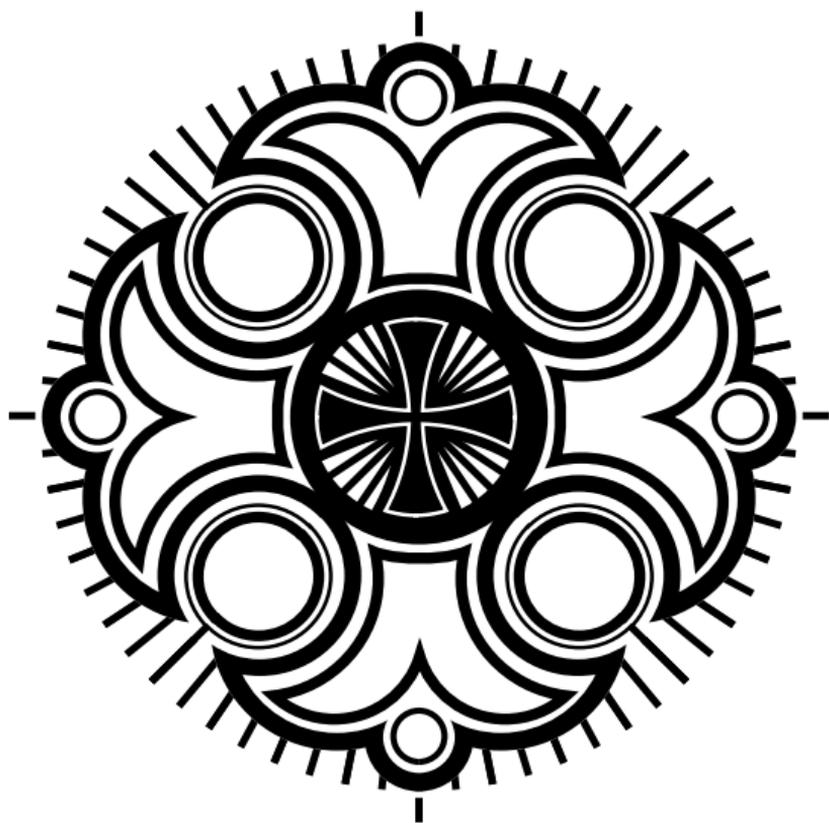


Drawing closer to God

Fasting and Prayer Program
The Holy Great Fast
2022



Introduction

By His Grace Bishop Youssef

Fasting is the champion of every virtue, the beginning of the struggle, the crown of the abstinent, the beauty of virginity and sanctity, the resplendence of chastity, the commencement of the path of Christianity, the mother of prayer, the wellspring of sobriety and prudence, the teacher of stillness, and the precursor of all good works. Just as the enjoyment of light is coupled with healthy eyes, so desire for prayer accompanies fasting that is practiced with discernment.

St. Isaac the Syrian

The church readings during the fifty-five days of the Holy Great Fast begin with a direct call to reject evil and culminate with the promised redemption, eternal salvation, and abundant grace. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ fervently desired to draw closer to His children. He marked the path distinctly so that we may follow boldly. He became personally engaged in our battles and waged a heavenly war against the enemy. By Divine inspiration, the writers of the Holy Gospel documented the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who prescribed the ideal strategy for spiritual combat to embrace prayer and fasting (Matt.17:21), *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 6:12). Our Lord’s goal was to heal His children from more than the mere physical infirmities but from the spiritual illnesses, which seized many captives wallowing in sin from debased moral conditions. By unwavering faith, the washing of the soul from its original sin through the holy Mystery of Baptism and renewing it through the holy Mystery of Repentance and Confession, the procession leads directly to the heart of Christ. He bowed the heavens and humbly emerged to share in humanity’s bitter struggles. He eagerly toiled and laboured in our inevitable path of sorrow and death. Therefore, He designed the procession to ease our struggles and nourish our minds and souls with His word. The fifty-five day spiritual expedition unveils a compassionate Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is the only bridge of hope and salvation unto eternal life for the world.

Guide to Readings:

If a Feast day falls during one of the days of the Holy Great Fast, in most instances, the readings of the Feast Day replace the ordinary readings of that day.

In this Program, the ordinary readings of the Holy Great Fast are included for all days.

Below are the Feast days which normally fall during the time of the Holy Great Fast and their associated readings:

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple – February 15

The Feast of the Cross – March 19

The Feast of the Annunciation – April 7 (not celebrated if it falls in the Holy Pascha)

Other important dates to remember:

9 March – Commemoration of H.H. Pope Kyrillos VI's departure

21 March - Commemoration of Fr Pishoy Kamel's departure

26 March - Commemoration of Fr Mikhail Ibrahim's departure

Readings of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 116:16-17,18-19
	Gospel	Luke 2:15-20
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 66:13-14,15
	Gospel	Luke 2:40-52
Mass:	Pauline	Phil 3:1-12
	Catholicon	2 Pet 1:12-21
	Acts	Acts 15:13-21
	Psalm	Ps 50:14,23
	Gospel	Luke 2:21-39

Readings of the Feast of the Cross

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 4:6-8
	Gospel	John 8:28-42
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 60:4-5
	Gospel	John 12:26-36
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 1:17-31
	Catholicon	1 Pet 2:11-25
	Acts	Acts 10:34-43
	Psalm	Ps 65:1-2
	Gospel	John 10:22-38

Readings of the Feast of the Annunciation

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 144:5, 7
	Gospel	Luke 7:36-50
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 72:6-7
	Gospel	Luke 11:20-28
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 3:1-31
	Catholicon	1 John 1:1-2:6
	Acts	Acts 7:23-34
	Psalm	Ps 45:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 1:26-38

33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

36 Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

40 "For he who is not against us is on our side.

41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

42 "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone

were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

43 "And if your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--

44 "where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

45 "And if your foot makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--

46 "where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

47 "And if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire--

48 "where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.

50 "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

Prayer

Enlighten our minds, O Lord, and grant that we may ever prefer You to everything else and choose rather to lose all worldly goods than relinquish but for one moment Your grace and love. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

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).

1st Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 2:23-3:5;	Is 1:2-18
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 6:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 12:24-34
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 1:26-27
	Catholicon	James 2:1-13
	Acts	Acts 14:19-28
	Psalm	Ps 22:26
	Gospel	Mark 9:33-50

Day 2

Cleave to Good Luke 12:41-50

41 Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"

42 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

43 "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

44 "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

45 "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and maidservants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,

46 "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 "But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

49 "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

50 "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!

Prayer

O my Saviour, let me never be separated from You. Amen.

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."

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

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)

1st Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Is 1:19-2:3;	Zech 8:7-13
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 23:1,3
	Gospel	Matt 9:10-15
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 9:14-29
	Catholicon	1 Pet 4:3-11
	Acts	Acts 5:34-42
	Psalm	Ps 25:16-17
	Gospel	Luke 12:41-50

Day 3

Love & Give
Luke 6:35-38

35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

36 "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Prayer

Purify my heart, O Lord, from the pursuits of self-love. Grant that I may seek no other pleasure than faithfulness in Your service and exactness in following Your Holy will in all things. Amen.

Practice

Love God above all creatures and earthly pleasures.

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

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).

1st Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Is 2:3-11; Joel 2:12-27	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 25:6-7
	Gospel	Luke 6:24-34
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 14:19-15:7
	Catholicon	2 Pet 1:4-11
	Acts	Acts 10:9-20
	Psalm	Ps 25:20,16
	Gospel	Luke 6:35-38

Day 4

Grow in Spirit
Mark 4:21-29

21 And He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?"

22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

23 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

24 And He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

25 "For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,

27 "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

28 "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

29 "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Prayer

O my God, do not allow me to live one moment without loving You. In flame me with continual affection for You, and ardent desire of pleasing You and of seeking You in all things, that I may find no happiness but in You. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

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)

1st Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Is 2:11-19; Zech 8:18-23	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 24:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 8:23-25
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 4:16-5:9
	Catholicon	1 John 1:8-2:11
	Acts	Acts 8:3-13
	Psalm	Ps 118:14,18
	Gospel	Mark 4:21-29

1 And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

3 "Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 "and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

5 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7 "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?"

8 "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

9 "And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Prayer

O loving God, can I know You and not love You and love You and not burn with desire to receive You on earth and to see and to possess You forever in Heaven.

Amen.

Practice

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

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

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. These are the sufferings that the church reminds us of while we recite this short but effective prayer of 'Lord have mercy'.

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. Specify each time a certain matter for which you need the Lord's mercy: Lord have mercy on me because of my evil thoughts; Lord have mercy on me from mental distraction; Lord have mercy on me in this tribulation; Lord have mercy on Your church from corrupt foxes; Lord have mercy on Your children from the seduction of sin.

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

1st Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 6:3-7:26; Is 3:1-14	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 30:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 5:12-16
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 12:6-21
	Catholicon	3 John 1:1-14
	Acts	Acts 2:42-3:9
	Psalm	Ps 13:5-6
	Gospel	Luke 11:1-10

Day 6

Be Perfect Matthew 5:38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

39 "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

41 "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Prayer

O Lord, may You alone be the God of my soul in time, that You may be my portion for eternity. Unite me to Yourself by making me like You, meek, humble, patient and charitable. Amen.

Practice

Endure cheerfully the trials of life and thus you will convert them into a ladder leading to God and Heaven.

Week 1

Preparation for Procession

Commentary:

When God created man, He gave him plenty of knowledge and whenever He needed more knowledge he was taught by God Himself. If man has continued along this path, he would have become a scholar and would have deserved to eat of the tree of life and live forever. But the man accepted to take knowledge from another source than God and so he began to be ignorant. His first lesson was from the serpent, and it resulted in eating of the tree of the knowledge and thus he became ignorant. 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).

