



Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

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MARCH 26, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 7. Leavetaking of the Annunciation. Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel. St. John Climacus (of *The Ladder*). Hieromartyr Irenæus, Bishop of Sirmium (304). Martyrs Bathusius and Bercus—Presbyters, Arpilus—Monk, Abibus, Agnus, Reasus, Igathrax, Iscoeus (Iskous), Silas, Signicus, Sonirilus, Suimbalus, Thermus, Phillus (Philgas)—laymen, and the women: Anna, Alla, Larissa, Monco (Manca), Uirko (Virko), Animais (Animaida), Gaatha and Duklida, in the Crimea (375). St. Malchus of Chalcis in Syria (4th c.). Ven. Basil the New, Anchorite, near Constantinople (10th c.). Martyr Montanus, Presbyter, of Singidunum, and his wife, Maxima (235).

EPISTLE: EPHESIANS 5.9-19: Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.
HEBREWS 2.11-16: He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one.
HEBREWS 6.13-20: The hope we have in God is the sure anchor of our soul.

GOSPEL: LUKE 1.24-38: Through her faith, the Theotokos becomes the Mother of God.
MATTHEW 4.25-5.12: Christ gives us the Beatitudes.
MARK 9.17-31: Prayer and fasting are mighty tools in overcoming evil and sickness.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: We will hold our Annual Parish Meeting today, Sunday, March 26th following the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend. If you are the head of a committee or may need to (or like to) report on an aspect of our Parish life, please see Fr. James beforehand.

IDEAS WALL: What inspires you? What ministries do you feel called to? What do you want to do with your life in Christ? Fr. James has note cards on which you can put your ideas for outreach ministries, building improvements, educational opportunities – anything you'd like! These will be posted in a prominent place as a reminder to continue improving our community. Stay tuned to the announcements for more information.

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community.

CONFESSIONS: In this cleansing time of the year, it is good for us to partake of the sacrament of Confession. Please have your confession heard before the Vigil of PASCHA. An appointment can be made at any time that is convenient for you, or before and after most services.

PUSSYWILLOWS: If you have access to pussywillows, please cut some branches and bring them to the church as soon as you are able to do so.

PASCHA FLOWERS: To contribute to the purchase of flowers to adorn the church for Pascha, contributions can be left in the basket and specified as being for Pascha flowers. These donations need to be made this week or next.

EPISCOPAL VISIT: Abp Michael will be visiting us over the weekend of Palm Sunday. He will be present for the Presanctified on Friday and for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Lazarus Saturday with a tonsuring. Please mark your calendars and spend time with our beloved archpastor.

FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE:

MARCH 26: Charlanow
APRIL 2: McKane
APRIL 9: King
APRIL 16: PASCHA!!!
APRIL 23: Worthington

READERS SCHEDULE:

For Week of: 3/25 Rdr William
4/1 Rdr Thomas
4/8 Sdn Michael
4/15 Rdr William
4/22 Rdr Thomas

PRAYER LIST

LIVING:	Kathleen	Kathleen	Priest Matthew	L (3-3), Joseph (3-8),
Apr John	Helen	Michael	Priest John	Debra
Apr Herman	Peter	Yuri	Apr Alexander	ANNIVERSARIES:
Apr Theodore	Rdr Thomas	Kira and Rebecca	Dn Mark	None.
Apr Jason	Rdr David	<u>Children: All of the</u>	Rdr Gregory	
Mat Joanna	Rdr Paul	Parish	Taissia	
Mat Katherine	Maria	BIRTHDAYS: None.	Theophan	
Mat Christine	Leon	ANNIVS: None.	Lynda	
Mildred	Katherine	NAMESDAYS: None.	Alfred	
Elizabeth	Kate	REPOSED:	NEWLY REPOSED:	
Antonina	Kristin	Apr John U	Anne O (2-27), Steven	

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME.

