, we too are assured that He will fulfill His promise to us if we are His faithful servants and patiently endure.

“*And Jesus said to them, ‘This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.’*” (*Mark 9:29*)

Jesus laid out before the Apostles His teaching regarding fasting and prayer, that many blessings accrue from them both. Simply praying – the wishing and hoping in the promise – was not enough to accomplish the very difficult of tasks: deliverance from Satan. Instead, patient endurance in struggle and effort – by fasting – was necessary to receive the promise of deliverance. We, too, must therefore pray and fast.

He who is praying as he ought, and also fasting, does not have many wants; and he who is free from many wants is not covetous. He who is free from covetousness will be more disposed toward almsgiving which is blessed by God. He who fasts is light, and winged, and prays with wakefulness and attentiveness. He also quenches his wicked lusts and propitiates God Who will humble his soul when he is lifted up.

Therefore, even the Apostles were almost continually fasting – and they were the closest friends of Jesus. Shouldn’t we also fast? Yet if our body is too weak to fast continually, at least we can avoid luxurious living.

Amen.

Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

About Saint John of Sinai, Author of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent"

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

This Sunday, the fourth in Great Lent, the Church commemorates Saint John of the Ladder. Who was he?

Saint John entered monastic life at the age of sixteen in Saint Katherine Monastery on Mount Sinai, where he later struggled in asceticism as a hermit and then as Abbot of the Monastery. There he lived in monasticism for 64 years, before he reposed at the age of eighty in AD 649.

Saint John was a man of grace who lived in unceasing prayer and was thus in constant, contemplative communion with God. He wrote what he had learned from his life in God in his book called "*The Ladder*," for which he is called "*of the Ladder*" or, in Greek, "*τοῦ Κλίμακος*."

Mount Sinai was the mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments, where God spoke to man. We could also say that God spoke to Saint John on Mount Sinai as well and gave him "commandments," or "counsels," for our benefit.

In thirty chapters, as though by thirty "ladder rungs," he describes how to raise ourselves from our fallen, earthly state, overcoming our sinful inclinations and attaining communion with God. It is as though the soul were rising up to God as if on a ladder.

It is true that the last five chapters of this book are quite difficult for people like us who live in the world to comprehend, but the earlier chapters can bring great spiritual profit to all. We can even say that those first rungs of this ladder are those which are most suitable for us. Like the man in today's Gospel, they are for those who cry out to God: "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief."

The later chapters are for those who are true spiritual ascetics, or athletes, and are able to cast out demons, as Christ did also in today's Gospel. This book, *The Ladder*, is in print today and can be bought by any who wish to read it with care and attention over time, taking in its precious words a little at a time.

On this Sunday we might consider reading some extracts from the early chapters of Saint John's *Ladder*. But let us simply start out slowly, relating just one account by Saint John, which has changed lives and saved people from their sins.

Saint John related that monastic life was similar to a number of stones being shaken together in a jar. At first the stones were sharp and hard, with rough,

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5 cutting edges. However, as the jar was shaken, so the stones became smoother and rounder, like the pebbles one can find on the seashore.

Although Saint John spoke of monastic life in this example, it can be applied to any sort of community, in a family, at home, at work, at school, at our place of work, and in our parish churches. Saint John is making the point that our salvation comes through our interaction with others.

In whatever situation we find ourselves, by our own choice or otherwise, we can find salvation through the difficulties, challenges, and even friction that we encounter with others.

This does not mean that we should go looking for, still less creating, difficulties! God will only allow us the difficulties we encounter naturally in the course of our everyday lives which we are capable of coping with through His Grace and by our struggles.

The next time that we encounter difficulties in any aspect of our lives where we are with others, let us consider this lesson given to us by Saint John. Let us think of the rough, sharp stones in the jar, wearing each other into rounded, smooth, and even beautiful pebbles. For those rough, angular stones which are worked into smooth and well-rounded pebbles are us, providing only that we persevere in patience in the life in Christ.

Holy Father John, intercede with God for us. Amen.

