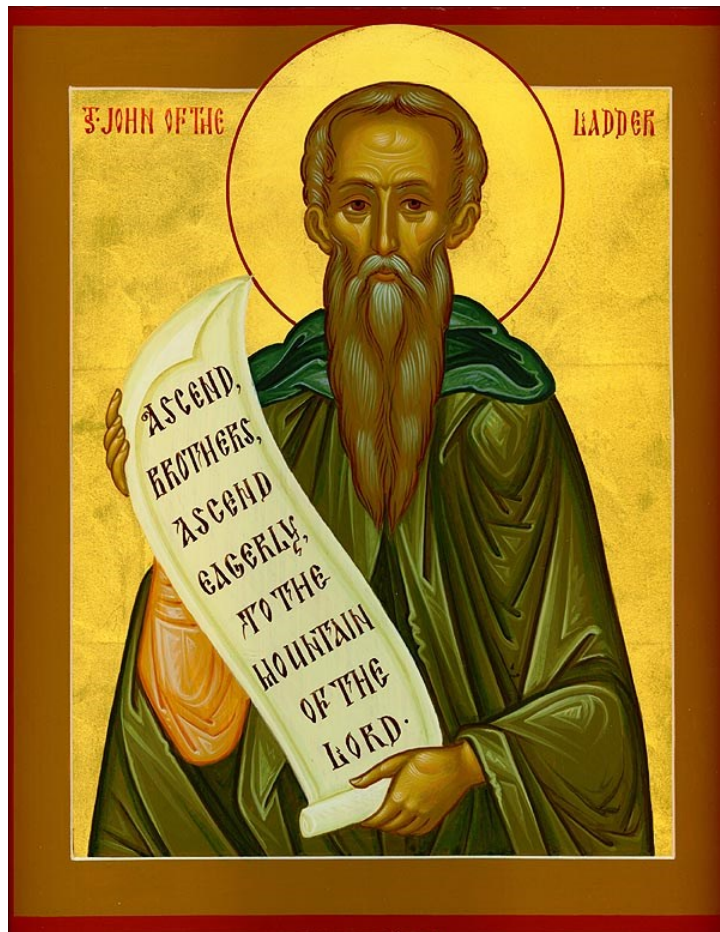


From the Divine Office for the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

O venerable and holy father John, with full voice, you have unceasingly sung the praises of God. You have meditated upon the inspired words in the Scriptures that teach us how to make them wisely bear much fruit in the spiritual life. Having become rich in heavenly grace, you have deserved unending happiness and have overcome the plots of the ungodly. (Vespers)

Come, let us labor in the mystical vineyard, gathering fruits of repentance within it, for we do not work to fill ourselves with food and drink, but to cultivate virtue through fasting and prayer. Thus we shall please the Lord, the Master of the vineyard, who will give us the recompense by redeeming our souls from the debt of sin; for he alone is rich in mercy. (Orthros)



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
ST. JOHN CLIMACUS
MARCH 10, 2024**



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St., Worcester, MA 01604
Phone: (508) 752-4174
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com/Website: olphworcester.org
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Cell: (774) 502-8547
Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.

Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8) Pg.52

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You!

Troparion of St. John Climacus (Tone 8)

Your abundant tears made the wilderness to sprout and bloom, and your deep sighing made your labors fruitful a hundredfold; you became a shining star shining over the world with miracles. Holy Father John, pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg.13

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8) Pg. 14-Arabic this week

We your servants ascribe to you, O Mother of God, thank offerings of victory, O Champion Leader, for we have been liberated from terror. But as you have that invincible power do you free us from every kind of danger, so that we may cry out to you: "Hail O Virgin and Bride ever pure!

"Forgetting the wrongs we have suffered is a sign of true repentance. But he who dwells on them and thinks that he is repenting is like a man who thinks he is running while he is really asleep." *From the Ninth Rung*

"He who has become aware of his sins has controlled his tongue, but a talkative person has not yet come to know himself as he should." *From the Eleventh Rung*

"He who has tasted the things on high easily despises what is below; but he who has not tasted the things above finds joy in possessions." *From the Seventeenth Rung*

"It is not darkness or the desolateness of place that gives the demons power against us, but barrenness of soul. Through God's providence this sometimes happens in order that we may learn by it." *From the Twenty- First Rung*

"Blasphemous thoughts, that deceiver and corrupter of souls, has often driven many out of their mind. No other thought is so difficult to tell in confession as this. That is why it often remains with many to the very end of their lives. For nothing gives the demons and bad thoughts such power over us as nourishing and hiding them in our heart unconfessed." *From the Twenty-third Rung*

"The natural property of the lemon tree is such that it lifts its branches upwards when it has no fruit; but the more the branches bend down, the more fruit they bear. Those who have the mind to understand will grasp the meaning of this." *From the Twenty-Fifth Rung*

"Before all else let us first list sincere thanksgiving on the scroll of our prayer. On the second line we should put confession and heartfelt contrition of soul. Then let us present our petition to the King of all. This is the best way of prayer, as it was shown to one of the brethren by an angel of the Lord." "If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us." "Your prayer will show you what condition you are in. Theologians say that prayer is the mirror of the monk." *From the Twenty-Eighth Rung*

And if You Are Not a Monk...