1st Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 119:57-58
	Gospel	Matt 5:25-37
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 12:1-21
	Catholicon	James 1:1-12
	Acts	Acts 21:27-39
	Psalm	Ps 5:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 5:38-48

Day 7

Seek the Kingdom Matthew 6:19-33

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will] [He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith?

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Sunday of the Treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven

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).

Do not lay treasures on earth. Do not serve two masters, God and money, do not worry about your future, but seek first the Kingdom of God. This can lead us to take care of the needy and be charitable believers. For this reason, the Church chants during Lent the hymn: “Blessed are those who have mercy on the poor, for they shall obtain mercy”. The Pauline epistle tells us about the proper Christian behaviour towards the rulers and the laws. The Catholic epistle speaks about the life of meekness (to be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath), and the Acts tells us to preach the Gospel to all people.

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

1st Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 17:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 6:34-7:12
Prophecies: -		
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 18:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 7:22-29
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 13:1-14
	Catholicon	James 1:13-21
	Acts	Acts 21:40-22:16
	Psalm	Ps 25:1-2,4
	Gospel	Matt 6:19-33

- 1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,
- 2 saying; "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.
- 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Avenge me of my adversary.'
- 4 "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,
- 5 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "
- 6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.
- 7 "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?
- 8 "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Prayer

*O my dear God! Make Your love reign in place of my self-love, I desire that from this moment You may be the God of my heart, that You may be my portion forever.
Amen.*

Practice

Arm yourself with patience and prayer in time of temptation.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

Prayer is opening the heart to God, so He would enter and purify it. It reminds us of the prayer of the tax collector who lifted up a contrite heart before God, asking for His mercy and so he went back to his house justified. Therefore, you should pray to acquire purity of the heart, while you say to God in your prayer: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be

clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 50). Is not He the one who

said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezek 36:26-27). Ask Him in your prayers to fulfill this promise.

Prayer is consecrating the lips and the thoughts and it is the sanctifying of the soul. Furthermore, it is reconciliation with God. It is natural for the one who has a dispute between him and God, not to talk to Him. He does not pray. He does not have the intimacy to talk with God. If he starts to pray, it means that he wants to reconcile with God, and if he prayed, he will be humbled by his talk with God and ashamed to defile his thoughts which were with God not so long ago. He will then reach modesty of the thoughts, which is a healthy, spiritual sign. And so by praying, bad thoughts are abolished, as one continues to pray and uses prayer to enter into a spiritual atmosphere, far from the forces of darkness.

Prayer is the horror of the devils and the strongest weapon against them. The devil fears the person who prays, for he will escape his grasp. He fears that through his prayer, this person may gain strength by which he could fight and defeat him. The devil would also envy him for having such a relationship with God, which he has been deprived of. Therefore, the devil fights prayer by all means. He tries to stop it by insinuating to the person that he is too busy and has no time, or he would make him feel tired and his body becomes heavy. If the person insisted on praying, the devil would try to distract his thoughts so that his mind would stray.

"The Spiritual Means", His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

2nd Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 3:6-14; Is 4:2-5:7	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 40:11
	Gospel	Mark 9:25-29
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 1:18-25
	Catholicon	Jude 1:1-8
	Acts	Acts 4:36-5:11
	Psalm	Ps 29:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 18:1-8

17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

19 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' "

20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth."

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

22 But he was sad at this word, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27 But looking at them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Prayer

O Jesus, since You have saved me by the Cross, grant that I may be ever willing to live in its practice, that I may die in its salvation. Amen.

Practice

Call upon God whenever adversity befalls you.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

Between the Eternities: We are all travelers in this world. From the sweet grass to the packing house, birth till death, we travel between the eternities.” We are travelers—pilgrims—in a world that offers no lasting peace or rest. And while there is only one eternity, we travel between eternity past and eternity future, waiting for promises of a home and a hope that will last forever—promises yet to be fulfilled.

In those times of struggle and despair when our pilgrimage of life is difficult, it is helpful to remember that though we are pilgrims who travel between the eternities, we have a Savior who is the Lord and Master of eternity. He has offered us the promise of life with Him forever and has secured that promise with His own sacrifice. This was the promise spoken of by the writer of Hebrews 11:13. We are locked into the moments and hours and days of life, but we look ahead by faith in Christ. One day, we will experience the promises of eternity when faith will become sight as we see Him. That hope is what lifts us beyond life between the eternities to a joy that is eternal. For time and eternity, Jesus is all we need.

Daily Bread, 21st February 2008

Lord, what is my confidence which I have in this life? Or what is my greatest solace among all the things that appear under Heaven? Is it not You, my Lord God, whose mercies are numberless? Where was it ever well with me without You? Or when was it ever ill with me when You were present? I had rather be poor for Your sake, than rich without You.

I prefer rather to sojourn upon earth with You than to possess Heaven without You. Where You are, there is Heaven; and there is death and hell where You are not. You are my whole desire, and therefore I must need sigh after You and cry and pray.

In short, I cannot fully confide in anyone to bring my opportune help in my necessities save only in You, my God. You are my hope, my confidence, my comforter and in all things most faithful.

The Imitation of Christ, Thomas A Kempis (Chapter 59).

2nd Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Job 19:1-27, Is 5:7-16	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 41:4, 13
	Gospel	Luke 12:22-31
Mass:	Pauline	2 Cor 9:6-15
	Catholicon	James 1:1-12
	Acts	Acts 4:13-22
	Psalm	Ps 41:1
	Gospel	Mark 10:17-27

32 Then Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

33 Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

34 Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

35 And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.

37 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

38 Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

Prayer

O my Saviour, I give myself wholly to You. Reign as supreme ruler over my heart, my mind, my senses, my passions. May I always be subject to You and never wander away from You. Amen.

Practice

Turn away from temporal honours and worldly applause, in which much vanity is found.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

Lent: A time for Fasting and a time for Feasting.

Fast from judging others; feast on Christ indwelling them.

Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.

Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.

Fast from negative; feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth.

Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplifts.

Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossips; feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that under grids.

2nd Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 2:11-20; Is 5:17-25;	
	Mal 1:6-3:6	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 18:17-18
	Gospel	Matt 5:17-24
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 3:1-17
	Catholicon	2 John 1:8-13
	Acts	Acts 5:3-11
	Psalm	Ps 18:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 15:32-38

Day 11

Reject, Give & Follow Matthew 19:16-30

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder," "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"

19 "Honor your father and your mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "

20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit everlasting life.

30 "But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Prayer

Grant, O Lord, that I may avoid whatever is offensive to You and love and practice that only which is well pleasing in Your sight. Amen.

Practice

Love God above all things and do not let worldly pleasures draw you from the love of God.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

A group of English writers were discussing what they would do if certain heroes of history were suddenly to enter the room. What would they do if Shakespeare or Dante were to appear before them? Finally someone asked, "What would we do if Jesus were to appear before us?" One member of the group, Charles Lamb, replied, "If Shakespeare were to enter this room, I should rise up to do him honour, but if Jesus Christ were to enter, I should fall down and give Him worship."

The Nicene Creed states correctly what Orthodox Christians believe about Jesus when it says we believe: "...in One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light out of light, True God out of True God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through Whom all things were made."

St. John, in his Gospel, repeatedly refers to Christ as the Word. The term is most appropriate. Unless a man speaks a word, we cannot know him. Words communicate meaning. They enable others to know what is on our mind. As words express our inner thoughts, so Christ – the Word of God – communicates to us the thoughts of God. He came to earth to be God's 'language' in speaking to man. In Christ, dialogue with God is re-established.

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

2nd Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 5:15-22; Is 6:1-12;	
	Josh 2:1-6:27	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 28:9
	Gospel	Matt 11:20-30
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 16:17-27
	Catholicon	James 3:1-12
	Acts	Acts 12:12-23
	Psalm	Ps 48:10-11
	Gospel	Matt 19:16-30

39 And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?"

40 "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

41 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?"

42 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

43 "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

44 "For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.

45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

47 "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

49 "But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Prayer

Let not my heart, O Lord, which is entirely the work of Your hands and the price of Your blood, to belong to any other but You. Amen.

Practice

Subject yourself willingly to God's service and you will find peace.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

Spirit Of God, My wonderful Companion!

Spirit of God, be my sole Companion!

Guide my steps, and lead me to a victorious battle!

Shelter my heart as a cloud,
that protects me from the heat of temptation,
and cool me with Your rich oil of grace.

Spirit of God, grant me a new and rejuvenated outlet,

so that I may be saved daily,
from the slavery of the devil,
and pass through the cruel wilderness of this world,
and enjoy the heavenly Canaan.

Spirit of God, I beg of You to stay behind me,

to protect me from the unknown!
Defend me, O Spirit of God,
as I do not depend on the strength of man,
prestige, power or any materialistic matters.

Enter my heart, O Spirit of God,
so that I may rejoice in Your glory!

The world then will find no room in my heart,

neither will sin be able to overpower me,

nor the enemy to lure me away from You,

as I will rejoice in Your grace!

Spirit of God, escort my footsteps, wherever I go.

Bless my heart, thoughts and senses.

Bless my inner and outer deeds.

Bless me, O Holy One!

Spirit of God, be with me and within me!

Guide me and I will follow You.

Defend me from the unknown.

Abide in my heart and escort my movements.

For You are my wonderful and sweet Companion!

“The Fiery Spirit.” Father Tadros Malaty (pp 19-20).

2nd Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 8:1-9:4; 1 Sam 17:1-18:4; Is 7:1-14; Job 11:1-20	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 116:7-8
	Gospel	Matt 15:39-16:12
Mass:	Pauline	Heb 12:28-13:16
	Catholicon	1 Pet 4:7-16
	Acts	Acts 15:22-31
	Psalm	Ps 29:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 6:39-49

Day 13

Difficulties on the Road Matthew 7:13-21

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Prayer

Grant, O my Saviour, that I may receive all things with humble submission to Your Holy will. Amen.

