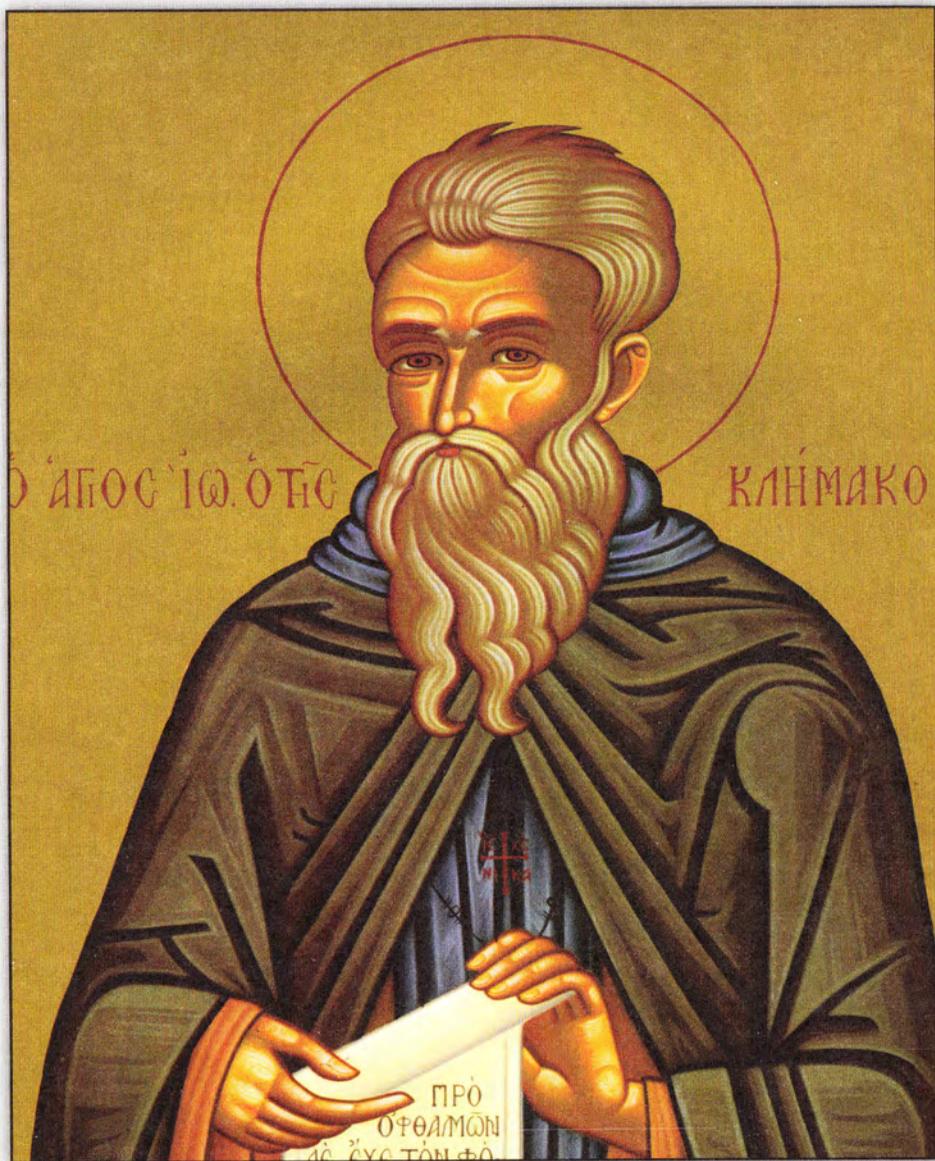


FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
MEMORY OF OUR HOLY FATHER JOHN CLIMACUS



Icon of Saint John Climacus



March 6, 2016

4TH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST – TONE 8

COMMEMORATION OF ST. JOHN OF SINAI, AUTHOR OF *THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT*
THE HOLY FORTY-TWO MARTYRS OF AMORIUM

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 7 – MARCH 13

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

6:30 PM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

THURSDAY, MARCH 10 – THE HOLY MARTYR QUADRATUS AND HIS COMPANIONS, IN CORINTH

9:30 AM – Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete with Life of St. Mary of Egypt

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

PLEASE NOTE: There will be NO Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts today.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12 – AKATHIST SATURDAY; COMMEMORATION OF THE MIRACLE OF THE GREAT MARTYR THEODORE; OUR VENERABLE FATHER AND CONFESSOR THEOPHANES OF MOUNT SIGRIANA

9:30 AM – Akathist Service

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 13 – 5TH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST (MARY OF EGYPT); THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF OUR HOLY FATHER NICEPHORUS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily),
please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважні!*

During the Great Fast, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will be offered on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. Each Wednesday, following the Presanctified Liturgy, there will be a Lenten Meal and a Spiritual Talk. We need volunteers to prepare the soup for the dates of 3/9, and 3/16. Please talk to Olena Bankston to volunteer.

