



Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast is dedicated to the memory of Venerable John Climacus, or John of the Ladder. Saint John is commemorated during Lent because of his great spiritual work called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Although this work was written for the monastics, Saint John's *Ladder* is a classic work of Orthodox spirituality that speaks to all members of the Church, in all places and in all times. His book presents us with a spiritual ladder ascending to heaven, with each rung representing a particular vice or passion to be conquered in order to proceed upward: going the next step in our spiritual growth necessitates overcoming the sinful obstacles, which keep us in the state where we presently find ourselves. An important part of understanding our spiritual lives as an ascent, is the possibility of falling down a few rungs, or even completely off the ladder, which is the reality that we constantly face. The icon of Saint John and his ladder clearly depicts the successful ascent of holy and spiritually advanced servants of God, versus those who have succumb to various passions, causing them to fall into hell.

Sunday, April 3

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Sunday of Venerable John of the Ladder

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

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Wednesday, April 6

Moleben to the Cross 9:30 A.M.

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Friday, April 8

Akathist to the Mother of God 6:00 P.M.

On Saturday of the Fifth Week of the Great Lent the Holy Church triumphantly chants the akathist, or triumphant praise, of the Most Holy Theotokos. This celebration was instituted in the 9th c. in thanksgiving for the numerous deliverances of the reigning city of Constantinople through the protection and intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos from the attacks of the enemies. In the 7th century, Patriarch Sergios walked around the city walls with the icon of the Mother of God beseeching the Lord for protection from the pagans besieging the capital city of the Christian world, while the people of God day and night were praying in churches to the Fervent Intercessor that she would save her city.

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Sunday, April 10

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Venerable Mary of Egypt Sunday

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.



We continue publishing short accounts of the lives of the saints depicted on the new icon in the narthex. The Lives are published in hierarchical order.



Hieromartyr Juvenaly of Alaska (†1796)

Hieromartyr Juvenaly of Alaska was a member of the first group of Orthodox missionaries who came from the Valaam Monastery to preach the Word of God to the natives of Alaska. He was martyred while evangelizing among the Eskimos of Alaska in 1796.

He was born in 1761 in Ekaterinburg, Russia, and was named Jacob. When tonsured monk, he was given the name Juvenaly, in memory of Saint Juvenaly, fifth century Patriarch of Jerusalem. After becoming a monk he was successively ordained deacon and then priest. He lived much of his early monastic life in the area around Lake Ladoga in northern Russia at the Konevetsky and Valaam

Monasteries.

In 1793, a missionary group of eight monastics was organized at the Monastery of Valaam to preach the Word of God to the natives of Alaska. This group of missionaries was led by Archimandrite Joseph (Bolotov), and included four hieromonks including Juvenaly and Makary, one hierodeacon, Stephen, and two lay monks including Herman. Their destination was the Russian settlement on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska, some 8,000 miles away across the length of Asia through Siberia and then the cold Bering Sea of the northern Pacific Ocean. The group arrived on Kodiak Island on September 24, 1794, to an unexpected scene. The settlement was primitive beyond what they were told, and violence was commonplace. The promised church was not there, and the promised supplies for three years were absent.

While Archimandrite Joseph dealt with the leadership issues with Baranov, the leader of the settlement, hieromonk Juvenaly and the others in their party began their missionary work. Within two years their zeal had brought more than 12,000 Alaskans to the Orthodox Christian faith. They did this not by degrading their former shaman based faith but by showing them that Christianity was the fulfillment of that faith.

As the group continued preaching further away from the settlement on Kodiak, hieromonk Juvenaly began missionary work on the mainland of Alaska 1796. Here he continued the success of the past two years as he baptized hundreds of Chugach Sugpiag and Athabaskan Indians. But as his mission continued along northwest toward the Bering Sea, he disappeared. No material evidence of his disappearance has been found, but among the Alaskan people oral tradition relates of his martyrdom. As he moved into territory inhabited by Eskimos, some Eskimos did not like him making the sign of the cross. Disturbed, a Yupiat shaman ordered an attack upon the hieromonk. When Father Juvenaly was attacked by the savages he did not try to defend himself, or run away, which he could easily have done, especially since he had a firearm with him. He let himself be taken without offering any resistance, asking only that those with him should be spared. Much later those who had been spared related that when Father Juvenaly was already dead he had risen up and followed his murderers, saying something to them. The savages, supposing him to be still alive, attacked him again and beat him. But as soon as they left him he again stood up and followed them, and this happened several times. Finally, in order to be rid of him, the savages hacked his body to pieces. Only then did this fervent preacher fall silent, a martyr for the word of God. On the spot where the missionary's remains lay, there at once appeared a column of flame, reaching up to the sky. Thus, Juvenaly became the first Orthodox martyr in the Americas.

Ask Your Parish Priest

Question: Why are there icons in church?

Answer: Seventh Ecumenical Council at the year 787 A.D. proclaimed: "We decree with full precision and care that, like the figure of the honored and life-giving Cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways; these are the images of Our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and of Our Lady without blemish, the holy God-bearer, and of the revered angels, and of any of the saintly holy men."

Icons has been used to adorn the churches since the dawn of Christianity. We can see the beginning of the development of the Christian sacred art on the frescos of the catacomb churches in Rome and we can trace its progress and coming to maturity in the early middle ages.