Practice

In time of trial and tribulation place yourself entirely in God's hands.

Week 2

Nature of Procession: STRUGGLE

Commentary:

I want nothing of the world, for the world does not give me benefit but with purpose to subjugate me. Those who received what the world gave them became slaves to the world. It gave them the pleasures of the body and took from them the purity of the spirit. The world gave them the worldly enjoyment and took from them the blessing of the heavenly Kingdom. Satan gave them all the kingdoms of the world and their glory to make them fall down and worship him. He always gives all that he has to make people lose their souls. As for me, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:8). This world takes more than what it gives. It subjects those who desire it. So I want nothing of it. I want nothing of the world, for I am superior to it. I am a son of God - in the image of God and after His likeness. I am a temple for the Holy Spirit and a place of dwelling for God. I am the only creature who partakes of His holy flesh and blood. I am superior to the world and the world is asking me to give it. For I have the keys of the heavens and earth. I, whom God, in His loving-kindness and humbleness, willed to make me the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13,14). I want nothing of the world, because I want to live as my fathers did; those whom the earth did not deserve to tread on. They lived so, received nothing of the world. On the other hand they were a blessing to the world. For the sake of their prayers God sent water on the earth and for their sakes God preserved the world till today. I want nothing of the world, because sin entered it and corrupted it. In the beginning God saw everything and behold it was very good, as sin had not

yet entered the world. Even the great sea creatures were blessed by God to be fruitful and to multiply. But now, the marvelous picture which God has drawn is scarred. Therefore I reject the world which loves the darkness more than the light and I no longer desire anything of it. I want nothing of the world, because I want You alone; You who loved me till the end and gave Yourself up for me; You who formed me out of nothing and was not in need of my service but it is rather I who was in need of your sovereignty. Therefore I want to be released from the world and be united to You, who gave me the gift of knowing You.

"Release of the Spirit." His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. (Chapter 14, pp89-91).

2nd Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 25:7-8,11
	Gospel	Mark 9:43-50
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 14:1-18
	Catholicon	James 1:22-27
	Acts	Acts 22:17-30
	Psalm	Ps 118:19-20
	Gospel	Matt 7:13-21

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and,

'In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Sunday of the Temptation in the Wilderness

Temptation along the way – anything of value is attained by struggle and strife. War is bound to be a nuisance if it is waged for its own sake. But it is mighty delightful if it is waged for the purpose of spiritual growth and adherence to God. It is a delightful war because victory is certain. It is a war with a ferocious enemy conquered formerly by God. Satan tempted Christ with food, tempted Him with vanity, telling Him to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple then he tempted Him with abandoning the Cross and pursuance of the easy path, saying: “I will give you all the kingdoms of the world “if thou wilt fall down and worship me” instead of reigning over the human souls by the Cross. But God has triumphed for us.

God will surely save the whole Church if there is only one individual who is truly fasting with self-denial. The devil will surely be put to shame. Battles are being waged everywhere. What we do by fasting is to mobilize our forces in preparation for war. We have nothing to worry about because our equipment is capable with Christ’s support to erase all fortifications and subject all thought to the dominancy of Christ. Lent is our way of mobilizing forces in a victorious battle, Christ our Lord will confirm us and make us triumph. We will seek no truce, but triumph we shall achieve.

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

Satan’s temptations increase during your fasting; thus we must be careful of the lust of the body, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). We take our Lord as an example how He defeated Satan who fled away, and then angels came to serve Him. The Pauline epistle tells us to beware of stumbling any one. The Catholic epistle speaks about avoiding partiality that offends others, and the Acts reading asks us to be cautious of divisions, which take away peace.

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

2nd Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 51:1,9
	Gospel	Mark 1:12-15
Prophecies: -		
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 57:1
	Gospel	Luke 4:1-13
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 14:19-15:7
	Catholicon	James 2:1-13
	Acts	Acts 23:1-11
	Psalm	Ps 27:8-9
	Gospel	Matt 4:1-11

Day 15

Confession of Repentance Luke 11:33-36

33 "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light.

34 "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

35 "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.

36 "If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

Prayer

O Lord, grant me the grace to unite my prayers to those of the Angels and Saints in order to praise, honour and thank you. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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 wounds he 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).

3rd Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 1:20-33; Is 8:13-9:7	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 19:11-28
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 5:9-6:5
	Catholicon	1 Pet 1:3-12
	Acts	Acts 17:10-14
	Psalm	Ps 32:5
	Gospel	Luke 11:33-36

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35 "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

38 "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.

Prayer

O Lord, grant that so long as I shall be in Your house my eyes may behold only You, my heart overflow with Your love and my tongue proclaim Your praise in prayer and supplication. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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).

3rd Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 2:1-15; Is 10:12-20; Josh 7:1-26	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:10
	Gospel	Luke 12:54-59
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 4:1-8
	Catholicon	1 John 2:1-11
	Acts	Acts 27:9-12
	Psalm	Ps 32:2-3
	Gospel	John 8:31-39

1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

7 "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.

10 "For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You,'

11 "and, 'In their hands they shall bear You up, lest You dash Your foot against a stone.'"

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

Prayer

Grant O Lord, that I may deny myself every gratification and delight only in pleasing You. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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).

3rd Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 4:19-6:13; Joel 2:21-26; Is 9:9-10:4; Job 12:1-14:22	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 27:4
	Gospel	Luke 13:18-22
Mass:	Pauline	2 Thess 2:9-17
	Catholicon	2 Pet 2:9-15
	Acts	Acts 28:7-11
	Psalm	Ps 27:7-8
	Gospel	Luke 4:1-13

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

45 "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

46 "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

47 "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

49 "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

50 "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Prayer

O Lord, it is to You we raise up our hearts and our minds. It is to You we look for help. Keep us from yielding to temptation; deliver us from the greatest of all evils, sin and preserve us from perishing everlastingly. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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).

3rd Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 18:17-19:29; Prov 2:16-3:4; Is 11:10-12:2	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 9:11-12
	Gospel	Luke 20:20-26
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 4:6-11
	Catholicon	James 4:1-10
	Acts	Acts 28:1-6
	Psalm	Ps 9:7-8
	Gospel	John 12:44-50

Day 19

Faithfulness of Repentance Luke 11:14-26

14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

16 And others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.

17 But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.

18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

19 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

20 "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

22 "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

23 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

25 "And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.

26 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Prayer

O Lord, change the inclinations of my heart. Take the place of self within me and grant that my love for You may be as ardent to please You as my own self-love is to satisfy myself. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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).

3rd Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 9:7-10:11; 1 Sam 23:26-24:22; Job 15:1-35; Is 13:2-13; Sirach* 2:1-3:4	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 16:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 20:27-38
Mass:	Pauline	Heb 11:1-8
	Catholicon	Jude 1:17-25
	Acts	Acts 23:6-11
	Psalm	Ps 16:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 11:14-26

* Second Canonical Book

Day 20

Forgiveness of Repentance Matthew 18:23-35

23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

25 "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

26 "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'

29 "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

30 "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

31 "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.'

33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Prayer

O Jesus, give to us inner peace. Give us this precious gift which may keep our minds and our hearts in Your faith and love. Amen.

Practice

Think little of yourself and highly of others.

Week 3

Purity of Procession: REPENTANCE

Commentary:

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).

3rd Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 130:1-2
	Gospel	Mark 10:17-27
Mass:	Pauline	2 Cor 7:2-11
	Catholicon	James 2:14-26
	Acts	Acts 23:12-35
	Psalm	Ps 27:6-8
	Gospel	Matt 18:23-35

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons.

12 "And the younger of them said to [his] father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls [to] [me].' So he divided to them [his] livelihood.

13 "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

14 "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

15 "Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 "And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him [anything].

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

19 "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'

20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put [it] on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on [his] feet.

23 'And bring the fatted calf here and kill [it], and let us eat and be merry;

24 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 "So he called one of the servants and

asked what these things meant.

27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

29 "So he answered and said to [his] father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.

30 'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

32 '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.'

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

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

3rd Sunday of the Holy Fast

Vespers:	Psalm:	88:1-2
	Gospel:	Matt 15:1-20
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm:	55:1-2,16
	Gospel:	Matt 20:1-13
Mass:	Pauline:	2 Cor 6:2-13
	Catholicon:	James 3:1-12
	Acts:	24:1-23
	Psalm:	79:8-9
	Gospel:	Luke 15:11-32

1 And He also said to His disciples:
“There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.

2 “So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’

3 “Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.

4 ‘I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’

5 “So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

6 “And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’

7 “Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

8 “So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

9 “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Prayer

O Jesus my Saviour, grant me the grace to learn and practice what you have taught me by Your word and shown me by Your life. Amen.

Practice

Utter several times a day short expressions such as: “My God! I love You. Help me to love You more and more.”

Week 4

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

Let all Christ's faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the Gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity; for they can achieve depth and ease in strengthening mutual brotherhood to the degree that they enjoy profound communion with the Father, the Word and the Spirit.

The Imitation of Christ, Thomas A Kempis (Book IV, Chapter 17, p367).

Orthodox Christians have great respect for the Bible. We bind it in gold and keep it enthroned upon the Altar. We kiss it in veneration. We carry it in pompous procession. We burn incense before it. We lift it up before the congregation and proclaim it to be the wisdom of God. We honour the Bible in all these ways. But do we honour it in the most important way? Do we open it to read its treasures? Do we proclaim its glorious good news from the roof tops?

“Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life.” Anthony Coniaris (pp162).

4th Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 27:1-41; Is 14:24-32; Job 16:1-17:16	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 55:1, 27:7-8
	Gospel	Luke 14:7-15
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 8:12-26
	Catholicon	James 5:16-20
	Acts	Acts 11:2-18
	Psalm	Ps 55:16-17
	Gospel	Luke 16:1-9

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Prayer

Grant, O Jesus, that I may seek only to please You in all things and that detached from all things I may unite myself to Your love and thus commence in time what I hope in Your great mercy to continue throughout eternity. Amen.