QUOTES FROM SAINT JOHN KLÍMAKOS

You wish, or rather, have decided, to remove a splinter from someone? Very well, but do not go after it with a stick instead of a lancet for you will only drive it deeper. Rough speech and harsh gestures are the stick, while even-tempered instruction and patient reprimand are the lancet. "*Reprove, rebuke, exhort,*" says the Apostle (*2 Timothy 4:2*), not "batter."

Heartfelt thanksgiving should have first place in our book of prayer. Next should be confession and genuine contrition of soul. After that should come our request to the universal King.

A man should know that a devil's sickness is on him if he is seized by the urge in conversation to assert his opinion, however correct it may be.

A man will know that he truly loves his brother when he weeps for the sins of that brother and is delighted by his progress and by the gifts given to him.

A silly person feels hurt when accused or shouted at. He tries to answer back or else at once apologizes to his accuser, not for reasons of humility but to put a stop to his reproaches. In fact, you should be silent when ridiculed. Patiently accept these spiritual cauterizations, or rather, purifying flames.

Humility is constant forgetfulness of one's achievements.

On the Fourth Sunday of the Fast, we celebrate the memory of our Holy Father John, the author of *The Ladder*.

John, who when alive in the flesh was dead,
Liveth eternally, though he appeareth a breathless corpse.

He left a writing, in which he showeth a
Ladder of Ascent, the journey of his own ascent.

Synaxarion

This Father, at the age of sixteen, and being shrewd of mind, offered himself as a most sacred sacrifice to God, after making the ascent to Mount Sinai. He then arose after nineteen years and entered the arena of hesychasm, five semeia away from the place where Saint Kyriakos had struggled in asceticism.

He took over a monastery by the name of Thola, where he spent forty years in perpetual yearning, ever ablaze with the fire of Divine love. He would eat everything that was permitted, without reproach, by the monastic profession, but in very small quantities and not to satiety, and in this way, I reckon, he very wisely broke the horn of vanity. But what mind could recount the fountain of his tears? He partook of sleep as much as was necessary to avoid damaging the fabric of his mind by keeping vigil; his way of life consisted of unceasing prayer and unimaginable longing for God.

Having lived a God-pleasing life by all these accomplishments and written *The Ladder*, in which he set forth most beneficial teachings, he reposed worthily in the Lord at the age of eighty, in the year AD 603, leaving behind many other writings.

His memory 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.

By his intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Apolytikion in Plagal of the Fourth Tone

With the rivers of your tears, you have made the barren desert fertile. Through sighs of sorrow from deep within you, your labors have borne fruit a hundredfold. By your miracles you have become a light, shining upon the world. O John, our Holy Father, pray to Christ our God, to save our souls.

Kontakion in First Tone

As ever-blooming fruits, you offer the teachings of your God-given book, O wise John, most blessed, while sweetening the hearts of all them that heed it with vigilance; for it is a ladder from the earth unto Heaven that confers glory on the souls that ascend it and honor you faithfully.

Tone 8, Troparion (*Resurrection*)

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One. • Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings. • O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

Tone 8, Troparion of the Temple (*Midfeast of Pentecost*)

O Savior at the Middle of the Feast, • fill my thirsting soul with the waters of piety, as Thou didst cry to all: • “If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink.” • O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee.

Tone 1, Troparion (*Saint John Climacus*)

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body, • thou wast a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John. • Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer, • healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to thee by faith. • Glory to Him Who gave thee strength. • Glory to Him Who granted thee a crown. • Glory to Him Who grants healing to all.

Tone 4, Kontakion of the Temple (*Midfeast of Pentecost*)

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, • cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: “Come and draw the water of immortality.” • We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: • “Grant us Thy mercies for Thou art the Fountain of our life.”

Tone 4, Kontakion (*Saint John Climacus*)

Glory... The Lord truly set thee on the heights of abstinence, • to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe, • O our father and teacher John.

Tone 2, Kontakion of the Theotokos

Both... Steadfast protectress of Christians, • constant advocate before the Creator; • despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, • but in thy goodness come speedily to help us who call on thee in faith. • Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, • for thou dost always protect those who honor thee.

Prokeimena

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their couches.





