

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS



Icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent



March 26, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST – TONE 4
ST. JOHN CLIMACUS; LEAVE TAKING OF ANNUNCIATION;
SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 27 – APRIL 2

MONDAY, MARCH 10 – OUR VENERABLE MOTHER MATRONA OF THESSALONICA

10:30 AM – LENTEN SERVICE AT ST. PAUL MANOR, 328 MAPLE STREET, SAN DIEGO, CA 92103

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER MARK, BISHOP OF ARETHUSA; CYRIL THE DEACON AND OTHERS WHO
SUFFERED UNDER JULIAN THE APOSTATE

6:30 PM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

THURSDAY, MARCH 30 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN CLIMACUS, AUTHOR OF “THE LADDER”

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 31 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER HYPATIUS, BISHOP OF GANGARA

9:30 AM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

SATURDAY, APRIL 1 – AKATHIST SATURDAY; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER MARY OF EGYPT

9:30 AM – AKATHIST TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 26 – FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST – SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT;

OUR VENERABLE FATHER AND CONFESSOR TITUS WONDERWORKER; PASSING INTO ETERNAL LIFE
(1959) OF BLESSED NYKOLAI (NICHOLAS) CHARNETSKY, EXARCH OF VOLHYNIA AND CONFESSOR

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For all parishioners

Looking Ahead:

- ❖ April 1st – Akathist Saturday
- ❖ April 8th – Lazarus Saturday
- ❖ April 9th – Flowery Sunday
- ❖ April 16th – Pascha

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! We are so concerned with our children's schooling; if only we were equally zealous in bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord!... When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls and reveal the image of God within them. This, then, is our task: to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness.

– St. John Chrysostom

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 3/29, 4/5 and 4/12. 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

FLOWER COLLECTION

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

DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE

Start arranging your schedule today so that you can be present for as many of the Lenten services as possible. Put God first.

Четверта неділя Великого посту

О роде невірний - Марко 9, 17-31

Сьогоднішня євангельська подія не анахронічна, вона безпосередньо стосується нас. Йдеться про драматизм нашого недовір'я. Наша повільність у вірі настільки засмучує Ісуса, що Він гостро говорить нам про це. Його слова: «О роде невірний!.. Доки вас терпітиму?» (Мр. 9, 19) звернені до нас з вами. Нехай кожен почує їх для себе щирим серцем. В описаній події є декілька штрихів, які проливають світло на драматизм нашої малої віри.

Найперше – дитина не чує і не говорить. А в нашому житті слух – це ціла проблема. Може бути, що ми не чуємо, бо страждаємо через певну проблему в організмі і намагаємося вилікуватися від неї. Але дуже часто не можемо говорити, бо не хочемо слухати. Добре відомо, що дитина не говорить, якщо погано чує чи якщо ніхто не говорить з нею або ж якщо говорять замість неї, що нерідко трапляється серед батьків.

З нашим Отцем все зовсім інакше. Він не лише не перестає говорити до нас через свого Сина, але й налаштовує нас слухати Його. Справді, Святий Дух безнастанно пригадує нам його Слово: Він пригадує нам Ісуса. Віра народжується зі слухання Слова Божого (див. Рим. 10, 14–17), і досвід доводить це. Отець говорить до нас. А ми? Чи справді хочемо ми слухати його (пор. Йо. 6, 45)? А йдеться про те, щоб через віру стати Його дітьми в єдинородному Сині, Ісусі, слухаючи всім своїм єством Отця і Його Слово.

Що каже нам Отець? Перед тим, як сказати нам те чи інше слово, яке можемо почути, слухаючи читання Святого Письма, Отець щомиті говорить про нас самих. Саме тому ми існуємо і саме завдяки цьому можемо стати самі собою. Самі по собі ми є нічим. Ми не існували вічно, нас могло не бути. Я існую не сам по собі, а тому, що я люблений, люблений Отцем. Усвідоммо це диво: ми були вибрані в Ньому перед заснуванням світу (див. Еф. 1, 4–6). Я бажаний так, як жодна дитина не може бути бажана для своїх батьків. Я бажаний від віку, і в певний вибраний ним момент Отець дарує мені життя, кличе мене з небуття до існування, як ми читатимемо сьогодні в анафорі святого Йоана Хрестителя. Кожної миті Отець кличе мене жити Ним і для Нього. І в цьому – надзвичайне диво нашої людської особи. Вірити – означає приймати і слухати цей поклик у тиші серця та впізнавати голос люблячого Отця, Який кличе мене –

захоплюватися тим, що ми покликані жити! Сенса мого існування в тому, що я покликаний жити Його життям, бути Богом і з Ним.

