"For all things come from You,
And of Your own we have given You."
(1 Chronicles 29:14)

GIVING

Fasting and Prayer Program
The Holy Great Fast
2015

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Cover
Christ's Outstretched Hands

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His Holiness Pope Tawadros II
118th Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of St Mark

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.

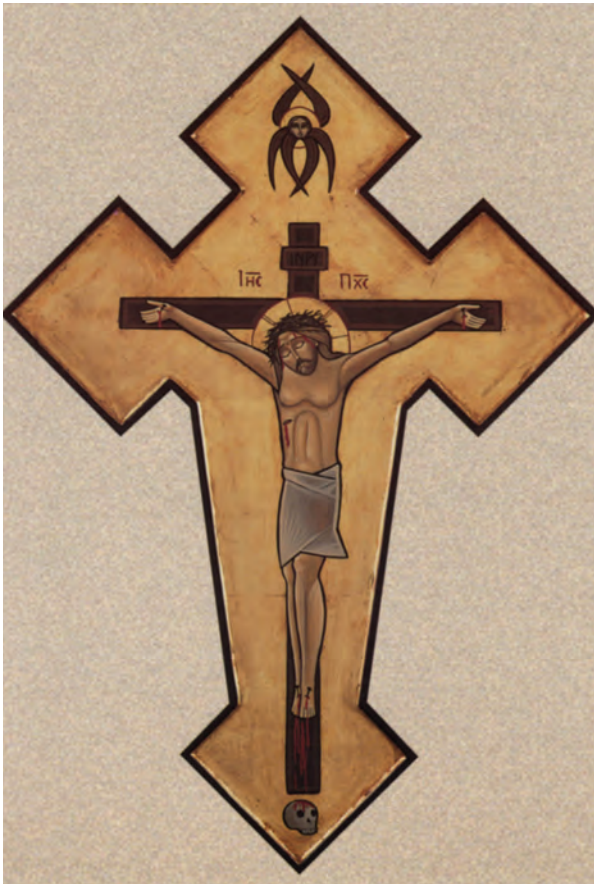
The Fasting and Prayer Program for the Holy Great Fast is designed to enrich you on your spiritual journey by providing daily readings for your contemplation. The theme of this Fasting and Prayer Program is **'Giving'** based on the verse **'For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.' (1 Chronicles 29:14)**

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.

"Train yourself in the virtue of giving, such that it becomes a habit of yours. The day that passes in which you have not given anything, do not count it as part of your life. And the day which is all taking and no giving, do not count it as gain."[1]

– H.H. Pope Shenouda III



Introduction

"For all things come from You
And of Your own we have given You."
(1 Chronicles 29:14)

Our Lord gives us and continues to give us so much. The fact that you have this Program in your hands means He has given you: life; the air that you breathe; intellect and reason; sustenance; access to spiritual resources; a living faith; and so much more.

The salvation we received on the Cross, and the victory we received through the Resurrection is all about God's giving. God has given us His only-begotten Son, who loved us and died for us.

Our Lord has given us so much, how can we not give back?

This year's Fasting and Prayer program is divided into **7** weekly themes to help us to give back. These themes are:

1. **Give Thanks**
2. **Why Give?**
3. **Give Alms**
4. **Give to the Poor and Needy**
5. **Give Service**
6. **Give your Life as a Living Sacrifice**
7. **How to Give**

The reality is that we are giving back from what God has given us and no matter how much we give we will never overcome God's generosity. In fact, when we 'give', it is we who 'take'; we receive so many immeasurable blessings from God. What a generous and loving Heavenly Father we have!

May our Lord move our hearts to give in thanksgiving and love to our God who loves us and gives us so much...

"What shall I render to the Lord
For all His benefits toward me?"
(Psalm 116:12)

Day 1

Give thanks

16 February 2015

"Many blessings such as health, shelter, clothing and food you have, yet you never give thanks because you consider them normal matters and take them for granted. But those that are deprived of them are aware of and feel the value of such blessings and if they obtain them, they give heartfelt thanks. Always give thanks to our Lord."[2]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"Thankfulness is a state of being and a way of life for all Orthodox Christians, for you and me. A thankful spirit is a key characteristic of a Christian. It sets us apart from the world. It makes us different.

