

Holy Lent Spiritual Journey

First week of the Holy Great Fast

Theme of the week

PREPARATION FOR THE PROCESSION



“Seek **first** the **kingdom of God**, and His **righteousness**; and all things shall be added to you”

Matthew 6:33



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READINGS

Day	Prophecies	Matins	Mass	Know your Bible Map
Monday	Ex 2:23-3:5; Is 1:2-18	Psalm 6:1-2 Matt 12:24-34	Rom 1:26-2:7 James 2:1-13 Acts 14:19-28 Psalm 22:26 Mark 9:33-50	Deuteronomy 27-28
Tuesday	Is 1:19-2:3; Zech 8:7-13	Psalm 23:1,3 Matt 9:10-15	Rom 9:14-29 1 Pet 4:3-11 Acts 5:34-42 Psalm 25:16-17 Luke 12:41-50	Deuteronomy 29-31
Wednesday	Is 2:3-11; Joel 2:12-27	Psalm 25:6-7 Luke 6:24-34	Rom 14:19&15:1-7 2 Pet 1:4-11 Acts 10:9-20 Psalm 25:20,16 Luke 6:35-38	Deuteronomy 32-34
Thursday	Is 2:11-19; Zech 8:18-23	Psalm 24:1-2 Luke 8:23-25	1Cor 4:16-5:9 1 John 1:8-2:11 Acts 8:3-13 Psalm 118:14,18 Mark 4:21-29	Joshua 1-2
Friday	Deut 6:3-7:26; Is 3:1-14	Psalm 30:1-2 Luke 5:12-16	Rom 12:6-21 3 John 1:1-14 Acts 2:42-3:9 Psalm 13:5-6 Luke 11:1-10	Joshua 3-5
Saturday	-	Psalm 119:57-58 Matt 5:25-37	Rom 12:1-21 James 1:1-12 Acts 21:27-39 Psalm 5:1-2 Matt 5:38-48	Joshua 6-8
Sunday	-	Psalm 18:1-2 Matt 7:22-29	Rom 13:1-14 James 1:13-21 Acts 21:40-22:16 Psalm 25:1-2,4 Matt 6:19-33	Joshua 9-10

Fasting	Metanias	Jesus Prayer
11:00	5 times /day	10 times morning 10 times night

MONDAY: REJECT EVIL

I want nothing from the world, for the world has nothing to be desired but only temptations for the beginners. I want nothing of the world, for the world is too poor to give me. If what I want is available in the world, the world would be a heaven. But it is still an earth as I see there is nothing in it except material things in fact I search for heavenly matters, for the Spirit, for God. I want nothing of the world, for I am not of the world. I am not dust as they think, I am a divine breath. I was with God from eternity, and God placed me on the earth. But I shall leave it after a while and return to God. So I want nothing of this earth. I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father. I want nothing of the world, all that I want is to get rid of it, to be released from it, from the flesh and from the earth! I want to return to God - as before - to be again a holy breath not defiled by any worldly thing. I want nothing of the world because I seek eternal immortal things and the world has nothing that is immortal. All that is in the world is passing away, even the world itself will perish and come to nothing. I do not seek perishable things. I want nothing of the world. There is He whom I ask to give me. He who is rich and powerful, in whom I have found satisfaction and nothing is lacking. He gives me before I ask Him, He gives me what is good and of benefit to me. Since I have put myself in His hands I need nothing of the world.

“Release of the Spirit.” His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

(Chapter 14, pp88-89).

Church Father Quote

"Let us fast an acceptable and very pleasing fast to the Lord. True fast is the estrangement from evil, temperance of tongue, abstinence from anger, separation from desires, slander, falsehood, and perjury. Privation of these is true fasting. St. Basil the Great

Practice

Cast all your sins upon the altar that they may be consumed during the Mass.