Якщо в нашому серці нема цього пережиття, тобто віри, тоді ми подібні до роботів, добре змайстрованих і організованих, хоча час до часу трапляються збої. Ми сотворені на образ животворного Слова, але поводимося немов комп'ютери. Усі слова, які Бог дає нам у Писанні, зрозумілі лише через Його Слово – Христа, в Якому Слово Боже «зодягнулося» в нашу людську природу. Всі слова Отця мають лише один сенс для кожної людини: «Я люблю тебе. Встань і живи! Я даю тобі своє Слово!». Віра – це згода, дана Ісусові, Слово, яке «заручається» з нами, адже Бог «порукає» себе нам, віддає себе нам, і коли ми відповідаємо Йому, між нами живе довіра.

І останній штрих, який проливає світло на драматизм нашої віри і є розв'язкою цієї драми, – це молитва. Ісус каже нам, що «цей рід нічим не можна вигнати, тільки молитвою». Чому? Бо віра – це живий, животворний зв'язок із Богом. Віра – це тиша, сповнена слухання, уваги, в якій все наше єство тягнеться до Нього. Віра – проста, вона ні з чим не змішана, чиста. На відміну від неї, «німий дух» (див. Мр. 9, 17), про якого йдеться в Євангелії, – нечистий. Він не говорить, а лише зчиняє шум. Той шум, що бушує в нашому серці, завжди нечистий. Та через молитву все знову стає простим, чистим. Молитва – це не суто зустріч один на один, так, ніби ми перебуваємо назовні відносно Бога. В молитві, яка є чистою вірою, я перебуваю в Ньому, а Він – у мені. Мені не треба шукати Його деінде. Це так просто: дозволяючи Йому знайти мене, я знаходжу Його, а коли Він віднаходить мене, тоді та загублена німа дитина, яка є в мені, повертається до життя, приймаючи його від свого Отця.

Просімо Святого Духа відкрити нам, яким дивовижним є той поклик Отця. Бо здатність вірити ми отримали у дар. Вона подарована нам. Чи погодимось ми на неї? Чи погодимось народитися від Отця, кликати Його «Отче», дарувати себе Йому. Це і є тим порухом віри, простим і чистим. Він іде з глибини серця. Чим більше я молюся, тим більшою мірою живу, то ж ніщо не є неможливе, особливо основні речі: радість і любов, які можемо давати іншим.

Жан Корбон, Це називається світанком, Львів, Свічадо 2007

THAT THING YOU DO – RIGHT WORSHIP

March 13, 2017 · Fr. Stephen Freeman

In my Anglican years I watched the introduction of a new prayer book. Among its most notable features was *variety*. In a certain manner, it brought under one roof that most obvious feature of modern Christianity: options. Our culture has an understanding that ideas, thoughts and sentiments are what matters; how they are embodied is largely a matter of private choice – perhaps a lifestyle preference. Confronted with radical differences in worship practice, a modern American Christian would most likely respond, “Does it really matter?” This stands in stark contrast to an ancient understanding of liturgy. Perhaps the most heated debate between East and West during the time of the Great Schism was over whether the bread of the Eucharist was to be leavened or unleavened. At the time, it was seen as far more important than the *filioque*. Modern sensibilities recoil at such a debate and again want to shout, “What does it matter?”

Our modern protest assumes that we are the masters of our thoughts. Actions and words are *fungible*, evidence only of *style*. We believe that substance is a matter of thought and intent. This philosophy is geared towards allowing us to ignore the words and actions of others. In a world of variety and multicultural complexion, such a strategy is understandable. However, it tends to value the private and the notional at the expense of the public and common experience. We imagine that our inner thoughts are what matter and that those thoughts are the product of our own choices. Such is not the case.

