

Great Lent. "This race" he tells us, the race of demons, in other words, "cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting". The wicked spirits cannot be fought in any manner, except only with prayer and fasting.

So let us take up, brethren, the weapons of the struggle, without delay, now that with the grace of God, we are proceeding on the path of victory against the devil, but also of the encounter with Christ. Let us hasten with "faith and longing" to go to the sacred mysteries, let us study "again and many times" the Holy Scripture, and let us not leave spiritually unutilized, Saint John of Sinai's gifts, which are both the Book of the Ladder, as well as the example of his holy life.

Archim. A. A.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 3 2022 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS**  
*Nicetas, abbot of the Monastery of Medicium, Joseph the hymnographer Theodosia and Irene the martyrs.*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Plagal Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON** : *Eighth Eothinon*

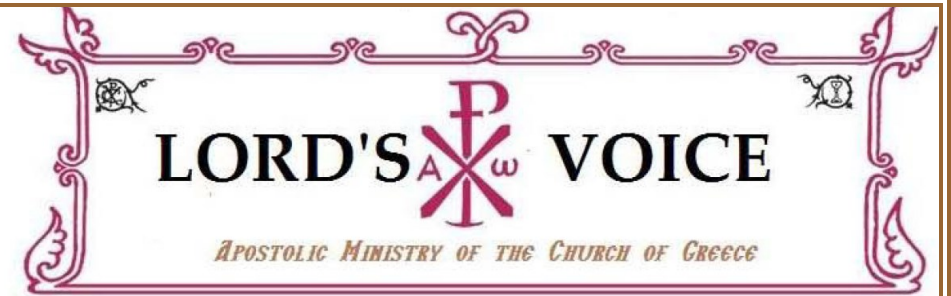
**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Mark 9:17-31*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 10 2022 SUNDAY OF MARY OF EGYPT**  
*Terence and his Companions beheaded at Carthage, 150 and more Righteous Martyr Fathers of the Sacred Monastery of Pantocrator Daou Pentelis, Gregory V, the Holy Martyr and Patriarch of Constantinople, Holy Father Theonas, Archbishop of Thessalonica*

**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 9:11-14*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Mark 10:32-45*



**70<sup>TH</sup> YEAR APRIL 3 2022 PAMPHLET # 14 (3592)**

## THE TEACHER OF VIRTUE

The 4th Sunday of Lent today and our Church projects, for strengthening, the sacred figure of Saint John of Sinai, who is also the author of the Ladder. The Saint, at the age of about 16 years old, became a monk at the Monastery of Saint Catherine at the god-trodden mountain of Sinai, after he received a rich education for his time and age. For 19 years he remained an underling of an important elder, Abba Martyrius, to whom he was absolutely obedient. After his death, he withdrew to a desert location, at a small distance from the Monastery, where he also lived for 40 years.

He advanced very much in spiritual matters, surpassing, with God's grace, his blameworthy passions, and cultivating humility and love. After he passed this great duration, the Fathers asked him to become abbot of the Monastery, a request that he accepted, remaining for some years in this service, until he again wanted to withdraw to his beloved solitude, and after a short time, he reposed venerably.

Various wondrous events from his life have been preserved, which reveal the special grace that he had from God, however, the greatest miracles are those related to the conversion of hearts, that his divinely inspired texts cause. This, furthermore, is something that each one of us can

## **THE SUNDAY 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."

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ascertain, when he begins studying them with a genuine disposition. It is familiar that the saints, who with their texts help

their fellow men throughout time, are the par-excellence miracle workers. Their miracle working is based on the power of their words, even if known miracles of physical healings are not attributed to them. Here we must note that Saint John's texts are not written exclusively for monastics, but they offer huge benefit to lay people as well. For this reason, his basic work, the "Ladder", was loved in both in the East and West. It is considered as the most important book in circulation after the Holy Scripture.

### **A sacred purpose**

The purpose of Saint John's teaching is to sweeten the hearts of people, and with the wealth of his examples, that spring from life in Christ and his experience, to again lead them to a connection with Christ. The connection that he himself had, and which we are humbly trying to again find during the period of fasting and ascesis which we are undergoing. It is precisely this effort of ours, that the god-hating and man-hating devil hates. Contrary to our all-good Creator who "wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth", the devil does not suffice in his personal perdition, but "like a roaring lion," he seeks to devour us with his ravenous and gateless mouth.

### **The saving intervention of God**

In today's Divine Liturgy, we are evangelically observing God's work and the devil's rage. Christ, despite the faithlessness and sinfulness of people, intervenes salvifically and grants healing from the dreadful demon possession of today's gospel narration. In one sentence of His, that He gives as an answer to His disciples, He names today as the safest path for salvation, the path of ascesis and fasting, the path, in other words, of Holy and