Евангелие

...Один из народа сказал в ответ: Учитель! я привёл к Тебе сына моего, одержимого духом немым: где ни схватывает его, повергает его на землю, и он испускает пену, и скрежещет зубами своими, и цепенеет. Говорил я ученикам Твоим, чтобы изгнали его, и они не могли. Отвечая ему, Иисус сказал: о, род неверный! доколе буду с вами? доколе буду терпеть вас? Приведите его ко Мне. И привели его к Нему. Как скоро бесноватый увидел Его, дух сотряс его; он упал на землю и валялся, испуская пену. И спросил Иисус отца его: как давно это сделалось с ним? Он сказал: с детства; и многократно дух бросал его и в огонь, и в воду, чтобы погубить его; но, если что можешь, сжался над нами и помоги нам. Иисус сказал ему: если сколько-нибудь можешь веровать, всё возможно верующему. И тотчас отец отрока воскликнул со слезами: верую, Господи! помоги моему неверию. Иисус, видя, что сбегается народ, запретил духу нечистому, сказав ему: дух немой и глухой! Я повелеваю тебе, выйди из него и впредь не входи в него. И, вскрикнув и сильно сотрясши его, вышел; и он сделался, как мёртвый, так что многие говорили, что он умер. Но Иисус, взяв его за руку, поднял его; и он встал. И как вошёл Иисус в дом, ученики Его спрашивали Его наедине: почему мы не могли изгнать его? И сказал им: сей род не может выйти иначе, как от молитвы и поста. Выйдя оттуда, проходили через Галилею; и Он не хотел, чтобы кто узнал. Ибо учил Своих учеников и говорил им, что Сын Человеческий предан будет в руки человеческие и убьют Его, и, по убиении, в третий день воскреснет (Мк. 9, 17-31).



Митрополит Антоний Сурожский

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Преподобный Иоанн Лествичник, память которого мы сегодня празднуем, говорит в одном из своих писаний: Мы не будем судимы, братия, мы не будем осуждены за то, что не творили чудес или не возглашали пророчеств; но мы осудимся за то, что не оплакивали своих грехов всю нашу жизнь... Что же такое грех, если он должен родить в нас такое

☞ сокрушение сердечное, чтобы эта сердечная боль – не омрачала, но вдохновляла всю нашу жизнь?

Мы часто думаем, что грех – это нарушение нравственного закона, нарушение долга, неправый поступок. Но в грехе есть нечто гораздо более основное, что поистине должно вызывать у нас печаль, и более чем печаль: глубокую, острую боль.

Грех – это неверность, грех – это измена, измена и неверность и нелояльность Богу; потому что грех означает, что, когда бы Бог ни обращался к нам, слова Его были маловажны, несущественны для нас, хотя говорил Он к нам из всей Своей Божественной любви, чтобы явить нам, как много мы для Него значим. Как высоко Он ценит нас, если отдал всю Свою жизнь и всю Свою смерть для того, чтобы спасти нас, и чтобы мы *поверили* в Божественную любовь!

Поэтому, когда мы грешим, это означает, что мы отворачиваемся от Того, Кто полюбил нас на жизнь и на смерть: и, как следствие, – что Его жизнь и Его смерть слишком незначительны для нас, чтобы мы отозвались на них с любовью, отозвались верностью и преданностью. И вот, в результате такого отношения мы беспрерывно нарушаем те законы жизни, которые ведут к жизни вечной, которые сделали бы нас подлинно, совершенно человеческими – как Христос был подлинным человеком – в полноте гармонии между Богом и нами.

Но все конкретные грехи, которые мы совершаем постоянно, небрежность друг ко другу, безразличие друг ко другу, то, как легко мы судим и осуждаем, как отворачиваемся от нужды других, как мы небрежны к любви, предложенной и отдающейся нам, или к материальной и духовной нужде вокруг нас – **все это от холодности наших сердец.**

И не напрасно говорит Христос в сегодняшнем Евангелии: Такой дух изгоняется только молитвой и постом. Пост означает, что нужно отвернуться от всего, что соблазнительно прельщает нас и отвлекает прочь от любви, от лояльности и верности и разрушает нашу цельность. А молитва – это общение с Живым Богом, Который есть Любовь, и в Ком *Одном* только мы можем найти силы и крепость любить.

