

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 14, 2013 ~ St. John Climacus

failings of others. Overlook insults and be kind to those who misuse you. Be swift to admit when you're wrong. Ask others to forgive you, and forgive them without asking if you want God to forgive you.

*Pray constantly.* Try always to recall that God is with you, dwelling in you. (This helps a great deal in controlling thoughts.) For more than 1,500 years, some Christians have tried to do this by forming the habit of praying, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me" all the time, a kind of background music to other thoughts. It not only helps one resist more turbulent thoughts and deeds, but also creates a kind of mental foyer in which thoughts and impulses can be examined before they're allowed inside.

*Ask God to help you repent.* We really don't want to do this, and we find a million excuses to change the subject. Read stories about repentant sinners, like John Newton, the slave dealer who wrote "Amazing Grace," or the once promiscuous Mary of Egypt. Those are reasonable models for you, not an ivory-tower saint. Keep thinking of yourself as the Prodigal Son. Think over your deeds and conversations each evening and look for areas to improve. Read Psalm 50 before bed every night. Someday you may actually believe it. —*Frederica Mathewes-Green*

• From the LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT:  
Repentance is the renewal of Baptism. Repentance is a contract with God for a second life. A penitent is a buyer of humility. Repentance is constant distrust of bodily comfort. Repentance is self-condemning reflection, and carefree self-care. Repentance is the daughter of hope and the renunciation of despair. A penitent is an undisgraced convict. Repentance is reconciliation with the Lord by the practice of good deeds contrary to the sins. Repentance is purification of conscience. Repentance is the voluntary endurance of all afflictions. A penitent is the inflicter of his own punishments. Repentance is a mighty persecution of the stomach, and a striking of the soul into vigorous awareness. —*St. John Climakos*

• SISTERHOOD MEETING UPCOMING:  
Sunday, April 21, at 12:45 PM. Everyone is invited.

• TROPARION OF ST. JOHN, Tone One:

O John, our father, saint of God, thou wast revealed as a citizen of the desert, an angel in a body and worker of miracles. Through fasting, prayer and vigils thou hast received heavenly gifts of grace, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those that turn to thee with faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him that crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee grants to all men healing.

• KONTAKION OF ST. JOHN, Tone Four:

Truly the Lord has set thee as a fixed star in the firmament of abstinence, giving light to the ends of the earth, O Father John, our teacher.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, April 13: 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy  
5 PM, Vigil / Confessions
- Sunday, April 14: 9–10 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy / 11:45 Church School  
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall
- Tues., April 16: 8 AM, Matins
- Wed. April 17: 8 AM, Matins / 6:15 PM, Presanctified / Meal
- Thurs., April 18: **PARISH SPIRITUAL RETREAT:**  
**9 AM**, Matins, with the Canon of St. Andrew and the Life of St. Mary of Egypt (about 3 hours long);  
**Noon**, Presanctified Liturgy
- Friday, April 19: *No 7 AM Matins* / **6 PM, Matins of the Akathist to the Theotokos**
- Sat. April 20: 10:30 AM, Extended Choir Rehearsal  
3:30 PM, Catechism  
5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions

- TODAY'S USHERS:

George Barsi and Esther Schau.

- A TIME OF REVERENCE:

Having prayerfully focused your attention for an hour and a half during the Divine Liturgy, it is an understandable temptation to “take a break” once Communion has been accomplished. However, the time of reverence has not passed until the last of the faithful partake and the Chalice returns to the Holy of Holies. An illustration: during the Lenten Presanctified Liturgy, for example, when the already sanctified Body and Blood are taken in procession, the faithful fully prostrate themselves in silence. What would then be appropriate for Sunday, since, according to the First Ecumenical Council, we do not kneel on Sundays? Please, stand quietly after Holy Communion—the Holy Mysteries are in our midst. Yes, of course, our elderly may sit as they need. As you stand, reverently contemplate the presence of the Body and Blood while the Chalice is being offered, giving thanks to God for being able to receive this great Gift.

- NEW CHAIRS:

Please do not move or relocate chairs in the Church. They should stay just where they are. If you need assistance, an usher will provide a metal folding chair for you.

- LAZARUS SATURDAY

Following the festal Liturgy for the Feast of the Raising of Lazarus on April 27, there will be a breakfast reception to honor the newly-illuminated (Baptisms at 9 AM) hosted by those who were baptized last year. Everyone is invited. In the afternoon, starting about 2 PM or so, there will be a Church Cleaning Work Party in preparation of Holy Week and Pascha. Inside we will be polishing, cleaning windows, light fixtures, scraping wax, and decorating the Church for Palm Sunday. Outside, provided there is enough help, we will start to prepare for the Paschal Potluck. Let Father Lawrence know that you will be coming to help.

- A DAILY REPENTANCE WORKOUT:

As we gradually gain more insight into ourselves, we are able, with God's grace, to find ways to resist habitual sin and grow in self-control. We gain

strength bit by bit, like an athlete striving for the prize, as Paul said.

Gradually we reclaim more and more of ourselves and offer it to God's transforming light. Thus the Holy Spirit works within us, sanctifying us from the inside out. From the earliest centuries, Christians have identified certain practices that have been helpful to the “athlete in training.” Here are some of them:

*Fasting* People are beset by different temptations, but everybody eats. Restricting foods, not necessarily a total fast, but simply declining favorites for a time can be a way of strengthening the “willpower muscle” to be ready when needed to handle a bigger temptation. An athlete doesn't lift weights just so he can lift more weights. Those healthy muscles are ready for any situation he meets. Turn down a doughnut today, and tomorrow you might be able to resist calling the driver in front of you an idiot.

*Bite your tongue.* Yes, not calling someone an idiot is a frequent theme in Scripture and early Christian writings. Both place great emphasis on controlling anger, perhaps as much as on sexual continence. Jesus said the penalty for calling your brother a fool was “the hell of fire.” “Your brother” includes people who can't hear you, like politicians on TV. It's not the harm to them that's at stake so much as the surging, disorienting pride in your own heart.

*Mind your thoughts.* Jesus said that to commit adultery in the imagination is the equivalent of committing it in fact. Nearly all sins begin with thinking about sin. Control the thoughts and you have a good head start on behavior. You may not be able to keep thoughts from appearing, but you can decline to entertain them; birds fly overhead, but you don't have to let them nest in your hair. Paul counsels that we think about things that are true, lovely, gracious, excellent, and praiseworthy, so you might want to read some Dickens tonight instead of watching that sleazy sitcom.

*Practice humility.* Humility is not the same as resisting the urge to show off (which is modesty) or denying that you have gifts and talents (which is lying). Humility is remembering that you have a beam in your eye. In every situation remember what God knows about you, and how much you have been forgiven. You might think you can fool people, but no matter how charming you appear, spiritually you have spinach in your teeth. Account yourself the “chief of sinners” and be gracious toward the