Psychological studies have long shown evidence for what is termed “confirmation bias.” We tend to find proof of what we already think. We might also say that you

will tend to think like you live – your actions determine your choices to a great extent, long before anything that we describe as “reason” comes into play. The Church has long known this and enshrined it in a formula: *lex orandi, lex credendi*: “the law of praying is the law of believing.” In simple terms, we believe what we pray – and not just what we pray, but what we pray publicly – the Liturgy.

Historically this referred to the fact that Church doctrine agreed with the Church’s liturgical life and its liturgical life agreed with its doctrine. It can be taken prescriptively, that the one *should* mirror the other. I take it, however, to be a principle (*lex*): whatever you do in your praying will eventually determine your believing. I think that because we are *wired* that way. It is worthwhile to look at a Church service, and, apart from the words, to ask, “What does this action mean?” There is a meta-message that is far deeper and more important than the words you say and the songs you sing.

The modern options in liturgical life (found all through the contemporized denominations), have a hidden, and, perhaps, unintended message. Their constantly changing structures suggest that what matters is what you *think/feel/believe*. What you do in Church is pretty much “immaterial,” a matter of preference and style. Indeed, many moderns believe that this is the great advantage of denominations – everybody can “do Church” in the manner that they like. But what you do is, eventually, what you will think (no matter what you say).

A simple observation: You cannot say that children matter and exclude them from Baptism and the Cup of Communion, much less isolate them and remove them from the

public liturgy of the Church. Their exclusion is a teaching regarding the full humanity of children, regardless of what you mean it to say. There is a connection (whether we want to admit it or not) between the repudiation of infant baptism and the repudiation of the humanity of a child in the womb. Adulthood is not required in the Kingdom of God.

This is a crucial matter. Any time there is some component of worship that “doesn’t matter,” the whole liturgy will begin to not matter. The modern thought, “I don’t need to go to Church to worship God,” simply says that all sense of a Eucharistic life is gone. The notion that some part of life, much less some part of worship, doesn’t matter is already an embracing of secularism. Secularism holds that the world somehow exists apart from God. God only cares what we think or feel; intention and sentiment are what is essential. All that sort of thinking can yield is a bifurcation of our lives, a rupture in the fundamental unity of our being. It is a disintegration of the spiritual life. And, in the end, what you do will win. The modern secularization of Christianity (and then the heart) is an inevitable result.

If there is one saving feature of Orthodox Christianity, it would be its *failure* to alter its liturgy in a significant manner for the bulk of its history. Anyone who says that what you see in an Orthodox service today is the unchanged liturgy of the early Church is mistaken. Much of what we see is unchanged, but centuries have added things here and there. And those additions were intended. When doctrines have been expressed in a definitive manner, for example, they generally gain a place within the worship life of the Church.

As I study the history of Orthodoxy it is primarily the liturgical life of the Church that remains a constant. Periodic corruption within the hierarchy, cultural captivity and other failures are quite notable in Orthodox

history. Indeed, very little in its history can be singled out as an outstanding feature of stability and faithfulness. But corrupt characters and cultural hegemonies come and go. Various religious fads and fashions have passed through. That it is possible to speak of an “Orthodox phronema” (*mind*), is perhaps solely due to the stability of its liturgical life.

The fact that most of Orthodoxy spent the better part of the 20th century stagnated under various communist regimes may have been far more salutary than not. For many Orthodox, mere survival was the greatest concern of the time. There are some who wring their hands over the controversies and failures of the recent Council in Crete. I am not one of them – primarily because I had very low expectations. St. Gregory the Theologian, who took early leave from the 2nd Ecumenical Council, said: “I have never seen a council produce anything but anger and rancor.”

But the same participants who argue and scheme eventually return to the liturgy that faithfully bathes them in the unchanging truth of the faith. The prayers of the Church produce saints. No decisions, made anywhere at any level, have such effective power.

Ortho-doxa is sometimes translated as “right worship.” This is proper and goes to the point of our lives. It was said by many Jews in Hitler’s camps, “We did not keep the Sabbath; the Sabbath kept us.” The same can be said regarding Orthodox worship in the life of the Church. The Church proper is the Church gathered in Liturgy.

The whole of our life, ideally, becomes a liturgy, and, as such, is rightly lived. We were created to make Eucharist of all things, to *give thanks*. We are not the masters of our existence. We are its servants.

