

# ARCHANGEL MICHAEL CHURCH

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# **SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT. St. John of the Ladder, Abbot of Sinai. Mode 4. Eothinon 1.

## SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Lent is a time of repentance, a time when our heart of stone must be made by the power of God into a heart of flesh, from insensitive to perceptive, from cold and hard to warm and open to others—and indeed, to God Himself.

Lent is a time of renewal when like spring, everything become new again; when our life that had gone into a twilight becomes alive with all the intensity that God can communicate to us, humans, by making us partakers of His Holy Spirit, by making us partakers, through the Holy Sacraments and the direct gift of God, of the Divine nature.

It is a time of reconciliation, and reconciliation is a joy: it is God's joy, and it is our joy; it is a new beginning.

Today is the day of Saint John of the Ladder, and I want to read to you a few phrases of his that are relevant to the particular time of the year in which we live:

"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, which is peace—peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with the whole created world. Repentance is born of hope and rejection of despair. 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."

And if we ask ourselves how we can achieve it, how we can come to this, how we can respond to God Who receives us as the father received the prodigal son, a God Who has waited for us longingly, Who though rejected never turned away from us. How can we respond to Him? Here is a short word about prayer:

"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 fills it with imaginations. One word spoken to God collects the mind in His presence. And if a word, in your prayer, reaches you deeply, if you perceive it profoundly dwell in it, because at such moments our Angel guardian prays with us because we are true to ourselves and to God."

Let us remember what Saint John of the Ladder says, even if you forget the short comments (which I introduced) to make his text more readily understandable. Let us remember his words because he was a man who knew what it means to turn to God, to stay with God, to be God's joy and to rejoice in Him. He is offered to us in this time when we are ascending towards the days of the Passion; he is offered us as an example of what Divine grace can do to transform an ordinary, simple human being into a light to the world.

Let us learn from him, let us follow his example, let us rejoice in what God can do by His power in a human being, and let us confidently, with faith, with an exulting and yet serene joy follow his advice, listen to God begging us to find a way of life and telling us that with Him, in Him we will be alive—because He is the Truth but also the Way, and Life eternal. Amen.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sorouzh

### Ήχος δ΄

Το φαιδρον τῆς ἀναστάσεως κήρυγμα, ἐκ τοῦ Ἁγγέλου μαθοῦσαι αἱ τοῦ Κυρίου Μαθήτριαι, και την προγονικην ἀπόφασιν ἀπορρίψασαι, τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις καυχώμεναι ἔλεγον Ἐσκύλευται ὁ θάνατος, ἠγέρθη Χριστος ὁ Θεός, δωρούμενος τῷ κόσμῳ το μέγα ἔλεος.

## Ήχος πλ. δ΄

Μνήσθητι Κύριε, ὡς ἀγαθος τῶν δούλων σου, και ὅσα ἐν βίῳ ἤμαρτον συγχώρησον· οὐδεις γαρ ἀναμάρτητος, εἰ μη Συ ὁ δυνάμενος, και τοῖς μεταστᾶσι δοῦναι τήν ἀνάπαυσιν.

## Ήχος πλ. δ΄

Ταῖς τῶν δακρύων σου ῥοαῖς, τῆς ἐρήμου το ἄγονον ἐγεώργησας, και τοῖς ἐκ βάθους στεναγμοῖς, εἰς ἑκατον τους πόνους ἐκαρποφόρησας, και γέγονας φωστηρ τῆ οἰκουμένῃ, λάμπων τοῖς θαύμασιν, Ἰωάννη Πατηρ ἡμῶν ὅσιε, πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, σωθῆναι τας ψυχας ἡμῶν.

