

**4th Sunday of Great Lent: St John Climacus
(of the Ladder)**

Commemorated on [April 7](#)

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The abbot of Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt.10:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Eph 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt.24:13).

Hebrews 6:13-20 (Epistle)

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Mark 9:17-31 (Gospel)

Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."



DANBURY FOOD PANTRY - APRIL

Suggested donation of canned vegetables (and other non-perishable goods) will be collected through April 14.

April donations will be delivered to the food pantry Thursday April 18.

Thank You &
God Bless
You!

Obedience and Trust

Matthew 5:34-37 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and 'No' mean 'No.' For whatever is more than these comes from the evil one" [MEV version].

James 5:12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation. (RSV Version)

Last week I began to share some thoughts on obedience in family life. I gave examples of how we might understand obedience in a more negative light. Obedience is a virtue that needs to be formed in us over time. What are some things that could be done in family life that would enable obedience to become a virtue that leads us into the Kingdom?

Last week I quoted Ephesians 6:1-4, which ends with this verse, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." We often speak of children needing to obey their parents, but do we ever spend time addressing this verse? How might parents provoke their children to anger resulting in rebellion? Or what if they obey but it comes with resentment and anger? Are the expectations for obedience realistic? Are parents expecting something from their children that they cannot give? Children are told to be obedient, but are parents modeling the very behavior that their children are expected to discontinue? The worst example I can give is a parent who physically disciplines a child for physically striking out at his or her sibling; or a parent who in the evening screams at his or her child to be quiet, settle down, and go to sleep? Parents are not to model the very behavior kids are told to stop. If that is the case, then at least they should likewise be examples of repentance and ask of the child forgiveness for providing a poor example. This is where emotions play a funny place in parenting. We should not react to children, parenting them strictly with our emotions. But, at the same time, when parents see their children doing something

that is not good for their well-being, their emotions become the very force that drives them to correct their children out of love for their well-being.

Finally, I began the above quotes from James and Matthew by highlighting the words, "Let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no." If parents want their children to be obedient, then this passage from Matthew is crucial to establishing this. The bottom line is that parents need to enforce the expectations they have of their children. Do not beg for a child's obedience; do not repeat the request over and over if it is not heeded. If one's yes means yes, or no means no, then after one warning or reminder, a parent needs to enforce what their child is being directed to do. The child's activity needs to be directed to what they need to do, and if not, then mom or dad needs to stop whatever their child is doing until they are ready to comply. If this can happen with children in family life, it will help to build consistency, stability, and promote an obedience based on trust.

Next week I will reflect on obedience one last time. I will focus on the Cross; this is where obedience, trust, and love all come together in this once-and-for-all, life-creating act of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgive me a sinner, the blessing of the Lord be upon you.

+Paul

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

April 7: Police officer Nicholas from TN; Police officer Steve TN / Fire Fighter John / Jack Condulis

April 14: All those who lost their lives from the Tornadoes in AL / Joseph / Victims from the Egyptian plane crash / Glen / Peggie / Sheriff deputy Jacob from IL / Terror attack victims from New Zealand / Mat. Julia Petranin / Leonard Soroka

May 5: 2 soldiers killed in Afghanistan / Police officer killed in IL / David Chikerotis / Todd Pollack / John Rofkar / 2 police officers Gerald & Brook from IL

May 12: Larry Tawrek