

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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March 18, 2018 St. John of the Ladder



On March 18 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our father among the saints Cyril, patriarch of Jerusalem; Martyrs Trophymos and Eukarpos of Nicomedia and those with them; Nikolai (Velimirovic), bishop of Zhicha who labored in America.

On this same day, the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we make remembrance of our godly father, John, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (or Climacus).

The celebration of his feast on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his lessons. John describes the method of elevating the soul to God as ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. John of the Ladder came to Mount Sinai at age 16 and remained there, first as a novice under obedience, then as a recluse, and finally as abbot until his eightieth year. One time, his disciple, Moses, fell asleep under the shade of a large stone. John,

in prayer in his cell, saw that his disciple was in danger and prayed to God for him. Later, when Moses returned, he fell on his knees and gave thanks to his spiritual father for saving him from certain death. He related how, in a dream, he heard John calling him and he jumped up and, at that moment, the stone tumbled. Had he not jumped, the stone would have crushed him. John Climacus died on March 30, 606.

Through his intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

Quotations from the Ladder of Divine Ascent on Prayer

"Before all else, let us list sincere thanksgiving first 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." 28:7.

"Do not be over-sophisticated in the words you use when praying, because the simple and unadorned lisping of children has often won the heart of their Heavenly Father." 28:9

"If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us." 28:11

"Oil and salt are seasoning for food; and tears and chastity give wings to prayer." 28:14

"Try to lift up, or rather, to enclose your thoughts within the words of your prayer, and if in its infant state it wearies and falls, lift it up again. Instability is natural to the mind, but God is powerful to establish all things. If you persevere untiringly in this labor, He who sets the bound of the sea of the mind will visit you too, and during your prayer will say to the waves: Thus far shall ye come and no further. Spirit cannot be bound; but where the Creator of the spirit is, everything obeys." 28:17

"Constantly wrestle with your thoughts, and whenever it wanders call it back to you. God does not require from those still under obedience, prayer completely free of distraction. Do not despond when your thoughts are plundered, but take courage, and unceasingly recall your mind. Inviolability is proper only to an angel." 4:92

"Ask with tears, seek with obedience, knock with patience. For thus he who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." 28:56

"Always let the remembrance of death and the Prayer of Jesus, being of single phrase, go to sleep with you and get up with you; for you will find nothing to equal these aids during sleep." 15:54

"Flog your enemies with the name of Jesus, for there is no stronger weapon in heaven or earth." 21:7

"Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of stillness." 27:61

"War proves the Soldiers love for his king; but the time and discipline of prayer show [our] love for God." 28:33

"Your prayer will show you what condition you are in. Theologians say that prayer is [our] mirror." 28:34

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome Archimandrite Fadi!

We are very blessed to welcome Archimandrite Fadi Rabbat today. Archimandrite Fadi was born in Beirut in 1977, holds a master's degree in Law from the University of the Holy Spirit, Kaslik. He holds a Doctorate in Law from the University of Poitiers – France and another in Theology from the Pontifical University of Strasbourg – France. He is also Chancellor of the Archbishopric of the Orthodox Antiochian Catholic Church in Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean.

Pascha celebration at the Fellegys

Rd. Mark and Michelle wish to invite everyone to a Pascha open house after Agape Vespers. We will have an egg hunt for the kids, grills going to cook on, fellowship, and live music, so bring something to share (your talent if you play music) and join in the celebration of His glorious Resurrection. Also, please stock up on Easter candy for the egg hunt while it is on sale and available. For more information see Rd. Mark, or call at 208-215-1766.

Antiochian Women's Events and Update

- The monthly fellowship lunch at Pilgrim's on the 21st is cancelled due to conflicting schedules. Our next Fellowship Lunch will be April 18th at noon.
- Our next **Antiochian Women's Quarterly meeting is March 25th**. We have very important agenda items to discuss and are looking forward to receiving the blessings that this time together will deliver.
- March 25th is the Feast of the Annunciation, and a coffee hour pot luck (fish/wine/oil).
- April 1st is the Feast of Palm Sunday, and a coffee hour pot luck (fish/wine/oil).