Advice to Those Living in the World

From Step 1 of the Ladder of Divine Ascent



Some people living in the world have asked me: "We have spouses and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the spiritual life?" I replied to them: "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 own spouses can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

- God won't ask what kind of car you drove, he'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.
- God won't ask the square footage of your house, he'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
- God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet, he'll ask how many you helped to clothe.
- God won't ask what your highest salary was, he'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.
- God won't ask what your job title was, he'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
- God won't ask how many friends you had, he'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.
- God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, he'll ask how you treated your neighbors.
- God won't ask about the color of your skin, he'll ask about the content of your character.
- God won't ask you how many times you spoke the truth, he'll ask you how many times you lied.
- God won't ask why it took you so long to seek salvation, he'll lovingly take you to your mansion in heaven.
- Бог не запитає тебе, яким автомобілем їздив, але скількох людей ти підвіз.
- Бог не запитає тебе, яку площу мав твій дім, а скількох подорожніх ти в ньому прийняв.
- Бог не запитає тебе, як ти одягався, а запитає, скількох людей ти зодягнув.
- Бог не запитає тебе скільки грошей ти заробляв, але яким способом.
- Бог не запитає тебе яку посаду ти займав, але чи ти працював чесно і сумлінно.
- Бог не запитає тебе, скільки ти мав приятелів, але для кого з них був приятелем ти.
- Бог не запитає тебе, в якому оточенні ти жив, але як ти ставився до своїх сусідів.
- Бог не запитає тебе краски твоєї шкіри, але запитає про твій характер.
- Бог не запитає тебе, скільки разів ти говорив правду, але запитає скільки разів ти збрехав.
- Бог не запитає тебе, чому ти так довго зводікав з покаянням і виправленням. Він з любов'ю запровадить тебе до твого небесного житла.

Watch your thoughts, they become words.
Watch your words, they become actions.
Watch your actions, they become habits.
Watch your habits, they become your character.

Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

Пильнуй свої думки, вони стають словами.

Пильнуй свої слова, вони стають діями.

Пильнуй свої діла, вони стають звичками.

Пильнуй свої звички, вони стають характером.

Пильнуй свій характер, він стає долею.

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORITION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

PARISH COMMITTEES FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Myra Heltsley
Stephen Hojsan
Maria Hughes

PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Vladimir Bachynsky
Olena Bankston
Gabriel Espedal
Mark Hartman
Luke Miller

STEWARDSHIP (FUNDRAISING) COMMITTEE:

Susan Avant
John Heltsley (*fundraising consultant*)

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Olena Bankston
Olga Fedunyak
Mary Kitt
Michael Miller
Olga Miller
Lubomyra Yoldas

Sunday offering for March 19

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	1
\$51.00	1 (loose)
\$100.00	1
\$105.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$846.00	

Parishioner Total: \$846.00

Average / parish household (43): \$10.85

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Shortfall: <\$442.00>



**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

“To admire the labors of the saints is good; to emulate them wins salvation; but to wish suddenly to imitate their life in every point is unreasonable and impossible.”

“A servant of the Lord is he who in body stands before men, but in mind knocks at Heaven with prayer.”

“To judge others is a shameless arrogation of the Divine prerogative; to condemn is the ruin of one's soul.”

“In all your undertakings and in every way of life, whether you are living in obedience, or are not submitting your work to anyone, whether in outward or in spiritual matters, let it be your rule and practice to ask yourself: Am I really doing this in accordance with God's will?”

“The Christian is one who imitates Christ in thought, word and deed, as far as is possible for human beings, believing rightly and blamelessly in the Holy Trinity.”

“Let your prayer be completely simple. For both the publican and the prodigal son were reconciled to God by a single phrase.”

“Do not say, after spending a long time in prayer, that nothing has been gained; for you have already gained something. And what higher good is there than to cling to the Lord and persevere in unceasing union with Him?”

“Some people with a hot temper do not worry about it and ignore the remedies that would heal them. They forget, unfortunately, what is written: ‘Surely anger kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple,’ (Job 5:2).”

“A charitable and sensible mind takes careful note of whatever virtues it sees in anyone. But a fool looks for faults and defects. And of such it is said: ‘They have searched out iniquity and expired in the search.’ Do not condemn, even if you see with your eyes, for they are often deceived.”

Visit www.ecpubs.com for more publications.