LADDER SUNDAY MARCH 26: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy and Social Hour
Annual Parish Meeting

MONDAY, MARCH 27: Rector's Sabbath

TUESDAY, MARCH 28: 8:30 Abbreviated Lenten Matins

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29: 8:30 Abbreviated Lenten Matins
6 PM Matins of the Great Canon

THURSDAY, MARCH 30: 8:30 Abbreviated Lenten Matins

FRIDAY, MARCH 31: 8:30 Abbreviated Lenten Matins
6 PM Presanctified Liturgy and Potluck

SATURDAY, APRIL 1: 3:30 Choir Rehearsal
5 PM Great Vespers

MARY OF EGYPT SUNDAY APRIL 2: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy and Social Hour

APRIL 7: Presanctified Liturgy with Abp Michael

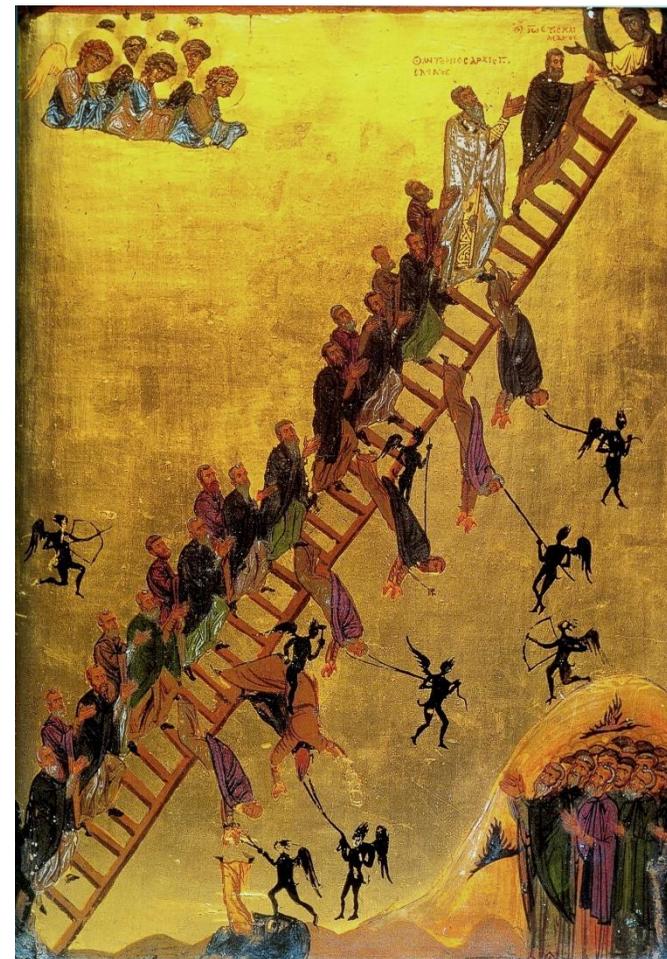
LAZARUS SATURDAY APRIL 8: Liturgy with Abp Michael and Tonsuring of a Reader

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. There is a painting of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century. The Council of Toledo in 656 mentions the Feast, and the Council in Trullo in 692 says that the Annunciation was celebrated during Great Lent. There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15): "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel." The Fathers of the Church understand "her seed" to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled. This is echoed in the Liturgy of Saint Basil, as well: "When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself." St Philaret of Moscow boldly stated in a sermon for the Annunciation that "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God's will, but also involves the Virgin's free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God's will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Elmira Heights, New York



SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH, 2017
FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
SUNDAY OF ST JOHN OF THE LADDER

WEEKLY HYMNS FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH

Troparion Tone 7 (Resurrection)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Troparion Tone 4 (Annunciation)

Today is the beginning of our salvation,
the revelation of the eternal mystery!
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin
as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace.
Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos:
"Rejoice, O Full of Grace,//
the Lord is with thee!"