Practice

Take it calmly when people speak ill of you and remember that it is God's judgment which alone matters.

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

A Jewish soldier who had attended a Christian service during World War II went to a rabbi and asked him the difference between the Messiah of the Jews and the Jesus of the Christians. The rabbi explained, "The difference is that we Jews believe the Messiah is still to come, whereas Christians believe He has already come in Jesus." To this, the soldier asked a questions which could not be answered. "But rabbi, when our Messiah does come, what will he have that Jesus does not have? Will he have more love? More positive goodness? More miraculous power? More purity of life? More divine forgiveness? More perfect righteousness?"

"Christ" is a Greek word which means "the anointed one". The Greek word "Christ" is equivalent to the Hebrew word "Messiah". Thus the title "Christ" means the Messiah or the anointed one. When we speak the words "Jesus Christ" we are confessing the essence of what we believe as Orthodox Christians. Since "Jesus" is a name and "Christ" is a title, when we put them together and say "Jesus Christ" we are confessing our faith that Jesus is the Messiah or the One anointed by God to save His people.

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris (pp18)

I listen; He is the one who speaks.
I am enlightened; He is true Light.
I am the ear; He is the Word.

St. Augustine

4th Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 28:10-22; Is 25:1-26:8; Job 18:1-21, Sirach* 8:1-10:1	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 17:1
	Gospel	Matt 21:28-32
Mass:	Pauline	Eph 4:1-16
	Catholicon	2 Pet 2:2-8
	Acts	Acts 27:1-3
	Psalm	Ps 17:6
	Gospel	Luke 9:57-62

* Second Canonical Book

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."

36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Prayer

O Lord, grant that temptations and troubles may not separate me from You but unite me more closely to You by teaching me my constant need for Your help. Amen.

Practice

Place your hope of peace not in men but in God alone.

Week 4

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

During the Prayer of Reconciliation, when the deacon says to the congregation, "Pray for perfect peace, for love, and for the pure apostolic kisses," the congregation responds by saying, "Lord have mercy." We ask the Lord to have mercy by giving us these great divine graces; the grace of perfect peace for the church externally and internally, the grace of perfect peace within our homes and families so that troubles and conflicts may end and wounds may heal. And for the grace of love, which is the bond of perfection of the children of the church with each other. If peace and love dwell within us, then the exchange of holy kisses will be like those of the apostles in the first Church; unlike the kiss of Judas which was false and deceptive, shrewd and evil hearted.

While the deacon is chanting this response, why don't you, my beloved, request peace and love for yourself, your family, your neighbours and your friends, and especially those who are suffering from various conflicts and trials. Mention them by name, ask for them in persistence at these moments and God will be able to do by your prayers more than wise men can do. In the second part of the Prayer of Reconciliation, the priest asks God to fill our hearts with His Divine Peace that surpasses the mind, to keep our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus, the King of Peace. And when He reigns in our hearts we can live peacefully with ourselves and others, bearing all their weaknesses, and we will have peace with God who is a loving Father for all of us. Hence, we will also enjoy psychological and physical health, and make us live in heaven while still being on earth.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp95-96).

4th Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 7:14-8:18; Joel 2:28-32; Job 1:1-22; Is 26:21-27:9	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 18:37,40
	Gospel	Luke 14:16-24
Mass:	Pauline	Eph 4:17-32
	Catholicon	James 3:13-4:4
	Acts	Acts 11:26-12:2
	Psalm	Ps 18:17-18
	Gospel	Mark 4:35-41

35 Then it happened, that as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.

36 And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant.

37 So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

39 Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him,

41 saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

42 Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you."

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Prayer

O my Saviour, enlighten our minds with the truths we read and move our hearts to practice them. Grant that they may be our consolation in trouble, our support in difficulties and the rule of our whole conduct. Amen.

Practice

Avoid arguments and turn from the strife of men that God's truth may be heard more clearly.

Week 4

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

Above all the noise of the multitude Jesus heard the lonely prayer of the blind beggar and He stopped. The Almighty Lord and Master of the universe is stopped by the prayer of a poor, blind forgotten beggar! He commands the beggar to be brought to Him. Let us talk briefly about the prayer that stopped Jesus: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." For certainly if this prayer stopped Jesus then, it can stop Him today.

The blind man's prayer, altered but slightly, is known today as the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." It is one of the most commonly used prayers in the Orthodox Church... The power of the Jesus prayer lies in the name Jesus, "the name that is above every name."...The Jesus prayer can give us the power to resist every evil thought and temptation with which Satan attacks us. When Satan knocks on the door of the mind seeking entrance through some evil thought, send Jesus to the door and he will flee. Resist every temptation with the Jesus prayer...

Let the last words you utter each night be the Jesus prayer. Fall asleep with these words on your lips. What better way to end a day than with Jesus? And when you wake up in the morning, let the first words you utter be the Jesus prayer. What better way to greet a new day than with Jesus? During the day, whether you are talking, sitting or walking repeat the Jesus prayer or the name of Jesus alone in love and adoration.

As Princess Illeana of Romania said, "I sleep, but my heart, as it beats, prays on: 'Jesus'".

"Eastern Orthodoxy: A Way of Life"
Anthony Coniaris, Chapter 3

4th Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 32:1-30; Is 28:14-22; Job 20:1-29; Dan 6:1-27	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 12:7
	Gospel	Mark 3:7-12
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 12:31-14:1
	Catholicon	James 4:11-5:3
	Acts	Acts 4:19-31
	Psalm	Ps 48:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 18:35-43

Day 26

Faith in the Holy Gospel Matthew 15:21-31

21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

24 But He answered and said, "[I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26 But He answered and said, "[It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

27 And she said, "True, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

29 And Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.

30 Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them those who were lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them.

31 So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Prayer

Speak to me, O Lord, speak in such a manner to my soul that I may hear and obey You. Amen.

Practice

Turn your ear to God and He will speak to you of the things that bring you peace.

Week 4

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

Two thousand years ago a certain Samaritan woman would draw water regularly from Jacob's well for drinking and cleaning. One day, Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty." (v 13). Deep in her heart, the woman had desired something more than the well water. According to the Bible, she had five husbands and the man she was living with was not her husband. All the time she was longing for true love, acceptance, satisfaction and meaning in life, which she could not find.

Like this woman, people today are looking for something to satisfy their needs and solve their problems. They may turn to their heritage, tradition, culture, knowledge or religion – as symbolized by Jacob's well. Unfortunately, these are not the ultimate solution for people's problems. The prophet Amos said, "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign Lord, "when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord." (Amos 8:11).

Jesus understood this and offered the woman another kind of water. The living water He gives can quench her thirst eternally. Living water refreshes and flows endlessly, and would satisfy her deepest needs. So she said to Him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." (v15 NIV). Life changes when one encounters the Messiah – Christ, for He will give us abundant life which will be for all eternity. "Then the angel showed me the river of water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God

and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city." (Revelation 22:1-2a NIV).

"Dying and Rising with Christ: Daily Devotions for Lent 2008" (pp40-41).

4th Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 10:12-11:28; Is 29:13-23; Job 21:1-34; Dan* 14:1-42	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 28:6-7
	Gospel	Luke 4:31-37
Mass:	Pauline	Heb 13:7-16
	Catholicon	1 John 4:7-16
	Acts	Acts 22:17-24
	Psalm	Ps 28:2
	Gospel	Matt 15:21-31

* Second Canonical Book

Day 27

Works & Fruit of the Holy Gospel - Matthew 21:33-46

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

34 "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

35 "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

36 "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

37 "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

38 "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

39 "And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Prayer

Penetrate my heart, O Jesus, with love for You when You send me pains and support me in all my afflictions. Inspire me with that patience, that strength and that courage which You did impart to Your martyrs. Amen.

Practice

When suffering comes your way, accept it as a cross given by Jesus.

Week 4

Constitution of Procession: THE HOLY GOSPEL

Commentary:

One of the finest tributes ever paid to the Bible was that of Coleridge the Poet. He said simply, "It finds me." It finds me in my wrongdoing and convicts me of sin. It finds me in my loneliness and brings to me the companionship of God. It finds me in my need and brings the divine answer to that need. Are we giving the word of God a chance to find us? How often do we open the door to God's presence? The two disciples who had been walking with the risen Christ on the Road to Emmaus did not know it was Jesus. They thought He was a stranger until the end when He revealed Himself to them in the breaking of the bread. Then, looking back on the experience they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). If we walk with the risen Christ today and let Him open the Scriptures to us, our hearts and minds too will burn with new light, new understanding, new power, joy and hope.

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaria (pp160).

"And I, humble Seraphim...go through the Gospel daily. On Monday I read St. Matthew, from beginning to end; on Tuesday, St. Mark; on Wednesday, St. Luke; on Thursday, St. John; the other days I divide between the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of the Apostles. And I do not for a single day neglect to read the daily Epistle and Gospel, and also the readings of the Saints. Through this not only my soul, but even my body rejoices and is vivified, because I

converse with the Lord. I hold in my mind His life and suffering and day and night I glorify and give thanks to my Redeemer for all His mercies that are shed upon mankind and upon me, the unworthy one." St. Seraphim of Sarov.

4th Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 142:5,7
	Gospel	Luke 16:19-31
Mass:	Pauline	Phil 4:4-9
	Catholicon	James 3:13-4:6
	Acts	Acts 24:24-25:12
	Psalm	Ps 61:1,5
	Gospel	Matt 21:33-46

1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria. 5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from [His] journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?" 12 "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband; 18 "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 "Our fathers

worshiped on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am [He]." 27 And at this [point] His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" 28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him. 31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." 33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." 39 And many of the Samaritans of that

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I [ever] did." 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard [Him] and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

There was an encounter face-to-face between the evasive human soul (the Samaritan Woman) and our Lord Jesus Christ. The human soul is seeking happiness and has envisaged that such happiness could be attained through dissipation and realization of worldly passions, even to the extent of having five husbands. Encounter with Christ indicated a valuable truth, the human soul living in desires of the flesh is not satisfied but it is thirsty. Confession is the only way to encounter God. The woman's confession enabled her to acquire the bliss of living water. Confession reveals the evasiveness of the human soul. Following confession there comes satisfaction. In fasting you should drink to your satisfaction from the living water. Meditation is a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Prayer is a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Love of Christ is a well.

