

Holy Lent Spiritual Journey

Third week of the Holy Great Fast

Theme of the week
PURITY OF PROCESSION

Repentance



“It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is **alive** again, and was lost and is **found**.”

Luke 15:32



ST. MARY COPTIC
ORTHODOX CHURCH
OTTAWA

READINGS

Day	Prophecies	Matins	Mass	Know your Bible Map
Monday	Prov 1:20-33; Is 8:13-9:7	Psalm 32:1-2 Luke 19:11-28	1Cor 5:9-6:5 1 Pet 1:3-12 Acts 17:10-14 Psalm 32:5 Luke 11:33-36	Judges 9
Tuesday	Prov 2:1-15; Is 10:12-20; Josh 7:1-26	Psalm 32:10 Luke 12:54-59	Rom 4:1-8 1 John 2:1-11 Acts 27:9-12 Psalm 32:2-3 John 8:31-39	Judges 10-12
Wednesday	Ex 4:19-6:13; Joel 2:21-26; Is 9:9-10:4; Job 12:1-14:22	Psalm 27:4 Luke 13:18-22	2Thess 2:9-17 2 Pet 2:9-15 Acts 28:7-11 Psalm 27:7-8 Luke 4:1-13	Judges 13-16
Thursday	Gen 18:17-19:29; Prov 2:16-3:4; Is 11:10-12:2	Psalm 9:11-12 Luke 20:20-26	Rom 4:6-11 James 4:1-10 Acts 28:1-6 Psalm 9:7-8 John 12:44-50	Judges 17-19
Friday	Deut 9:7-10:11; 1 Sam 23:26-24:22; Job 15:1-35; Is 13:2-13; Sirach 2:1-3:4	Psalm 9:11-12 Luke 20:20-26	Rom 4:6-11 James 4:1-10 Acts 28:1-6 Psalm 9:7-8 John 12:44-50	Judges 20-32
Saturday	-	Psalm 130:1-2 Mark 10:17-27	2Cor 7:2-11 James 2:14-26 Acts 23:12-35 Psalm 27:6-8 Matt 18:23-35	Ruth 1-4
Sunday	-	Psalm 55:1-2,16 Matt 20:1-16	2Cor 6:2-13 James 3:1-12 Acts 24:1-23 Psalm 79:8-9 Luke 15:11-32	1 Samuel 1-3

Fasting	Metanias	Jesus Prayer
12:00	9 times /day	20 times morning 20 times night

MONDAY - CONFESSION OF REPENTANCE

There is an old legend according to which God said to one of His angels: "Go down to earth and bring back the most precious thing in the world." The angel flew down to earth and traversed hills and valleys, seas and rivers, in search of the most precious thing in the world. Finally, after a number of years, the angel came upon a battlefield and beheld a brave soldier dying of the wound she had received in defense of his country. The angel seized a drop of blood, brought it to the throne of God and said, "Lord God, surely this is the most precious thing in the world." God said, "Indeed, O angel, this is precious in My sight, but it is not the most precious thing in the world." So the angel returned to earth and, after many years of wandering, came to a hospital where a nurse lay dying of a disease that she had contracted through nursing others. As the last breath passed from her lifeless form, the angel caught it up and brought it to the throne of judgment, saying, "O Lord God, surely this is the most precious thing in the world." God smiled at the angel and said, "Indeed, O angel, sacrifice on behalf of others is very precious in My sight, but it is not the most precious thing in the world." The angel returned to earth and this time wandered for many years. Then it happened that the angel beheld one day a vicious looking man riding through a dark forest. He was going to the hut of his enemy to destroy him. As he approached the enemy's house, light streamed from the windows as the members of the household, unsuspecting, went about their tasks. The villain approached and looked into the window. There he saw the wife putting the little son to bed, teaching him to pray, instructing him to thank God for all His blessings. As the vicious man looked at this scene, he forgot why he had come. He remembered his own childhood – how his mother had put him to bed and taught him to pray to God. The man's heart melted and a tear rolled down his cheek. The angel caught the tear and flew to God saying, "Dear Lord, surely this is the most precious thing in the world – the tear of repentance." God beamed upon the angel as He spoke, "Indeed, O angel, you have brought Me the most precious thing in the world – the tear of repentance which opens the gates of heaven."