Troparion Tone 4 (Archangel)

Gabriel, commander of the heavenly hosts,
we who are unworthy beseech thee,
by thy prayers encompass us beneath the wings of thine immaterial glory,
and faithfully preserve us who fall down and cry to thee://
"Deliver us from all harm, for thou art the commander of the powers on high!"

Kontakion Tone 8 (Archangel)

Supreme commander Gabriel, thou art the glorious intercessor and servant
before the all-radiant, worthy, all-powerful, infinite and awesome Trinity.
Ever pray now that we may be delivered from all tribulations and torments,//
so that we may cry out to thee: "Rejoice, protection of thy servants!"

Kontakion Tone 8 (Annunciation)

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts!
We, thy servants delivered from evil
sing our grateful thanks to thee, O Theotokos.
As thou dost possess invincible might set us free from every calamity
so that we may sing: "Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!"

Prokeimenon Tone 7

The Lord shall give strength to His people. The Lord shall bless His people with peace.
v: Offer to the Lord, O ye sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord! (Ps 28/29:1)
Tone 4: From day to day proclaim the salvation of our God! (Ps 95/96:2)

Alleluia Verses Tone 7

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High. (Ps 91/92:1)*
v: To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night. (Ps 91/92:2)
v: He descends like rain upon the fleece, like raindrops that water the earth. (Ps 71/72:6)

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of Angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a Child:
our God before the ages.
He made thy body into a throne,
and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace.//
Glory to thee!

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps 148:1) The Lord has chosen Zion;
He has desired it for His habitation. (Ps 131/132:14) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

INNER UNITY OF THE TRIODION: ON THE SUNDAY OF THE LADDER

On this day is commemorated *St. John Climacus*, abbot of Sinai (sixth-seventh century), who is assigned a special Sunday in Lent because, by virtue of his writings and his own life, he forms a pattern of the true Christian ascetic. St. John is the author of *The Ladder of Paradise*, one of the spiritual texts appointed to be read in church during Lent. His memorial, like that of St. Theodore, has been transferred to the movable from the fixed calendar, where he is remembered on 30 March. The first Canon at Mattins on this Sunday is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-5): the repentant Christian is likened to the man who fell among thieves.

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

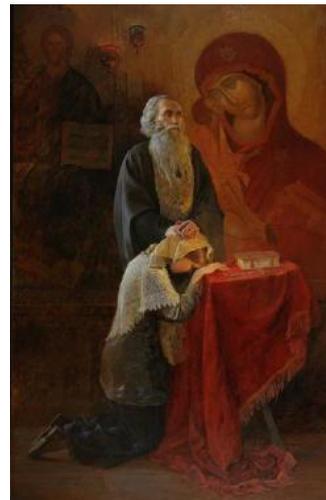
The aim of the treatise is to be a guide for practicing a life completely and wholly devoted to God. The ladder metaphor—not dissimilar to the vision that the Patriarch Jacob received—is used to describe how one may ascend into heaven by first renouncing the world and finally ending up in heaven with God. There are thirty chapters; each covers a particular vice or virtue. They were originally called *logoi*, but in the present day, they are referred to as "steps." The sayings are not so much rules and regulations, as with the Law that St. Moses received at Sinai, but rather observations about what is being practiced. Metaphorical language is employed frequently to better illustrate the nature of virtue and vice. Overall, the treatise does follow a progression that transitions from start (renunciation of the world) to finish (a life lived in love).