After confession and satisfaction comes prostration in prayer. In the pilgrimage of fasting the Church stresses prostration (matanias) which means submission and subjection to Christ's sovereignty.

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

Repentance (Type II) - The Samaritan woman repented in response to Christ's love towards her. If we can not return ourselves the Lord will come and fetch us, by different means. It shows that the grace of God can visit us in the 12th hour and moves sinners to repentance. It declares that our Lord is thirsty and hungry for our salvation. The repentant lady preached in the town and she led her people to the salvation of Christ. The Pauline epistle asks us to be armed with the word of God. The Catholic epistle tells us to submit to God and resist the devil. The Acts encourages us to be like St. Paul who spoke boldly and preached the gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles.

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

4th Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 28:9
	Gospel	Luke 12:22-31
Prophecies: -		
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:11
	Gospel	Matt 22:1-14
Mass:	Pauline	Eph 6:10-24
	Catholicon	James 4:7-17
	Acts	25:13-26:1
	Psalm	Ps 105:3-5
	Gospel	John 4:1-42

12 When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

13 But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people."

14 For there were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty."

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Prayer

O God, speak to my heart, that it may die to itself and live only for You. Amen.

Practice

Strive to be the ruler of your actions instead of the slave of your passions.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

Commentary:

Salvation is Christ overcoming for us our greatest enemy which is at the root of all our insecurity, the fear of death. God does not remain aloof in the heavens while men suffer and die. He takes on a body and by His death destroys our death so that now death becomes a doorway through which we must all pass to enter the splendor of His glorious presence,

Salvation is:
Liberation from evil,
The defeat of the devil,
The transfiguration of man,
Living authentically,
Putting on Christ,
The restoration of the image of
God in man,
Participating in the life of God,
Restoration of communion with
God,
Incorruption,
Receiving the Holy Spirit,
Becoming temples of the Holy
Spirit,
Forgiveness of sins,
Ascending to the throne of God,
Participating in the Kingdom of
God,
Being by grace what God is by
nature,
The destruction of death,
Seeing the light,
Being in a process of growth that
never ends,
Living life the way God meant it
to be.

This is the salvation the Lord Jesus offers us.

“Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life” Anthony Coniaris (pp51).

5th Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 3:5-18; Is 37:33-38:6; Job 22:1-30	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 88:2-4
	Gospel	Luke 12:16-21
Mass:	Pauline	Phil 2:1-16
	Catholicon	1 Pet 3:10-18
	Acts	Acts 10:25-35
	Psalm	Ps 86:3-4
	Gospel	Luke 9:12-17

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world.

He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

13 The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.

15 "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

16 "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

17 "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

18 "I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

20 These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

Prayer

Correct in me, O Lord, that indolence of mind and that uselessness of thought which withdraw me from the enjoyment of your presence and distract my attention in the time of prayer. Teach me, O Lord, that I may fulfill this important duty with a becoming sense of Your great presence. Amen.

Practice

Perform all your actions in a spirit of dedication to God.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

Commentary:

In the Book of Numbers, when the children of Israel traveled in the wilderness, the cloud accompanied them wherever they went. If they stopped, then the cloud stopped, and if they walked, it followed. Thus the Spirit of God wishes to accompany you in every step you take. The Holy Spirit wishes to bless your actions and your deeds. He wishes to sanctify your body, thoughts and feelings. He also wishes to consecrate your clothes, as He did with the Apostles, Peter and Paul, whose shadows were used to heal the sick, and their handkerchiefs and other personal articles were used to drive out devils. The Spirit of God wants to guide you to assure you of a bright future. He stands close by you to deliver you from your past, and dwells in you, so that you may always rejoice and be happy with the present time. He accompanies you in all your steps to sanctify and fulfill you.

“The Fiery Spirit.” Father Tadros Malaty (pp 19).

He has no hands but our hands, to do His work today.

He has no feet but our feet, to lead men on His way.

He has no voice but our voice, to tell men how He died.

He has no help but our help, to lead men to His side.

Annie Johnson Flint

5th Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Num 10:35-11:34; Prov 3:19-4:9; Is 40:1-8; Job 25:1-6; Job 26:1-14	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 86:5-6
	Gospel	Mark 9:14-24
Mass:	Pauline	Phil 2:22-26
	Catholicon	1 John 3:2-11
	Acts	Acts 24:10-23
	Psalm	Ps 86:17
	Gospel	John 8:12-20

6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

7 "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'

8 "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.

9 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

Prayer

O Jesus, grant us that state of Holy and spiritual infancy, simplicity of mind and purity of heart which may make us worthy of Your love. Amen.

Practice

Keep yourself in peace and have peace with others, no matter how they differ from you in their opinions.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

Commentary

An American lady of the Bahai religion was once lecturing in India. According to the Bahai faith all religions are equally true. They believe, for example, that Jesus was just another great teacher like Buddha. He was not the way but one of the many ways to God. Since the Bahai lady spoke only English, an Indian was translating for her. In her lecture she said, "The sun rises in the morning, and as it ascends in the heavens it shines through the various windows in the house, one after another. Each religion represents a window through which the light shines. Jesus is one such window." The Indian translator interpreted faithfully what she said, but at the end of the sentence he added in his own language, "I beg to differ with the lady, Jesus Christ is not the window. He is the Light itself."

"Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life." Anthony Coniaris (pp19)

"Not only do we understand God only through Jesus Christ, but we understand ourselves only through Jesus Christ. We understand life and death only through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ, what we know is neither our life nor our death, neither God nor ourselves." Pascal.

Scribbled on the wall of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, during the violence and despair of World War II was this profound confession of faith:

"I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining;

I believe in love, even when I feel it not;

I believe in God, even when He is silent."

5th Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 8:20-9:35; Is 41:4-14;	
	Joel 3:9-21; Job 28:12-28;	
	Prov 4:10-19; 1 Sam 1:1-2:21	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 55:1-2
	Gospel	Mark 10:1-12
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 4:14-5:5
	Catholicon	1 Pet 4:12-19
	Acts	Acts 11:12-18
	Psalm	Ps 86:13-14
	Gospel	Luke 13:6-9

10 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

11 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.

12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity."

13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

15 The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?"

16 "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Prayer

O Lord, grant that, resigning myself in all things to Your blessed will, I may find peace and happiness in being, doing and suffering whatever You will appoint.

Amen.

Practice

Soar above created things and rest in God alone.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

Commentary

Jesus Christ says: "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you" (John 16:7). He is the only One who can enter our heart and accompany you throughout your way. How can this take place? The Spirit of God in the shape of a dove "was hovering over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2), in order to create from your heart (the rugged and desolate earth) a new beautiful world where the touch of God's love, His work and beauty are manifested. The Holy Spirit embraces you with His Godly love and transforms your inner corruption into God's joyous Kingdom. Where you felt loneliness in your heart, the Holy Spirit will now build God's Kingdom within you, that you may enjoy fellowship with God and the fulfilling state of being in the presence of angels. He will carry you as on His wings to find comfort in your heavenly Father's tender bosom. The Spirit of God is not merely a divine energy working in your life, but He is rather a Friend who accompanies you wherever you go, and removes the dreadful feelings of loneliness. That's what we got in touch with even in the Old Testament, where the Spirit of God appeared as a cloud that sheltered the children of Israel by day, and in a pillar of fire that gave them light by night and accompanied them permanently. Sometimes He led their way as a commander would lead an army. Other times He walked behind them to protect them from backward hits. On other occasions, He walked with them to bless them along the way. What a wonderful companion and friend!

"The Fiery Spirit." Father Tadros Malaty (pp15-16)

5th Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Is 42:5-16; Prov 4:20-27; Job 29:2-20; 1 Sam 3:1-20	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 86:14
	Gospel	Luke 9:37-43
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 10:14-11:1
	Catholicon	1 Pet 1:2-8
	Acts	Acts 21:5-14
	Psalm	Ps 86:17
	Gospel	Luke 13:10-17

Day 33

Sentence of Faith John 8:21-27

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

22 So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.

26 "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

27 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

Prayer

O my most amiable Saviour, the live of my soul, the only object of my hope and the assurance of my salvation, come, take possession of my heart. Amen.

Practice

Acknowledge your own weaknesses and turn to God for help in every trial.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

Commentary:

Threats and warning - "God never threatens; the devil never warns," declared Oswald Chambers. Warnings are an expression of love, threats are an expression of control. We sometimes use the words threat and warning interchangeably, but Chambers saw a principle that suggests a distinction. Threats are used to get people to do what is in our best interest. Warnings are issued to get people to do what is in their best interest. In other words, threats seek to preserve power, whereas warnings serve to protect people from danger. Satan wants us to think of God's loving warnings as mean-spirited threats, but he is wrong. According to Chambers, "A warning is a great arresting statement of God's, inspired by His love and patience." The evidence of this is found in the many commands that are coupled with phrases like "that it may go well with you" (Deut. 4:40; 12:28).

In loving relationships, people warn one another of the inevitable consequences of foolish behavior. In unhealthy relationships, people threaten one another with punishment if they fail to live up to unreasonable demands. As we interact with others, it's good to consider the nature of our counsel and commands. Do we use ultimatums to preserve our own well-being? Or do we lovingly warn others to keep them from harm?

Daily Bread – 20th February
2008.

