



Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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The Fourth Sunday in Lent: *One Step at a Time!*
March 30, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to Him forever!

“One Step at a Time!”

- It takes time to arrive at a goal.
 - On a hike, you take one step at a time.
 - If you drive to your destination, you get to the 100th mile on your trip only after you drive the first 99.
 - If you rush, or turn off the road your GPS directs you to go, you'll not only lose time, but most likely get lost. Or, if you turn your wheel into a field to take what looks like a more direct route, you'll likely wind up getting stuck.
- This is all common sense. To reach a goal, you have to be focused on achieving it, one step at a time.
 - We feel sorry to people who lose focus. A potential, budding career dropped because the person loses interest in pursuing the requisite education
 - Or, we shake our heads over people who get the wrong advice. Do this, not that, and they wind up spinning their wheels or flapping their wings never to take flight

- The 4th Sunday in Great Lent is about pursuing our goal toward union with God.
- We commemorate St. John of the Ladder, the Ladder of Divine Ascent as it's called in its full title.
 - Ascent does not mean going up. It's not about geography. Rather, it's about transformation. To ascend to the heights of divinity is to become more and more like God, to follow the path of Christian discipleship and take on the likeness of God. It is to fulfill His Divine Image within and grow one step at a time more and more like Him.
- We heard last week what that means: Obedience to His Commandment; following His example. Doing as He did. Noticing and aiding others in need – not merely as duty but as the natural result of our Oneness with the ONE. It is about having a heart that is merciful in all things, refusing to judge, never condemning, always giving for the good of the other. Being as Jesus Christ is the Divine-Man for others.
- When we move forward toward our goal, whether it is achievement in education, job growth, self-betterment, whatever – we need to take stock, inventory, or how we are doing.
- That, Brothers and Sisters, is in a nutshell perhaps the single most important purpose of the Great Fast.
 - Not to save money or lose weight by abstaining from eggs and meat. Those things are relatively unimportant
 - Rather, to take inventory by looking within.
- The Ladder of Divine Ascent begins with the journey setting out – first step is turning away from the world and from the evil within it
- 30 steps later, it is the realization of the King of all Virtues, Charity – self-giving love, the love shown by Christ who submitted to the ignominy of the cross, who did what was unpopular, because there was a need to be filled – lepers to be cured, tax collectors to be brought in, fornicators to be redeemed.
- It's time to look within. Take inventory. Bring it to Confession, if you haven't already done so this season.

- One step at a time toward the goal of become Christ to a world in turmoil.

Fr. Elias

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