THE RUNGS OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

1. On renunciation of the world
2. On detachment
3. On exile or pilgrimage; concerning dreams that beginners have
4. On blessed obedience (in addition to episodes involving many individuals)
5. On painstaking repentance which constitutes the life of the holy convicts; and about the Prison
6. On remembrance of death
7. On joy-making mourning
8. On freedom from anger and on meekness
9. On remembrance of wrongs
10. On slander or calumny
11. On talkativeness and silence
12. On lying
13. On despondency
14. On that clamorous mistress, the stomach
15. On incorruptible purity and chastity, to which the corruptible attain by toil and sweat
16. On love of money, or avarice
17. On non-possessiveness (that hastens one Heavenwards)
18. On insensibility, that is, deadening of the soul and the death of the mind before the death of the body
19. On sleep, prayer, and psalmody with the brotherhood
20. On bodily vigil and how to use it to attain spiritual vigil, and how to practice it
21. On unmanly and puerile cowardice
22. On the many forms of vainglory
23. On mad pride and (in the same Step) on unclean blasphemous thoughts; concerning unmentionable blasphemous thoughts
24. On meekness, simplicity, and guilelessness which come not from nature but from conscious effort, and about guile
25. On the destroyer of the passions, most sublime humility, which is rooted in spiritual perception
26. On discernment of thoughts, passions and virtues; on expert discernment; brief summary of all aforementioned
27. On holy stillness of body and soul; different aspects of stillness and how to distinguish them
28. On holy and blessed prayer, the mother of virtues, and on the attitude of mind and body in prayer
29. Concerning Heaven on earth, or Godlike dispassion and perfection, and the resurrection of the soul before the general resurrection
30. Concerning the linking together of the supreme trinity among the virtues; a brief exhortation summarizing all that was said at length in this book.

FROM: SOME REFLECTIONS ON CONFESSION

By Fr Alexander Schmemmann



Can a truly Orthodox view and practice of confession be restored? Yes, if we have the courage to deal with the problem at its roots and not with mere externals. The starting point of this restoration is in *preaching* and *teaching*. To some extent all Christian preaching and teaching is a call to repentance, to the *metanoia*, the change of mind, the reevaluation of all values in the light of Christ. There is no need to preach constantly on "sin," to judge and to condemn. It is when a man is challenged with the real "contents" of the Gospel, with its Divine depth and wisdom, beauty and all embracing meaning, that he becomes "capable of repentance," for the true repentance is precisely the discovery by the man of the abyss that separates him from God and from His real offer to man. It is when the man sees the bridal chamber adorned that he realizes that he has no garment for entering it. Too much of our preaching is in the form

of abstract imperatives: the Church prescribes to do this and that; but commanding is not preaching. Preaching implies the desire to convey to people the positive, the Divine *meaning*, for it is only this meaning that makes "prescriptions" significant, life-giving, saving. Christian teaching should also include a deep and constructive criticism of the secularistic philosophy of life, an evaluation of the culture in which we live. Christians must always fight idols – and there are plenty of them today: "success," "materialism," "security," "money-centeredness," etc.

Confession, then, must be replaced in the perspective of the sacrament of penance. And each sacrament implies at least three equally essential elements: *preparation*, *liturgical order*, and *fulfillment*. If the whole life of the Church, but especially preaching and teaching are, as we have seen, preparation for repentance in a broad sense, there is room and need for special preparation. The Church has set apart special periods of repentance: Lent, Advent, other fasts. Here the liturgy itself becomes a "school of repentance" (*cf.* for example the inexhaustible riches of the Lenten Triodion), and it is the proper time to center preaching on the sacrament of penance itself. The order of Gospel readings, the Psalter, the hymns and prayers supply us with abundant material, the purpose of preaching being to "apply" all this to men, to their life, to their actual situation. The goal is to provoke in them the *penitential mood*, to make them examine their life not only in terms of isolated sins and transgressions, but in their deepest motivations. Where is the real treasure of their hearts? What guides them in their life? How do they "feel" the precious time given them by God? What is the meaning of this rapid progression to the unescapable end? A man who questions the deep motivations of his life, who has understood, be it just once, that life in its totality can and must be referred to Christ, is on his way to repentance, which is always a *conversion*, a change of mind, a renewed vision, a decision to return to God. The preparation must, of necessity, include an explanation of confession, – its order, prayers, meaning.