

Holy Lent Spiritual Journey

Sixth week of the Holy Great Fast

Theme of the week
THE FRUITS OF THE STRUGGLE

Identity in Procession: **BAPTISM**



“For judgment I have come into this world, that those who **do not see may see**, And that those who see may be made blind.”

John 9:39



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READINGS

Day	Prophecies	Matins	Mass	Know Your Bible Map
Monday	Prov 8:1-11; Is 43:10-28; Job 32:6-16	Psalms 38:9 Mark 12:1-12	1Thess 4:1-18 James 4:7-12 Acts 18:9-18 Psalm 35:1-2 Luke 13:1-5	2 Samuel 8-10
Tuesday	Prov 8:12-21; Is 44:1-8; Job 32:17-33; 32:33; 2 Kin 5:1-27	Psalms 35:13 Luke 4:22-30	1Cor 14:18-28 James 1:22-2:1 Acts 19:11-20 Psalm 42:1 Luke 9:18-22	2 Samuel 11-12
Wednesday	Ex 10:1-11:10; Is 44:21-28; Prov 8:22-36; Job 34:1-37; Sirach 10:1-31	Psalms 102:17,21 Mark 7:1-20	Rom 2:12-24 2 Pet 1:20-2:6 Acts 26:1-8 Psalm 9:11-12 Luke 11:45-52	2 Samuel 13-14
Thursday	2 Kin 4:8-41; Is 45:1-10; Prov 9:1-11; Job 35:1-16; Sirach 11:1-10	Psalms 9:13 Luke 20:9-19	1Tim 2:1-3:4 Jude 1:19-25 Acts 27:16-20 Psalm 9:13-14 John 6:47-71	2 Samuel 15-16
Friday	Gen 22:1-18; Is 45:11-17; Prov 9:12-18; Job 36:1-33; 37:1-24; Tobit 1:1-3:23; 3:24-9:12; 10:1-14:15	Psalms 51:7-8 John 3:14-21	1Cor 10:1-13 1 John 2:12-17 Acts 8:9-17 Psalm 34:5,4 John 3:1-13	2 Samuel 17-18
Saturday	-	Psalms 79:8-9 Matt 9:1-8	Eph 4:1-7 1 Pet 1:13-21 Acts 27:9-26 Psalm 32:1-2 Mark 10:46-52	2 Samuel 19-20
Sunday	-	Psalms 26:2-3 Matt 23:1-39	Col 3:5-17 1 John 5:13-21 Acts 27:27-37 Psalm 143:7,1 John 9:1-41	2 Samuel 21-22

Fasting	Metanias	Jesus Prayer
1:30	15 times /day	35 times morning 35 times night

MONDAY - REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

One can find in the Orthodox Church an important theology of tears.

Just as in Baptism our sins are cleansed by water, so the sins committed after baptism are cleansed by water – the tears of repentance. St. Symeon calls them the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit' and teaches that sins committed after cannot be forgiven without tears.

Thus St. John Climacus wrote: "Greater than baptism itself is the fountain of tears after baptism, even though it is somewhat audacious to say so. For baptism is the washing away of evils that were in us before, but sins committed after baptism are washed away by tears. Because baptism is received in infancy, we have all defiled it, but we cleanse it anew with tears. And if God in His love for mankind had not given us tears, then few indeed would be saved."

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris(pp133).

Church Father Quote

✦ "Prayer is a great weapon, a rich treasure, a wealth that is never exhausted, an undisturbed refuge, a cause of tranquillity, the root of a multitude of blessings and their source" St. John Chrysostom

Practice

Commit yourself entirely to God so that the judgments of men will not disturb you.

TUESDAY - WITNESSING IN BAPTISM

The prayer of `Agios' or `Holy' is the holiest and strongest of prayers, and the most chastening for the devil, who is the enemy of all holiness. It includes honouring God, and the word `Holy' means 'high' and "who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2), and "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). In the Syrian language, `Agios' means 'has no limit in greatness, love, justice and all divine qualities. As the saints in heaven praise Him saying, "Great and marvellous are Your works Lord God Almighty, who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name, for You alone are holy" (Revelations 15:3,4), and Hannah, Samuel's mother prayed saying, "There is none holy like the Lord for there is none beside You, nor there is any rock like our God" (1 Samuel 2:2).

Isaiah the Prophet heard the praise of the Seraphim: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3), and the praise of the four living

creatures carrying the Divine Throne (Revelations 4:8). The rank of the Seraphim is the highest of heavenly hosts, proving that the praise they sing is of the highest and greatest praise that can possibly be presented to the Divine Glory. St. Ambrose says, "We cannot find anything to honour God better than calling Him Holy, because He is the most Holy." These words are also reflected in Daniel 9:24. Our beloved Lord is the source of every purity and holiness.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp105-106).

Church Father Quote

- ❖ Everywhere, wherever you may find yourself, you can set up an altar to God in your mind by means of prayer. St. John Chrysostom

Practice

Concentrate on your chief defect and strive ceaselessly to overcome it.

WEDNESDAY - JUDGEMENT OF BAPTISM

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers: "A brother asked Abba Sisoës, 'What shall I do, Abba, for I have fallen?' The old man said, 'Get up again.' The brother said, 'I have got up again, but, I have fallen again.' The old man said, 'Get up again and again, until you are taken up either in virtue or in sin; for a man presents himself to judgment in the state in which he is found.'"