"Some people living carelessly in the world have asked me 'We have wives and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the solitary 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 wives can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven.'" *From the First Rung*

"Let us observe and we shall find that the spiritual trumpet serves as an outward signal for the gathering of the brethren, but it is also the unseen signal for the assembly of our foes. Some of them stand by our bed and, when we get up, urge us to lie down again. 'Wait,' they say, 'until the preliminary hymns are finished, then you can go to church.' Others plunge those standing at prayer into sleep. Some produce severe, unusual pains in the stomach. Others urge us on to make conversation in church. Some entice the mind to shameful thoughts. Others make us lean against the wall as though from fatigue. Sometimes they involve us in fits of yawning. Some of them bring on waves of laughter during prayer... Some force is to hurry the reading or chanting merely from laziness; others suggest that we should chant more slowly for the pleasure of it, and sometimes they sit at our mouths and shut them so that we can scarcely open them. He who reckons with feeling of heart that he is standing before God in prayer shall be an unshakable pillar, and none of the aforesaid demons will make sport of him." *From the Nineteenth Rung*

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Agnes Esper (10th). Requested by Lauri Moossa

Mar 17 +Ronald Abraham. Requested by Zina Zigmont

This morning's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Lauri Moossa

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Sandra Hanlan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$585
Coffee Hr.	\$ 22
Candles	\$ 20
Easter Fl.	\$125
TOTAL	\$752

Just a reminder that we need a minimum of \$2,000 per week to meet our financial obligations.

God bless you for your generosity to our Parish!



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Mon Mar 11, 6pm - Great Compline

Wed Mar 13, 6pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Fri Mar 15, 6pm - Compline & Akathist

Sun Mar. 17, 10am - Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

Please join us!



“As a spark falling into the wide sea would straightway be quenched, or would become invisible, being overwhelmed by the multitude of the waters, so also all human wickedness, when it falls into the pool of the divine fountain, is more swiftly and easily overwhelmed, and made invisible, than that spark.”

— St John Chrysostom

Fruit of the Desert - Saint John Climacus

AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT SINAI, in the Egyptian peninsula of the same name, sits the monastery of St Catherine. It has been inhabited continuously for over 1700 years, making it one of the oldest such places in the world. Its unique climate has preserved icons and manuscripts from the first millennium AD that look as if they were just made. The greatest treasures it has produced, however, are its spiritual riches: over 170 saints honored in the Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches, chief among them being St John Climacus.

A native of the region, St John lived in the sixth century. At 16 he became a monk and spent the rest of his life as an ascetic. For most of his life he lived in a hermitage at the foot of the mountain. When he was 75, he was chosen as abbot of St Catherine's Monastery but ended his life back in solitude, as a desert-dwelling ascetic.

In the early seventh century another John, abbot of the Raithu monastery on the shores of the Red Sea, asked our John to write a guide to the spiritual life for the monks of Raithu. The result was the *klimax* or Ladder by which John of Sinai has been known ever since. Using the imagery of Jacob's ladder (see Gen 28:10-19), he portrays the ascetic life as a climb to heaven with each rung on the ladder being a virtue to be acquired.

A twelfth-century icon preserved at the monastery shows monks climbing this ladder. Some acquire all the virtues and complete the ascent to God; others fall off, pulled down by the passions, unable to endure the ascetic life to the end.

It has long been the custom in monasteries to read The Ladder each year during the Great Fast. This is turn gave rise to the commemoration of St John on the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.

The Rungs of the Ladder

The first seven rungs portray the most basic virtues necessary for an ascetic life: renunciation of the world, detachment from what was left behind, exile from all we have known, obedience (which is voluntary death of the ego), repentance, the remembrance of death, and cultivating a spirit of mourning.

The remaining rungs detail steps needed to make progress on this way of life, such as freedom from anger and irritability, forgetting of wrongs suffered, avoiding gossip and slander, and conquering despondency. Battling gluttony, lust and greed through fasting from food, drink and sleep are depicted as the daily work of the monk. "The farmer's wealth is gathered on the threshing floor and in the wine-press, but the wealth and knowledge of monks is gathered during the evening and the night hours while standing in prayer and engaging in spiritual activity" (Step 20).

On subsequent rings the monk confronts more dangerous enemies – pride and vanity – through humility and the revealing of one's inmost thoughts. Only through the acquisition of these virtues can the monk attain to prayer, love, and heaven on earth: the state of communion with God.

Some Excerpts from *The Ladder*

"Blessed is he who, though maligned and disparaged every day for the Lord's sake, constrains himself to be patient. He will join the chorus of the martyrs and boldly converse with the angels.

"Blessed is the monk who regards himself as hourly deserving every dishonor and disparagement. Blessed is he who mortifies his own will to the end, and leaves the care of himself to his director in the Lord; for he will be placed at the right hand of the Crucified. He who will not accept a reproof, just or unjust, renounces his own salvation. But he who accepts it with an effort, or even without an effort, will soon receive the remission of his sins." *From the Fourth Rung*

"Greater than baptism itself is the fountain of tears after baptism, even though it is somewhat audacious to say so. For baptism is the washing away of evils that were in us before, but sins committed after baptism are washed away by tears. As baptism is received in infancy, we have all defiled it, but we cleanse it anew with tears. And if God, in His love for mankind, had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed." *From the Seventh Rung*

Prokimenon

Reader: The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

People: The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Reader: Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise.

People: The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Reader: The Lord will give strength to his people;

People: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Epistle: Heb. 6:13-20

Alleluia Verses

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High!

Verse: To proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night.

Gospel: Mk. 9:17-31

Hirmos (Tone 3)-English this week

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the human race as well: O Sanctified Temple, Spiritual Paradise, and Glory of Virgins, from whom our God, who exists before all eternity, took flesh and became a little Child! He has taken your womb as His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. Therefore, O Full of Grace, in you all creation rejoices: glory to you!

