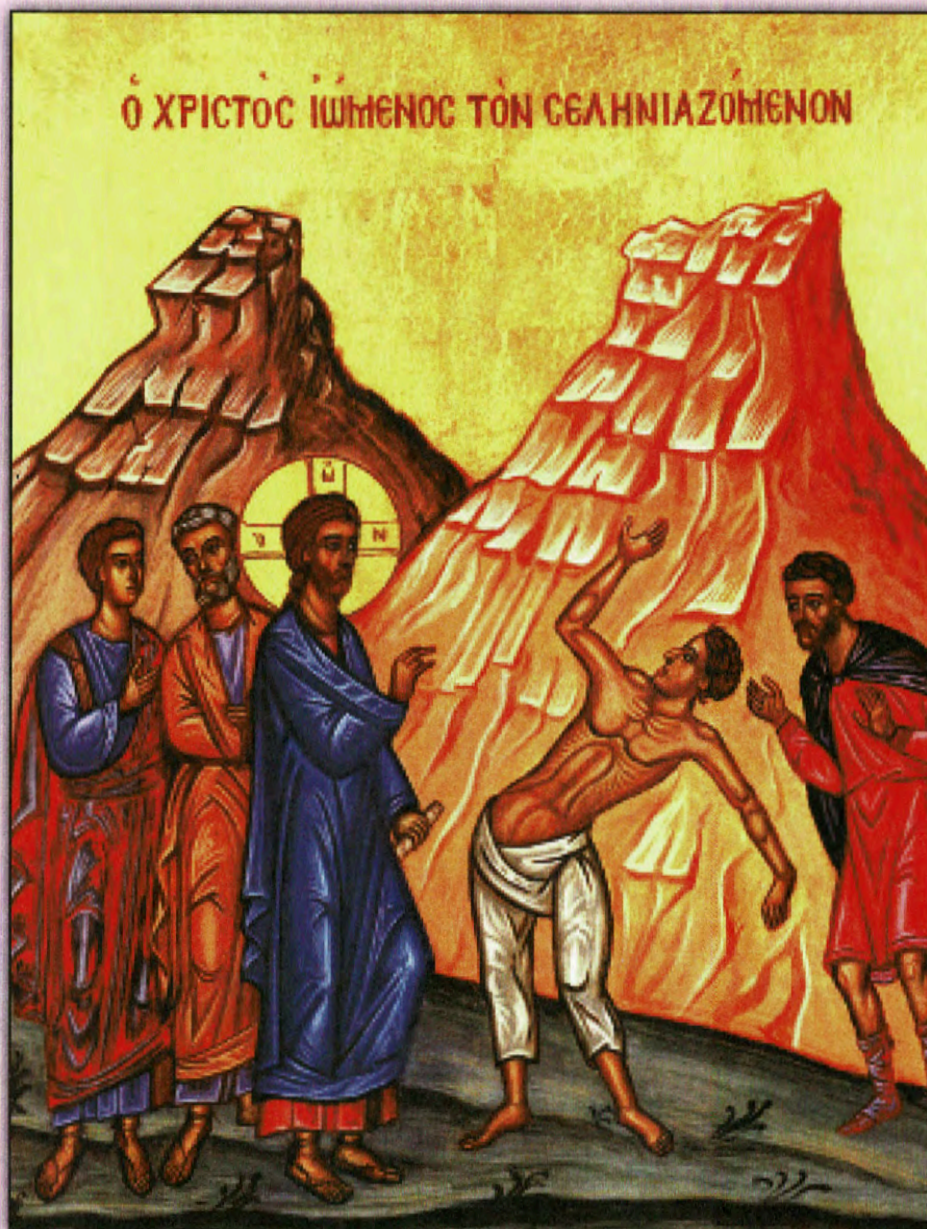


FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS



Icon of Healing the Boy with a Demon



March 11, 2018

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST – JOHN CLIMACUS
OUR HOLY FATHER SOPHRONIUS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM**

