



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

"Enter the Church ... for here is the physician, not the judge.

Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

March 30, 2014

The Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

THE SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JENNA NEHME, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER **N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON**

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Sunday 10 AM & 12:45 PM, before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (*Fourth Tone*) Page 50

The Troparion of St. John Climacus (*Eighth Tone*)

Your abundant tears made the wilderness sprout and bloom, and your deep sighings made your labor fruitful a hundredfold. You became a star shining over the world with miracles, Holy Father John. Intercede with Christ God that He may save our souls.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (*First Tone*): Page 15

The Kontakon of the Annunciation (*Eight Tone*): Page 16

THE PROKIMENON:

**THE LORD WILL GIVE STRENGTH TO HIS PEOPLE;
THE LORD WILL BLESS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE!**

Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise!

Today's Readings: Hebrews 6:13-20 and Mark 9:17-31

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Anne Jadda (52nd Anniversary)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Anne Gallagher,
by the Lazos and Ashooh Families

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Esther Essie (56th), David Wihbi (48th),
Thomas Holt (24th), Alice Ashooh (7th), and David "Sky" Nassif (24th)

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

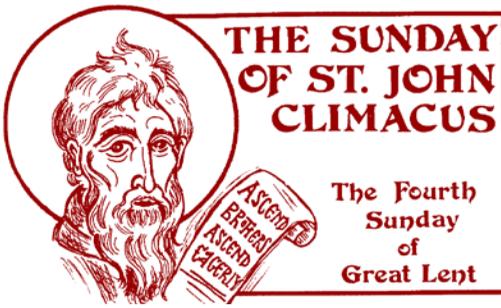
For the repose of George Dagher (8th Anniversary),
by Chahida, Romio, and Joseline Dagher



*There will be a meeting of the Parish Council
on Monday, March 31 at 8:00 PM, following Great Compline.*

Helpers are needed on Thursday, April 10, and Friday, April 11 morning beginning at 9 AM to 1 PM to clean the church in preparation for Great Week and Pascha. See Jeanine Notter if you can help.





The Sunday of St. John Climacus

Though details of the life of St. John Climacus are sketchy, it is known that he was born in the 6th century and entered the monastic life at an early age. After 40 years of living as a hermit, he was elected abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. Because of his reputation for wisdom and piety, pilgrims traveled from all over the East to visit him.

He passed to the Lord on March 30, about 649. Throughout Lent, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, the spiritual classic authored by St. John is read in monasteries. The reading of this book is completed on this, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, and so we honor him on this day.

The Lenten Dinner!

The annual Lenten Dinner will be held after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. It will feature a wonderful array of foods, and some lovely company. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$3 for children, and are available at the door.

GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS!

The drawing for the winners of the Lenten Charity Raffle will be held at the Lenten Dinner. There are still some raffle tickets still remaining for those who wish to participate, and they will be available at the dinner. The tickets are \$100 each. Only 110 tickets will be sold. Prizes are: 1st prize \$2,500, 2nd prize \$1,000, 3rd prize \$500.

Lenten Mission: Part 3 on Friday evening

Out Lenten Mission this year is a video presentation by Fr. Robert Baron. It will be shown in the church hall following Great Akathist. This week's topic is "Your life is not all about you."

There will be a second collection this week for the mortgage.

Saturday Kitchen: Next Saturday! Meat & spinach pies will be available from the Saturday Kitchen next Saturday morning. Please call in your order in advance at 625-9966. Any help you can offer that morning will be greatly appreciated!

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 21 Sunday 11:00 AM: 128

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,582.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope offering last week was \$36.²²

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 342,647.⁷⁵

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Mar. 31	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Wed., Apr. 2	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Apr. 4	7:00 PM	Great Akathist, followed by 3rd night of the Lenten Mission
Sat., Apr. 5	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
Sun., Apr. 6	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Apr. 6	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt



The Fathers Speak....*On Prayer:*

...be not afraid, for He Who said: 'Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid;' (Matt. 14:27) is Himself with us, He Whom we seek and Who always protects us. So in calling to God we must neither fear nor sigh. *St. Gregory of Sinai (Instructions to Hesychasts no. 7)*

...he who loves God cultivates pure prayer, driving out every passion that keeps him from it. *St. Maximos the Confessor (Second Century on Love no. 7 Lecture 9 no. 2)*

Abba Macarius was asked, 'How should one pray?' The old man said, 'There is no need at all to make long discourses, it is enough to stretch out one's hands and say, "Lord, as You will, and as You know, have mercy." And if the conflict grows fiercer say, "Lord, help!" He knows very well what we need and He shows us His mercy.' *Sayings of the Desert Fathers by Benedicta Ward*

Brethren, let us also occupy ourselves with prayer..., and seeking God's mercy, cry out with a humble heart from morning till night and if possible all night long, saying constantly: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us." *Saint John Chrysostom*