"Eastern Orthodoxy: A Way of Life." Anthony Coniaris (Chapter 5 pp26-27).

Church Father Quote

✦ *We pray not to inform God or instruct Him but to beseech Him closely, to be made intimate with Him, by continuance in supplication; to be humbled; to be reminded of our sins. St. John Chrysostom*

Practice

Cast away every earthly pleasure which robs you of God's grace and love.

TUESDAY - RIGHTEOUSNESS OF REPENTANCE

My dear friend why do you thirst?

Examine your heart, and you will discover the sealed spring within you!

Enjoy the gift of the Spirit who dwells in you!

The Spirit is yearning to work in you!

To convict you of your sins, and bestow on you repentance and forgiveness.

He will fill you with joy and peace.

Come to Him! Come closer to Him and be quenched!

Come along for repentance and confession!

Ask Him to work in you!

"The Fiery Spirit", Father Tadros Malaty (pp30)

Church Father Quote

❖ *Let us always guard our tongue; not that it should always be silent, but that it should speak at the proper time. St. John Chrysostom*

Practice

Bear patiently the irritation caused by others and offer it to God in atonement for your sins.

WEDNESDAY - TEMPTATION OF REPENTANCE

The path of godliness is not as easy as it may seem at first glimpse, but needs effort, struggle and Divine Providence so that we ask in the first supplication of the Liturgy of St. Gregory, "May the righteousness of faith multiply, straighten the path of godliness for us. The Sacrament of Communion is the most important Divine help in our struggle in the way of godliness and fear of God, as the wise King Solomon says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10)". We believe the mystery of redemption which was made by the Son of God on the cross, and we believe in this great Mystery which He instituted on the night of His sufferings as an expression of love to mankind and His Divine will to save them. We believe in this great Mystery instituted by the Lord as a remedy for all diseases, exposing all sins and strengthening the life of godliness, humility and reverence before the sacrificial love of God. My beloved, remember all these matters while you proclaim during the Mass, "Truly we believe" with the congregation. The priest takes the Bread into his hands

and says, "He took bread upon His holy, immaculate, undefiled and blessed life-giving hands." Beginning with this statement, the Divine Liturgy teaches us the way in which the Lord instituted the great Mystery of godliness and redemption. The first thing that the Lord Jesus did was to take the bread upon His hands to bless it, sanctify it, and convert it to His Holy Body.

Contemplate on the description of the hands of the Lord. Strive to make your own hands resemble them as much as you can. The Lord's hands were unblemished, and your hands, my beloved, have the sense of touch, which is one of the five senses; senses are the doors of the heart and mind. Try to keep them undefiled from lust and evil and prevent them from sin such as stealing, abuse, forgery and bribery. Thus your hands should be blessed like the Lord's hands which were described as life giving. For by His hands, He rose many from the dead and healed many sick and diseased.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp112-113).

Church Father Quote

❖ *O most grateful burden, which comforts them that carry it! The burdens of earthly masters gradually wear out the strength of those who carry them; but the burden of Christ assists the bearers of it, because we carry not grace, but grace us.* " St. John Chrysostom

Practice

Exercise patience and humility when you have fallen into some defects and turn quickly to God in trust and love.

THURSDAY - JUDGEMENT OF REPENTANCE

Jesus did not come to condemn us because we had become enslaved to sin. He came to save us by breaking the bonds of sin and death.

"Our nature was sick and needed a doctor.

Man had fallen and needed someone to raise him up.

He who ceased to participate in the good needed someone to bring him back to it.

He who was shut in darkness needed the presence of life.

The prisoner was looking for someone to ransom him.

The captive for someone to take his part.

He who was under the yoke of slavery was looking for someone to set him free." St. Gregory of Nyssa.

Who shall deliver me? Thank God for Jesus Who came not to judge me but to deliver me from this body of sin and death!

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris(pp49).

Church Father Quote

❖ *“This is the great work of man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.” St. Anthony the Great*

Practice

Examine your conscience and make the resolution of amendment before approaching the Holy Communion.