5th Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Deut 11:29-12:27; 1 Kin 17:2-24; Prov 5:1-12; Is 43:1-9; Job 30:9-32:5	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 86:9-10
	Gospel	Mark 12:28-34
Mass:	Pauline	Heb 12:5-16
	Catholicon	1 Pet 4:15-5:5
	Acts	Acts 15:36-16:3
	Psalm	Ps 138:1-3
	Gospel	John 8:21-27

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'

17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'

19 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

20 "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.

21 "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.

22 "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

24 "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

26 "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

28 "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,

30 "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt.

Prayer

O my Jesus, whom I adore here on earth by the light of faith, grant that I may one day adore You in the light of glory in Heaven. Amen.

Practice

Love Jesus above all things and seek Him in all you do.

Week 5

Target of Procession: FAITH

33 "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

34 "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

35 "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

36 "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

38 "See! Your house is left to you desolate;

39 "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "

Me," He says, "and I will say, Here am I." You heard sooner than I expected, Master. "And if they pass over, they shall not slip," says the Lord. For we who are passing over to eternal life will not fall into corruption because He will sustain us. For so He has said and so He has willed. Our Instructor is righteously good. "I came not," He says, "to be ministered unto, but to minister." Therefore, He is introduced in the Gospel as "wearied," because He toiled for us and promised "to give His life as a ransom for many." For Christ alone is the Good Shepherd. He is generous and gives us the greatest of all gifts, His own life. He is extremely good and loving to men, while, when He might have been Lord, He wished to become a brother to humanity. He was so good that He died for us.

Clement of Alexandria

Commentary:

Feed us, Your children, as sheep. Master, fill us with righteousness from Your own pasture. Instructor, give us food on Your holy mountain, the Church, which towers in the air, is above the clouds and touches heaven. "And I will be," He says, "their Shepherd," and will be as near to them as clothes to their skin. He wants to save my flesh by enveloping it in the robe of immorality, and He has anointed my body. "They shall call

5th Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 65:2-3
	Gospel	Luke 15:3-10
Mass:	Pauline	Gal 5:16-6:2
	Catholicon	James 5:7-11
	Acts	Acts 26:1-18
	Psalm	Ps 143:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 23:14-39

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep [Gate] a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been [in] [that] [condition] a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry [your] bed."

11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"

12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in [that] place.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Sunday of the Healing of the Paralytic

Christ knows no despair or defeat. The sick man has risen, taken up his bed and walked after 38 years of sickness, 38 years of sinfulness and 38 years of wasteful living. Christ would not consider how many years we lived, when we come to know Him. He rejuvenates us into powerful eagles. We pray to Him saying, let us be among the people of the eleventh hour. Life in Christ is a daily renewed life.

This is the corner stone of our fasting pilgrimage: hope and renovating life in Christ, joy, courage, expectation, spiritual liberation and unending growth. A trip that is never stalled.

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

Repentance (Type III) - The Lord comes to the sinners who have lost hope, saying, “Do you want to be well?” If the sins chain us and we become paralyzed and can not move, the merciful Lord can heal us from our sins and iniquities, if we believe in His words and obey Him. He will tell us, “Sin no more, least a worst thing come upon you.” There are many believers who suffer from spiritual paralysis due to many sins, and they need a visit from our Lord. The Pauline epistle instructs us to have strong faith, endure hardships and hold to the teachings we received. The Catholic epistle tells us that the Lord is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and we ought to live in holy conduct and godliness. The Acts asks us to stand tribulations for the sake of the word of God, and to show our strong faith in Christ’s salvation, proclaiming His light to all people.

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

5th Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 39:12
	Gospel	Luke 18:1-8
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 102:1-2,12
	Gospel	Matt 21:33-46
Mass:	Pauline	2 Thess 2:1-17
	Catholicicon	2 Pet 3:1-18
	Acts	Acts 26:19-27:8
	Psalm	Ps 33:5-6
	Gospel	John 5:1-18

Day 36

Repentance & Baptism Luke 13:1-5

1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

4 "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Prayer

Come, my Saviour, heal the pride of my heart. Invest me with Your strength, that I may conquer my passions; animate me with Your spirit, that I may seek only to please You. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary:

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).

6th Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 8:1-11; Is 43:10-28; Job 32:6-16	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 38:9
	Gospel	Mark 12:1-12
Mass:	Pauline	1 Thess 4:1-18
	Catholicon	James 4:7-12
	Acts	Acts 18:9-18
	Psalm	Ps 35:1-2
	Gospel	Luke 13:1-5

Day 37

Repentance & Baptism Luke 9:18-22

18 And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

19 So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again."

20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

21 And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

Prayer

Turn not, O Lord, Your face away from me, for there is no consolation but in Your presence. Console me when I think of You and of the misery of not being able to see and to possess You. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary:

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).

6th Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 8:12-21; Is 44:1-8;	
	Job 32:17-33:33; 2 Kin 5:1-27	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 35:13
	Gospel	Luke 4:22-30
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 14:18-28
	Catholicon	James 1:22-2:1
	Acts	Acts 19:11-20
	Psalm	Ps 42:1
	Gospel	Luke 9:18-22

45 Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

46 And He said, "Woe to you also, you lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 "In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs.

49 "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,'

50 "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation,

51 "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

Prayer

O God, support us in our combat against our passions, our self-love and our whole self. Strengthen us that we may at all times and in all things renounce our evil inclinations. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary:

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).

6th Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Ex 10:1-11:10; Is 44:21-28;	
	Prov 8:22-36; Job 34:1-37;	
	Sirach* 10:1-31	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 102:17,21
	Gospel	Mark 7:1-20
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 2:12-24
	Catholicon	2 Pet 1:20-2:6
	Acts	Acts 26:1-8
	Psalm	Ps 9:11-12
	Gospel	Luke 11:45-52

* Second Canonical Book

47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

48 "I am the bread of life.

49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

62 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?"

63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

68 Then Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Prayer

*In gratitude for so great a favour, I offer my whole self to You, for time and eternity.
Amen.*

Practice

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

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary

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 210-22).

6th Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	2 Kin 4:8-41; Is 45:1-10; Prov 9:1-11; Job 35:1-16; Sirach* 11:1-10	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 9:13
	Gospel	Luke 20:9-19
Mass:	Pauline	1 Tim 2:1-3:4
	Catholicon	Jude 1:19-25
	Acts	Acts 27:16-20
	Psalm	Ps 9:13-14
	Gospel	John 6:47-71

* Second Canonical Book

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?"

11 "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

12 "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Prayer

Most blessed Saviour, prepare me for the moment of death. Help me to be diligent in my employments, faithful to Your graces, attentive at my prayers, regular in frequenting the sacraments, and constant in the practice of those virtues which are proper to my state. Amen.

Practice

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

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary:

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).

6th Friday of the Holy Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
Vespers:	Gospel	-
Prophecies: Gen 22:1-18; Is 45:11-17; Prov 9:12-18; Job 36:1-33; Job 37:1-24; Tobit* 1:1-3:23; Tobit 3:24-9:12; Tobit 10:1-14:15		
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 51:7-8
	Gospel	John 3:14-21
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 10:1-13
	Catholicon	1 John 2:12-17
	Acts	Acts 8:9-17
	Psalm	Ps 34:5,4
	Gospel	John 3:1-13

* Second Canonical Book

46 Then they came to Jericho. And as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Prayer

O my God, whose Holy will is the rule and principle of all good, may You be the soul of all my actions and the object of all the motions of my heart. Amen.

Practice

Watch and pray that you may guard against temptation.

Week 6

Identity of Procession: BAPTISM

Commentary:

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 it 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)

6th Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 79:8-9
	Gospel	Matt 9:1-8
Mass:	Pauline	Eph 4:1-7
	Catholicon	1 Pet 1:13-21
	Acts	Acts 27:9-26
	Psalm	Ps 32:1-2
	Gospel	Mark 10:46-52

1 Now as [Jesus] passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; [the] night is coming when no one can work. 5 "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" 9 Some said, "This is he." Others [said], "He is like him." He said, "I am [he]." 10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." 12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." 13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until

they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these [things] because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed [that] He [was] Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." 25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner [or] [not] I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." 26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear [it] again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 "We know that God spoke to Moses; [as] [for] this [fellow], we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the

Sunday's Holy Gospel

Healing the Man Born Blind

Son of God?" 36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." 38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, "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." 40 Then [some] of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

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

6th Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	Ps 17:3,5
	Gospel	Luke 13:22-35
Prophecies: -		
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 26:2-3
	Gospel	Matt 23:1-39
Mass:	Pauline	Col 3:5-17
	Catholicon	1 John 5:13-21
	Acts	Acts 27:27-37
	Psalm	Ps 143:7,1
	Gospel	John 9:1-41

31 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

32 "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

33 "You have sent to John, and he has bore witness to the truth.

34 "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

35 "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

36 "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

37 "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

38 "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

41 "I do not receive honor from men.

42 "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

44 "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust.

46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Prayer

Come, O Jesus, and raise me, who am poor, from the dust and from nothing and elevate me to the possession of Your love. Amen.

Practice

Thank God in prosperity and adversity and offer yourself entirely to God.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

Commentary:

By the cross He was the Light of the world, attracting all to Him as He said, "And I, being lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32). And from the cross He descended to Hades and saved those who were sitting in the darkness and shadow of death, "Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16). Despite this, He called us saying, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Christ ascended the lighthouse of the cross, and so attracted all people from darkness to His light, and here He resembles the believer who puts the light on a lamp stand to give light to all who are in the house.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp75).

7th Monday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 10:1-16; Is 48:17-49:4; Job 38:1-38	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 16:19-31
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 14:10-15:2
	Catholicon	James 2:5-13
	Acts	Acts 9:22-31
	Psalm	Ps 86:12-13
	Gospel	John 5:31-47

Day 44

Confessing the Savior John 12:36-43

36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their heart, lest they should turn, so that I should heal them."