Let no one think, my brother-Christians, that it is the duty only of priests and monks to pray without ceasing, and not of laymen. No, no; it is the duty of all of us Christians to remain always in prayer. So, my Christian brethren, I too implore you, together also with St. Chrysostom, for the sake of saving your souls, do not neglect the practice of this prayer. Imitate those I have mentioned and follow in their footsteps as far as you can. *St Gregory Palamas, from "Early Fathers From the Philokalia,"*

Don't Forget:

THE WEEKDAY SERVICES OF LENT

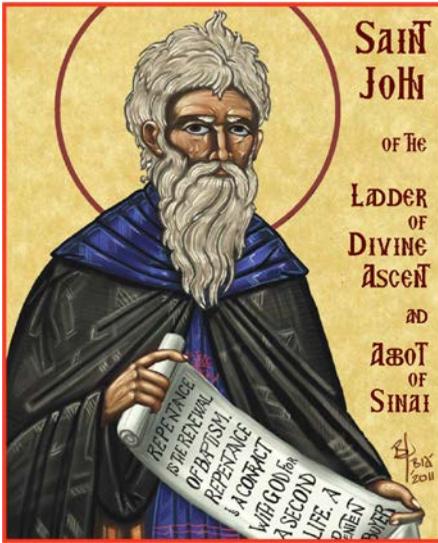
To assist us in our Lenten effort, we are called to come to make a special effort to pray. Let us come together as a parish family to support and encourage one another at the special prayer services that are offered throughout Lent:

Monday evenings, 7:00 PM: Great Compline: The Office of Compline is the nighttime prayer of the church. It is enhanced during Lent to contain beautiful prayers of repentance and to remind us during our Lenten struggle that "*God is with us!*"

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM: Presanctified Liturgy: During the season of Great Lent, we traditionally "fast" from the joy of the Divine Liturgy on weekdays. However, so as not to be denied the strength that comes from receiving from the Lord's Table, the church offers us this service, which is Lenten vespers followed by Holy Communion.

Friday evenings, 7:00 PM: The Akathist Hymn: This service presents a beautiful series of hymns to the Mother of God. We pray this service during Lent in anticipation of the great feast of the Annunciation that comes on March 25th.





“YOUR AUBUNDANT TEARS MADE THE WILDERNESS SPROUT AND BLOOM...”

Saint John Climacus was probably born in the second half of the sixth century; but his country and origins are unknown. Because of his renunciation of the world, he took great care to live as a stranger upon earth. “Exile,” he wrote, “is a separation from everything, in order that one may hold on totally to God.” We only know that, from the age of sixteen, after having received a solid intellectual formation, he renounced all the pleasures of this vain life for love of God and went to Mount Sinai, to the foot of the holy

mountain on which God had in former times revealed His glory to Moses, and consecrated himself to the Lord with a burning heart as a sweet-smelling sacrifice.

He submitted to an elder called Martyrios and set himself, free from all care, to climb that spiritual ladder at the top of which God stands, and to “add fire each day to fire, fervour to fervour, zeal to zeal.” He saw his elder as “the image of Christ” and he had only one care: to reject his own will and “with all deliberateness to put aside the capacity to make [his] own judgement,” so that no interval passed between Martyrios’ commands and the obedience of his disciple. In spite of this perfect submission, Martyrios kept him as a novice for four years and only tonsured him when he was twenty, after having tested his humility.

In spite of his youth, John showed the maturity of an elder and great discernment. He thus passed nineteen years in the blessed freedom from the care that obedience gives, freed from all conflict by the prayer of his spiritual father and on “a safe voyage, a sleeper’s journey,” moved towards the harbor of impassibility. On the death of Martyrios, he resolved to continue his ascension in solitude and flee from others so as not to be even for a moment deprived of the “sweetness of God.”

The holy elder George Arsilaïtes then instructed him in the way of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence). He chose to live in a solitary place called Tholas, situated five miles from the main monastery, where other hermits lived, each not far from the others. He stayed there for forty years, consumed by an ever-increasing love of God, without thought for his own flesh, free of all contact with men, having unceasing prayer and vigilance as his only occupation, in order to “keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body,” as an angel clothed in a body.

As his cell was too near the others, he would often withdraw to a distant cave at the foot of the mountain, which he made an antechamber of heaven by his groans and the tears which fell effortlessly from his eyes like an abundant spring, transfiguring his body as with a “wedding garment.” Sometimes he was ravished in spirit in the midst of the angelic choirs, not knowing if he was in the body or out of it. When he came out of the furnace of prayer, he sometimes felt purified

as if by fire, and sometimes totally radiant with light. As for sleep, he allowed himself just the measure necessary to keep his spirit vigilant in prayer and, before sleeping, he prayed at length, or wrote down on tablets the fruit of his meditations on the inspired Scriptures.