TUESDAY - CLEAVE TO GOOD

Fasting coupled with prayer is a means to achieve God's will in us. Christ fasted after baptism. He fasted on our behalf, accumulating for us a treasure of fasting. He made us aware that He would be a companion for every repentant person on their fasting pilgrimage. Christ has pointed the way for us and He is also going to be our companion. Fasting is by no means torturing the body. It is liberation of the soul, to accompany Christ's followers on the voyage of Salvation, reaching for Gethsemane and then Golgotha and then finally the dawn of Ascension and its glory, that is the achievement of God's will in us. Our Coptic Church celebrates fasting by chanting this hymn: "With love we lay the foundation, with humility we strengthen the structure. Our pilgrimage is based on love, humility shields us all the way." By the grace of God we must liquidate our failing corners; liquidation of sensual desires, of worldly passions, of selfishness, of lethargy, passiveness, hostility and hatred. To prepare for the pilgrimage means to get ready to carry the burden of the Cross – I am crucified with Christ. To accompany Christ on His way is to be ready to bear the Cross with Him. Fasting is the Cross born pleurably and with delight, for it is the path to salvation, that I may partake with my Lord the burden of the Cross of humanity as Simon of Cyrene did. The Cross of love and sacrifice to all humanity, the Cross of the realization of God's will to the end, the Cross of maintaining chastity up until the sacrificial altar. "The Pilgrimage of the Holy Days of Fasting", Father Tadros Malaty. (pp12)

Church Father Quote

"To be Orthodox means to have the God-man Christ constantly in your soul, to live in Him, think in Him, feel in Him, act in Him. In other words, to be Orthodox means to be a Christ-bearer and a Spirit-bearer." St. Justin

Practice

Say each day the words of St. Augustine, "Our hearts have been made for You, O God, and they shall never rest until they rest in You."

WEDNESDAY LOVE & GIVE

Jesus. This was the name indicated from heaven for the Child born in the manger in Bethlehem. "And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.'" (Luke 1:30-31). Jesus is the Greek for the Jewish name 'Joshua' which means 'God is salvation'. A further explanation of the name of Jesus is found in Matthew 1:21, "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

The nature of Christ's mission was announced from heaven before He was born. He was to be named Jesus (God's salvation) because His primary purpose was to save His people from their sins. Is there any name more precious than Jesus? "Jesus" – the name at whose mention all things bow, those in heaven, those on earth and those under the earth. "Jesus" – the name that brings comfort to the afflicted, strength to the weak, hope to the hopeless, forgiveness to the sinner, courage to the faltering, life to the dying. "Jesus" – the name that is above all other names; the name that becomes a prayer expressing and fulfilling the needs of our souls; the name at whose prayerful mention impossible things begin to be possible. Jesus is the human name of God's Son. It denotes His human nature since He was fully man and fully God in one and the same person.

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life", Anthony Coniaris (pp17-18).

"The Pilgrimage of the Holy Days of Fasting", Father Tadros Malaty. (pp12)

Church Father Quote

"Do not be surprised that you fall everyday, Do not give up but stand up courageously and assuredly the angel who guard you will honor your patience before God St. John The Laddert

Practice

Love God above all creatures and earthly pleasures.

THURSDAY - GROW IN SPIRIT

My beloved brother, a spirit which desires to be released, knows well its own worth. It knows how magnificently great it is and how much greater it is than to be humiliated by the flesh, the environment or by the devils. God's beloved, to have an idea about this matter, we have to examine it together. We have to also remember the past, the present and the future in order to recognize what a hidden power we have which we are not aware of. We have to remember that man is the only being created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:27). So when you are asked to introduce yourself, say, firmly and confidently, "I am the image of God". Being the image of God, you are immortal and not liable to perish at all. For is it possible that a person created after the likeness of God, the Immortal, would perish?! See then how great you are than the high mountain, the great sea, the blazing sun and the shining moon. You are greater than the wide desert and the spacious plain, and even greater than the atom which destroys and all the power of nature. All these things pass away as the Holy Bible says, "Heaven and earth will pass away...", but you will not, for the Lord Jesus Christ promised you an eternal life (John. 4:14). You, the image of God; You are the king (ruler) of the earth and all that is in it: You, my great brother, are the only divine creature who, of all the earth and what is beneath or on it, are given by God the gift of intellect and utterance given to angels. You are the creature who is given the ability to know God and worship Him and whom God is pleased with. The nature which you sometimes think greater than you, is only made by God to serve you. "Release of the Spirit." His Holiness Pope Shenouda III (pp 37-38)

Church Father Quote

"Devils take great delight in fullness, and drunkenness and bodily comfort. Fasting possesses great power and it works glorious things. To fast is to banquet with angels." St. Athanasius the Great

Practice

Lift up your mind and heart to God when men speak ill of you.

