



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 3—9 April 2022

SUNDAY 3 APRIL

4th Sunday of Lent, St John Climacus, Mark 9: 17-31

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy
- 6.30pm Vespers of Forgiveness at Parish of Presentation of the Lord, Coburg

2021 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

(A free voluntary program organised by the Church)

Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.

MONDAY 4 APRIL

- 5.30pm
Service of Great Compline

TUESDAY 5 APRIL

- 5.30pm
Service of Great Compline

WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL

- 8.00am
Service of Pre-sanctified Liturgy
- 5.30pm
Service of Small Compline and Great Canon

THURSDAY 7 APRIL

- 5.30pm
Service of Great Compline

- ➔ • 8.00—9.00pm

TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP

ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME

Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment.

: In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church

FRIDAY 8 APRIL

- 6.00pm
Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos

SUNDAY 10 APRIL

GOSPEL READING: Mark 10: 32-45
EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 9: 11-14

Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

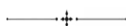
Humility is constant
forgetfulness of one's
achievements.



~ John Climacus

**Teachings of St. John of the Ladder who is commemorated on the fourth Sunday of Lent.
His Feast Day is on the 30th March.**

Saint John of the Ladder is honoured by Holy Church as a great ascetic and author of the renowned spiritual book called *THE LADDER*, from which he is also called "of the Ladder" (Climacus).



A discerning man, when he eats grapes, takes only the ripe ones and leaves the sour. Thus also the discerning mind carefully marks the virtues which he sees in any person. A mindless man seeks out the vices and failings ... Even if you see someone sin with your own eyes, do not judge; for often even your eyes are deceived. ~ John Climacus

Humility is the only virtue that no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of angels, there is no doubt that humility could make angels out of demons..

~ St John Climacus

4th Sunday of Lent, St John Climacus, Mark 9: 17-31

Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not. He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 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!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." (Mark 9:17-31)

As Christians, we often experience the same frustrations that the father of the demon possessed child and the disciples did in today's Gospel. Many times people come to the church seeking help from God in their prayers, but their prayers go unanswered. And many times we as Christians want to help some family suffering in some great need, and yet we are unable to provide the particular spiritual help they need, and we see them languishing in their pain despite our best efforts to help them.

Jesus tells the disciples that in the particular case brought to them by the father in today's Gospel Lesson, that the only way to resolve the spiritual problem is through prayer and fasting. The Gospel Lesson is given to us at this time of year because we are in Great Lent that season where we are supposed to be engaged in intense prayer and fasting. And in today's lesson we come to understand fasting and prayer as an act of love for others. For the self-denial of Lenten fasting isn't praised in today's Gospel lesson as a means for us to attain salvation for our own souls, but rather as a means to drive out evil spirits from the world. We aren't fasting for our own selfish interests – to gain our own salvation; we are fasting to help liberate our fellow humans from demonic influence. Fasting in this sense is not about "ME". It is about God's love for the world, and that some of God's Kingdom goals only can be accomplished through intense prayer and fasting.

This of course presents to us the counterintuitive notion that for Christians to live for the world, means to pray and fast. This 4th Sunday of Great Lent we remember St. John Climacus who wrote a book about a ladder reaching to heaven. It is a symbolic image which serves to remind us as Christians that we are on a sojourn. All of Great Lent is a journey, prayer and fasting and charity and repentance are the ways we move along this journey toward our destination: the Kingdom of God.

We are reminded through Lent that the world we live in is the world of the Fall, a world in which sin and death are still dominant players. We are reminded that the world we live in is not the Paradise wherein God put the first human beings, nor even is this the world into which Eve and Adam were expelled, because our world is after the Great Flood and so many things separate us from Paradise and Adam and Eve. This world also is not the Kingdom of God: death and corruption and suffering are the signs of this.

So we are sojourning through a time and place which are neither are original home nor our final destination. We need to actively travel through this time and place and again we are reminded that this means repentance, going to confession, being generous and charitable, forgiving others, asking forgiveness, praying, studying the Scriptures, fasting and focusing on loving God and neighbour.

The reality of our spiritual sojourn on earth is that we don't see the entire picture of what is happening, what has happened, or what is yet to come. We know that Jesus is the Son of God who came into the world and who descended into Hades, the place of the dead. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Christ reveals to us that there is this greater reality: that place from which He came and to which He returned after His life on earth. And He revealed to us that the place of the dead is not our final destination either. Christ reveals to us that we normally see only a part the entire cosmos which God created. This is why we are often troubled by our inability to understand what is going on in the world.

We can observe only the world of the Fall, a world in which death and earthquakes and tsunamis and nuclear melt downs take place. It is a world in which the powers opposed to God still operate. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that it is the devil who has power over death. We cannot accomplish God's will through death – not through abortion, capital punishment or bombing enemies into submission. Death is an enemy of God and of humankind. Death is not even the way to heaven: the phrase "die and go to heaven" does not occur in the New Testament.

God is destroying both death and the devil. The world of the Fall is not a world of justice. People die unfairly and due to events that are no fault of their own. It is a world in which humans afflict death on one another to try to gain control over each other. That reminds us that we live in the world of the Fall, for again as Hebrews 2:14 tells us, the devil has the power of death.

We are sojourning through this world. We have the power to transform our own lives through the Gospel – to live not relying on the power of death, but on that power which destroys death.

- Fr Ted Bobosh