Thankfulness is more than a comparison of our own circumstances to someone else's. It is more than having enough food to eat, a nice home, good health, or financial security, because any of these can be lost in an instant. Thankfulness is being grateful to God for who we are, His sacrifice for us, and the hope and joy of everlasting life."[3]

Chris Avramopoulos

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 1:26-2:7
	Catholicon	James 2:1-13
	Acts	Acts 14:19-28
	Psalm	Ps 22:26
	Gospel	Mark 9:33-50

"In ordinary life we hardly realise that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich. It is very easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements in comparison with what we owe others."[4]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"St. John of Kronstadt writes, 'No matter where I look with the eyes of my heart, whether within myself or without, everywhere I see good reasons to thank and glorify the Lord!'

Truly, our entire life is an unbroken chain of God's blessings! He created the body, something better and more perfect than any machine or computer. He instilled in us this immortal, God-like soul to animate our mortal body, the soul which is precious and treasured above all else. He gave us reason, raising us above the animals; free will, through which we might physically and spiritually improve ourselves and direct our life to good; and the senses, with which we might enjoy God's gifts and find happiness and joy in life...

...Thus, contemplating the paths of God's providence in our lives, we see that it is not so much duty or obligation, but rather our entire being, our present and future life, that demands that we not remain insensitive to God's blessings. One must add that it is not God, but we ourselves, who need our thanksgiving. In thanking God, we are reminded of His love for us, His constant care for us, and the sea of material and spiritual good things which He daily pours out upon us. This reminder enlightens our intellect, gives us the opportunity to understand more precisely the purpose of our life, and helps us to separate from what is of primary importance that which is of secondary importance.

Moreover, giving thanks to God causes our despondency to dissipate, removes our sorrow from us, returns to us courage and joy in being alive. Giving thanks to God may be compared to the warm rays of the sun penetrating into the dark cellar of the soul. The touch of the Spiritual Sun warms the soul, causing man to become kinder and better disposed to love."[5]

Bishop Alexander

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

"One must understand that the Lord sometimes permits us to experience troubles and sorrows not because He has forgotten us, or because He wishes to punish us. No! He allows them to occur, as a bitter but necessary medicine, a medicine to heal us of pride, absent-mindedness, excessive self-reliance, egotism, and other such failings."[6]

Bishop Alexander

"How, indeed, is it possible for Christians, who are deemed worthy of the greatest gift—that is, of being members of the Body of Christ—, to be unaware that gratitude is the fundamental hallmark of Orthodox spirituality and an indispensable element of our Christian identity?

When the Saints exhort us to thank our Lord not only in words, but also with deeds and actions, they present us with a vast arena in which to practice gratitude; that is, we must give thanks unceasingly and for all things: for our illnesses, for poverty, for pleasant and unpleasant things, for visible and invisible things, for all the things we know and do not know, for the seen and unseen benefits that come to us, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[St John Chrysostom] asks: 'What then? Are we to show gratitude for all that happens to us?' And he immediately replies:

'Yes. Even if it be disease or poverty..., for seen and unseen benefits..., and for those which we receive against our will; ...but also whenever we are either in poverty, or in sicknesses, or are being insulted, then let us intensify our thanksgiving; thanksgiving, I mean, not in words, nor with the tongue, but in deeds and works, in mind and in heart; let us give thanks to Him with all our souls.'

The height of holiness to which thanksgiving exalts us, especially in unpleasant occurences, is so great that the Saints consider those who show gratitude to be equal to the Holy Martyrs:

'Have you fallen seriously ill? [asks St. John Chrysostom]. This brings you the crown of martyrdom [through thanksgiving]. Nothing is holier than that tongue which gives thanks to God in evil circumstances; truly in no respect does it fall short of that of Martyrs; both alike are crowned, both the former and the latter.'"[7]

Archimandrite Cyprian

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

"MAN HAS THIS INNATE CAPACITY FOR LOVE AND THANKSGIVING BECAUSE HE IS FASHIONED ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD; IT IS PRECISELY FOR THIS REASON THAT HE BEARS THE SEAL OF GRATITUDE INDELIBLY WITHIN HIMSELF."[8]

ARCHIMANDRITE CYPRIAN

"[The] crowning point [of thanksgiving is]: love for God and love for ones neighbour. The Saints teach—and our own experience confirms it—that gratitude brings us closer to God, and thereby our love for the Lord becomes exceedingly fervent. (St John Chrysostom writes]:

'Let us give thanks to God continually. For, it is outrageous that when we enjoy His benefaction to us in deed every single day, we do not acknowledge the favour with so much as a word; and this, when the acknowledgment confers great benefit on us. He does not need anything of ours, but we stand in need of all things from Him.

In point of fact, thanksgiving adds nothing to Him, but it brings us closer to Him. For if, when we recall the benefactions of men, we are the more warmed by affection for them; much more, when we continually bring to mind the benefits of the Master towards us, shall we be more earnest with regard to His commandments.