Lenten Services at

Holy Angels Byzantine Church

Each Friday during the Great Fast, Holy Angels celebrates the Presanctified Liturgy at 6:00 PM. Holy Angels is located at 2235 Galahad Road San Diego, CA 92123-3931

PRAYER FOR THE UNKNOWN

Lord, You steadied the hand of Peter as he began to sink on the stormy sea. If you are with me, no one can overcome me. Grant the shield of faith and the mighty armor of the Holy Spirit to protect me. Guide me to do Your will. I will follow You as I place my future into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ. Amen



Looking Ahead:

- ❖ March 12th – Akathist Saturday
- ❖ March 20th – Flowery Sunday
- ❖ March 23rd – Holy Wednesday
- ❖ March 24th – Holy Thursday
- ❖ March 25th – Annunciation & Great and Holy Friday
- ❖ March 27th – Pascha

CHURCH-GOERS



DON'T EXPERIENCE
THE HORROR OF
ARRIVING TO CHURCH
AS EVERYONE IS
LEAVING!

Before going to bed
next Saturday

CHANGE YOUR CLOCK



CHANGE YOUR BATTERY

Did you lose a Tryzub lapel pin?
One was found in the parking lot
last weekend. See Fr. James if it is
yours.

FLOWER COLLECTION

*Special envelopes are available in the back
of the church do help with the purchase of
flowers for the Feast of Pascha.*

March Birthdays:

Danylo Drogobytsky	–	3/1
Lubomyra Yoldas	–	3/2
Olena Bankston	–	3/5
Askold Haywas	–	3/10
Roman Drogobytsky	–	3/17
Oksanna Hirniak	–	3/21
Maria Odezynskyj	–	3/24
Artem Drogobytsky	–	3/27

*Многая і благая літа!
Many blessed years!*



ABOUT THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

In the sixth century, a monk of Mount Sinai named John wrote a book outlining the stages of the spiritual life. He based his entire work on the image of a ladder of thirty rungs, stretching from earth to heaven. Each rung described a step in the pursuit of virtue and the spiritual life. Since it was first written, The Ladder of Divine Ascent has been an essential part of the formation of Eastern Christian monastics, and a mainstay of Eastern Christian ascetic spirituality. However, The Ladder is not just for monks and nuns because all Christians are called to make an ascent to the heights of heaven. For this reason the Church places the commemoration of Saint John and his Ladder on the 4th Sunday of the Great Fast, as the faithful continue their ascent with the Lord to Golgotha and through Golgotha to His Heavenly Kingdom.

The 30 Steps of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

- ❖ Steps 1–4: renouncement of the world and obedience to a spiritual father
- ❖ Steps 5–7: penitence and affliction as paths to true joy
- ❖ Steps 8–17: the defeat of vices and acquisition of virtue
- ❖ Steps 18–26: avoidance of the traps of asceticism (laziness, pride, mental stagnation)
- ❖ Steps 27–29: acquisition of stillness or peace of the soul, of prayer, and of dispassion
- ❖ Step 30: the union of faith, hope, and love

THE PRACTICAL PRACTICE OF ALMSGIVING

FR. DWIGHT LONGENECKER

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/standingonmyhead/>

One of the dreariest tasks of a parish priest is to stand up and ask for money. One can almost hear the moans of the parishioners and hear them thinking, “Here we go again. Father’s always asking for money. That’s all he ever thinks about is money.”

This complaint is more accurately aimed at the complainer. Father Frugal – like most priests – loathes asking for money. It is the grudging parishioner – Mr. Cashback – who is always thinking of money – otherwise he wouldn’t be grumbling about it.

During this season of Lent we stop and remind ourselves that almsgiving is one of the three expectations for a good Lent along with fasting and prayer. A request to give one’s money away is most painful because the request for alms is about far more than money.

Money itself is not the issue. It’s not money. It’s what money buys: security, prestige, power, control—and most of all power over oneself and one’s decisions. **If we gave up our money we’d have to trust in God instead of our bank account, and that is the real test.**

Fr Frugal does not ask for money for himself. He also does not ask for money because the church needs a new roof or the boiler needs to be repaired. He doesn’t even ask for money to feed the hungry, educate the children and clothe the naked. Yes, indeed all those things need to be paid for, but the good priest asks for money not for himself, or for the church roof or for the school or to feed starving children. He asks for money to save your soul.

