



## Commemoration of John Climacus (Fourth Sunday of Lent) [Reader Service Text](#)

### Calendar and Announcements

#### *Church services and events:*

- Due to possible exposure to Fr. Joel's family, and after consultation with Bishop THOMAS and doctors, services for Wednesday (3/25) and Friday (3/27) are **cancelled**. An email will follow in the next few days regarding Sunday as Fr. Joel is trying to find a priest to serve Liturgy on Sunday 3/29. (Please note: the family is non-symptomatic and doing well, but self-quarantine was recommended for the safety of all.)
- Based on Metropolitan JOSEPH'S latest encyclical (dated 3/17/2020), all non-liturgical events are **cancelled**.
- Copies of reader services, streaming information, and other resources can be found on the Archdiocese website:  
<https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=COVID-19>.
- Dn. Joseph is leading Akathist on Tuesday evenings via Zoom meetings online. To participate, please email Dn. Joseph at [dnjosephclark@gmail.com](mailto:dnjosephclark@gmail.com) to receive the link.

#### **Troparion of St. George**

O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings,  
O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

#### *Confession, communion, and access to the church:*

- For the time being, the church building remains closed and appointments for confession and communion are suspended.

#### *For those who are sick or in need:*

- Several members of the ministry team will be contacting parishioners to identify any special needs and to ensure our church family is taken care of during this time. If you or someone you know has a particular need during this time, please contact the church office so we can coordinate with the ministry team.

#### *General notes:*

- If you are able to still tithe / contribute to the church during this time, please consider giving online via PayPal on the church's website.
- While we are connected to many Orthodox communities across the country and around the globe, please remember that we are following the guidance of our Archbishop and Bishop, and will be making decisions within this guidance that is specific to the needs of our parish community.
- All communication about services and other updates during this time will be sent via parish email from Fr. Joel (or the office) and posted on the website. Please continue to monitor your email and the website for any updates. All questions can be directed to the office ([office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org](mailto:office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org)).

#### **Wisdom of the Holy Fathers**

"Humility is the only thing that no devil can imitate."

- St. John Climacus

## **Church History**

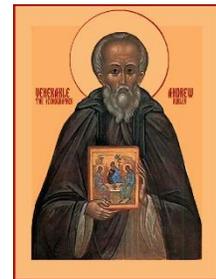
*This week we continue a series on the Essentials of Faith. These lessons are taken from Fr. Thomas Hopko's series The Orthodox Faith.*

### **Saint Stephen of Perm**

A contemporary and friend of Saint Sergius, Saint Stephen of Perm (1340–1396), was a learned bishop who undertook missionary work among the Zyrian tribes living just west of the Ural Mountains. Saint Stephen created an alphabet for the Zyrian language, and translated numerous Church writings into this language. Thus he continued the Byzantine tradition of fostering Church life in the vernacular in new regions, and he laid the spiritual foundations for the future missionary work of the Russian Church among the Siberian tribes, and later in China, Japan, and Alaska.

### **Saint Andrei Rublev**

Saint Andrei Rublev (d.c. 1430), the greatest Russian iconographer and perhaps the greatest iconographer in Orthodox history, did his marvelous work at the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries. He was a monk of the Holy Trinity Monastery founded by Saint Sergius of Radonezh. Much influenced by the illustrious Byzantine iconographer Theophanes the Greek, Saint Andrei worked together with his friend Daniel the Black.



Rublev's most famous work is the icon of the Holy Trinity, painted for the iconostasis of the new church built at his monastery. This profoundly moving icon depicts, in a perfect harmony of colors and lines, the Three Angels who visited Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18). During this same period there was a renaissance of Church art in the Byzantine Empire, with many famous frescoes and mosaics coming from this time.

### **The Serbs**

Under Tsar Stephen Dushan (r. 1331–1355), who grew up in Constantinople until the age of 13, the Serbian kingdom reached its greatest heights, encompassing nearly the entire Balkan Peninsula. In 1345, with the approval of the archbishop of Ochrid, the Patriarch of Bulgaria, and representatives of Mount Athos, Dushan raised the Serbian archbishop to the rank of patriarch, with his headquarters at Pec. He took the title "Patriarch of the Serbs and the Greeks."

On Easter Sunday of the next year, at a national assembly held at Skopje, Dushan was crowned by the new patriarch as emperor (tsar). Tsar Stephen saw himself as the legitimate, natural successor to the Byzantine emperor, since that empire had become so weak, and his had become so strong. At the time of his death, he was actually preparing to launch an attack against the imperial City.

This unilateral double "presumption" by the Serbs naturally scandalized the Byzantines, who excommunicated the Serbian tsar and his religious leaders. But by 1370, with the Serbian Empire in serious decline after the death of Tsar Stephen Dushan in 1355, the excommunications were lifted, and in 1375 the Serbian patriarchate was recognized by Constantinople.

With their defeat at the momentous Battle of Kosovo on June 15, 1389, despite the heroic leadership of Saint Lazor, their prince, the Serbs fell under the yoke of the Ottoman Turks. On the eve of the great battle, Saint Lazor led his troops in receiving the Holy Eucharist, in a Liturgy during which they all dedicated themselves to die as martyrs in defense of their Church and their nation at the hands of the much more numerous Ottomans. Serbia was then completely integrated into the Ottoman realm. The Serbs did not regain their independence until 1830.