Понятно, поэтому, что когда человек, приведивший своего припадочного ребенка к ученикам, обратился ко Христу и сказал: Они не могли исцелить его, – Христос ответил: *Приведи его ко Мне!* **Если только нас не приведут ко Христу, все остальные усилия будут тщетны.**

И у нас может возникнуть вопрос: неужели мы так далеки от Бога, что должны оплакивать это разобщение в течение всей жизни?.. Но *кто* из нас посмел бы сказать, что сердце его в каждое мгновение жизни горит любовью и глубоким чувством пребывания с Богом, чувством близости Божией, общения с Ним?

По отношению к Богу мы должны бы быть наподобие влюбленных, когда во всякое мгновение, ночью и днем, наяву и во снесердце ☞ 3

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2 ☞ **ликует и трепещет любовью, которая переполняет его до краев, которая есть радость и ликование, мир и покой, крепость и дерзновение;** такая любовь, когда мы можем глядеть вокруг себя и видеть каждого в новом свете, видеть Божественный образ, сияющий в каждом, кого мы встретим, и ликовать о нем.

Если же мы спросим себя: как далеки мы от Бога? – и даже не сумеем понять, каково это расстояние, потому что у нас *так* мало опыта близости с Ним, то поставим перед собой вопрос: какое расстояние отделяет меня от людей, меня окружающих? Сколько во мне есть верности, самоотдачи, сколько радости о ближнем? И, напротив, сколько во мне осуждения, безразличия, небрежности, забывчивости?.. И тогда мы сможем сказать: если *это* качествует во мне, значит, Бог для меня не средоточие всего. Бог для меня *не* Господь, владычествующий в моем сердце, и уме, и всем моем существе и жизни. И если мы подумаем о том, как мы колеблемся между зовом Божиим и хотениями нашего человечества, как мы прельщаемся злом, мы можем снова сказать: *как я далек, как я далека...*

И если только мы не найдем этой гармонии с Богом, мы будем оставаться разделенными и сломленными внутри самих себя; пока мы не нашли этой гармонии *в Боге*, мы будем разделены и друг от друга.

Вот почему святой Иоанн Лествичник зовет нас **обратить абсолютное внимание на то, как мы относимся к Богу; потому что от этого зависит все остальное.** Бог – как ключ гармонии, благодаря которому можно расшифровать и спеть мелодию; Бог, – говорит другой писатель, – как тонкая нить, связующая вместе цветы, которые иначе распадутся: как цветы, даже добродетели, даже красота, даже правда распадаются на куски, если нет этой дивной любви, ликования и радости, которые даются нам только в общении с Богом, потому что *Он* есть любовь, Он есть жизнь. Он есть правда, Он радость, и свет, и ликование.

Обратимся поэтому к тому покаянию, о котором говорит святой Иоанн Лествичник: не к пустому оплакиванию прошлого, не к праздному, бесплодному сожалению о том, что мы не таковы, какими хотели бы быть; но к покаянию, которое есть *крик* к Богу: *Приди, Господи, и приди скоро!*.. И если мы будем кричать от всего сердца, от всего ума, от всей *нужды* нашей, – *придет* Господь, и в общении с Живым Богом мы обретем себя, и все станет красотой: мы вступили в Царство Божие.

Аминь.

Протоиерей Вячеслав Резников

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Господь после Своего славного Преображения спускается вниз. Там, на горе был глас Отца Небесного, были верные рабы Божьи - Илия и Моисей. Все было пронизано Божественным нетварным светом, силою Духа

☞ 4



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15 марта 2026 г.

3 ☞ Святого. Но вот - подножие горы. Какая жалкая картина открывается взору: кучка учеников, на которых насаждают, споря с ними, враги Господни. Вокруг - толпа с любопытством ждет, чем это кончится.

Господь встает на защиту Своего малого стада, готовясь принимать удары врагов: «О чем спорите с ними?» - спрашивает Он книжников (*Мк. 9, 14-16*). А тут еще подошел человек со своим несчастьем: «Учитель! Я привел к Тебе сына моего, одержимого духом немым: где ни схватывает его, повергает его на землю, и он испускает пену, и скрежещет зубами своими, и цепенеет; говорил я ученикам Твоим, чтобы изгнали его, и не могли».