It is really quite simple. You cannot get into heaven if you worship some other God. You

cannot serve God and money. This simplest of Sunday School lessons is somehow the one most difficult to understand. If you wish to get into heaven you will – sooner or later – have to overcome your love of money. You thought the priest was asking for money so he could have control over you. In fact, the good priest asks for your money not so he can have control over you, but **so that your money will not have control over you.** He does not ask for money to enslave you, but to set you free.

When we give sacrificially we tell our money who’s boss. We take control of the money rather than the money taking control of us. It is all too easy to be possessed by our possessions, and all too easy to forget that if we are possessed by anything other than the Holy Spirit we are possessed by a kind of demon, and the way to exorcise the demon of greed and the false idol called mammon is to give our money away.

What we cannot see is that most of us are hooked on money just as certainly and demonically as a drug addict is addicted or an alcoholic is dependent. Drugs and booze make them feel good about themselves and their world. Drugs and booze give them an artificial high. Same with money. It makes us feel good about ourselves and the world, and like any other artificial stimulant – the high soon fades and we need more and more and will never be satisfied. **Giving alms is like giving up a drug, and it is just as difficult.**

But just like giving up a drug, the practical effect of sacrificial giving is an authentic freedom. When we give alms we are breaking the chains that bind us, and we not only experience spiritual freedom, but we experience a new freedom from

financial worry. Furthermore, in a paradoxically practical way, by giving freely and sacrificially we end up being more prosperous than before.

The person who gives alms generously does not become poorer. He becomes richer. He becomes richer because he has started to learn the **value of everything** rather than the **price of everything**. He becomes richer because he grows in self respect and honor. he sees clearly what really matters and what does not matter. When he gives his money away he also gives away the worldly viewpoint that made him greedy and reliant on the false god of money for his security. Furthermore, he not only becomes rich in real values and honest principles. He also becomes more wealthy. He has more money – not less.

This is how it works: when we give generously – I mean really generously – we shift our values. Our mind is changed. We come to realize that we do not need so much. The old car we have will do. Soon we don't care so much about the clothes we needed to impress people and the extra luxuries we needed to re-assure ourselves and build our self esteem. By giving generously we become more contented and we really do need less. The sooner we realize we have enough, the sooner we have enough. We used to seek happiness in buying stuff. Now we don't need to. Consequently we are not only happy

and more prosperous spiritually and mentally, but we also have more disposable income.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means that we must leave all and follow him. This is not just a cute Bible story. Neither is it an optional extra. This is not one of many ways to follow him. It is THE way to follow him. **Sooner or later in one way or another Jesus Christ will demand that we leave all to follow him.** It's part of the deal. Part of leaving all for the first disciples was to leave their livelihood their capital investment of their fishing boats and nets and their career. When we are called to give alms during Lent this is part of the radical discipleship we are called to.

Until Catholics in the United States learn this lesson, the church will continue to be ineffectual, weak and complacent. As long as American Catholics continue to rely on cash rather than Christ, the church will be a sleeping giant.

Finally, every action of sacrifice releases spiritual power into the world. Through sacrifice God's grace is poured out and great things are accomplished. They are accomplished not just because good people now have the money to do God's work. They are accomplished because through the sacrifice of giving alms **human will aligns to God's will**. Pride and the worship of mammon is broken and God's great and loving power is unleashed on a dark and needy world.

What is tithing?

In Sacred Scripture, tithing is the setting aside of 10% of the “first fruits” of one's labors. Many Protestant congregations strongly encourage and sometimes even require their faithful to tithe. While we don't require it, I certainly encourage you to consider tithing. If not 10%, perhaps 5%.

If your monthly income is:

**A 10% tithe would be
per month**

**A 5% tithe would be
per month**

\$1,000
\$2,000
\$4,000
\$6,000
etc...

\$100
\$200
\$400
\$600

\$50
\$100
\$200
\$300

Preparation for Confession

by St. John of Kronstadt

I, a sinful soul, confess to our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, all of my evil acts which I have done, said or thought from baptism even unto this present day.

I have not kept the vows of my baptism, but have made myself unwanted before the face of God.

I have sinned before the Lord by lack of faith and by doubts concerning the Orthodox Faith and the Holy Church; by ungratefulness for all of God's great and unceasing gifts; His long-suffering and His providence for me, a sinner; by lack of love for the Lord, as well as fear, through not fulfilling the Holy Commandments of God and the canons and rules of the Church.

