

March 30

John Climacus (d. ca. 649) monk

Today the Orthodox churches celebrate the feast of John of Sinai, also known as John Climacus.

Little is known about the life of this monk who lived between the sixth and the seventh centuries. His hagiographers write that when he was about sixteen he heard of the fame of the monks of Raithu and went to join this monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai, where God had revealed his Name to Moses.

He spent twenty years in the community, and the next twenty years in solitude.

Elected igumen of the monastery of Sinai at the age of sixty, John wrote for his disciples what would become one of the most famous works of Christian spirituality, *The Ladder of Paradise*, thus earning for himself the name Climacus (from the Greek klimax, ladder). In this work he describes the steps the monk must climb in order to reach God, adding, in John's words, "day after day, fire to fire and desire to desire."

A monk, according to the great master of Sinai, is someone who seeks hesychia, or inner quiet, by combatting harmful thoughts and practicing the virtues analogous to them.

Climacus died in or near the year 649, and in the Orthodox churches he is also solemnly commemorated on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

BIBLICAL READINGS

Eph 5:9-19; Mt 4:25-5:12

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (21 baramhat/maggabit):

Presence of the Saviour at Bethany (Coptic Orthodox Church)

LUTHERANS:

Johannes Evangelista Goßner (d. 1858), theologian in Bavaria and Prussia

MARONITES:

John Climacus, monk

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

John Climacus, igumen

Gabriel Mzire or the Lesser (18th-19th cent.), martyr (Georgian Church)