For this cause Paul also said, Be ye thankful. For the best preservative of any benefaction is the remembrance of the benefaction, and a continual thanksgiving for it.'

At the same time that love for God in our hearts increases through gratitude, love for our neighbour also increases. Experience has shown that thanksgiving is a very effective method for curing whatever weaknesses we might have when it comes to fellowship with our neighbour."[9]

Archimandrite Cyprian

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

"....GRATITUDE [IS] AN INVINCIBLE WEAPON WHEREBY WE CAN REPEL ALL THE DEVICES OF THE DEMONS: THERE IS NOTHING SO GOOD AS THANKSGIVING.... WE HAVE ONE WEAPON WHICH IS THE BEST, AND SUFFICIENT TO REPEL ALL SUCH DEVICES AS THESE: IN EVERYTHING TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD."[10]

ARCHIMANDRITE CYPRIAN

"It is striking how the Saints insist that we give thanks to our Lord, not only for the personal benefits that we receive, but also for common benefits and those granted to other people; such a thankful attitude on our part turns us from men into Angels: Let us be thankful, St. John Chrysostom urges us, also for the blessings of others; this makes us Angels instead of men; let us give thanks continually. Indeed, it is worth our while to observe how this wondrous subject of love is analysed by the Saints, who connect it with the sublime Mystery of the Divine Eucharist:

'Let us therefore give thanks to Him continually, and let this precede both our words and our works. But let us be thankful not for our own blessings alone, but also for those of others; for in this way we shall be able both to destroy our envy and to reinforce our love and make it more genuine. For you will no longer be able to envy those on whose behalf you give thanks to the Master.

Wherefore, as you know, when this Sacrifice [of the Eucharist] is being offered, the Priest also enjoins us to give thanks for the whole world, for things past, for the things present, for what has previously happened to us, and for what will befall us hereafter.

For, this is what frees us from earth and translates us to Heaven, and makes us Angels instead of men.... We have been taught to treat our fellow-servants in such a way as to consider even their blessings ours. Hence, throughout his Epistles, St. Paul gives thanks for God's benefactions to the world.

Let us, too, therefore continually give thanks, for our own blessings, and for those of others, alike for the small and for the great.'"[11]

Archimandrite Cyprian

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

"WHEN THOU HAS TRULY THANKED THE LORD FOR EVERY BLESSING SENT, BUT LITTLE TIME WILL THEN REMAIN FOR MURMUR OR LAMENT."[12]

HANNAH MORE

"What exactly does it mean for us to be in constant remembrance of God's bounties? To this question, the Saints reply by listing examples of God's benefactions, in an attempt to arouse in us the feeling of gratitude to the Lord. For example, St. Basil the Great, with reference to the verse in which the holy Prophet David asks, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?' majestically enumerates gifts which we, being more irrational than the irrational animals, habitually forget.

1st Saturday of the Holy Great Fast

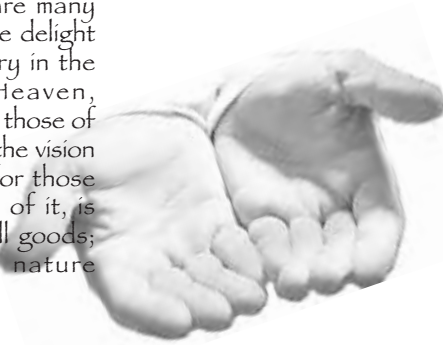
Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	-	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 119:57-58
	Gospel	Matt 5:25-37
Mass:	Pauline	Rom 12:1-21
	Catholicon	James 1:1-12
	Acts	Acts 21:27-39
	Psalm	Ps 5:1-2
	Gospel	Matt 5:38-48

'He brought us from non-being in being; He dignified us with reason; He provided us with crafts to help sustain our lives; He causes food to spring up from the earth; He has given us cattle to serve us. For our sake there is rain, for our sake there is the sun; the hills and plains have been adorned for our benefit, affording us refuge from the peaks of the mountains. For our sake rivers flow; for our sake fountains gush forth; the sea is made calm for our trading; riches come from mines and delights from everywhere, and the whole of creation is offered as a gift to us, on account of the rich and abundant Grace of our Benefactor towards us.

But why speak of minor gifts? For our sake God lived among men; for the sake of our corrupt flesh, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. To the thankless He was their Benefactor; to those sitting in darkness, the Sun of Righteousness; ...in death, the Life; in Hades, the Light; the Resurrection for the fallen; the spirit of adoption into sonship, bestowals of spiritual gifts, and promises of crowns.

