

EPISTLE Hebrews 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

TODAY'S READER: MANOLI ANAGNOSTIADES

GOSPEL Mark 9:17-31

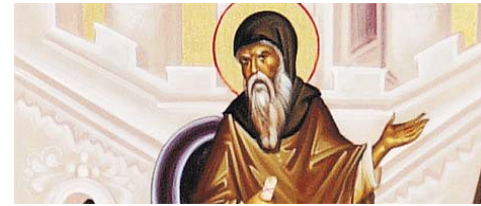
At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

Resurrectional Apolytikion

By means of Your Cross, O Lord, You abolished death. * To the robber You opened Paradise. * The lamentation of the myrrhbearing women You transformed, * and You gave Your Apostles the order to proclaim to all * that You had risen, O Christ our God, * and granted the world Your great mercy.

Seasonal Kontakion

To you, Theotokos, invincible Defender, having been delivered from peril, I, your city, dedicate the victory festival as a thank offering. In your irresistible might, keep me safe from all trials, that I may call out to you: "Hail, unwedded bride!"



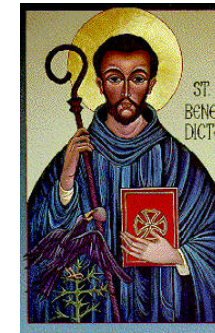
FROM THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT BY ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

“Repentance, that is our return to God is renewal of our baptism; it is our effort to renew our covenant with God, our promise to change our life. It is a time when we can acquire humility, that is peace; peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with all the created world. Repentance is born of hope and rejection of despair. And one who repents, is one who deserves condemnation - and yet, goes away from the tribunal without shame, because repentance is our peace with God. And this is achieved through a worthy life, alien to the sins we committed in the past. Repentance is cleansing of our conscience. Repentance implies carrying off all sadness and pain. Don't use in prayer falsely wise words; because it is often the simple and uncomplicated whispering of children that rejoices our heavenly Father. Don't try to say much when you speak to God, because otherwise your mind in search of words will be lost in them. One word spoken by the publican brought Divine mercy upon him; one word filled with faith saved the thief on the cross. The use of the multiplicity of words when we pray disperses our mind and fill it with imaginations. One word spoken to God collects the mind in His presence. And if a word, in thy prayer, reaches you deeply, if you perceive it profoundly - dwell in it, dwell in it, because at such moments our Angel guardian prays with us because we are true to ourselves and to God”.

PRAYER LIST: Antonia “Nitsa” Kempf, Connie Kanaris, Diana Lazar, George Markomanolakis, Argie Palaios, Katherine Panagakos, Priscilla Preuss, George Virvan, Sylvia Basdekas, George Speris, Mariah Smiley, Doris Webb, the child Camille Feruzzi who is gravely ill, the child Heather Greene, Irene Pappas, Marty Levine, Lindsey Reijsoo, the child Ashley Lyvers, the child Alexis Ross, the child Joseph Saxon, Francine Bruggeman, Estrella Grandea Ocampo, Stephanie Skanderis, Michael Giatzis, Georgia Haldas, Eric Ricasa, Theodosia Karmiris, and Robert Shriver. **US ARMED FORCES:** (Col.) Fr. Alexander Webster, Rev. Fr. John Kalantzis, Lt. Nicholas Karnaze, Spc. Spiro Nino, John Xanthakos, Maj. Sydney Pennix, Colonel James Karas, and Gary Hogman (Iraq) and his wife Cindy, and 2nd Lt. Phillip Natsios

40 DAY BLESSINGS

A 40 Day Blessing will be offered today for the child of God, **Zoe Alyssandra**, daughter of Nicholas and Suzannah Zachos; and for **George**, son of James and Amanda McPherson. May the Lord God grant His children many and blessed years!



ST. BENEDICT: FATHER OF WESTERN MONASTICISM

Our Holy Father Benedict of Nursia (480 – 547) was a saint from Italy, the founder of Western Christian monasticism, and a rule-giver for cenobitic monks. His purpose may be gleaned from his

Rule, namely that "Christ ... may bring us all together to life eternal." Benedict founded twelve communities for monks at Subiaco, about 40 miles to the east of Rome, before moving to Monte Cassino in the mountains of southern Italy. There is no evidence that he intended to found a religious order. The Order of St Benedict is of modern origin and, moreover, not an "order" as commonly understood but merely a confederation of autonomous congregations. Benedict's main achievement is his "Rule", containing precepts for his monks. It is heavily influenced by the writings of St. John Cassian, and shows strong affinity with the Rule of the Master. But it also has a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness (*επιεικεια*, *epieikeia*), and this persuaded most religious communities founded throughout the Middle Ages to adopt it. Abba Benedict is often called the founder of western Christian monasticism.