Meals for the Harmon Family – Michelle Molloy is organizing meals for Tara and Josh. With their new angel now in the world, let's spoil them some more with some good meals. We'd like to plan meals for the next 3 weeks. 2-3 sign ups a week would be great. Due to their location Kelly has offered to take them their meals. She will be able to pick up prepared entrees on Wednesday night and Sunday at services. Preferably, frozen or prepared entree to be reheated or cooked is simple and convenient. Disposable containers encouraged. Please, no game, no seafood, and they are not fasting. If you are able to help please contact me, Michelle Molloy call or text (208) 627-9947 or Kelly Peterson at (208) 929-2771. If you have questions feel free to ask. Thank you brethren for all you do!

St. Herman of Alaska Scholarship Fund - St. Herman's Scholarship Fund has been established to help students who wish to pursue or are currently pursuing full time study in an institution of learning (two or four year college or university) or a vocational institute. It was created for the purpose of helping young people who have recently graduated from high school or are already in college. Each year a student will be selected to receive a stipend of \$2,000. In order to be eligible for the stipend, a student should be a member in good standing at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Post Falls or at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Spokane or at Holy Myrrhbearers Orthodox Church in Bonners Ferry, and a full time student at a high school or college with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale. Academic excellence, financial need and church/community service will be taken into account in the awarding of the stipend. Please see Fr. Mark or Barbara Garbinski for an application form. June 11th is the deadline.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father John Climacus, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

KONTAKION FOR THE ANNUNCIATION (AND GREAT LENT) IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without bridegroom.

THE EPISTLE

The Lord will give strength to His people. The Lord will bless His people with peace.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13-20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by one greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed with an oath. So that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (9:16-30)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And Jesus answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again."

And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And Jesus said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.” They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus would not have anyone know it; for He was teaching His Disciples, saying to them, “The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and after He is killed, He will rise on the third day.”

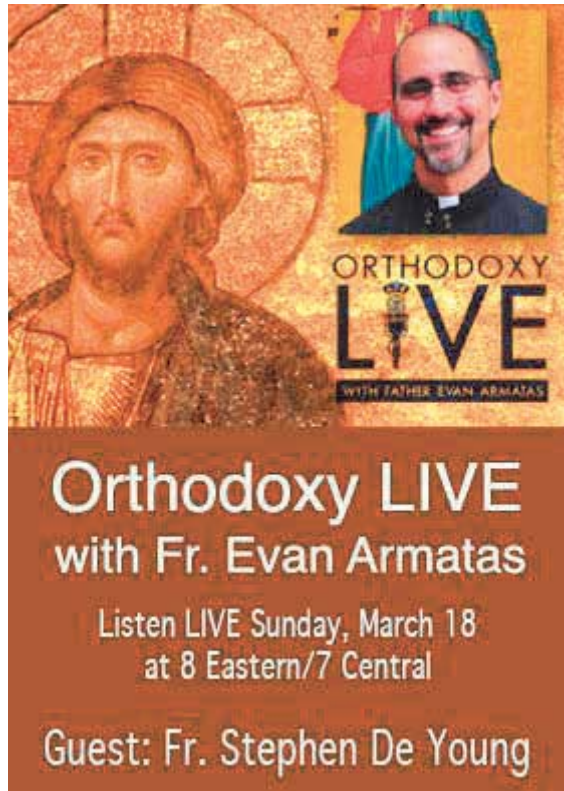
WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