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Prayer

Grant, O Lord, that my heart may loathe all earthly things and cleave to those things alone which are eternal, which will be given to me in exchange for the little I renounce in this world for the love of You. Amen.

Practice

Put your confidence and trust not in creatures but in God alone.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

Commentary:

The eyes of the world are fixed on the follower of Christ. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." The greatest gift that any man can give to another is Christ. When we speak to others about Christ and the Church we are not asking them to follow us. We are asking them to follow Christ. "Evangelism," writes C. T. Niles, "is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." "That you may be blameless and innocent," writes St. Paul to the Philippians, "the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." We live in a world whose moral standards have descended. It is easy to conform to the darkness of the world. After all, few people want to be different, odd, eccentric. But for the sake of Christ we must be different. "We must obey God rather than man," said the Apostle Peter. We must be out of tune with the music of the streets because as Christians we march to the rhythm of a different drummer – Christ.

We cannot be lights for Christ in this world unless we live in His presence day by day exposing ourselves to the light of His teachings and grace through prayer, the Gospel, the liturgy and the Sacraments. Only then can we be what Jesus intends us to be – lights shining in the darkness.

"Eastern Orthodoxy: A Way of Life."
Anthony Coniaris (Chapter6).

7th Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 10:17-32; Is 49:6-10; Job 38:37-39:30; Sirach* 5:1-15	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 38:18-19
	Gospel	Luke 17:1-10
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 14:5-17
	Catholicon	2 Pet 3:8-15
	Acts	Acts 22:17-24
	Psalm	Ps 51:2-3
	Gospel	John 12:36-43

* Second Canonical Book

Day 45

Faith in the Saviour John 6:35-45

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

36 "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

41 The Jews then murmured against Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.

44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Prayer

*O Jesus my Saviour, grant me the disposition necessary for frequent and worthy Communion. Come often into my heart, for I desire to live only for and by You.
Amen.*

Practice

Bear with the faults of others as you expect others to bear with yours.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

Commentary:

Our Christian religion has been telling us through the ages that God is all-powerful. A prominent scientist tells us that if we were to pay the light bill of the sun, pay for its energy at one penny per kilowatt, that a one-hundredth-millionth part of a second would cost us more than World War II. This is power – God’s power. We use it every day and most of us just take it for granted. Man invents a pump to lift water from the earth, yet he carries a pump inside him that pumps ceaselessly, night and day, without repair, without attention, for seventy or eighty years, lifting two hundred and eighty thousand tons of blood a year, and so silently the doctor has to listen to it with a stethoscope.

Everywhere nature speaks of the power of God. Now we have a faint idea of what our Lord meant when He said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.” Is it only in nature that God has placed such power? Are we to believe that God has left man – the masterpiece of His creation – powerless? Not if we believe, as we do, that man is made in the image of God. But has man able to master himself. People so often say, “I can’t...I can’t control my temper...I can’t resist temptation...I can’t live a pure life in today’s society...I can’t come to Church every Sunday...I can’t pray...I can’t be a victorious Christian...I can’t, I can’t, I can’t. Where does one receive the strength to overcome this inadequacy, this powerlessness? There is no other way than by attaching ourselves to Someone who is all-powerful – God in the Person of Christ. St. Paul writes, “Christ is able to supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” And, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

When you need help, be sure to ask someone who is not only willing, but also able to give it. God is not only willing but able. When Daniel was thrown into the Lion’s Den, the king came to him the next day asking, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” (Daniel 6:20). From experience Daniel could say, “My God is able.”

Able to help us do the good that we don’t always want to do.

Able to give courage and insight for the day’s needs.

Able to forgive our lack of faith and sins.

Able to help us overcome our fears and hopelessness.

“Eastern Orthodoxy: A Way of Life.”
Anthony Coniaris (Chapter 11).

7th Wednesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 10:32-11:13; Is 58:1-11; Job 40:1-41:34	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 57:1
	Gospel	Luke 14:28-35
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 10:4-13
	Catholicon	James 1:13-21
	Acts	Acts 19:23-26
	Psalm	Ps 51:2-3
	Gospel	John 6:35-45

18 Then some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:

19 "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves his wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

20 "Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring.

21 "And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise.

22 "So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also.

23 "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

24 Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?"

25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

26 "But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"

27 "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

Prayer

Grant, O God, that I may rely entirely on Your power and goodness. Be my support and confidence in the midst of the most grievous affliction. Keep me from sin, and I am content to suffer all things else. Amen.

Practice

Gladly endure privation and hardship after the example of your crucified Saviour.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

Commentary:

The sacrament of Holy Communion enables us to abide in Jesus and be united with Him, assuring us of the perfect unity with God in the Eternal Life. As we yearn to abide and unite perfectly in Him, so we remember Him always until He comes, and we await His glorious coming with earnest expectation, for His second coming will fulfill our unity with Him forever. In the Liturgy the congregation responds with this wonderful hymn in answer to the Lord's words, "Amen, Amen, Amen. We preach Your death, O Lord. Your Holy Resurrection and Ascension we acknowledge. We praise You, we bless You, we thank You, O Lord, and supplicate You, O our Lord." They sing with an uplifted voice to the Lamb who was slaughtered for their salvation. They remember His life-giving death for their redemption, and confess His holy resurrection by which He defeated the terrifying enemy of humanity - death. They confess their belief in His ascension to heaven, where He is sitting at the right Hand of the Father, having entered, "the inner part behind the veil where the forerunner has entered for us" (Hebrews 6:20), "To prepare a place for us" (John 14:2).

We live in the expectation of His Second Coming, according to what He advised, "Do this in remembrance of Me". St. Paul says, "For as often as you eat this Bread, and drink this Blood, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The last sentence of this hymn, "We praise You ..." is addressed to the Holy Trinity, as explained by one of the church fathers: "We praise You, O Lord God. We bless You, O Son the Word. We thank You O Holy Spirit for all these great gifts, and we supplicate You, O Holy Trinity,

our One God to accept this sacrifice from us, sending to us the gift of Your Holy Spirit."

My beloved, recite this response reverently with the whole Church, meditating on every word. Stretch out your hands and say to the Lord, "We praise You Lord, bless You and thank You for these great graces, which angels yearn to see". Supplicate unto Him with all your heart concerning your private needs or problems that need a solution, or blessing, guidance and divine leadership in your life. Lift up your hands and eyes and heart to God pleading with persistence so that He may give you your request.

"How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy", His Grace Bishop Matthaous (pp123-124).

7th Thursday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 11:13-26; Is 65:8-16;	
	Job 42:1-6; 2 Kin 6:8-7:20	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 63:1
	Gospel	Matt 20:20-28
Mass:	Pauline	2 Cor 4:5-18
	Catholicon	1 John 3:13-24
	Acts	Acts 25:23-26:6
	Psalm	Ps 122:1-2
	Gospel	Mark 12:18-27

31 On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'

33 "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

35 "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who Comes in the name of the Lord!' "

Prayer

Give us, O Lord, inter peace. Calm the storms of our passions by giving us courage to overcome them. Grant that our desires may be submissive to reason, to faith and to God. Amen.

Practice

Strive daily to pray more devoutly that you may grow in Holiness.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

Commentary:

God's will in incarnation was to change our nature and have us partake in His divine nature so that we would be able to do like He did, to be as humble, loving, forgiving, sacrificing and abnegating as He was; so that we may be like Christ in every way. This is the essence of the Church's striving during the days of fasting. The Church is always preaching to us about love, forgiveness, prayer and fasting and the acceptance of temptations and trials with devoted souls. The Church tells us about the living water which satisfies the human spirit, until we are capable, eventually, to see God and have communion with Him; in other words, realizing God's will in us.

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

7th Friday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 49:33-50:26; Prov 11:27-12:22; Is 66:10-24; Job 42:7-17	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 16:19-31
Mass:	Pauline	2 Tim 3:1-4:5
	Catholicon	James 5:7-16
	Acts	Acts 15:1-18
	Psalm	Ps 98:8-9
	Gospel	Luke 13:31-35

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

10 "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."

13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

15 "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.

19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

29 As soon as she heard that, she arose

Prayer

Speak, my God, to my heart. Grant that, being instructed in Your law and in Your Holy will by reading good books, I may follow them in all things, so that what You teach may ever be the rule of my conduct. Amen.

Practice

Meditate on the lives of the Saints and follow their example.

Week 7

End of Procession: SALVATION

quickly and came to Him.

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.

31 Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

42 "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

Commentary:

Death is destroyed. The cross has triumphed over it. It no longer has any power but is truly dead. This is why all of Christ's disciples despise death and no longer fear it. They take the offensive against it. And by the sign of the cross and by faith in Christ they trample it down as dead. Before the Saviour came, death was terrible to the Saints. Everyone wept for the dead as though they perished. But now that the Saviour has risen, death isn't terrible anymore. For everyone who believes in Christ tramples over death. They would rather die than deny their faith in Christ. For they know that when they die they aren't destroyed, but actually begin to live. Through the resurrection they become incorruptible. For the devil, who once maliciously rejoiced in death, is the only one truly dead now that we are relieved of death's pains. As proof of this, people are terrified of death before they believe in Christ. But when they have turned to Christ's faith and teaching, they despise death so much that they even eagerly rush up to it. They testify of Christ's victorious Resurrection.

St. Athanasius

Lazarus' Saturday

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 49:1-28; Is 40:9-31; Zeph 3:14-20; Zech 9:9-15	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 88:2-4
	Gospel	Luke 12:16-21
Mass:	Pauline	1 Cor 2:1-8
	Catholicon	1 Pet 1:25-2:6
	Acts	Acts 27:38-28:10
	Psalm	Ps 129:8,2
	Gospel	John 11:1-45

Gospel of the Palm Sunday Liturgy
Mark 11:1-11

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;

2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring [it]."

