



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org
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St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, April 14, 2013

ON THIS DAY, THE *FOURTH* SUNDAY OF LENT, WE COMMEMORATE OUR RIGHTEOUS FATHER JOHN OF THE LADDER (CLIMACUS), AUTHOR OF “THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT” (649). (SEE *TRIODION INSERT ON NEXT PAGE*). WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Aristarchus, Pudens, & Trophimus of the 70 Apostles (1st cent.); Thomais the Martyr of Alexandria (+476); Holy Martyr Efthimios the Wonder Worker; Holy Martyr Ardalian the Mime; Kyriakos, Bishop of Jerusalem; and New Martyr Demetrios of Tripolis (1803). *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name and mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of

services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

TODAY'S Spiritual Theme From the Triodion:

On the *Fourth Sunday of Lent*, the Church commemorates the famous saint and ascetic *St. John of the Ladder (Climacus in Greek)*, who was head of the monastery located on Mt. Sinai for much of his life. St. John got his name from a famous book of spiritual exercises which he wrote and entitled *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, and which he intended to serve as a means of climbing spiritually from earth to heaven. His book of spiritual directions is read in monasteries during Lenten periods and is available to us in English.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (Fourth Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.110-113):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: The joyful news of Your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with His great mercy.

3. Hymn for St. John of the Ladder–(Hymnal-pp.136-139):

This hymn is sung after the Small Entrance: Like warm and gentle rain, your tears of compunction made the desert burst forth in bloom. Your patient endurance made your sufferings bear fruit one hundredfold and your wondrous deeds have filled all the world with light. O holy father John, intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

5. Kontakion sung for Lenten Sundays – (Hymnal-pp. 268-271):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Victorious Lady, mighty champion, defending us, we your servants now inscribe to you this hymn of thanks, for you rescued us from suffering and tribulation. Theotokos, with your power that can never fail, keep us safe from every danger our whole life long that we may cry to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

6. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301)::

On the first five Sundays of Great Lent when we use the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, a different hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Matthew 28:16-20)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Amen.

Epistle Reading (Hebrews 6:13-20)

When God made a promise to Abraham, because He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Human beings, of course, swear by someone greater than themselves, and an oath given as confirmation puts an end to all dispute. In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel Reading (Mark 9:17-31)

Someone from the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if You are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" 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 was able to stand. When He had entered the

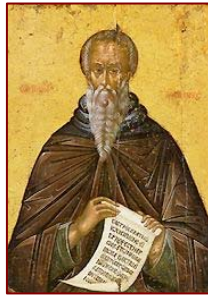
house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “This kind can come out only through prayer.” They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for He was teaching His disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill Him, and three days after being killed, He will rise again.”

THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor’s work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads.” (Gal. 6:1-5)

St. John Climacus the Righteous

Author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*



This Saint gave himself over to the ascetical life from his early youth. Experienced both in the solitary life of the hermit and in the communal life of cenobitic monasticism, he was appointed Abbot of the Monastery at Mount Sinai and wrote a book containing thirty homilies on virtue. Each homily deals with one virtue, and progressing from those that deal with holy and righteous activity (praxis) unto those that deal with divine vision (theoria), they raise a man up as though by means of steps unto the height of Heaven. For this cause his work is called "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." The day he was made Abbot of Sinai, the Prophet Moses was seen giving commands to those who served at table. Saint John reposed in 603, at eighty years of age. St. John is remembered on the day of his death, March 30th, and today, the Fourth Sunday of Great and Holy Lent.

"For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore, I command you to do this word which says, 'You shall surely open your hands to your brother, to your poor and needy in your land.'" Deuteronomy 15:11



Helping Hands of Love

April, 2013

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

There is a little church on the Appian Way not far from Rome that bears the interesting name “The Church of the Quo Vadis.” Those Latin words, *Quo Vadis* mean “*where are you going?*” I read a beautiful legend that reveals that a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus, St. Peter had been in Rome and was under the threat of persecution again. He was fleeing for his life – leaving the city in fear, when he met Jesus. Jesus was headed into the city, so St. Peter asked Him the question “Lord, where are you going?” And the Master answered: “I go to Rome, to be crucified again.”

The legend has it that the answer so pierced the heart of St. Peter that it turned this cowardly fugitive into a hero, and he followed his Lord back into Rome, where he gladly died. Recall that St. Peter was crucified upside down on a cross at his own request, because he felt that he was not worthy to die as the Lord.

So, a little church has been built on the Appian Way, on that spot where St. Peter fleeing Rome met the Lord coming back into the city. He asked the Lord *Quo Vadis*, “where are you going?”

It is a legend – but the church is there...the “Church of the Quo Vadis” – to tell a moving story. I share it because the question that St. Peter asked is the same as our Lord asks us each and every day, “*Where are you going?*” *Quo Vadis?*

Jesus knows all that is in our minds and hearts. Undoubtedly, He wonders whether we will lay down our life for His? It is a commitment question for all of us. It is relevant for us today, especially relevant as we are moving rapidly toward Holy Week and the vivid memory of Jesus’ passion and death: “Will you lay down your life for me?”

Let us remember our Lord’s words in the full context in which they were offered in John 13:36-38: “*Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, ‘Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow afterward.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for You.’ Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your life for Me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied Me three times.’*”

My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we contemplate the journey we’ve been engaged in during Great Lent, I ask you, “*Where are you going?*” I pray it is to our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and commend you for your efforts.

Join us Friday, April 19, 6:30 p.m for the Akathist Hymn



Do we consciously seek to be God-bearers - to use God's heavenly virtues in our everyday life? Do the recesses of our souls - the deep, inner core of our beings - reflect the divine light? Can we recall our last attempt to use our heavenly gifts to heal the weak and sick (both physically and spiritually) that God sends our way?

Join us for this final Friday service during Great Lent as we contemplate the power of God in the Life of the Theotokos, the Mother of God, and let us in turn respond to His call to us!

And on this the four hundred and fifty-eighth Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 14 (Sunday of St. John Climacus):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service**
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship**
- 10:45 am Religious Education Classes**
- 11:30 am Hellenic Language Class**
- 12:00 pm Parish Council Meeting/Planning Retreat**

Wednesday, April 17 (5th Wednesday of Great Lent):

- 5:00 p.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy**
- 6:15 p.m. Community Family Dinner & Lenten Program** *(Please Bring fasting food to share and join us for our Family Lenten Program series that concludes each Wednesday by 7:30 p.m. We will focus on the book, "Turning the Heart to God" – chapters 9-11. You & your family are encouraged to attend.)*

Thursday, April 18:

- 6:30 p.m. – Choir Practice**

Friday, April 19 (5th Friday of Great Lent):

- 6:30 pm Akathist Hymn** *(final Friday service of Great Lent)*

Sunday, April 21 (Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service**
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship**
- 10:45 am Religious Education Classes**
- 11:30 am Philoptochos General Meeting/GOYA Meeting**

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!