

Sunday, March 19, 2023 – Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast: St. John Climacus. The Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria (253-60)

Great Fast Day 21. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated today.

Troparia and Kontakia *Troparion, Tone 8:* You came down from on high, O Merciful One,* and accepted three days of burial* to free us from our sufferings.* O Lord, our life and our resurrection,* glory be to You.

Troparion, Tone 1: O John, our God-bearing father,* you were shown to be a citizen of the desert,* an angel in bodily form,* and a worker of miracles.* Through fasting, prayers and vigils you received heavenly gifts* to heal the sick and the souls of those who, in faith, run to you.* Glory to Him who gives you strength.* Glory to Him who crowned you.* Glory to Him who works healing for all through you.

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4: On the heights of true abstinence,* the Lord established you as a reliable star,* giving light for guidance to the ends of the earth,* O father John, our teacher.

Prokeimenon, Tone 8 Pray and give praise to the Lord our God.

verse: In Judea God is known; His name is great in Israel. (*Psalms 75:12,2*)

Prokeimenon, Tone 7

verse: The venerable ones will exult in glory* and they shall be joyful in their beds. (*Psalms 149:5*)

Epistle - A reading of Paul to the Hebrews: Hebrews 6:13-20 (NRSV)

Brothers and Sisters, when God made a promise to Abraham, because he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Human beings, of course, swear by someone greater than themselves, and an oath given as confirmation puts an end to all dispute. In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Ephesians 5:9-19 (NRSV)

Brothers and Sisters, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,

Alleluia, Tone 8 *verse:* Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us acclaim God our Savior. *verse:* Let us come before His countenance with praise and acclaim Him with psalms. (*Psalm 94:1,2*) *verse:* They who are planted in the hose of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. (*Psalm 91:14*)

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31; (NRSV)

At that time a man came to Jesus, fell down before him and said, “Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever 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, but they could not do so.” He answered them, “You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!” 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 was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “This kind can come out only through prayer.” They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.”

Matthew 4:25-5:12 (NRSV)

At that time great crowds followed Jesus from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Hymn to the Mother of God

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices: the angelic ranks and all the human race. Sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, virgins’ pride and boast, from whom God is made flesh and became a little Child; and He who is our God before all ages, He made your womb a throne, and He made it wider than all the heavens. In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices. Glory be to you.

Communion Hymn Praise the Lord from the heavens;* praise Him in the highest. (*Psalm 148:1*)* The just man shall be in everlasting remembrance;* of evil hearsay he shall have no fear.* Alleluia, alleluia,* alleluia. (*Psalm 111:6*)