3 "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.

5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread [them] on the road.

9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna!

'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the Lord!'

10 Blessed [is] the kingdom of our father David

That comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!"

11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Sunday's Holy Gospel

Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

Palm Sunday

Events:

Our Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as a King, sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Rites:

- Procession of the Cross during the prayers of Raising of Incense (Matins)
- The Liturgy of Palm Sunday in which the four Gospels relating to the entry of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem are read and the praises of the children 'Hosanna to the Son of David' and a hymn 'Evlogemenos' is chanted.
- The funeral service for the departed is conducted after the completion of the Holy Liturgy and Communion. Funerals are not performed during Passion week as the focus is on the pains and sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Monday Eve

Events:

Our Lord Jesus Christ returned to Bethany.

Rites:

- The Pascha prayers begin in the second chorus of the Church (outside the camp – Jerusalem) and the Church is decorated with black cloths suitable for the Passion of Christ.
- Every hour includes:
 - The Prophecies
 - 'Thok Te Ti-Gom' ('To You is the Power and the Glory') 12 times
 - The Psalm, the Gospel's introduction and the Gospel in the sad tune
 - Commentary introduction and conclusion
 - The Litanies
 - The Blessing
- 5 hours at night and 5 hours during the day of the Pascha prayers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Gospel of the First Hour of Monday of the Holy Pascha
Mark 11:12-24

12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.

13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard [it].

15 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them].

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Monday of the Holy Pascha

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ cursed the fig tree that had no fruit, while on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem. He spent the rest of the day cleansing the Temple and teaching.

Rites:

- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Tuesday Eve

Events:

- In the evening, Our Lord Jesus Christ returned to Bethany.

Rites:

- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Gospel of the Eleventh Hour of Tuesday
Eve of the Holy Pascha
Mark 13:32-14:2

32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

34 "[It] [is] like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—

36 "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

14:1 After two days it was the Passover and [the] [Feast] of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put [Him] to death.

2 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Gospel of the Third Hour of Tuesday of the Holy Pascha
Matthew 23:37-24:2

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under [her] wings, but you were not willing!

38 "See! Your house is left to you desolate;

39 "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not [one] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Tuesday of the Holy Pascha

Events:

- On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, the disciples saw that the fig tree was withered.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ spent the day with the disciples in the temple, teaching them by parables, telling them about the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming

Rites:

- In the 'Thok Te Ti-Gom' praise of the 11th hour, the words 'My Good Saviour' are added after 'My Lord Jesus Christ.'
- Psalm 45:6 'Pek-ethronos' ('Your throne O God is forever and ever') is chanted.
- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Wednesday Eve

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ returned to Bethany to spend the night there.

Rites:

- The Church prohibits the exchanging of a kiss from Tuesday evening, so as not to share with Judas Iscariot the sign of the delivery of the Lord.
- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Gospel of the Ninth Hour of Wednesday
of the Holy Pascha
Matthew 26:3-16

3 Then the chief priests, the scribes,
and the elders of the people assembled
at the palace of the high priest, who was
called Caiaphas,

4 and plotted to take Jesus by trickery
and kill [Him].

5 But they said, "Not during the feast,
lest there be an uproar among the
people."

6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the
house of Simon the leper,

7 a woman came to Him having an
alabaster flask of very costly fragrant
oil, and she poured [it] on His head as
He sat [at] [the] [table].

8 But when His disciples saw [it], they
were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?

9 "For this fragrant oil might have been
sold for much and given to [the] poor."

10 But when Jesus was aware of [it], He
said to them, "Why do you trouble the
woman? For she has done a good work
for Me.

11 "For you have the poor with you
always, but Me you do not have always.

12 "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My
body, she did [it] for My burial.

13 "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this
gospel is preached in the whole world,
what this woman has done will also be
told as a memorial to her."

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas
Ischariot, went to the chief priests

15 and said, "What are you willing to
give me if I deliver Him to you?" And
they counted out to him thirty pieces
of silver.

16 So from that time he sought
opportunity to betray Him.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Wednesday of the Holy Pascha

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ spent the day in Bethany.
- A woman poured fragrant oil on Our Lord's blessed head.
- The betrayal of Judas Iscariot who agreed on a price with the chief priests, to deliver Our Lord Jesus Christ to them with the sign of a kiss.

Rites:

- No exchanging of a kiss.
- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers
(1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).

Holy Thursday Eve

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ spent the night in Bethany.

Rites:

- No exchanging of a kiss.
- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers
(1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hour prayers).
- In the 3rd hour, Psalm 55:21,1 'Av-etchee-non'
(‘His words were softer than oil’) is chanted.

Gospel of the Covenant Thursday
Liturgy
Matthew 26:20-29

20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

21 Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 He answered and said, "He who dipped [his] hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.

24 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Holy Thursday

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover with His disciples. The word 'Passover' is Hebrew which means 'to cross over,' indicative of the passing of the destroying angel from the Israelites to kill the first born of the Egyptians.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ washed the feet of the disciples.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ established for us the Lordly Supper, the Eucharist, with His disciples.

Rites:

- The prayer of the Morning (1st) hour, the Raising of Incense. Procession of Judas from the southern side to the northern side (the opposite direction) and Psalm 55:21,1 'Av-etchee-non' ('His words were softer than oil') is chanted.
- The 3rd, 6th and 9th hours of the Pascha prayers are prayed as usual.
- The service of the 'Lakan' which contains readings concerning Our Lord washing the feet of His disciples.
- The service of the Divine Liturgy (The Catholic Epistle, Acts, Synaxarium, Prayer of Reconciliation, Commemoration of the Saints are not prayed).
- The 11th hour of the Pascha prayers are prayed instead of Psalm 150.

Good Friday Eve

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Rites:

- The words, 'My strength and my praise is the Lord who became my Holy Salvation,' are added to the praise of 'Thok Te Ti-Gom.'
- In the 1st hour of the Pascha prayers, the Paraclete chapters are read.
- The 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hours of the Pascha prayers are prayed as usual. The four Gospels are read in each hour.

Gospel of the Sixth Hour of Good Friday of the Holy Pascha
Matthew 27:27-45

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.

28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.

29 When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put [it] on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.

31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His [own] clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

32 Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.

33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

34 they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted [it], He would not drink.

35 Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."

36 Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

39 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads
40 and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said,

42 "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

43 "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

44 Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Good Friday

Events:

- The trial of Our Lord Jesus Christ, condemning Him to be crucified.
- The Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the 6th hour.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ's words on the Cross.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ's death on the Cross at the 9th hour.
- The piercing of Our Lord Jesus Christ with a spear, water and Blood flowed from His side. The body of Our Lord was taken down from the Cross at the 11th hour.
- The burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ in a new tomb at the 12th hour.

Rites:

- The 1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hours of the Pascha prayers are prayed in the second chorus.
- In the 6th hour, 'Tay-sho-ree' ('This is the pure golden censor') & 'Fay etaf enf' ('He who lifted Himself') are chanted before the Pauline Epistle. The priest prays the segments of the 6th hour from the Agpia, then the 'O-mo-no-ge-nees' hymn is chanted. After the 6th hour is prayed, the Right thief's creed is read.
- In the 9th hour, 'Te-sho-ree' ('This is the golden censor') & 'Fay etaf enf' ('He who lifted Himself') are chanted before the Pauline Epistle. The priest prays the segments of the 9th hour from the Agpia, then continues as usual.
- The prayers of the 12th hour are prayed in the first chorus, when the veil of the sanctuary is opened and the Altar is decorated with white cloths suitable for the Joyous Saturday.
- In the 12th hour, the prophecies are read, Lamentations 3:1-66 and Jonah 1:10-2:7. Psalm 45:6 'Pek-ethronos' ('Your throne O God is forever and ever') is chanted.
- After the 12th hour, once the litanies are prayed, 'Lord have mercy' is recited 100 times on each side (East, North, West, South), ending with 12 times towards the East.
- The procession with the icon of the Cross is performed followed by the hymn of Golgotha and the burial.

Day 55

Joyous Saturday (The Apocalypse)

Gospel of the Joyous Saturday Liturgy
Matthew 28:1-20

1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first [day] of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead [men].

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go [and] tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him [away] while we slept.'

14 "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."

15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Joyous Saturday (The Apocalypse)

Events:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ descended to Hades and restored the souls of the righteous to Paradise.

Rites:

- The hymns are chanted, half in sad tune and half in joyous tune.
- Many praises are read.
- The Book of Revelation is read.
- The Liturgy of Joyous Saturday (The Pauline Epistle, Catholic Epistle and Acts are read but not the Synaxarium).
- The Psalm and Gospel are prayed, half in sad tune and half in joyous tune.
- The Prayer of Reconciliation is not prayed, the Commemoration of the Saints is prayed, and at the end of the Liturgy, Psalm 150 is not chanted.

Ekhristos Anestee
Alithos Anestee

Christ is Risen
Indeed He is Risen

Icon from
St Mary & St Mina's
Coptic Orthodox Cathedral
Sydney - Australia



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The Holy Great Fast, in the Coptic Orthodox Tradition, is a 55 day spiritual journey to the foot of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a time of fasting and prayer and spiritual struggle and culminates in The Passion Week or the Holy Pascha (Passover) which is the most important week of the year and the richest spiritually.

The Fasting and Prayer Program for the Holy Great Fast is designed to enrich you on your spiritual journey by providing daily readings for your contemplation. The theme of this Fasting and Prayer program is, 'Drawing Closer to God.'

Each day consists of:

- * Daily Bible Readings
- * A Prayer
- * A Practice
- * Commentary

The Program concludes with the events and rites of the Holy Pascha week – “a week full of holy memories of the most crucial stage of salvation and the outstanding chapter in the story of redemption.”

We pray that this Fasting and Prayer Program will be of benefit to your spiritual life.