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GREAT LENT—SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father John Harvey, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Bazyl Zawierucha, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie— young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-

year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [child with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Karen Johnson, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Fred DeNorscia, Sandi Anderson, ina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philpa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Jeff Jones, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Stella Rossi, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Millie Koss Good, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Michael Pawlyshyn, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Frances Gebet, Sheryl Smith Haraczy, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Bill Baronie, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich Julia Collier, Amy

Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Berceli, Tom Nolan, Noble Wilshaw, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Evelyn Burlack, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], and Ian Brick. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!

Christianity is not about what people around you should be like. Christianity is about how you should be, no matter how people are like around you. *Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov*

REMINDER FOR GREAT LENT: This year we are asking everyone to pray for those who protect the least amongst us: police officers, firefighters, medical professionals, EMS folks, and especially the monastics—nuns and monks who pray for all of us constantly. Please remember Mother Alexandra and the sisterhood in Guatemala, and all members of our parish. God Bless you all!

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY, MARCH 18 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM

**SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASSENT;
MARTYRS CONON & ONISIUS OF ISAURIA; MARTYR CONON THE GARDENER OF
PAMPHYLIA; VIRGIN-MARTYR IRAIS OF ANTINOE IN EGYPT; MARTYR
EULAMPIUS; SAINT MARK; SAINT HESYCHIUS**

Tone 8

Hebrews 6:13-20; Ephesians 5:9-19

Mark 9:17-31; Matthew 4:25-5:12

**SUNDAY, MARCH 25 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
5TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; SAINT MARY OF EGYPT; SAINT THEOPHANES THE
CONFESSOR OF SIGRIANE; RIGHTEOUS PHINEAS-GRANDSON OF AARON;
SAINT GREGORY THE DIALOGIST-POPE OF ROME; SAINT SYMEON THE NEW
THEOLOGIAN**

Tone 1

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 10:32-45

**SUNDAY, APRIL 1 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
6TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; PALM SUNDAY; ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO
JERUSALEM; MARTYRS CHRYSANTHUS & DARIA & THOSE WITH THEM AT
ROME-CLAUDIUS, HILARIA, JASON, MAURUS, DIODORUS-PRESBYTER &
MARIANUS-DEACON; MARTYR PANCHARIUS AT NICOMEDIA**

Philippians 4:4-9

John 12:1-19

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 18 MARCH 2018

**SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE
ASSENT; MARTYRS CONON & ONISIUS OF ISAURIA; MARTYR
CONON THE GARDENER OF PAMPHYLIA; VIRGIN-MARTYR IRAIS OF
ANTINOE IN EGYPT; MARTYR EULAMPIUS; SAINT MARK; SAINT
HESYCHIUS**

TROPARION—TONE 1

O Dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body!

You were a wonder-worker, O our God-bearing Father John!

You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer:

Healing the sick and souls of those drawn to you by faith.

Glory to Him who gave you strength!

Glory to Him who granted you a crown!

Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 4

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence,
To be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe,
O our Father and Teacher John.

PROKEIMENON—TONE 8

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

PEOPLE: Let the righteous exult in glory! Let them sing for joy on their couches!

READER: In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: Pray and make your vows.

PEOPLE: Before the Lord our God!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Climbing Up by Moving Down: Homily for the 4th Sunday of Lent in the Orthodox Church Fr. Philip LeMasters

In just about any activity that is worthwhile, there is always room for improvement. When we rest content with our past performance in anything, we will never get any better at it. Only those who know their own imperfection and strive to overcome it have much chance of reaching a higher goal.

If that is true in our daily work and hobbies, it is far more the case when our goal is to participate by grace in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity. On this fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate St. John Climacus, who wrote the book *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* to guide monks step by step to a life of greater holiness. Now only two weeks from Palm Sunday, the Church reminds us that we must all move upward on that ladder if we are to follow our Lord to His Passion, to His death on the cross, to His descent into Hades, and to His glorious resurrection on the third day.

But the first step upward requires what seems like a step downward, for it is the step of humbly acknowledging our weakness, imperfection, and corruption. Without that honest confession, we will never develop the spiritual strength necessary to enter into the deep mystery of our salvation through the great offering and victory of our Savior.

In today's gospel text, the father of the demon-possessed young man stands as a model of the honesty that we must cultivate in order to unite ourselves more fully to our crucified and risen Lord. When Christ told him that "all things are possible for him who believes," the man "cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.'" The disciples had lacked the spiritual strength to cast out the demon, but in response to this anguished cry from the heart, the Lord Himself healed the young man. It was by acknowledging the imperfection of his faith, even as he begged for mercy, that the father's prayer was answered.