FRIDAY - FAITHFULNESS OF REPENTANCE

Following the resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of Jesus, the General Judgment will take place. The same Jesus who came humbly in Bethlehem to be our Saviour will come again at the end of time to be our Judge. The purpose of His first coming was to prepare us for the Second Coming. The One who will meet us at the end of the road is the One with Whom we may walk hand in hand on the road of life right now. In fact, we may even minister to Him in the persons of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned, the sick. The single most important criterion by which we shall be judged is the royal virtue of love: the love of God and love of neighbour, “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it to me.” (Matthew 24:40).

Remember that the Lord Jesus as Judge on the last day will not condemn those who have sinned, but those who have sinned without repenting. He forgives and saves those who have repented of their sins. For this reason He came into the world; to SAVE. That was the purpose of His coming; that was the dream of His heart; to save us all so that we might be with Him in His glory forever.

“Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life” Anthony Coniaris (pp117).

Church Father Quote

❖ *“This is the great work of man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.” St. Anthony the Great*

Practice

Never allow a day to pass without humbling yourself in some way.

SATURDAY - FORGIVENESS OF REPENTANCE

God was eager to constitute an agreement with man and make a covenant.

So He asked Abraham to offer a sacrifice divided into two, after which, "there was a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces" (Gen. 15:17). Do you want to enjoy a covenant of love with the Lord? Then first you have to enjoy real reconciliation with God! Through His sacrifice on the cross where you will meet the Lord, the consuming fire! He will then transform you to a burning torch with His Holy Spirit, extricating all coldness from your heart, creating out of you a spiritually inflamed person!

"The Fiery Spirit." Father Tadros Malaty (pp23).

The great Saints of the Church were humble men and women who radiated grace and love. They were not converted once. Nor did repent just once.

Their life was a daily conversion and a constant repentance. They were saved once on the Cross at Golgotha, but they were also being saved daily in the yielding of their will to Jesus. Daily they sinned and daily they repented. Daily they fell and daily they rose.

We have been saved but we are also being saved. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18).

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris(pp48).

Church Father Quote

♣ *What is slander? It is every sort of wicked word we would dare not speak in front of the person whom we are complaining about." St. Anthony the Great*

Practice

Think little of yourself and highly of others.

SUNDAY - ACCEPTANCE OF REPENTANCE

Fasting is an act of repentance in motion, and repentance means a constant vigil and entire abandonment to God's providence. There we discover how immense God's love is. Thus, the Church will tell us about the sinful son, "I will rise and go to my father." We reproach and rebel against God, believing that God has abandoned us. Actually, we are the ones who go to join the herd of swine and when we regress we discover an eternal truth; that God's love never diminishes and our appreciation of that love will be even greater.

How wonderful is God's embrace, how sweet are His caresses and His acceptance of my filth. This is my main consolation and encouragement

throughout my long pilgrimage and also my downfall. For that, I walk with long strides in the path of salvation because my father is there waiting for me. His embrace gives me courage and His blood purifies me. I wasted all the treasures endowed by Him in the way of talents, knowledge, health and wealth. I squandered all in worldly passions. How would be my Father's attitude when He sees me again? He will hasten to embrace me and caress me. How wonderful is that love!

The purpose of repentance is also the discovery of how rich is the house of God, how rich is the Church! There we find the first ROBE (Baptism) the RING (a sign of everlasting communion with God) and the FATTED CALF (the millennial banquet – the everlasting Flesh and Blood on the altar).

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

Repentance (Type I) - The sinful desire of the prodigal son, who followed Satan's deceit, ended by a miserable life after leaving his father's house, but by a sincere decision, to repent, and after he had returned to himself, he was saved. The father met the disloyalty of his son by compassion, patience and love. It demonstrates the loving kindness of our Father towards us and warns us of postponing our repentance. The Pauline epistle mentions the prophecy of Isaiah, "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation". The Catholic reading tells us that we must control our tongue, which is the source of many sins. This is an important issue for repentance. The Acts advises us to cling to the truth and not to fear the other opponents. This is how a true Christian should be

Father Gawargious A. Kolta, St. John's Magazine, April 2006, Vol. 17. No. 195

Church Father Quote

❖ *"The one who overcomes hardships and does not use them as an excuse, proves the truth of his inner intentions." HH Pope Shenouda*