Many miracles were attributed to St. John during his lifetime. Yet it was above all in the gift of spiritual teaching that God manifested His grace in him. Basing his teaching on his personal experience, he generously instructed all those who came to him on the snares which lay in wait for monks in their battle passions and against the prince of this world. This spiritual teaching, however, attracted the jealousy of some who then spread around calumnies about him, accusing him of being a conceited chatterer. Although his conscience was clear, Abba John did not attempt to justify himself but, seeking rather to take away any pretext from those who sought one, he stopped teaching for a whole year, convinced that it was better to do some slight harm to his friends rather than to exacerbate the resentment of the wicked. All the inhabitants of the desert were edified at his silence and by this proof of humility, and it was only at the insistence of his repentant calumniators that he agreed to receive visitors again.

Filled with all the virtues of action and contemplation, and having arrived at the summit of the holy ladder through victory over all the passions of the old man, Saint John shone like a star on the Sinai peninsula and was held in awe by all the monks.

When the Saint had sojourned these forty years in the desert, he was charged by God, like a second Moses, to be at the head of this new Israel by becoming abbot of the monastery at the foot of the holy mountain (c. 650). It is recounted that, on the day of his enthronement, six hundred pilgrims were present, and when they were all seated for the meal, the great prophet Moses himself, dressed in a white tunic, could be seen with him.

The Abbot of Raitho, who was also named John, having been informed of the wonderful manner of life of the monks of Sinai, wrote to Saint John, asking him to explain briefly but in a methodical way what those who had embraced the angelic life should do in order to be saved. He who did not know how to go against the wishes of another, thus wrote his treatise as a Ladder of thirty steps, known today as the "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." This book has remained for centuries the outstanding guide to evangelical living, both for monks and for lay people. In "The Ladder," Saint John does not institute rules but, by practical recommendations, judiciously-chosen details and short pithy maxims and riddles often full of humor, he initiates the soul into spiritual combat and the discernment of thoughts. His "word" is brief, dense and tapered, and it penetrates like a sword to the depths of the soul, uncompromisingly cutting out all self-satisfaction and egoism at their roots. Like that of Saint Gregory (January 25) in the theological domain, this "word" is the Gospel put into practice, and it will lead most surely those who let themselves be impregnated by it through an assiduous reading to the gates of heaven, where Christ awaits us.

At the end of his life, the blessed John designated his brother George, who had embraced the hesychast life from the beginning of his renunciation, as his successor at the head of the monastery. When he was about to die, George said to him: "So, you are abandoning me and leaving! I prayed, however, that you would send me to the Lord first, for without you I cannot shepherd this brotherhood." But Saint John reassured him, and said: "Do not grieve and do not be afraid. If I find grace before God, I shall not let you complete even a year after me." And it was so: ten months after John's falling asleep, George departed in his turn to the Lord.

-Edited from an article found at www.goarch.com

WISDOM FROM ST. JOHN CLIMACUS: *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*



“The Christian is one who imitates Christ in thought, word and deed, as far as is possible for human beings, believing rightly and blamelessly in the Holy Trinity.” (Step 1, Section 4)

“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.’” (Step 1, Section 21)

“To admire the labors of the saints is good; to emulate them wins salvation; but to wish suddenly to imitate their life in every point is unreasonable and impossible.” (Step 4, Section 42)

“A servant of the Lord is he who in body stands before men, but in mind knocks at Heaven with prayer.” (Step 4, Section 102)

“To judge others is a shameless arrogation of the Divine prerogative; to condemn is the ruin of one's soul.” (Step 10, Section 14)

“The sun shines on all alike, and vainglory beams on all activities. For instance, I am vainglorious when I fast; and when I relax the fast in order to be unnoticed, I am again vainglorious over my prudence. When well-dressed I am quite overcome by vainglory, and when I put on poor clothes I am vainglorious again. When I talk I am defeated, and when I am silent I am again defeated by it. However I throw this prickly-pear, a spike stands upright.” (Step 22, Section 5)

“An angel fell from Heaven without any other passion except pride, and so we may ask whether it is possible to ascend to Heaven by humility alone, without any other of the virtues.” (Step 23, Section 12)

“In all your undertakings and in every way of life, whether you are living in obedience, or are not submitting your work to anyone, whether in outward or in spiritual matters, let it be your rule and practice to ask yourself: Am I really doing this in accordance with God's will?” (Step 26, Section 91)

“Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience.”

“The forgetting of wrongs is a sign of true repentance. But those who dwell on them and think that they are repenting are like a man who dreams he is running while he is actually asleep....” (Step 9)

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Betty Bilodeau, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Danielle Caron, Meghan Connors, Lucy Corriveau, Julie Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Nicholas Daniak, Lynn Dargie, Marie Dargie, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Peggy Hunt, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, James McCloskey, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Virginia Pichette, Jean Poleatewich, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Robert Siwik, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.



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