In addition to such great and splendid benefits, or rather, benefits par excellence, the benefits that He promises us in the future life are many times greater: the delight of Paradise, glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, honours equal to those of the Angels, and the vision of God, which, for those counted worthy of it, is the highest of all goods; every rational nature desires this, and may we also attain to it, after we have cleansed ourselves of carnal passions.'"[13]

Archimandrite Cyprian



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!

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

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."

"THE SUN GIVES FORTH LIGHT; IT CANNOT HELP DOING SO. ANIMALS BREATHE IN AND OUT; THEY CANNOT HELP DOING SO. FISH SWIM IN RIVERS AND THE SEAS; THEY CANNOT HELP DOING SO. WHAT, THEN, ARE THE THINGS WHICH A CHRISTIAN CANNOT HELP DOING... A CHRISTIAN CANNOT HELP BEING GENEROUS. TO BE A CHRISTIAN IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD AND THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE MERELY STEWARDS OF WHAT THEY POSSESS; SO THEY NATURALLY WANT TO SHARE THEIR POSSESSIONS WITH THOSE IN NEED."[14]

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"The Bible gives us an example of the people's joy when they were giving to build the temple during the time of the Prophet David. The Bible says: 'then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they gave to the Lord; and King David also rejoiced greatly.' David then blessed the Lord before all the congregation and said: "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You... O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own" (1 Chron 29:9,14,16).

It is a beautiful phrase "Of Your own we have given You."

We own nothing. Each of us should say what the Righteous Job said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there" (Job 1:21). And all that we possess at present, we also say about it with Job: "The Lord gave", and with David, we say to the Lord: "Of Your own and all is for You." Therefore it is good for us, every time we give to the Lord, to say: "Of Your own we have given You."

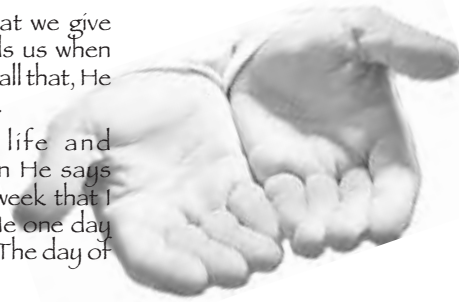
Truly, it is humility from God who is Almighty and infinite, to take from us.

He is giving us a chance to express our feelings. Exactly like the father who accepts a gift from his son, so the son expresses his feelings of love towards his father, while the money paid for the gift is also from his father. As if he is saying to him: "Of Your own we have given You" ... God, the source of all richness, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness" (Ps 24:1). God who satisfies all the living from His goodness, due to His love, He likes us to share with Him in looking after His house and His children, and He rewards us for that...

He gives us what we give Him and rewards us when we give... And in all that, He trains us to give.

He gives us life and existence. Then He says to us: in every week that I give you, give Me one day which is called "The day of the Lord"... And I will give you possessions and in all that I give you, give Me the tithes... And in all that, we say to Him: Lord, of Your own we have given You... You who gave us and to those whom we have given. You also gave us the love of giving."[15]

H.H. 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

"WHEN YOU ARE GENEROUS TO ANOTHER PERSON, YOU ARE NOT BESTOWING A GIFT, BUT REPAYING A DEBT. EVERYTHING YOU POSSESS MATERIALLY COMES FROM GOD, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS. AND EVERY SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VIRTUE YOU POSSESS IS THROUGH DIVINE GRACE. THUS, YOU OWE EVERYTHING TO GOD. MORE THAN THAT, GOD HAS GIVEN YOU HIS SON, TO SHOW YOU HOW TO LIVE; HOW TO USE YOUR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS AND HOW TO GROW IN MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VIRTUE."[16]

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"Someone said one Sunday during the offering, 'Here we go again! There's always a plate.' The person was right in one way and wrong in another. There is not one plate---but two! One plate is man's; the offering plate that is passed to us every Sunday. The other plate is God's. And that is the paten,... the plate that carries the Precious Body of our Lord during the liturgy. **Two plates --- not one!**

God gives first. He gives us our body, mind, life, health, talents. **On the paten – the plate of God's mercy, He gives us Himself as the Bread of Life,** the manna from heaven. He gives forgiveness, strength, courage. He gives victory over sin and death. He gives eternal life. 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which he lavished upon us' (Ephesians 1:7-8). God gives. He lavishes upon us the riches of His grace. That is the meaning of the first plate---the paten.