Whether we like it or not, our lives are full of opportunities for us to become more like that broken-hearted, honest, humble father. Sickness, family difficulties, economic hardship, persistent personal problems, and so many other common challenges reveal the weakness of our faith and the sickness of our souls, for we never respond to them perfectly. The Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and other spiritual practices that reorient us to God, help us catch a glimpse of how much room we have to grow in the Christian life. And if we ever think that we are the only ones for whom they are a struggle, then we should think again. None of us does them perfectly; indeed, it is beyond our ability to know what it would mean to do them perfectly, for our goal is to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48) In comparison with that standard of infinite holiness, who does not have more room for growth than we could possibly imagine? But the more we embrace these disciplines and acknowledge our own weakness before life's daily challenges, the more aware we become of how far we are from sharing fully in the life of our Lord. The more we grasp our own sinfulness and brokenness, the more we must cry out from our hearts, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

Lent is a time to stop hiding our true spiritual state even from ourselves. It is a time to confess our failings to the Lord and hear in spoken words an assurance of our forgiveness in the sacrament of Confession, if we are truly repentant. It is a time to turn away from the illusion that we have already arrived spiritually and that prayer, fasting, and confession are only for other people. It is a time to see ourselves in that brutally honest father who, even in the midst of his heart-broken love for his son, told the truth

about the weakness of his faith. The more we become like him, the better. The more that we pray, fast, and otherwise humble ourselves before the Lord, the clearer our spiritual vision will be and the more we will see the infinite chasm between the holiness of God and our own wretchedness.

There is good news, however, for all of us who have fallen short. Thank God, the God-Man Jesus Christ has bridged that gap. Through His death and resurrection, He makes it possible for each of us to grow in holiness as we see ever more clearly how far we are from attaining the fullness of the glory for which He created us.

Ironically, it is by knowing our own brokenness and imperfection that we become aware of the true mystery of our salvation, of why our Lord offered Himself on the cross, descended into Hades, and rose again on the third day.

Paradoxically, we climb up the ladder of holiness by lowering ourselves through humble repentance.

"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." That is the only confession that will enable us to prepare for what is to come

in the weeks ahead as we enter into the deep mystery of our salvation. As our Savior said, "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."

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/easternchristianinsights/2016/04/10/climbing-moving-homily-4th-sunday-lentorthodox-church/>

Saint John Climacus and the "Ladder of Divine Ascent"

By Metropolitan Philaret

More than once, brethren, the fact has been mentioned that on each Sunday in the Great Fast (i.e., Lent) there are other commemorations besides that of the Resurrection. Thus, on this day, the Church glorifies the righteous John of the Ladder, one of the greatest ascetics, which the Church, in speaking of them, calls "earthly angels and Heavenly men."

These great ascetics were extraordinary people. They commanded the elements; wild beasts willingly and readily obeyed them. For them, there were no maladies they could not cure. They walked on the waters as on dry land; all the elements of the world were subject to them, because they lived in God and had the power of grace to overcome the laws of terrestrial nature. One such ascetic was St. John of the Ladder.

He was surnamed "of the Ladder" (Climacus) because he wrote an immortal work, the "Ladder of Divine Ascent."

In this work, we see how, by means of thirty steps, the Christian gradually ascends from below to the heights of supreme spiritual perfection. We see how one virtue leads to another, as a man rises higher and higher and finally attains to that height where there abides the crown of the virtues, which is called "Christian love."

Saint John wrote his immortal work especially for the monastics, but in the past his "Ladder" was always favorite reading in Russia for anyone zealous to live piously, though he were not a monk. Therein the Saint clearly demonstrates how a man passes from one step to the next. Remember, Christian soul, that this ascent on high is indispensable for anyone who wishes to save his soul unto eternity.

When we throw a stone up, it ascends until the moment when the propelling force ceases to be effectual. So long as this force acts, the stone travels higher and higher in its ascent, overcoming the force of the earth's gravity. But when this force is spent and ceases to act, then, as you know, the stone does not remain suspended in the air.

Immediately, it begins to fall, and the further it falls the greater the speed of its fall. This, solely according to the physical laws of terrestrial gravity.

So it is also in the spiritual life. As a Christian gradually ascends, the force of spiritual and ascetical labours lifts him on high. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Strive to enter in through the narrow gate." That is, the Christian ought to be an ascetic. Not only the monastic, but every Christian. He must take pains for his soul and his life. He must direct his life on the Christian path, and purge his soul of all filth and impurity.

Now, if the Christian, who is ascending upon this ladder of spiritual perfection by his struggles and ascetic labours, ceases from this work and ascetic toil, his soul will not remain in its former condition; but, like the stone, it will fall to the earth. More and more quickly will it drop until, finally, if the man does not come to his senses, it will cast him down into the very abyss of Hell.

It is necessary to remember this. People forget that the path of Christianity is indeed an ascetical labour. Last Sunday, we heard how the Lord said: "He that would come after Me, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow Me." The Lord said this with the greatest emphasis. Therefore, the Christian must be one who takes up his cross, and his life, likewise, must be an ascetic labour of bearing that cross. Whatever the outward circumstance of his life, be he monk or layman, it is of no

consequence. In either case, if he does not force himself to mount upwards, then, of a certainty, he will fall lower and lower.

And in this regard, alas, people have confused thoughts. For example, a clergyman drops by a home during a fast.