Вот картина нашего мира: кто поумнее, только спорят друг с другом, и не могут помочь чужому горю. Те же, кто попроще, только с бессмысленным любопытством смотрят, кто кого переспорит. А бесы делают свое дело. Увидев это после торжества Фаворской горы, Господь воскликнул: «О, род неверный! Доколе буду с вами? Доколе буду терпеть вас?»

Да и отец больного отрока, хотя и подошел к Иисусу Христу с какой-то надеждой, но чувствуется, что эта его надежда - и самая маленькая, и самая последняя: «Если что можешь, сжался над нами и помоги нам». Но Господь вдруг как бы на самого этого слабого человека перекладывает ответственность за происходящее: «Если сколько-нибудь можешь веровать, все возможно верующему». И тогда в человеке что-то произошло. Он как бы пробудился от оцепенения и «воскликнул со слезами: верую, Господи! Помоги моему неверию». Он пришел в себя: понял и свое глубочайшее неверие, и возымел глубочайшее желание обрести веру. И Господь тут же «запретил духу нечистому». *Дух же, «вскрикнув и сильно сотряси его, вышел».*

Потом, на вопрос учеников, почему они не могли исцелить отрока, Господь ответил: «*сей род не может выйти иначе, как от молитвы и поста*». А ученики все только спорили. А когда спорим, - не только не до поста и не до молитвы, но и последние силы теряем в этом бесплодном занятии.

Ну а надежда, хотя она порой мала и незаметна, но это - «как бы якорь безопасный и крепкий, и входит» туда, «куда предтечу за нас вошел Иисус». И часто кресты над храмами имеют в подножии как бы полумесяц. Это именно - полумесяц якоря. Кажется, понесла волна, одолело неверие, и вдруг - спасительный удар: якорная цепь натянулась: «Верую, Господи! Помоги моему неверию». И Господь на это отчаянное исповедание ничего не говорит, а просто совершает Свое дело.

Аминь.



The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Volume 14, Issue 12

Jesus goes before us



Have you ever watched construction vehicles building a road? Have you watched as they break up the ground, and put down materials, and smooth it all out? The construction trucks make a path for us to use, to get us to where we want to go. Things would be very bumpy and rough if we didn't have them!

Today's epistle reading tells us how our Lord went before us too. He went before us so that we could go down His same path. The epistle says we want to take the "hope set before us."

As Christians, what is our greatest hope? Our hope is to go to heaven, to live with Christ, to be with Him forever in peace. The epistle tells us that our Lord has already gone there! "Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf."

Let's always remember that our Lord, Jesus Christ, isn't only God. He is also a man, and He went before us. He lived here so He could know us and understand us. He died before us, and He went to heaven before us. He did this so He could get a path ready for us. God wanted to help us to get to where we want to go...and where is that? Life in heaven forever!

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

Afraid
Annunciation
Feastday
Forerunner
Good News
Heart
Humanity
Mercy
Obedience

D	G	C	A	N	N	U	N	C	I	A	T	I	O	N
J	I	O	Z	C	R	N	K	R	C	R	H	Y	Y	C
F	L	A	M	K	N	T	Y	G	U	E	S	C	R	Y
O	O	L	R	U	Q	Q	E	F	A	S	J	R	Z	A
B	R	R	M	F	W	L	Q	R	E	G	R	E	I	N
C	A	V	E	E	A	R	T	C	A	Q	H	M	C	K
U	Z	G	L	R	R	O	N	I	C	Z	R	A	G	N
A	M	V	Y	A	U	E	X	Z	W	D	K	F	T	U
U	V	S	O	P	I	N	N	M	X	J	K	E	D	S
X	X	J	K	D	M	O	N	X	X	Z	I	A	K	D
X	S	K	E	J	I	B	A	E	T	Z	L	S	I	S
J	B	B	N	K	B	M	E	K	R	N	Q	T	L	K
L	O	O	H	U	M	A	N	I	T	Y	Y	D	K	L
Z	L	X	S	W	E	N	D	O	O	G	U	A	A	M
V	F	D	S	Y	Q	Z	Q	N	C	W	D	Y	H	O

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

This icon of the Annunciation comes from Ethiopia.

