



**Our Righteous Father John of Sinai,
Author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*,
Whom The Holy Church Celebrates on March 30.**

This Saint gave himself over to the ascetical life in his early youth. Experienced both in the solitary life of the hermit and in the communal life of cenobitic monasticism, he was appointed Abbot of the Monastery at Mount Sinai and wrote a book containing thirty homilies on virtue. Each homily deals with one virtue, and progressing from those that deal with holy and righteous activity (*praxis*) unto those that deal with divine vision (*theoria*), they raise a man up as though by means of steps unto the height of Heaven. For this cause his work is called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The day he was made Abbot of Sinai, the Prophet Moses was seen giving commands to those who served at table. John reposed in 603, at eighty years of age. See also the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.

Alleluia

Dismissal Hymn. Plagal of Fourth Tone

WITH the streams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold in labours; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O John our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion. First Tone The soldiers standing guard

AS ever-blooming fruits, thou dost offer the teachings * of thy God-given book, O wise John, thou most blessed, * for while sweet'ning the hearts of all them that heed it with vigilance; * for it is a ladder from the earth unto Heaven * that conferreth glory on the souls that ascend it * and honour thee faithfully.

VESPERS¹

*For, I have cried, we chant the following Stichera:
Plagal of Fourth Tone. O strange Wonder*

RIGHTEOUS Father John, in very truth, * thou hadst the high praise of God * in thy throat every day and hour; * and with active diligence * thou didst earnestly meditate * on the divinely inspired oracles * and wast made rich in the grace that they pour forth; * through this, O man most wise, * thou becamest blessed and didst utterly * overturn the counsels of all base and godless men.

RIGHTEOUS Father John most glorious, * with streaming fountains of tears, * thou didst wash thy soul clean of stain; * standing all the night in prayer, * thou becamest a friend of God; * and thou didst soar as on wings unto His love * and His divine beauty, which thou worthily * now dost enjoy on high * with thy fellow athletes evermore in joy, * O most blest and godly-minded Saint and man of prayer.

¹ The material presented here has been edited for content. The hymns that do appear are complete. Virtual Parish Ed.

RIGHTEOUS Father John most glorious, * since thou hadst given thy mind * wings to soar up to God by faith, * thou didst hate the turbulence * and impermanence of the world. * For thou didst take up thy cross with ardent zeal * to follow after Him that beholdeth all; * and thou didst subjugate * the reluctant body to thy sovereign mind * by ascetic labours through the Holy Spirit's might.

Glory; both now. *Theotokion*

COME, O my soul, now with heavy groans * and running torrents of tears * streaming forth from the heart, and cry * to the all-immaculate * Virgin Mother of Christ our God: * In thine unbounded compassion, rescue me * from the dread torment, O pure and holy Maid; * and bring me forth to dwell * in the place wherein is rest, eternal joy, * and enjoyment of the things that pass the mind of man.

MATINS

The Reading from the Psalter and the Canons as appointed, with the following for the Saint. Before the Troparia we say, O Saint of God, intercede in our behalf.

A Composition of Clement.

First Tone

ODE ONE

Troparia

HAVING rightly abhorred the world below, thou hast received the world on high, O most wise John; so dost thou teach us that by fleeing from the world, we draw nigh to God.

BY thine attachment to hunger, thou didst chase away sickness, binding the prince of the passions with the chains of thy struggles, O blessed one; and thou hast been crowned by Christ God with the prizes of dispassion.

THOU has written thy long treatise for those who hearken, O blessed and all-wise John, leading them up by thy teachings from the earth unto the blessed life.

Theotokion

WITH an Orthodox mouth and divine doctrines, the Church proclaimeth thy Child, O Virgin Bride of God; and it worshippeth the symbols of the flesh of thy Son.

ODE THREE

Troparia

Driving away all the foul odor of wrath out of the depth of thy soul, thou foundest freedom from anger to be as delightful incense. Wherefore, O godly John, ask the Redeemer now in our behalf for the loosing of our sins.

BURNING up all thought of the remembrance of wrongs with the fire of Christ's love, O blessed Father, thou faithfully shonest with the rays of love for thy brother, and didst point out to all an easy way to salvation, by making clear what it is not to remember wrongs.

Theotokion

OF old the Prophet knew that in virginity and beyond mind and speech thou wast to give birth in time to the Timeless One, Christ our God, One of the Trinity. Incline Him to be merciful unto us who acclaim thee, O pure one.

SESSIONAL HYMN

Fourth Tone. Thou Who wast raised up

SETTING the virtues as ascents unto Heaven, * thou truly wentest up in all godly rev'rence * to contemplation's awesome and unfathomed depth; as thou dost lay bare for all * the deceits of the demons, * thou dost shelter men unharmed * from their treacherous dealings. * O ladder of the virtues, righteous John, * offer entreaty to God that we all be saved.

ODE FOUR

Troparia

THOU didst abundantly sweeten thy soul with truth, and fleddest from the bitter partaking of falsehood; wherefore, bringing the demon's servants into servitude to God-given asceticism, O divinely-speaking John, thou didst show thyself to be an unerring guide of monastics.

Theotokion

BLESSED is the nation that hath been deemed worthy to honour thy childbirth faithfully, O pure and all-hymned Virgin, as in Orthodoxy, and in doctrines, and in deeds, and in symbols of the truth, it maketh manifest the whole incarnation of thy Son.