### Ήχος δ΄

Τῶν οὐρανίων στρατιῶν Ἀρχιστράτηγοι, δυσωποῦμεν ὑμᾶς ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀνάξιοι, ἴνα ταῖς ὑμῶν δεήσεσι, τειχίσητε ἡμᾶς, σκέπῃ τῶν πτερύγων, τῆς ἀΰλου ὑμῶν δόξης, φρουροῦντες ἡμᾶς προσπίπτοντας, ἐκτενῶς και βοῶντας Ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων λυτρώσασθε ἡμᾶς, ὡς Ταξιάρχαι τῶν ἄνω Δυνάμεων.

## Ήχος πλ. δ΄.

Τῆ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τα νικητήρια, Ὠς λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν εὐχαριστήρια, Ἀναγράφω σοι ἡ Πόλις σου Θεοτόκε. Ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχουσα το κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον, Ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων ἐλευθέρωσον, Ἱνα κράζω σοι Χαῖρε νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

### Εβρ 6:13-20

Άδελφοί, τῷ Άβρααμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ Θεός, ἐπει κατ΄ οὐδενος είχε μείζονος όμόσαι, ὤμοσε καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, λέγων ή μην εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε και πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε και ούτω μακροθυμήσας έπέτυχε τῆς έπαγγελίας. ἄνθρωποι μεν γαρ κατα τοῦ μείζονος όμνύουσι, και πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὅρκος ἐν ῷ περισσότερον βουλόμενος ὁ Θεος έπιδεῖξαι κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας το ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ, ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω, ἵνα δια δύο πραγμάτων άμεταθέτων, έν οίς άδύνατον ψεύσασθαι Θεόν, ίσχυραν παράκλησιν έχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης έλπίδος ἡν ώς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς άσφαλῆ τε και βεβαίαν και είσερχομένην είς το έσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπερ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατα την τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ ἀρχιερευς γενόμενος είς τον αίῶνα.

#### Mode 4

When the women disciples of the Lord heard the Angel joyously proclaim the resurrection, they cast aside the ancestral verdict, and boasting in glory they said to the Apostles, "Death has been despoiled! Christ God has risen, granting the great mercy to the world!"

## **Mode Plagal 4**

Remember, Lord, as the Good One, your servants, and forgive them in whatever they have sinned in life. No one is without sin, except for you the Mighty One, and show rest to the departed.

### **Mode Plagal 4**

With the rivers of your tears you made the barren desert bloom; and with your sighs from deep within, you made your labors bear their fruits a hundredfold; and you became a star, illuminating the world by your miracles, O John, our devout father. Intercede with Christ our God, for the salvation of our souls.

#### Mode 4

O Chief Commanders of the heavenly armies, we the unworthy now entreat you in earnest, to fortify us by your supplications to the Lord, and shelter us beneath the wings of your spiritual glory, guarding us who run to you and fervently entreat you: As the Commanders of the hosts on high, rescue us faithful from dangers of every kind.

### **Mode Plagal 4**

O Champion General, I your City now inscribe to you Triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, Being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, From all kinds of perils free me, so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.