I have not preserved a love for God and for my neighbor nor have I made enough efforts, because of laziness and lack of care, to learn the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Holy Fathers. I have sinned: by not praying in the morning and in the evening and in the course of the day; by not attending services or by coming to Church only halfheartedly.

I have sinned by judging members of the clergy. I have sinned by not respecting the Feasts, breaking the Fasts, and by immoderation in food and drink.

I have sinned by self importance, disobedience, willfulness, self-righteousness, and the seeking of approval and praise.

I have sinned by unbelief, lack of faith, doubts, despair, despondency, abusive thoughts, blasphemy and swearing.

I have sinned by pride, a high opinion of myself, narcissism, vanity, conceit, envy, love of praise, love of honors, and by putting on airs.

I have sinned: by judging, malicious gossip, anger, remembering of offenses done to me, hatred and returning evil for evil; by slander, reproaches, lies, slyness, deception and hypocrisy; by prejudices, arguments,

stubbornness, and an unwillingness to give way to my neighbor; by gloating, spitefulness, taunting, insults and mocking; by gossip, by speaking too much and by empty speech.

I have sinned by unnecessary and excessive laughter, by reviling and dwelling upon my previous sins, by arrogant behavior, insolence and lack of respect.

I have sinned by not keeping my physical and spiritual passions in check, by my enjoyment of impure thoughts, licentiousness and unchastity in thoughts, words and deeds.

I have sinned by lack of endurance towards my illnesses and sorrows, a devotion to the comforts of life and by being too attached to my parents, children, relatives and friends.

I have sinned by hardening my heart, having a weak will and by not forcing myself to do good.

I have sinned by miserliness, a love of money, the acquisition of unnecessary things and immoderate attachment to things.

I have sinned by self-justification, a disregard for the admonitions of my conscience and failing to confess my sins through negligence or false pride.

I have sinned many times by my Confession: belittling, justifying and keeping silent about sins.

I have sinned against the Most-Holy and Life-Creating Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord by coming to Holy Communion without humility or the fear of God.

I have sinned in deed, word and thought, knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly, thoughtfully and thoughtlessly, and it is impossible to enumerate all of my sins because of their multitude. But I truly repent of these and all others not mentioned by me because of my forgetfulness and I ask that they be forgiven through the abundance of the Mercy of God.

Fasting is beneficial when it is undertaken for quelling desire, humbling the soul, transforming hatred, extinguishing anger, erasing remembrance of wrongs, and for the purity of the understanding and the practice of prayer.

+St. Gregory Palamas

Please consider adding "donate blood" to your "to-do" list – you'll save 3 lives! Today the demand for blood is increasing while blood donation levels are decreasing. The GIFT OF LIFE is a present that cannot be bought and wrapped. An hour of your time can give someone a LIFETIME.

Did You Know??

- A donation is one unit. The average person has 10-12 units.
- The body begins replenishing the lost fluid and red cells at once after donating.
- Blood has a shelf life of 42 days and donors can give only every 56 days. As a result, there is a critical lapse between the time when blood expires and donors can donate again.

GOD'S EXTENDED HAND

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

Sunday offering for February 28

Amount	Number
\$5.00	2
\$9.00	1 (loose)
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	3
\$85.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$125.00	1
\$160.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1084.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1079.00
 Guest Total: \$5.00
 Average / parish household (42): \$13.83
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: (\$1121.00)
Year-to-date deficit: (\$11,011.00)

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279
 Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357
 Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Social Committee Chair:

Megan Hartman (619) 540-4291

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Wisdom from St. John Climacus

Forgetting offences is a sign of sincere repentance. If you keep the memory of them, you may believe you have repented but you are like someone running in his sleep. Let no one consider it a minor defect, this darkness that often clouds the eyes even of spiritual people.

When the soul betrays itself and loses the blessed and longed-for fervor, let it carefully investigate the reason for losing it. And let it arm itself with all its longing and zeal against whatever caused this. For the former fervor can return only through the same door through which it was lost.

When a man has found the Lord, he no longer has to use words when he is praying, for the Spirit Himself will intercede for him with groans that cannot be uttered.

Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do

not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience.

As fire does not give birth to snow, so those who seek honor here will not enjoy it in heaven ... As those who climb a rotten ladder are in danger, so all honor, glory, and power are opposed to humility.

It happens, I do not know how, that most of the proud never really discover their true selves. They think they have conquered their passions and they find out how poor they really are only after they die.

Humility is the only virtue that no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of angels, there is no doubt that humility could make angels out of demons.

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.ecpubs.com**