TONE 7

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR MARCH 12 – MARCH 18

MONDAY, MARCH 12

11:00 AM – Funeral Service for Adriana Avant at St. Thomas More Catholic Church,
1450 S. Melrose Dr, Oceanside, CA 92056

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

6:30 PM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**THURSDAY, MARCH 15 – THE HOLY MARTYR AGAPIUS AND THE SIX MARTYRS WITH HIM, TIMOLAUS, ROMEL,
ALEXANDER, ALEXANDER, DIONYSIUS AND DIONYSIUS**

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 16

9:30 AM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**SATURDAY, MARCH 17 – AKATHIST SATURDAY; OUR VENERABLE FATHER ALEXIS, THE MAN OF GOD;
PATRICK, THE ENLIGHTENER OF IRELAND**

9:30 AM – Akathist Service

6:30 PM – Great Vespers for Sunday (satisfies Sunday obligation)

SUNDAY, MARCH 18 – FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST (MARY OF EGYPT)

OUR HOLY FATHER CYRIL, ARCHBISHOP OF JERUSALEM

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Looking Ahead:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ❖ March 24th – Lazarus Saturday | ❖ March 29th – Holy Thursday |
| ❖ March 25th – Annunciation & Flowery
Sunday | ❖ March 30th – Great and Holy Friday |
| ❖ March 28th – Holy Wednesday | ❖ March 31st – Great and Holy Saturday |
| | ❖ April 1st – Pascha |

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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

Prayer Books for sale:

Daily Prayers of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. A compendium of prayers prepared by the North Anthracite Protopresbyterate of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia. It is in English and available for \$5.00. Please speak to Fr. James.

FLOWER COLLECTION

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

“There is in each of us a shadow-self, and a real-self. The shadow-self seeks only its own will and pleasure. The more we keep the sun behind us, the greater the length of the shadow, the less Christ is in our lives. Every pain patiently borne, every blow to self, shapes the real eternal self. It was the Crucifixion of Our Lord that prepared the way for His resurrection and Glory. Our Lord is weaving your heavenly robes for the heavenly nuptials, though you know it not, in moments that seem so loveless. You cannot see entirely God’s Plan for you. The uncharted ocean is before you, as you toss in the narrow cabin of your suffering; but the Divine Pilot is bringing you to port.”

*Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation
(Lenten & Easter Inspirations)*

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

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

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 беззастанно 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. Усвідомлю 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 Іоана 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 цього 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, Слову, яке «заручається» з нами, адже Бог «поручає» 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 погодимося ми на неї? Чи погодимося 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

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.



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

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

Journeying to Pascha

Jesus continues today his work of healing and exorcism, and that is appropriate for this time of Lent, because Lent is a time for healing and exorcism. It is a time for us to heal the wounds of our souls – self-inflicted wounds due to our complacency and laziness and self-indulgence. It is time to get rid of those demons of our own sinful habits and anything that keeps us away from God and from living that abundant life that Christ came to give us.

We start to make our way toward Jerusalem. At the end of today's Gospel already there is the prediction of the passion, the death and the resurrection of Christ, giving a little hint in the Gospel that the course of Lent is moving now towards Jerusalem. We have gone through several weeks now of spiritual preparations, Scripture texts, prayers and activities. Now our focus

is starting to turn towards Jerusalem. That will be made more explicit in next Sunday's Gospel, but we are already getting a hint of it now.

There are only three weeks now until Easter, two weeks until Palm Sunday, when we are really liturgically accompanying Christ into the mystery of His Passion.

So it is coming soon, and we have to start turning towards Jerusalem. We have to get focused, we have to get recollected, we have to really revive our Lenten prayer and fasting so that we can make the rest of this journey and be fruitful and overcome the demons and find healing for the wounds of our souls – and go with Christ to his Passion and, through the mystery of His Cross, come to that great, transfiguring, glorious celebration of His Resurrection.