If the believer repents to God in humility and with a contrite spirit, God will turn their mourning into tears of joy and happiness, for the salvation which Christ has given us from the bondage of sin and evil. The Lord will take off the sackcloth of sorrow and cloth him with the purified white vestments. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over." (Psalm 23:5); "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength." (Psalm 93:1); "He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." (Revelation 3:5).

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp65).

Church Father Quote

- ❖ “A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much, but one who gives much. For what he gives away remains his forever” St. John Chrysostom

Practice

Live each day in the state of holiness in which you wish to die.

THURSDAY - LIFE OF BAPTISM

A flaming heart is one which burns with the Spirit of Christ! Wherever this heart is found it kindles all hearts associated with it. This kind of heart is attached to the Lord, and is capable of altering people's callous hearts into warm hearts, fit for a sacrifice of love that pleases God's gracious heart. A flaming heart confronts sin with power. Such a heart is capable of transforming those sins from abrasive thorns to nothingness. A person with such a heart transforms the love of the world with all its pleasures, into a life of thanksgiving to the Lord for creating such a beautiful world for his sake. He transforms the lusts of the flesh into spiritual sensational feelings full of love for the Lord! A flaming heart can never be quenched “nor can the floods drown it” (Eccl. 8:7). It is God's loving image. Such a heart cannot be attained by knowledge or by personal striving. It is the seed that God Himself plants in the believer's heart. A flaming heart is one that holds the true living image of God's Spirit the consuming fire (Heb.12:29), who lives with the devouring fire (Is.33:14). Who came to send fire on the earth (Luke12:49). Thus God then makes of the believer a creation similar to the fiery Cherub, and from the Church He makes a fiery vessel carrying God's throne! Meet God's inflamed Spirit and you will become a blessed flame!

“The Fiery Spirit.” Father Tadros Malaty (pp 21022).

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

Practice

With simple and undoubting faith and with humble reverence approach the Holy Communion.

FRIDAY - REBIRTH IN BAPTISM

Quench My Thirst, Sanctify Me, Submit My Heart To Joy

Quench me O Spirit of God with Your holy waters, as You are the true Fountain of life!

My heart is completely depleted, I am in great need of You!

Transform my heart from all mundane desires, to Jesus' heavenly kingdom!

Rejuvenate it from dreariness and raggedness, to God's splendid world!

O Holy Spirit of God, be my Helper!

Who is capable of transforming my darkness to light, but You!

Who is capable of changing my lust to holiness, but You!

Who can renew my nature, O Spirit of God but You!

Quench my thirst, sanctify me, and submit my heart to joy!

Carry me, O Spirit of God, on wings, and I will fly up with You, to witness the heavenly hosts and join in their praises!

Carry me, O Spirit of God to my Beloved, so that I may delight in the throne of the gracious God, where my spirit will rejoice with His glory!

There I will discover God's plans for me, and for all mankind, and praise Him unceasingly!

Work in me, and sanctify me, O Spirit of God!

"The Fiery Spirit", Father Tadros Malaty (pp34).

Church Father Quote

❖ A man may seem to be silent, but if his heart is condemning others, he is babbling ceaselessly. But these may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent, that is, he says nothing that is not profitable. Abba Poemen

Practice

Withdraw occasionally from the tumult of the world and think of God and your eternal salvation.

SATURDAY - SALVATION OF BAPTISM

A bishop was once asked, "Have you been saved?" He replied, "I have." He was then asked, "And when were you saved." He answered, "On a Friday afternoon at three o'clock in the spring of the year 33 AD on a hill outside the City of Jerusalem." That is when we were all saved, but God will not force this salvation upon us. Each one of us must accept is

personally as the great gift of God's love. We were saved in baptism which is our personal Golgotha. Baptism is the tomb where "we were baptized into His death." (Romans 6:3); it is also the womb from which we were born anew receiving within us the life of Christ. We were saved at baptism but we must continue to 'work out' our salvation for the rest of our lives by daily serving, loving, obeying and following Jesus.

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris(pp47)

Church Father Quote

❖ "If we keep ourselves in the presence of God we shall neither think nor say nor do what is wrong, convinced as we are that God is the witness of all our thoughts & words & actions" St. John Chrysostom

Practice

Watch and pray that you may guard against temptation.

SUNDAY - ENLIGHTENMENT OF BAPTISM

The goal of the pilgrim (the man born blind from birth) is to see God. This blind man was deprived from seeing material things. Now he has the insight to see Christ whom the Pharisees were too blind to see. At the close of fasting the Church says we have the spiritual vision of God. Fasting helps purify the soul. These are the fruits of the holy fast. Our spiritual eyes begin to see God, recognize His will and commandments and all His doings all around us. Thus, we train our eyes to see Christ and prostrate in prayer as did the man who was born blind.

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

I was blind but now I can see. It is called baptism Sunday or the enlightenment Sunday because the Church was accustomed to baptize the catechumens on that day. When anyone lives in sin, he is blind, because he lives in darkness. He is enlightened after repentance. The blind man was enlightened physically by having eyes, and spiritually when he obeyed the Lord, who said to him: "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash." Acceptance of the word of God and washing by baptism, enlighten anyone that he can say: "I was blind but now I can see." The Pauline epistle declares to the believers that they have to put to death the old man with all the bad deeds and put on the new man who is

renewed in knowledge, through baptism. The Catholic epistle assures the believers that they have eternal life when they are born of God. The Acts comforts the believers that God is with them in hardships, because not a hair will fall from our heads without His permission.

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