ODE FIVE

Troparia

THOU wast seen to be a lover of purity and a hater of lust; with the light of truthful confession, thou didst escape from the moonless night of the passions; for he who would purge body and mind must fervently triumph over the hidden things of darkness.

MINISTERING unto the Trinity in mind and soul and flesh, thou didst clearly and utterly reject the worship of idols, thou who in mercy wast a lover of the poor even in scarcity of necessities; and thou becamest a lover of God rather than a lover of money.

PIOUSLY casting off the burden of matter while on the earth, thou didst soar unto the immaterial with the wings of thy non-possessiveness. Therefore, O Father, as thou standest immaterially and faithfully before Christ with the immaterial hosts, ask that forgiveness be granted our souls.

Theotokion

THEY that will not worship the depiction of thy form and of thy Son, O Ever-virgin, are our foes and accursed, since they are not obedient to the ancient divine doctrines of the Fathers.

ODE SIX

Troparia

WITH the strength of chaste soberness and with thy struggles in prayer, thou mightily dravest from thy soul the insensibility of the passions and didst prove to be wholly sober, O Father John.

PIOUSLY purifying the eye of thy mind and unwearingly ministering unto Christ at all times, thou foresawest the divine beauty of blessed delight.

Theotokion

THE iniquitous are sickened now in the tossing sea of bitter unbelief, as they behold the choirs of the Orthodox devoutly venerating thy likeness, O Virgin.

SYNAXARION

✠ On the thirtieth of this month we commemorate our righteous Father John, Abbot of Sinai and Author of the Ladder.

Verses

Since thou, O Father, didst firmly set thy virtues
Ladder upon ladder, thou art come to Heaven.

On the thirtieth John departed rejoicing.

✠ On this day Saint Eubola, mother of Saint Panteleimon, reposed in peace.

Verses

Eubola, who mothered a fair child and athlete,
Now liveth in Heaven with her child, the athlete.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us. Amen.



SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER.
CHARCOAL SKETCH BY THE HAND OF
PHOTIOS ΧΟΝΤΟΒΛΟΥ

ODE SEVEN

Troparia

DIVINELY obedient to the law of Christ, thou, like thy namesake, didst trample vainglory underfoot, bringing the labor of steadfast asceticism unto God alone, Who is in secret, and giveth rewards openly in return.

Theotokion

HONOURING Thine Incarnation, O Christ, I worship the union and the likeness thereof in a manner befitting God; for becoming God from before the ages, Thou Thyself becamest a mortal from a Virgin without confusion, perfect in both Thy Divinity and Thy humanity.

ODE EIGHT

Troparia

WITH thine uncontrived ways, in all integrity thou didst rid thyself of hypocrisy, fleeing from it as unserviceable; and since thou hast lived in meekness, thou verily dwellest in the places of the meek, O godly-minded John.

THOU didst describe to us divine humility as the mother and guardian of all the virtues; for, as a wise architect, thou didst set fast this foundation for divine ascent.

THOU clearly partookest of the grace of the Spirit, and thou hast filled all with divine enlightenment, teaching us by thy deeds and instructing us by thy words concerning truly perfect discernment.

Theotokion

I portray not the Godhead; speak not deceitfully, ye blind; for He is simple, invisible, without form; but recording the form of His flesh, I worship it, and with faith I glorify the Virgin who gave Him birth.

ODE NINE

Heirmos

WE the faithful magnify the ever-flowing and life-receiving Spring, the all-golden Lampstand that beareth the Light, the living Temple, the immaculate tabernacle, the Theotokos, who is more spacious than Heaven and earth.

Troparia

FLYING up on an immaterial mind unto immaterial things, thou didst attain to the depth of visions; and obtaining the grace of the Holy Spirit through fervent prayer, thou wast deemed worthy to foresee revelations of things to come.

WITH the flame of prayer thou didst consume the material mind, O most righteous Father, and thou becamest all fire, O most wise and godly-minded John. Therefore, being piously outside thyself in divine visions, thou wast changed with the good change.

MORTIFYING the passions by thine asceticism, O righteous Father, thou didst swiftly ascend to the perfection of dispassion. Wherefore, make supplication to God now for the peace of all the world and for the salvation of us who honour thee.

RECEIVING strength by faith, O our Father, and given wings by love, thou rankest to the ladder of virtues and didst powerfully mount it in the love of Christ; for therein is the fullness of all things desired.

Theotokion

WE venerate the marvel of thy giving birth as portrayed in murals, O pure Virgin; we reverence² the deed and honour the image, confessing the truth in both, and we are rightly filled with Orthodox belief.



ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE

² The Greek word, προσκύνησις here translated ‘reverence,’ can also be translated as ‘relative worship,’ ‘veneration,’ or ‘honour.’ The Greek language has a special word, λατρεία, that has to do with the worship or adoration of God. The word, προσκύνησις, has nothing to do with the worship or adoration of any thing, man, or God. For instance, a handshake is an act of προσκύνησις between two people; the Washington Press Corps stands when the President of the United States enters the room and in doing so, they offer προσκύνησις, i. e. their *respect*, or *veneration*, to the President. The Greek language serves us well in its ability to make such a sharp distinction by means of the use of two different words in this critical connection.



† THEOTOKOS OF THE SION
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