PASTORAL VISITATIONS

Please inform the Church Office 301-469-7990 (ext 300) of any loved ones who are hospitalized or "shut-ins," so they may be visited and receive the grace of Holy Communion.

ORTHODOX INQUIRY

If you or anyone you may know are interested in embracing Holy Orthodoxy and being baptized or chrismated, please contact Fr. Dimitrios at 301-469-7990 or by email at FrAntokas@stgeorge.org

PARISH ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

GOYA SPAGHETTI LUNCHEON TODAY GOYA is holding its **Annual Lenten Spaghetti Luncheon** immediately after Divine Liturgy until 2:00 pm. Admission is \$8 for adults and \$5 for kids under the age of 12. All proceeds benefit the St. George **GOYA**

CHALLENGE LITURGY AND FELLOWSHIP On Saturday, **March 20**, there will be the monthly Challenge Liturgy for those with intellectual and physical challenges, their families and friends. The Liturgy will be at 9:30 a.m. followed by Fellowship. Please join us for this important Liturgy in support of our brothers and sisters.

FEED THE HUNGRY HELP NEEDED Volunteers are needed to help prepare food for our next Feed the Hungry Sunday, **March 21**. Please use this as an opportunity to do something for our homeless brothers and sisters during the Great Fast.

FIFTY PLUS The next meeting is on **March 24** at 11:30 am in the Founder's Hall. Officer Michael Prather, of the Montgomery County Police Department will speak on "Personal Safety Procedures: Identity Theft and the Scam of Fraud.". Guests are always welcomed. Keep in mind as you do your spring cleaning to save any unwanted items for Yiayia's Attic . No clothing or cook books, please.

PASCHA FLOWER FUND Please make a donation to our annual Pascha Flower Fund in order to assist us in making the celebration of the Lord's Rising extra special. Checks may be made out to the Ladies Philoptochos and should specify **Pascha Flower Fund**.

ANNUAL SPRING FESTIVAL The annual St. George Spring Festival is fast approaching (**April 30, May 1 and May 2**). Many volunteers will be needed. Volunteers are needed for the preparation of spanakopita (March 15, March 16, and March 18 from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.) and for tiropita (March 22 and March 23, from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.) Please help us with our festival preparations!

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS We are happy to announce that we will be holding our first "Day Circle" meeting for Philoptochos members who cannot make the evening meetings, however, everyone is welcome. This Circle will focus on Crafting for Charity, it will be a "hands-on" outreach! We will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. If you have any questions, please call Lia Kent, 301-762-8976 or email kent_amalia@yahoo.com.

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN

MARCH 14, 2009

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

(ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA)



OUR HOLY FATHER St. John Climacus was born in the sixth century and spent the first sixteen years of his life in Palestine, the ancient Holy Land of his birth whose traditions he respected and whose Christian heritage is cherished. His early ambitions were realized when he went to the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, the oldest Christian monastery in the world. There he became one of the most scholarly monks in Christendom. John is remembered not only as the author of the masterful "Ladder of Divine Ascent," but also as the originator of hesychasm, the divine quietness that leads one to God through constant prayer, the prayer which has come to be known as the pure or intellectual "Jesus Prayer." Regarding this John wrote: "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of hesychia." He continued to champion this doctrine which found eager support among Christian thinkers, chief among them was St. Gregory Palamas, whose sponsorship brought about official Church recognition of hesychasm in the fourteenth century. For more than seventy years, John of the Ladder practiced what he preached in the confines of his desert monastery. He achieved such a reputation for piety and wisdom that men from all walks of life were drawn to his side and came from all over the east to make a pilgrimage to his retreat. From John's strong faith and fervent prayer came the power of healing through the divine intervention of the Jesus. One of Orthodoxy's outstanding ascetics, he died on March 30 at the age of eighty-six.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

Thou didst prove to be a freeman of the desert, an angel in a body, and a wonder-worker, O our God-bearing Father John. By fasting, vigil and prayer thou didst obtain heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those who have recourse to thee with faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength, glory to Him Who crowned thee, glory to Him Who works through thee healings for all.

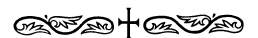
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Rev. Fr. Nicholas Despotides,
Emeritus



DIVINE SERVICES THIS WEEK

Wednesday, March 17: Fifth Presanctified Liturgy followed by spiritual discussion. 6:30 p.m. (Chrysostomos Gunning on "Christian Eschatology")

Friday, March 19: Fifth Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 20: Challenge Liturgy and fellowship 9:30 a.m.