

From the Divine Office for St. John Climacus (Fourth Sunday of Great Lent)

Venerable father John, you heeded the voice of the Gospel and gave up the world, and the riches and glories of the world, counting them as nothing for the sake of Christ. Wherefore you could cry out to all: "Love God, and you will find eternal favor. Place nothing above His love, so that when He comes in His glory, you may find rest with the saints!" Wherefore, O Christ God, preserve and save our souls through His intercession. (Vespers)

Come, let us labor in the mystical vineyard, gathering the fruits of repentance within it; for we do not work to fill ourselves with food and drink, but to cultivate virtue through fasting and prayer. Thus we shall please the Lord, the Master of the vineyard, who will give us the recompense by redeeming our souls from the debt of sin; for He alone is rich in mercy. (Orthros)



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
MARCH 19, 2023**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Antiphon (3rd)

- 1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.
O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia
- 2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.
Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.
- 3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.
O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: *O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!*

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8) pg. 5

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You!

Troparion of St. John Climacus (Tone 8)

Your abundant tears made the wilderness to sprout and bloom, and your deep sighings made your labor fruitful a hundredfold. You became a star shining over the world with miracles, Holy Father John, pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 13

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8) Pg. 14-Arabic this week

We your servants ascribe to you, O Mother of God, thank offerings of victory, O Champion Leader, for we have been liberated from terror. But as you have that invincible power do you free us from every kind of danger, so that we may cry out to you: “Hail O Virgin and Bride ever pure!

The Church’s spiritual masters from the Desert Fathers to our own day have sought to determine the course of our spiritual struggle. They agree that our interior combat begins with the assault of what they called *logismoi*, random thoughts that suggest definite wrongdoing or simply not doing what it takes to keep in shape. There is no word to accurately translate *logismoi*. It has been variously translated as “prodigal thoughts,” “impulses,” “provocations,” “temptations” or “the seeds of the passions, those suggestions or impulses that emerge from the subconscious and soon become obsessive... blockages, usurpations, deviations that destroy the human being’s basic desire.”

These “prodigal thoughts” come to us unbidden from our past, from what we see others do, from entertainment media, from many sources. We may dismiss them and continue on our chosen path or entertain them, allowing them to convince us that what they propose is right for us. As Evagrius of Pontus noted in the fourth century, “It is not in our power to determine whether we are disturbed by these thoughts, but it is up to us to decide if they are to linger within us or not and whether or not they are to stir up our passions.”

Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware) once described *logismoi* as “first whispered by demons in obedience to the will of the Satan (the Tempter),” locating their source as further beyond our broken nature. This, too, is suggested by St. Paul who teaches that “*we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Ephesians 6:12).

Evagrius, writing in the same tradition, insists, “Demons first inspire thoughts and these, when they are allowed to linger, unleash the passions in us. The remedy against this system of demonic attacks is a constant vigilance over thoughts, never allowing them to linger.”

Right about now many of us may be assaulted by *logismoi* suggesting that we dispense ourselves from the Fast, skip a Lenten service, or return to any amusements we have given up for the season. We may be like many who commit themselves to regimens of diet and exercise for a short time and then are tempted to abandon them because they do not see speedy progress. It is, however, one’s commitment to the contest which brings about greater results. As Pope Paul VI noted in another context, “All life demands struggle. Those who have everything given to them become lazy, selfish, and insensitive to the real values of life. The very striving and hard work that we so constantly try to avoid is the major building block in the person we are today.”

Prayer, Fasting and Spiritual Power

The nineteenth century Russian Saint, Theophan the Recluse, once wrote, “The demons can sense a faster and man of prayer from a distance, and they run far away from him so as avoid a painful blow.”

The opposite is also true as we read in Sotos Chondropoulos’ life of St. Nectarios of Aegina: “One time there was an archimandrite from Egypt who found himself in Athens on some religious business. Although he was a cleric, he was one only by profession... When he performed the Divine Liturgy he did it mechanically, without the faith and humility which is required...”

[Told about a girl supposedly possessed by an evil spirit, he asserted confidently “There are no demons today” and declared that girl must be a schizophrenic. He would see for himself. When he arrives the possessed girl addressed him laughingly:] “My dear priest, how beautiful and playful you seem...” Seizing him she shouted “You dirty, filthy worm... Isn’t it you that hasn’t left a girl or woman in Alexandria untouched? You dare to insist that I do not exist? Then I will make an account of all the ‘good works’ you have done as a mocker of sacred things.”

