

## ***Parish Prayer List (Living)***

Alexandra	Sharon	Paige	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Kristi
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Nanette	Alexandra	Illisa	Rachael
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Erin and baby		

## ***Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)***

Metropolitan Nicholas (+3/13)	Lorraine Solinko (+2/28)
John Beach (+2/27)	Veronica Brickman (+3/5)
Laura Lamby (+3/17)	Michael Baker (+3/26)

## **Additional Announcements**

The 2011 Distinguished Diocesan Donors Giving Campaign is now in progress. Every household in the diocese recently received an appeal letter and an explanatory brochure. All diocesan faithful are encouraged to become 3D Members. This year there are new giving level opportunities: \$100.00- Contributor, \$250.00- Bronze, \$500.00- Silver, \$1,000.00- Gold and \$10,000.00 and up – Platinum.

Your help is needed today to properly equip our Diocese for ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Your generous support will allow the DDD Program to offer support at the same or greater levels to the apostolates it has supported in the past and provide funding to other key ministries necessary for diocesan growth and renewal.

If you have not already done so, please fill out and send the donation form included in the brochure along with your donation to the diocesan chancery. Visit DDD on line at <http://ddd.acrod.org>. To learn more about the 3D Program, download a mail-in donation form or donate on line.

All donors at the \$100 and up giving levels will receive a complimentary dinner at a regional DDD Dinner.

It is asked if at all possible contributions be made and forwarded to the Chancery by Pascha.

### Thoughts from the Fathers

Ascend, brothers, ascend eagerly, and be resolved in your hearts to ascend and hear him who says: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of our God, who makes our feet like hind's feet, and sets us upon high places, that we might be victors with His song.

*St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent*

"If, according to the example of Abraham and Job, we think that we are earth and ashes, then we shall never be robbed, but we will always have something to give to others: not gold and silver, but an example of humility, patience, and love toward God. May there be glory to Him forever. Amen."

*Saints Barsanuphius & John*

Here in the church there is the one thing needful: Here is a refuge from the vanity and the storms of life. Here is the calm harbor for souls seeking after salvation. Here is incorruptible food and drink for the soul. Here is the light that enlightens all men existing upon earth. Here is the clean air of the spirit. Here is the fountain of living water which flows to life eternal (John 4:14). Here are distributed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, here is the cleansing of souls. The reading and chanting is done in church in a holy language. All Orthodox Christians should learn it, that they might understand the sweet pronouncements of their mother, who educates her children to prepare them for heaven, for life eternal. . . . Here in the temple, man comprehends the truly noble origin of his soul, the worth of life and its goal and purpose. Here he is torn away from his fascination with earthly vanities and passions. Here he comprehends his temporal and eternal fate. Here the Savior lives – in His Life-giving Mysteries, in His salvation. Here he recognizes his true relationship to God and to his neighbor, to his family and to the society in which he lives. The temple is heaven on earth, a place where intimate union with the Divine

takes place. It is a heavenly school, where Christians are taught to become citizens of heaven, where they are taught heavenly norms, the way of life in heaven. It is the threshold of heaven, a place of communal prayer, thanksgiving, praise of the Triune God, creator and protector of all. It is a place of unification with the angels. What is more honorable and more esteemed than the temple? Nothing. In its Divine Services, as in a blueprint, are severally depicted the fates of all humanity, from beginning to end. The Divine Services are the alpha and omega of the world and of mankind.

*St. John of Kronstadt*

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### *The Spirituality of St John Climacus*

Those who aim at ascending with the body to Heaven, indeed need violence and constant suffering, especially in the early stages of their renunciation, until our pleasure-loving dispositions and unfeeling hearts attain to love of God and chastity by manifest sorrow.

St John begins forthrightly in his *Ladder*. He is neither flowery with his words nor soft in his speech, but instead speaks simply and with a driving intent. There is a certain ‘brutal honesty’ to his spiritual direction, for he does not make any attempt to portray the path of salvation and sanctification in a way that will be pleasing to men, but rather in a manner that is truthful to the reality of God. It is not every Father who would begin his 30-step manual for spiritual growth with the daunting ‘Renunciation of the World.’

Yet John Klimakos’ directness, while having prompted him to portray the ascetic struggle in clear pictures of the toil and work involved, also invited him to reflect upon the greater task at hand in the spiritual life. Oftentimes the very harshness of his words, in the same breath that it prompts the reader to action, also reaches out and touches him with a taste of depth with which St John viewed all positive action as leading the

human person closer to God. In the quotation above, taken from the first step of his *Ladder*, the Saint is frank and honest about the toil and labour involved in the ascetic struggle: those who participate therein ‘indeed need violence and constant suffering’ and ‘manifest sorrow’. Yet the same sentence does not end before he has proclaimed the great hope that is the goal of the struggle for which these are tools: that ‘our pleasure-loving dispositions and unfeeling hearts attain to the love of God’. We must be careful, when reading Klimakos’ *Ladder*, that the harshness and seeming negativity of his words on repentance do not, by their foreignness to modern ears, distract us from the equally poignant and forceful comments on salvation, transfiguration, and deification.

We cannot leave our above quotation without addressing another important point that it makes as to the whole of St John’s theology, and this in its opening line: ‘Those who aim at ascending *with the body* to Heaven...’ (emphasis mine). Our small investigation of this great teacher’s spirituality of repentance can go nowhere without first absorbing this basic notion, that the spiritual quest and all the labours of the ascetic are not concerned with a ‘soul-freeing liberation’ from our bodily nature, in which the body is killed and repressed so that the soul may spring forth refreshed and new. To the mind of St John there is no question that the ascetic life, indeed the life of every Christian, is a journey upon which the whole of the human person—both body and soul—is engaged; and which, at the resurrection and in the fullness of the Kingdom, will again involve the wholeness of that person. Thus John does not attempt to equate spirituality with a theology of soul, but with a theology of the whole of human personhood—we find in the *Ladder* no sharp distinction between instruction for bodily and spiritual needs, for that very distinction was foreign to John. The human person is a mysterious, ineffable unity of body and soul, indescribable in its character, and unique among God’s creations.