

SYNAXARIA OF THE TRIODION

by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos

FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT

On the same day, the Fourth Sunday of the Fast, we celebrate the memory of our Holy Father John, the author of *The Ladder*.

Verses

John, who when alive in the flesh was dead,
Liveth eternally, though he appeareth a breathless corpse.
He left a writing, in which he showeth a
Ladder of Ascent, the journey of his own ascent.

Synaxarion

This Father, at the age of sixteen, and being shrewd of mind, offered himself as a most sacred sacrifice to God, after making the ascent to Mount Sinai. He then arose after nineteen years and entered the arena of hesychasm, five *semeia* away from the place where Saint Kyriakos had struggled in asceticism. He took over a monastery by the name of Thola, where he spent forty years in perpetual yearning, ever ablaze with the fire of Divine love. He would eat everything that was permitted, without reproach, by the monastic profession, but in very small quantities and not to satiety, and in this way, I reckon, he very wisely broke the horn of vanity. But what mind could recount the fountain of his tears? He partook of sleep as much as was necessary to avoid damaging the fabric of his mind by keeping vigil; his way of life consisted of unceasing prayer and unimaginable longing for God. Having lived a God-pleasing life by all these accomplishments and written *The Ladder*; in which he set forth most beneficial teachings, he reposed worthily in the Lord at the age of eighty, in the year 603 A.D., leaving behind many other writings.

His memory is celebrated on the 30th of March; but it is also celebrated today, perhaps because in monasteries it is customary to read *The Ladder* from the beginning of the holy Fast.

By his intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