Look at the eyes of the holy Theotokos. She hears how the Archangel Gabriel greets her. Does she look a little scared or confused?

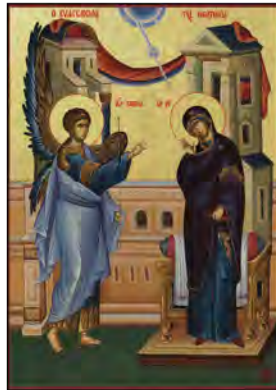


THE ANNUNCIATION

WHAT DID THE THEOTOKOS HOLD IN HER HEART?

We know that we can think bad thoughts, but we can also think good and holy ones too!

This week is the great feast of the Annunciation, when we celebrate the good news that the angel told Mary. He told her that she would have a baby. But before that, he greeted Mary, and said, “Rejoice, O favored one, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women!”



Nobody had ever greeted her like *that* before, and the Bible tells us that she was afraid when she heard it. She thought in her heart what it might mean. The angel meant that she was blessed because she was going to have baby Jesus, the Son of God. She was going to carry Him and take care of Him!

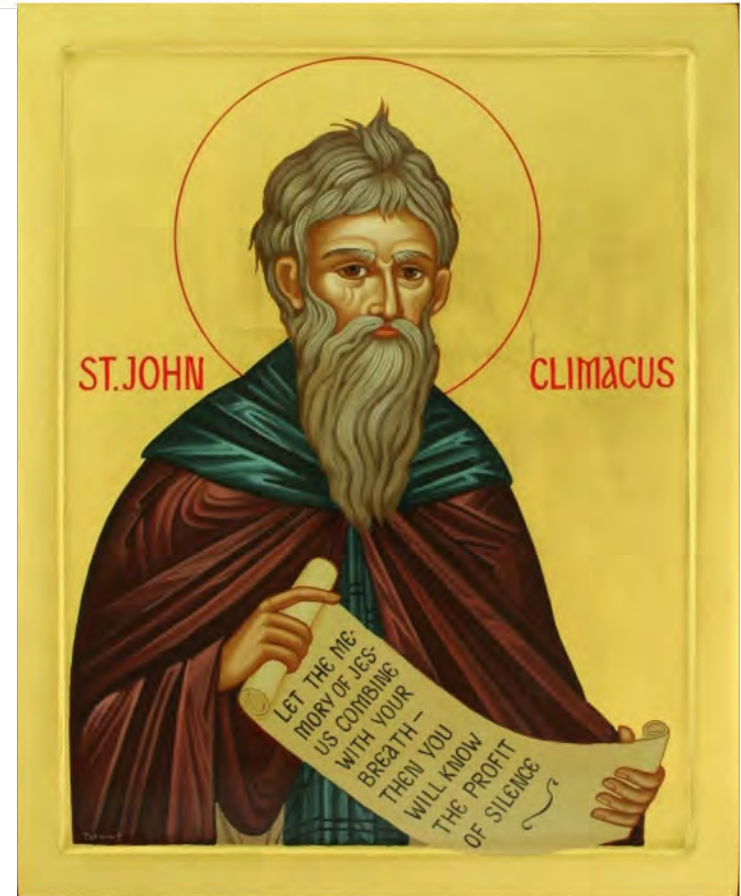
Another time in the Bible, we read about how Mary, the Theotokos, kept things in her heart. Later on, we read about Jesus as a young boy, and how she found Him with the teachers in the Temple. The Bible says, “His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”

The Theotokos knew that her Son was special, and she trusted God to make things clear someday. Let’s be like the holy Theotokos, and try to think wonderful things about our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let’s be like her, and not the teachers in the Gospel today.

We celebrate the Annunciation on Wednesday, March 25th (OC: April 7th).

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St. John Climacus, pray for us!



The Children’s Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian kids. Copyright 2026 Alexandra Houck. Email is [orthodoxchildrensword \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:orthodoxchildrensword@gmail.com). Find it each week at orthodoxchildrensword.org.