Cordially and thoughtfully, they offer him fast food (i.e., food prepared according to the rules of the Fast), and say: "For you, fast food, of course!" To this, one of our hierarchs customarily replies: "Yes, I am Orthodox. But who gave you permission not to keep the fasts?" All the fasts of the Church, all the ordinances, are mandatory for every Orthodox person. Speaking of monastics, such ascetics as St. John of the Ladder and those like him fasted much more rigorously than the Church prescribes; but this was a matter of their spiritual ardour, an instance of their personal ascetic labour. This the Church does not require of everyone, because it is not in accord with everyone's strength. But the Church DOES require of every Orthodox the keeping of those fasts which She has established.

Oftentimes have I quoted the words of Saint Seraphim, and once again shall I mention them. Once there came to him a mother who was concerned about how she might arrange the best possible marriage for her young daughter.

When she came to Saint Seraphim for advice, he said to her: "Before all else, ensure that he, whom your daughter chooses as her companion for life, keeps the fasts. If he does not, then he is not a Christian, whatever he may consider himself to be." You see how the greatest saint of the Russian Church, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, a man who, better than we, knew what Orthodoxy is, spoke concerning the fasts?

Let us remember this. Saint John Climacus has described the ladder of spiritual ascent: then let us not forget that each Christian must ascend thereon. The great ascetics ascended like swiftly-flying eagles; we scarcely ascend at all. Nonetheless, let us not forget that, unless we employ our efforts in correcting ourselves and our lives, we shall cease our ascent, and, most assuredly, we shall begin to fall. Amen.

Wisdom from the Church Fathers

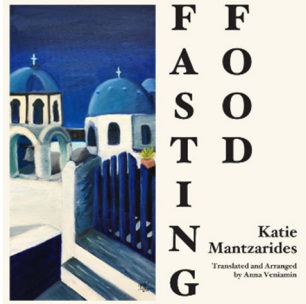
When you are praying, watch over yourself so that not only your outward man prays, but your inward one also. Though you be sinful beyond measure, still pray. Do not heed the devil's provocation, craftiness, and despair, but overcome and conquer his wiles. Remember the abyss of the Saviour's mercy and love to mankind. The devil will represent the Lord's fact to you as terrible and unmerciful, rejecting your prayer and

repentance; but remember the Saviour's own words, full of every hope and boldness for us: `Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out'; and `Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden' - with sins and iniquities, and wiles and calumnies of the devil - and I will give you rest.'

*St. John of Kronstadt, **My Life***

ST GREGORY PALAMAS **THE HOMILIES**

LENTEN RECIPES FROM Fasting Food



Cream of Vegetable Soup

- 2 medium carrots
- 1 eggplant
- 3 medium potatoes
- 3 medium zucchini
- 1 celery stalk, preferable with leaves
- 2 sweet green peppers
- 1 leek
- 1 cup finely chopped cabbage
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped dill
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- 1 cup broken vermicelli pasta, or medium grain rice
- 4 tablespoons tahini
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

1. *Prepare the vegetables:* Wash and peel the carrots, eggplant, potatoes and zucchini. Wash the celery stalk. Rinse the peppers; remove the stems and seeds. Make a deep, length-wise cut in the leek and wash it under running water, separating the layers as you wash them to remove any grit. Cut all these into 1/2 inch dice.
2. Place the chopped vegetables and the herbs into a large pot and add 10 cups of water. Bring this to a boil and adjust the heat, with the lid askew, until the vegetables simmer steadily. Cook for 20 minutes.

3. Add the rice or the vermicelli and a teaspoon of salt, stir and continue to cook for another 20 minutes, or until the rice and vegetables are tender. Remove the pot from the heat.
4. In a small bowl, mix the tahini with the lemon juice and 3 tablespoons tepid water until it is smooth. Take a ladle-full of the liquid from the soup and add it slowly to the tahini sauce stirring the sauce as you do so.
5. Add the tahini sauce to the soup in a thin stream, stirring the soup continuously. Do not boil the soup after the tahini has been added. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Preparation time: 40 minutes Yield: 6-8 servings Cooking time: 40 minutes

Tahini Cake

8 ounces dates
1/2 cup tahini
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons honey
2 cups self-rising flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon
5 tablespoons orange juice
1 cup finely chopped walnuts

1. Preheat the oven to 350F.
2. Pit the dates and cut them into small pieces, put them to soak in 1 cup of hot water.
3. Beat the tahini with the sugar and the honey in a mixing bowl. Add the dates with their water, the flour, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt and stir well.
4. Stir in the orange juice and the walnuts, the result will be a thick batter.
5. Spoon the batter into a 9-inch springform pan and bake for 40 minutes.

Preparation time: 30 minutes Yield: 8-12 servings Baking time: 40 minutes

Small good deeds - it is like watering a person as a flower. It is not necessary to pour a sea of water on it. You can pour half a glass and this will be enough for life. - *Archimandrite John Krestiankin*

Keep praying

And you will see how God will turn

**Chaos in your life to a miracle. REMINDER FOR
GREAT LENT: This year we are asking
everyone to pray for those who protect**

the least amongst us: police officers, firefighters, medical professionals, EMS folks, and especially the monastics—nuns and monks who pray for all of us constantly. Please remember Mother Alexandra and the sisterhood in Guatemala, and all members of our parish. God Bless you all!