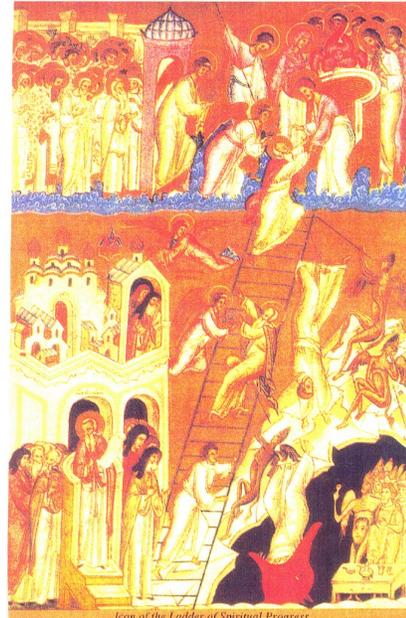


The Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

Teachings of St. John of the Ladder

Our Holy Father among the Saints St John Climacus is the author of a powerful spiritual work that is divided into about thirty chapters, called “steps”, as part of the overall book entitled, “The Ladder of Divine Ascent.” As the Great Fast is about our ascending to the things of Heaven, it is entirely appropriate that the Church focus on the ascetical enterprise as presented by this work and on the person of its author who is celebrated on the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.



THE LADDER begins with the rejection of worldliness, and ends with God, Who is love. As we climb the ladder of virtues while making our way toward Christ, we must remember that our focus must remain on the Person and power of our Saviour. As we advance in the spiritual life slowly, taking it one “step” at a time, we need to be in a state of constant prayer, especially the “Jesus Prayer”.

A Christian is one who imitates Christ in thought, word, and deed, as far as is possible for human beings.

Follow Christ without anxiety or hesitation, always looking heavenward and expecting help from there.

I do not know whether we must all teach others: but teach yourselves at all costs.

Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously.

If anyone could see their own vices accurately without the veil of self-love, they would worry about nothing else in this life.

If the Holy Spirit is peace of soul, then nothing so prevents the presence of the Spirit in us as anger.

This is a very vivid icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent. It shows people ascending toward heaven with angels helping them. It also shows demons pulling people off the ladder, causing them to fall into the pits of hell. In today's Gospel passage, we are shown that through faith in Christ all things are possible. We too need to cry as the father in today's Gospel, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." Furthermore, this passage reveals that faith to conquer our demons comes only from prayer and fasting. At this point, Christ begins to reveal to the disciples about His upcoming suffering.

The GOSPEL reading: Mark 9:17-31

- . Who could not cast out the evil spirit?
- . What three things did Jesus say about their lack of faith?
- . What is a requirement of healing?

For More information,

www.sspp.ca

<https://www.goarch.org/sunday-stjohnclimacus>