[She told of one scandalous incident after another. The archimandrite collapsed and had to be taken away. The girl was eventually freed from the spirit after being anointed with oil from a lamp at St Nektarios’ tomb.]

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today All those affected by the earthquakes in Syria & Turkey
+Georgette, Wadi, Dori, Tanios Kahale. Deceased members of Kahale, Daw & Yanni families. Requested by Houda Daou
+Victims of the earthquakes in Syria & Turkey

The Lenten Lunch takes the place of today's Coffee Hr.
Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Mark Bashour

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Vi Gazal, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Anthony Poti, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Wendy Halal, all those affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,468
Candles	\$ 28
Coffee Hr.	\$ 40
Easter Flowers	\$ 215
Stole	\$ 100
TOTAL	\$1,851

God bless you for your generosity!



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

LENTEN SERVICES THIS WEEK

Mon. 3/20, 6PM - Great Compline
Wed. 3/22, 6PM - Presanctified Liturgy
Fri. 3/24, 6PM- Akathist Hymn (Complete)
Sat. 3/25, 10AM- Divine Liturgy- Feast of the Annunciation

PARISH WEBSITE

We are working on a website for the parish. It should be operational sometime after Pascha.

SHEPHERDS CARE

Shepherd's Care is the diocesan Lenten charitable program. There are mite boxes and pamphlets at the back of the church. Please take one and put the savings from your fasting in it. Bring it back to church on Palm Sunday or anytime during Holy Week.

LENTEN LUNCH

Our Lenten Lunch is this morning after the Divine Liturgy. The suggested donation is \$20 per adult and \$5 per child. The proceeds from the lunch will go to aid those affected by the earthquakes in Syria. Please join us!

Fr. Bryan has a new cellphone number. It is (774) 502-8547.

ADULT EDUCATION

Our next adult education series will be this **Tuesday March 21 at 6:30PM**. It's not too late to come! **Please bring your Bible. We have the books.**

Prayer, Fasting and Asceticism

"THIS KIND CAN COME OUT BY NOTHING but prayer and fasting" (Mk 9:29). The last words of this Gospel passage explain its selection for reading at today's Divine Liturgy, In the home stretch of the Great Fast we may need to be reminded that effectiveness in the Christian life demands more than occasional application. We must apply ourselves regularly and consistently to maintaining our life in Christ for it to bear fruit. This constant living out of our faith is called asceticism, from the Greek word for "struggle," ascesis.

St Paul witnesses frequently to the ascetical nature of Christian spiritual life. He uses both athletic and military imagery to present the life in Christ as, at least in part, a struggle. Consider the following:

- *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ... and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts"* (Rom 13:12-14)
- *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown"* (1 Cor 9:24-26)
- *"Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified"* (1 Cor 9:26-27).
- *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil....For we wrestle not against flesh and blood..."* (Eph 6:11-12).
- *"...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:13-14).
- *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day..."* (2 Tim 4:8).

Training for an athletic contest or for a military expedition demands single-minded commitment to the struggle. Our eye must be continually on the goal and our will firm to do anything in order to achieve it.

A Spiritual Combat

In St Paul's day Christians had no lack of enemies striving to eliminate their Churches as damaging to the state or to established religions. Yet the Apostle does not finger these opponents when describing the struggle.

St Paul identified what would later be called *spiritual warfare*: the interior struggle to keep our minds and hearts centered on the Lord. *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"* (Romans 7:22-23). The real struggle, Paul teaches, is not with enemies outside but with our own broken nature. The arena where Christians would struggle was not the coliseum but the heart.



Prokimenon

Reader: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

People: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

Reader: Give to the Lord. You sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise.

People: The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

Reader: The Lord will give strength to His people;

People: The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Epistle: Heb. 6:13-20

Alleluia

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Verse: To proclaim Your kindness at dawn and Your faithfulness throughout the night.

Gospel: Mk. 9:17-31 Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

Hirmos of Saint Basil (Tone 3)-English this week

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the human race as well: O Sanctified Temple, Spiritual Paradise, and Glory of Virgins, from whom our God, who exists before all eternity, took flesh and became a little Child! He has taken your womb as His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. Therefore, Full of Grace, in you all creation rejoices: glory to you!