#### Heb. 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.

Μκθ' 17-31 Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἄνθρωπός τις προσῆλθε τῷ Ἰησοῦ γονυπετῶν αὐτῷ και λέγων· διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τον υἱόν μου πρός σε, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον. και ὅπου ἂν αὐτον καταλάβη, ρήσσει αὐτόν, και ἀφρίζει και τρίζει τους όδόντας αύτοῦ, και ξηραίνεται· και είπον τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτο έκβάλωσι, και οὐκ ἴσχυσαν. ὁ δε ἀποκριθεις αὐτῷ λέγει ὧ γενεα ἄπιστος, ἔως πότε προς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἔως πότε άνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετε αὐτον πρός με. και ἤνεγκαν αὐτον προς αὐτόν. και ἰδων αὐτον εὐθέως το πνεῦμα ἐσπάραξεν αὐτόν, και πεσων έπι τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων. και έπηρώτησε τον πατέρα αὐτοῦ· πόσος χρόνος ἐστιν ὡς τοῦτο γέγονεν αὐτῷ; ὁ δε εἶπε· παιδιόθεν. και πολλάκις αὐτον και είς πῦρ ἔβαλε και είς ὕδατα, ἵνα ἀπολέση αὐτόν ἀλλ' εἴ τι δύνασαι, βοήθησον ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεις ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. ὁ δε Ίησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ το εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσαι, πάντα δυνατα τῷ πιστεύοντι. και εὐθέως κράξας ὁ πατηρ τοῦ παιδίου μετα δακρύων ἔλεγε· πιστεύω, κύριε· βοήθει μου τῆ ἀπιστία. ἰδων δε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐπισυντρέχει ὄχλος, ἐπετίμησε τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ λέγων αὐτῷ· το πνεῦμα το ἄλαλον και κωφόν, έγώ σοι έπιτάσσω, έξελθε έξ αὐτοῦ και μηκέτι εἰσέλθης εἰς αὐτόν. και κράξαν και πολλα σπαράξαν αὐτον έξῆλθε, και έγένετο ώσει νεκρός, ώστε πολλους λέγειν ὅτι ἀπέθανεν. ὁ δε Ίησοῦς κρατήσας αὐτον τῆς χειρος ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, και άνέστη. Και είσελθόντα αὐτον είς οἶκον οἱ μαθηται αὐτοῦ έπηρώτων αὐτον κατ΄ ίδίαν, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἡδυνήθημεν έκβαλεῖν αὐτό. και εἶπεν αὐτοῖς τοῦτο το γένος ἐν οὐδενι δύναται έξελθεῖν εί μη ἐν προσευχῆ και νηστεία. Και ἐκεῖθεν έξελθόντες παρεπορεύοντο δια τῆς Γαλιλαίας, και οὐκ ἤθελεν ίνα τις γνῷ· ἐδίδασκε γαρ τους μαθητας αὐτοῦ και ἔλεγεν

αὐτοῖς ὅτι ὁ υἱος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας

άνθρώπων, και άποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, και άποκτανθεις τῆ

τρίτη ἡμέρα ἀναστήσεται.

#### Mk. 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."

## ΚΑΤΗΧΗΤΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

Το σημερινό Ευαγγέλιο μας λέγει για το θαύμα του Χριστού, που θεράπευσε το δαιμονισμένο παιδί. Ο διάβολος θέλει να ξεκόψουμε από το Θεό και έτσι να χάσουμε τη σωτηρία μας, που είναι και η αληθινή ζωή μας. Στην περίοδο της Μεγάλης Σαρακοστής ο άνθρωπος αγωνίζεται για να συντρίψει με τη βοήθεια του Θεού την αμαρτία. Μόνον έτσι μπορούμε να πλησιάσουμε τον Κύριο, που είναι ο Λυτρωτής και ο Σωτήρας μας.

Το Ευαγγέλιο μας παρουσιάζει το δυστυχισμένο πατέρα, που είχε το δαιμονισμένο παιδί. Μας δείχνει πώς καταντάει ο άνθρωπος, όταν κυριευθεί από το σατανά. Η αμαρτία μας ξεμακραίνει από το Θεό. Μας κάνει δούλους του σατανά, που μας βασανίζει με το χειρότερο τρόπο. Σ' αυτή τη φοβερή κατάσταση δε φτάνει ο άνθρωπος απότομα, αλλά σιγά σιγά. Από τη μικρή ηλικία αρχίζουμε να κάνουμε ορισμένες παρεκτροπές, που μας απομακρύνουν από το Θεό και τον ίσιο δρόμο. Ξεχνάμε την προσευχή. Αραιώνουμε τον εκκλησιασμό. Αναβάλλουμε την εξομολόγηση. Καθυστερούμε τη θεία Κοινωνία. Όλα αυτά είναι άσχημα δείγματα. Το Ευαγγέλιο μας λέγει ότι ο άνθρωπος προχωρεί στο κακό και την καταστροφή.