When Christian enters the church, he is surrounded by the images of those whom God has

revealed to mankind as examples, imitating whom we make ourselves fit for the Kingdom of God. As an artist covers the walls of his studio with reproductions of the masterpieces of art in hope that one day he too will be able to paint as good, so also the Christian surrounds himself with the icons of the saints who teach him, encourage him and always ready to hear his prayers.

When we refuse to accept icons in our churches we are saying ‘no’ to the gift of God to us — to the saints whom God reveals to us as our guides, nourishers, protectors, co-sufferers and the radiant lamps illumining our paths to salvation.

..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth

Vienna, Austria: Vast majority of Austrians (80%) believe that “Austria is a Christian country and it should remain such”, as shown by the results of the poll conducted by “IMAS International”. Majority (70%) approve presence of crucifixes in schools. 13% stated that Austria is not a Christian country and shouldn’t remain such and 19% are against crucifixes in schools.

Tokyo, Japan: Japan has begun burying some of its tsunami and earthquake victims in temporary mass graves because it does not have enough fuel for traditional cremations. With supplies of fuel dwindling, officials have abandoned cremation in favour of quick, simple burials in a show of pragmatism over tradition. Some are buried in bare plywood caskets and others in blue plastic bags, with no time to build proper coffins. The bodies will be dug up and cremated later, officials assured the families. Burial is unusual in Japan, where 99.9 per cent of bodies are cremated. Cremation requires 50 litres of kerosene for a single corpse, and there is not enough available at present. Makeshift morgues are overwhelmed and there is no dry ice to preserve the dead. Many areas had banned burials because of public health concerns, but now mass graves will be created across the north-east of Japan. The intention is to cremate the victims at a later date. Some families were reported to have taken away the bodies of their loved ones to attempt their own cremations.



Asia Bibi

Lahore, Pakistan: Asia Bibi, the Christian woman condemned to death for blasphemy against Islam, fasts and prays for peace. “During Lent I want to pray and to fast for peace and justice. I want to offer up my suffering to God to be close to Him. I want to thank all those who are praying with me, throughout the world: I feel their support. I want to say to them that I pray for them all and ask God, Who is Divine Providence, to bless them. I ask all Christians to continue to pray for me”. This is Asia Bibi's statement made in the prison of Sheikpura via the Masihi Foundation, which is providing legal and financial assistance to Asia. Ashiq Masih, Asia Bibi's husband, and her children say that “they are fasting together with her.” Haroon Barkat Masih, Director of the Masihi Foundation, worriedly commented: “Asia is a fragile and vulnerable person. We are worried about her health and have asked prison authorities to allow a team of doctors to visit her. I would not like this prolonged fasting to affect her health and weaken her too much. She has been in an isolation cell now for two months and needs to take some air and see the sun. The authorities say that they

cannot allow that due to security risks. But now it is also time to protect her health. We don't want her to collapse.” Fears have risen for Asia's health after the death of Qamar David, the Catholic man found dead in jail in Karachi, in mysterious circumstances.

Athens, Greece: Thousands of Orthodox citizens of Greece hit the streets of Athens on Sunday to protest against the introduction of new identity cards. They perceive the plastic cards with microchip as the fulfilling prophecy of the Apocalypse. The trouble revolves around the proposal to strip all references to religion from new National ID card. The clergy also deem the new identity card as offering too much information about citizens, making it easier for the state to wield control over them. The card will contain information on taxes, the history of appeals to state bodies and other personal information. Presently, Greece uses the traditional paper identity certificates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. April bulletin covers' sponsors are Petyo family — birthdays and anniversary.
2. On Saturday, April 9, our annual deanery-wide Lenten Mission will be held at Holy Archangel Michael Church in Niles, IL, starting at 2 P.M. with a presentation on stewardship as a new look on caring for the church, followed by Moleben to the Cross and Lenten meal. Please, try to attend. If you cannot attend because of the lack of transportation, please talk to Fr Sergii.
3. Next Sunday, April 10, two votive candles on the Holy Altar and the Eternal Light are offered in memory of Michael Ferio by his nephews Robert and Matthew. May Michael's memory be eternal!
4. Next Sunday, April 10, a collection is going to be taken at the end of the Divine Liturgy for the Patriarchal Pence — our annual effort to support our embattled patriarchate in Constantinople.
5. We have received Camp Nazareth raffle tickets. They are \$20.00 each and kept in the Camp Nazareth envelope on the office. Please purchase the tickets and leave the money (checks should be made payable to “Camp Nazareth Raffle”) inside the Camp Nazareth envelope. The tickets will be available throughout April.
6. We are collecting donations towards purchasing the flowers to adorn the Tomb of the Lord. The list for donors is in the narthex.
7. Sometimes we are asked if something special, even if little, can be done for the church, besides our Sunday offerings. The answer remains the same: “*he that seeketh findeth*”(Matthew 7:8). Last week, the week of the Veneration of the Precious Cross, someone took it upon themselves to fashion the beautiful wreath to adorn the Cross, another parishioner made an elegant cloth for the table which we use at our fundraisers, someone else is working on the new vestments for the Altar Table and the analogions/icon stands. Come to church more often and you will find a special area where you could apply your talents and exercise your generosity.