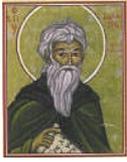


## March 30

### B. *Our Ven. Father John, Author of the Ladder*



Ven. John appeared on Mount Sinai when he was 16 years old. His contemporary biographers did not even know the place of his birth. Some consider him to be the son of Ven. Xenophon (see Jan. 26). The young ascetic began the asceticism of his salvation, when he completely devoted himself to obedience, which for him was really "a grave for the will", "suspension of any judgment, from every temptation of judgment". When he was 20 years old, he was tonsured a monk. After the death of Elder Martyrius, under whose direction he practiced asceticism for 19 years, St. John departed to the desert of Thola and began to carry out a life in strict fasting, prayer, solitude and silence. He shunned all kinds of special ascetic effort.

He ate everything that was irreproachably permitted according to the monastic vow, but ate the smallest quantity; he only slept enough so that by vigilance he would not disturb the property of mind; he prayed for a long time before going to sleep he devoted much time reading salutary books. But if in his external life Ven. John acted cautiously in everything, avoiding extreme measures dangerous for the soul, then in his internal spiritual life he, "burning with divine love", did not want to know limits. He was especially deeply penetrated by the feeling of repentance and shed abundant tears, being distressed about his sins. Generally all his life was continual prayer and unexampled love for God. After 40 years of asceticism he became the hegumen of the Mount Sinai monastery, but within four years he again left it for solitude and peacefully departed to the Lord about the year 563, at the age of 80 years. Greatest of the ascetics in piety, Ven. John not only reached height of spiritual perfection, but he also left for others a direction for their spiritual life, having written the salutary composition, the "Ladder", where he presented 30 steps of spiritual ascent from perfection to perfection. In the "Ladder" is described the struggle of the pious ascetic against such vices and passions (sins of gluttony, fornication, love of money, pride, vanity, anger and so forth), which equally apply both to the monk and the layman. Together with these the "Ladder" directs the formation of virtues obligatory for all Christians (for ex. meekness, chastity, patience, humility, prayer and so forth). Representing a way of gradual ascent to moral perfection, the "Ladder" is a faithful and reliable direction for a spiritual life of zealousness in piety and the salvation of soul.

### *Kontakion, tone 1*

**Offering teachings from your books as ever flowering fruits, O Wisest One,  
Sweetening the hearts of those who receive them with attention, O Blessed One:  
For the ladder is leading souls of those who honor you in faith  
From earth to abiding heavenly glory.**

### *Ven. John the Silent*

A monk since he was 18, a Roman bishop of the city of Colonia since he was 28 and after directing his flock for 10 years, he secretly abandoned everything and entered the Monastery of St. Sabbas the Sanctified as a postulant. The intention of St. Sabbas to ordain St. John a presbyter betrayed his rank. Since this time St. John practiced asceticism in the monastery as a silent hermit and died at a very old age in the year 557 or 558. See Dec. 8.

### *Ven. Zosimas, Bishop of Syracuse*

Born after the fervent prayers of his parents and as a child he was sent to the Monastery of St. Lucia [Lucy] (see Dec. 13). Having reached majority and having succeeded in virtue, he became a guard at the tomb of St. Lucia [Lucy], and later became a deacon. After 30 years of asceticism he was elected hegumen of the monastery, and following that the bishop of Syracuse. In this dignity St. Zosimas was glorified for his special mercy, that once he removed his clothes to sell them and to give 2 coins to the poor. He edified his flock both by example and by word, adorned the temple of the Mother of God and turned the bribed chief of city away from his intention to give Jews permission to construct a synagogue. After 13 years of rule St. Zosimas peacefully gave up his spirit to the Lord (about the year 662). Many of the sick received healing with one touch to his tomb.

### *Prophet Joad*

He accused Jeroboam of spreading idolatry in his kingdom. He died strangled by a lion because he disobeyed the will of God and entered the house of a prophet in Bethel (3 Kg. ch. 13).

### *Holy Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Cephas, Caesar and Epaphroditus of the 70*

Sosthenes was converted to Christ by Apostle Paul and ruled as bishop in Colophon. Apollos, co-laborer of Apostle Paul, was bishop in Smyrna; Cephas was bishop in Colonia; Caesar was bishop in Dyrhachium [Durazzo]. Epaphroditus, co-laborer of Apostle Paul (Phil. 2:25-30), was bishop in Adrianum. See Dec. 8.

*St. Eubula*, mother of Martyr Panteleimon (July 27) died before the martyrdom of her son at the beginning of the 3rd century).

*Patriarch John of Jerusalem* died in peace.

*Hieromartyr Zachary [Zachariah], Bishop of Corinth*

Accused of disloyalty to the state and unwillingness to accept Islam, the Turks after cruel torture beheaded him in 1684.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0125b-0127.  
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