Το παράδειγμα του πατέρα είναι πολύ συγκινητικό. Με δάκρυα στα μάτια απάντησε στον Κύριο που τον ρώτησε αν πιστεύει: «Πιστεύω, Κύριε, αλλά βόηθα την απιστία μου». Ο πατέρας φαίνεται πως είχε στην καρδιά του μεγάλη ταπείνωση, γι' αυτό και οδηγήθηκε στο σημείο να εμπιστεύεται στο Χριστό. Αισθανόταν όμως μέσα του και μια ολιγοπιστία. Παρακαλεί τον Κύριο να τον δυναμώσει με τη θεϊκή του δύναμη και να του χαρίσει το δώρο της πίστεως.. Μακάρι και εμείς με πολύ ταπείνωση να παρακαλούμε το Θεό να δυναμώνει την πίστη μας και να μας χαρίζει τη σωτηρία της ψυχής και του σώματος μας.

Οι μαθητές δεν μπόρεσαν να κάμουν αυτό το θαύμα και ο Κύριος τους λέγει ότι τα πονηρά πνεύματα απομακρύνονται μόνο με την προσευχή και τη νηστεία. Με την προσευχή ο άνθρωπος συνδέεται με το Θεό, ζητεί τη βοήθεια του και τη δύναμη του. Ιδιαίτερα τη Μεγάλη Σαρακοστή η προσευχή μας οπλίζει με τέτοια δύναμη, ώστε να συνεχίσουμε νικηφόρα τον αγώνα μας κατά του διαβόλου και της αμαρτίας. Η νηστεία επίσης μας βοηθάει να πλησιάσουμε το Θεό. Με τη νηστεία προσπαθούμε να στερήσουμε τον εαυτό μας από κάτι, που το αγαπάμε για το χατίρι και την αγάπη του Θεού. Η νηστεία μας γεμίζει με η δύναμη του Θεού, γιατί διαρκώς μας προσφέρει την αγάπη Του, που μας συντηρεί και μας λυτρώνει.

## **SYNAXARION**

**April 14th** - St. Thomais of Alexandria

April 15th - St. Crescens the Martyr

April 16th - St. Sts. Agape, Chionia, & Irene

April 17th - St. Symeon, Bishop of Persia

April 18th - Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

April 19th- St. Paphnutius the Holy Martyr

April 20th - St. Theodore the Trichinas

**April 21st - St. Alexandria the Empress** 

**Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt** 

We honor St. Mary of Egypt on the 5th Sunday of Lent



## **LITURGIES**

Monday, April 15th Great Compline 4PM

**Tuesday, April 16th** Great Compline 4 PM

Wednesday, April 17th

Presanctified Liturgy and Dialogues of Faith 6:45 PM

Thursday, April 18th

Bible Study 11 AM | Vespers & Bible Study 7 PM

Friday, April 19th

Presanctified Liturgy 9 AM | Akathist Hymn 7 PM

Saturday. April 20th

Saturday of the Akathist Hymn | Orthros & Liturgy 8:30 AM

Sunday, April 21st

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

Orthros & Liturgy 8:00 AM

## **MEMORIALS**

Ilia Vasili - 9 days Matoula Stamatiki Papadaki - 1 year Christos Papas - 2 years Dennis Dionisiou - 4 years Maria Damoulakis - 4 years

## May their memory be eternal!

# **EVENTS**

Registration has begun for our second summer of Camp Hellas at AMC. Please sign up your children via Realm. There is a limited amount of space and seats are quickly filling!

Please purchase your GOYA Luminary Candles for Good Friday by April 28th.

Easter Lambadas are on Sale at the Pre-School. Easter Egg Hunt - Sunday May 5th after Agape.

HOPE will be making Lazarakia Buns on April 27th at 10:30am. RSVP to the HOPE ministry.

Barre Exercises Wednesdays at 10:30am in the Piano Room - offered by Liz Tagios