“Humility is a quality of the human soul that the proud stigmatize contemptuously, for such people do not believe in Christ and have chosen other ideals in life. They call humility slavery, and the humble—slaves deprived of the most required and necessary quality: the spirit of protest, of forceful opposition to mankind’s serious misfortunes. They contemptuously stigmatize humility, and exalt the energy of rebellion and protest. However the humble are not slaves submitting to force, but spiritual victors over evil. Only they lead a true struggle with evil, for they uproot the very sources of it in their own hearts and the hearts of others. They do not believe that the cause of evil lies solely in the imperfection of social relationships. The humble man is a true warrior of Christ, and not a slave. But truly humble people are very hard to find these days—no one thinks about humility; it is practically forgotten.” -*St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea*

“Only struggle a little more. Carry your cross without complaining. Don’t think you are anything special. Don’t justify your sins and weaknesses, but see yourself as you really are. And, especially, love one another.” -*Fr. Seraphim Rose*

“In England, when people bow before the queen, they do so out of respect, but it does not imply any repentance. But when we bow before Christ, it means that we are ready to empty ourselves from an evil mind, from any evil thought or act, or any evil thing in our lives. -- *His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH*

“What I see around me would drive me insane, if I did not know that — no matter what happens — God will have the last word.” -*St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain*

The image is a promotional graphic for a radio broadcast. It features a mosaic-style portrait of Jesus Christ on the left. On the right, there is a photograph of a smiling man with glasses and a goatee, identified as Fr. Evan Armatas, wearing a black clerical shirt. Below the photo is the text 'ORTHODOXY LIVE WITH FATHER EVAN ARMATAS'. The bottom half of the graphic has a dark red background with white text. The main title is 'Orthodoxy LIVE with Fr. Evan Armatas'. Below that, it says 'Listen LIVE Sunday, March 18 at 8 Eastern/7 Central'. At the bottom, it lists the guest: 'Guest: Fr. Stephen De Young'.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS

Saturday, Mar 17: Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, Mar 18 – Tuesday Mar 20 – Visit from Archimandrite Fadi

Sunday, Mar 18: St. John of the Ladder – Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School and Lunch following

Monday, Mar 19: Parish Council Lunch with Archimandrite Fadi 12:00pm; Great Compline 6:00pm; Youth Swing 7:00pm

Wednesday, Mar 21: Little Compline with the complete Canon of St. Andrew of Crete and the life of St. Mary of Egypt 6:00pm

Thursday, Mar 22: Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck 6:00pm

Friday, Mar 23: Spiritual Circle 9:30am; Little Compline with the Akathist 6:00pm

Saturday, Mar 24: Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, Mar 25: +ANNUNCIATION –Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School and Potluck Lunch (fish/wine/oil) following

EPISTLE READERS

Mar 18 Tabitha Townsend

April 1 Reader David Gencarella

Mar 25 Mary Welsh

April 8 Reader Mark Felleggy

LUNCH TEAM

Mar 18: Team 3: Joy Corey, Tecca family, Roth family, David & Lisa Gencarella

Mar 25: Annunciation Potluck (Fish/Wine/Oil) - Team 4: Kelly Peterson, Nicky Nolan; Sandford family, Deacon Joseph and Susan Mannion

April 1: Palm Sunday Potluck (Fish/Wine/Oil) - Team 1: Palm Sunday – Potluck: Schaefer family, Gallatin family, Ebert family & the Phillips family

April 8: PASCHA Potluck - Team 2: Victoria Purviance, Dale Ayoub & the Bardwell family

CLEANING ROTATION (nave, narthex, hallway and upstairs restrooms)

Week of 3/18 Mary Jo Neyman

Week of 4/1 Joy Corey

Week of 3/25 Dn. Joseph & Susan Mannion

Week of 4/8 St. Theophan Coop

PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING: Kh. Joanna Townsend, Marina (Jeane Wood's mother), Shirley Myers, Chaplain Larry Green, Kaitlin Weisman, Helen Odell, Metropolitan Paul Yazigi and Metropolitan Youhanna Ibrahim (hostages in Syria), Suffering Christians throughout the Middle East

PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED: George (Joseph) Nolan, Evelyn Pippy, Victims of Abortion, Departed Christians throughout the world who have died for their Faith.



A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, only those who are members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.