FRIDAY - PRAY & SUBMIT

Prayer Of Lord Have Mercy: At the completion of every prayer of the Agbia, the church repeats, 'Lord have mercy' forty-one times. It is a marvelous example of perseverance in prayer which does not return empty. The Greek for Lord have mercy is 'Kyrie-ley-son', which is composed of two words: Kyrie, meaning Lord, and ley-son, meaning to have mercy. My advice to you my beloved, is that whenever you pray 'Lord have Mercy' forty-one times, try to remember the thirty nine lashes that grazed the holy back of your beloved Jesus for your sake. Remember the crown of thorns which was placed on His holy head in mockery and scorn and remember how He was beaten on His holy head so that the crown of thorns pierced His bleeding forehead, and do not forget that cruel stab in His holy side which caused His pure Blood to be shed on the earth. So, its repetition reminds us always of Christ's incredible love for us. Let us pray 'Lord have mercy' saying, 'You who were lashed for us, have mercy on us. You who were stabbed by the spear for us, have mercy on us. Try my beloved, to ease the severe pain which the Lord Christ endured for you, through your repentance and persistence, pleading for His mercy. Father Antonious Rageb says about this meaningful short prayer: "We recite, 'Lord have mercy' so many times. Our whole life is not enough to recite and beg the compassionate mercy from our loving God. Let your repetition in prayer become a beautiful incense, seek mercy for yourself, for all your matters and also for others. Lord have mercy on me because of my evil thoughts; from mental distraction; in this tribulation; on Your church from corrupt foxes; on Your children from the seduction of sin.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp18-19)

Church Father Quote

As it is impossible to verbally describe the sweetness of honey to one who has never tasted honey, so the goodness of God cannot be clearly communicated by way of teaching if we ourselves are not able to penetrate into the goodness of the Lord by our own experience. St. Basil the Great

Practice

Do not allow yourself to be puffed up with vain pride over your good works, but offer them in humility to God.

SATURDAY - BE PERFECT

Man seeks knowledge away from God and he only gains ignorance upon ignorance. Man is God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in him. The Spirit whom the Lord Jesus Christ said of, "He will guide you into all truth" (John. 16:13) and St. Paul said about Him, "For the Spirit searches all things. Yes, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10). However, due to the great misery and ignorance of the man, he seeks knowledge not within himself, from the Spirit of God dwelling in him, but seeks it outside, with people, and in the books which he thinks can give him life! Thus, there are many scholars and wise men in these generations while the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God. St. Augustine walked along this path for a long time, seeking God outside himself, but when he found God, he sang to Him this everlasting song which says: "Too late did I love You, O Fairness so ancient and yet so new! Too late did I love You! For behold, You were within, and I without, and there did I seek You. I unlovely, rushed heedlessly among the things of beauty You made. You were with me, but I was not with you". When Augustine found God within him, he became a saint. You also, my beloved brother, will lose the way if you try to seek God outside you. But sit alone, consider and meditate, go deep into yourself and seek God. You will find Him there, in your inmost depths. You will see Him face to face and feel Him as a pouring and overflowing fountain of love. Only then you will be greatly astonished and cry out in silent joy "I have seen God".

"Release of the Spirit", His Holiness Pope Shenouda III (pp92-93).

SUNDAY - SEEK THE KINGDOM

No man can serve two masters. You can not serve God and mammon. At the start of the path God asks me: How many gods do you serve? Is it true that you believe in one god? Which one, God or mammon? God or the flesh? God or garments? God or appearances? God or yourself? This is the preliminary instructions for the fasting pilgrims, to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you, they are traveling carefree. For God is their life, their guiding light, their power and sustenance. These are sure steps toward eternal life.

"The Pilgrimage of the Holy Days of Fasting." Father Tadros Malaty (pp12).