

mystically beautiful *Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos*. Please log in to Facebook to join me in this prayer.

- FROM THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT of St. John:

The sun shines on all alike, and vainglorious 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.

Fire and water are incompatible; and so is judging others in one who wants to repent. If you see someone falling into sin at the very moment of his death, even then do not judge him, because the Divine judgment is hidden from men. Some have fallen openly into great sins, but they have done greater good deeds in secret; so their critics were tricked, getting smoke instead of the sun.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The abbot of Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt. 10: 12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Eph 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt. 24:13).

- * SATURDAY CATECHISM:

This Saturday at 3:30 PM we will have a Zoom session to cover the *Mystery of Holy Unction, Healing Anointing*. All are invited to join me as we speak about the scriptural, theological, liturgical and pastoral aspects of this wonderful sacrament. Log in to the following: <https://zoom.us/j/7323143155> and the Meeting ID: 732 314 3155.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



March 29, 2020 ~ St. John of the Ladder



- RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION, Tone Eight:

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One; Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings. O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

- 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

All Prayers will be streamed on Facebook

- Saturday, March 28: 3:30 PM, Catechism *On Holy Unction**
5 PM, Evening Prayers
- Sunday, March 29: **9:30 AM**, Divine Liturgy (Priest and singer only)
- Tuesday, March 31: 8 AM, Morning Prayer
6 PM, Evening Prayer
- Wednesday, April 1: 8 AM, Morning Prayer
7 PM, Reading *Life of St. Mary of Egypt**
- Thursday, April 2: 8 AM, Portions of the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
6 PM, Evening Prayer
- Friday, April 3: 8 AM, Morning Prayer
6 PM, Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos
- Saturday, April 4: 3:30 PM, Catechism *On Death and the Funeral Services*
5 PM, Evening Prayers
- Sunday, April 5: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy (Priest and singer only)
5 PM, Evening Prayer

• STREAMING SERVICES:

Morning and evening prayers are “streaming” live on Facebook per the schedule above. Google: <https://www.facebook.com/stseraphimofsarovsr/> There is no requirement to have a Facebook account. On Sunday, perhaps some of you would simply like to park your car in the church parking lot, put your smart phone on to the Facebook page, and pray with me, both in joy that God is with us, and in sorrow, that we are temporarily separated. There is a speaker in the fountain courtyard near the bells through which you can hear the service.

Please note that the Liturgy will begin at **9:30 AM**.

• DIVINE LITURGY:

As indicated in a recent post on our GROUPS forum, for the next two

Sundays (who knows about arrangements past that date), Fr. Nicholas or I will serve the Divine Liturgy, with only one singer present. We are not in the least worried about transmitting sickness through the reception of Holy Communion, but we are very cautious about exposure to one another. It is out of concern for the health and well-being of the other person, not fear for oneself that we remain cautious. We are all terribly saddened by not being able to gather together at the Divine Liturgy and other services. At least, the serving of the Holy Liturgy will provide the faithful of the Church with the solace that they are being commemorated at it, and the testimony of the Church shows us what a blessing that is for each person. Metropolitan John in England says that “...the liturgy under the current conditions will be served for the life of the world...Let us not forget, the Liturgy is served ‘for those who are absent with good reason.’ Those, who cannot come, are now *everyone*.” You will all be with me on the Holy Diskos. Please note that we will begin at **9:30 AM on Sunday**. There’s no need to wait until 10 AM. Let’s promise that when we are able to serve together again, that NO ONE will arrive late for the 10 AM Liturgy. —Fr Lawrence

* WEDNESDAY EVENING: LIFE OF ST MARY:

Let’s “gather” on Wednesday at 7 PM to read the *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, via our Zoom meeting technology. In this way we can share the reading. A copy of the Life of St Mary will be emailed in the next few days. The Zoom meeting link will be: <https://zoom.us/j/7323143155> Meeting ID: 732 314 3155.

• THE FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT:

The observant Orthodox worshipper will have noticed, in times past, that during the Fifth Week of Great Lent there are additional Church Services and that those Services are of greater length. Of course, this is by design, and helps us intensify our Lenten efforts of prayer, fasting and alms. If a parishioner is accustomed to attending only the Sunday Liturgy during Great Lent, then the opportunity for a deeper Lenten experience will, alas, be missed, since the Sunday Liturgy is not by nature a Lenten service. Unfortunately, this week we will not be able to celebrate as usual. Our “usual” would be: the Presanctified Liturgy with additional psalms and hymns for the Fifth Week; the Thursday Matins with the entire *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. See www.pravmir.com/the-whos-who-of-the-great-canon-of-st-andrew-of-crete/ and the reading of the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*. At least on Friday evening at 6 PM, I will chant the very festive, unique and