

# OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN CLIMACUS

39<sup>th</sup> Day of the Holy & Great 40 Days Fast — March 30

**John Climacus** is honored 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). There is almost no information about Saint John’s origins. One tradition suggests that he was born in Constantinople around the year 570, and was the son of Saints Xenophon and Maria (January 26). John went to Sinai when he was sixteen, submitting to Abba Martyrius as his instructor and guide. After four years, Saint John was tonsured as a monk. Abba Strategios, who was present at Saint John’s tonsure, predicted that he would become a great luminary in the Church of Christ. For nineteen years Saint John progressed in monasticism in obedience to his spiritual Father. After the death of Abba Martyrius, Saint John embarked on a solitary life, settling in a wild place called Thola, where he spent forty years laboring in silence, fasting, prayer, and tears of penitence. It is not by chance that in THE LADDER Saint John speaks about tears of repentance: “Just as fire burns and destroys the wood, so pure tears wash away every impurity, both external and internal.” His holy prayer was strong and efficacious, as may be seen from an example from the life of the God-pleasing saint. Knowing of the wisdom and spiritual gifts of Saint John of Sinai, the igumen of Raithu requested him to write down whatever was necessary for the salvation of those in the monastic life. Such a book would be “a ladder fixed on the earth” (Gen. 28:12), leading people to the gates of Heaven. Saint John felt that such a task was beyond his ability, yet out of obedience he fulfilled the request. The saint called his work THE LADDER, for the book is “a fixed ladder leading from earthly things to the Holy of Holies....” The thirty steps of spiritual perfection correspond to the thirty years of the Lord’s age. When we have completed these thirty steps, we will find ourselves with the righteous and will not stumble. THE LADDER begins with renunciation of the world, and ends with God, Who is love (1 John 4:8). Although the book was written for monks, any Christian living in the world will find it an unerring guide for ascending to God, and a support in the spiritual life.

## **Troparion of St. John Climacus** (Tone 4)

We find your virtues to be a ladder leading us to heaven, \* Venerable Father John. \* You have become virtue personified O glorious Saint.

## **Kondakion of St. John Climacus** (Tone 4)

The Lord has placed you on the pinnacle of chastity, \* O Father John our Guide.  
\* Like some brilliant star \* you shed light on the earth.

## **Prokimenon of a Venerable** (Tone 7 – pew book page 377)

Precious in the eyes of the Lord \* is the death of His faithful

*Verse: What can I return to the Lord \* for all He has given me?*

## **Alleluia of a Venerable** (Tone 6 – pew book page 377)

*Verse: Happy the man who fears the Lord \* and greatly delights in His commands.*

*Verse: His posterity will be mighty \* upon the earth.*

## **Communion Hymn of a Venerable** (pew book page 377)

The just man will be remembered forever; \* evil news he will not fear.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Concluding Hymn sung once by Priest; twice by people*

**Having suffered the Passion for us, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us!**  
**Preterp'ivyj za nas Strasti, Isuse Christe, Syne Bozij, pomiluj nas!**



# **Daily Prayer During The Great Fast**

**(February 20 — March 31)**

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, and Hope of all on land and of those far away at sea; You have established these holy days of fasting by Your law and the prophets as a way for our mortification and repentance. At the proper time, You manifested Yourself in the flesh on this earth, and by Your fast of forty days and nights, You sanctified the practice of fasting and commanded us to follow Your example. As a merciful and gracious God, enable us to continue these holy days of The Great Fast with perfect repentance, with humility instead of hypocrisy, with fervent prayer, with hunger and thirst, with frequent prostrations, and with a contrite heart. Enable us, also, to complete this time of The Great Fast without fault and with a pure conscience, keeping our faith intact and achieving victory over sin. Send an angel of peace to watch over our lives, to protect us from all snares of our enemies, and to assist us in the performance of good deeds. Strengthen us by Your power so that we may accomplish the spiritual works of The Great Fast. Then, with our passions in control and our souls and bodies properly cleansed, we will be worthy to partake, without condemnation, of Your most pure Body and Your most precious and life-giving Blood. For You are the merciful and gracious Lover of Mankind, Who came down to earth to save all; and we give glory to You (+) and to Your Eternal Father, and Your All-Holy, Gracious, and Life-Giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.