The second plate which is passed every Sunday --- the offering plate --- represents our response to the first plate. We are invited to give in gratitude for God's generosity, for His limitless forgiveness and mercy. The emptiness of the offering plate represents the aching needs of the world, which we are called upon to assist. It represents also the great spiritual hunger that exists in the world --- the God-shaped vacuum in every heart that only Christ can fill.

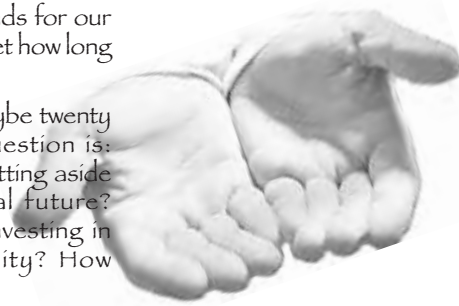
We give, but He gave first. Two plates – not one! However much we give, it will never be more than just a minute fraction of what we receive from Him.

There's always a plate! Indeed there is! Not one but two. First God's, then man's.

.... Many of us are careful to set aside funds for our retirement .... Yet how long will these

last? – Ten, maybe twenty years? The question is: What are we setting aside for our eternal future? What are we investing in God, in eternity? How many of us who are quite well-to-do on earth (and most of us are) may end up paupers in heaven? St. John Chrysostom said once, 'A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much. For, what he gives away remains his forever!'"[17]

Fr Anthony Coniaris



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

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MERCY; WHO GIVE TO THE POOR, FAST AND PRAY; THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL FILL THEIR HEARTS; AND THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY ON JUDGEMENT DAY."[18]

LENTEN HYMN OF THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

"There are many valid reasons for fasting but the main one is love. Love was one of the main purposes for fasting in the early Church.

...[an] early Christian, Aristides, writes in his 'Apology,' 'If there is a poor person among the Christians and they do not have the means to help him, they fast two or three days and give the food that they have saved through fasting to the hungry person.'

During Great Lent we are called upon to fast not only for reasons of self-control and prayer, but also for reasons of love: to deny ourselves something that we may share what we have saved with a needy person.

One family in a parish in America decided to have a meal of just rice once a week during Lent since that is the daily diet of hundreds of millions of people in the world. When Lent was over, the family decided to continue the practice year-round once a month. The money that was saved was put into a special envelope and given through their church to the poor in the world. They could have cut out some other luxury item, but they felt that the rice meal helped them identify with those who didn't enjoy such bounty.

...The Lord God said through the prophet Isaiah: 'Is not this the fast that I choose ... to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover him...' (Isaiah 58:6-7). And St. John Chrysostom says: 'Do you fast? Give me proof by your works ... If you see a poor man take pity on him.' This is the fast that is pleasing to God.

'The Lenten spring has come,

The light of repentance...

Let us receive the announcement of Lent with joy!

For if our forefather Adam had kept the fast,

We would not be deprived of paradise...

While fasting physically, brothers,

Let us also fast spiritually;

Let us loose every knot of iniquity,

Let us tear up every unrighteous bond,

Let us distribute bread to the hungry and welcome

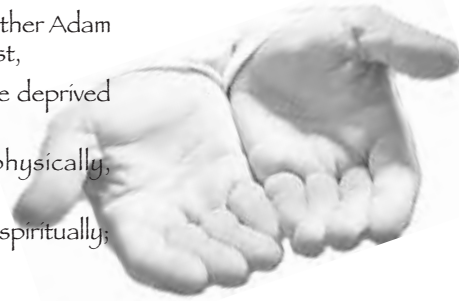
To our homes those who have no roof over their heads

So that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God.'"[19]

Fr Anthony Coniaris

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



"GIVING IS ONLY TRULY GIVING IF IT IS DONE IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST. WE ARE TOLD TO LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART, TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELF, AND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST HAS LOVED US."[20]

JOHN TRUSLOW

"When.... was a child he lived in a small town and, on one occasion, his mother sent him to a florist to pick up some flowers for the dinner table. He had to carry the flowers through town from the store to his home and he was embarrassed to do this. He was afraid that his friends would see him and call him a sissy for carrying flowers. But a few years later, he was in love with a young woman and he returned to that same florist's shop, purchased a bouquet for the object of his affection, and carried it through the same streets without shame. 'I was no longer concerned with what anyone would think of me,' the [young man] concluded. 'I was just thinking of her, and of how happy she would be to get flowers, and of how happy I was to be the one to bring them to her.'

There is a strong connection between love and giving. Most of us know what it is like to love someone so much that we want to give them things. The motivation for such gifts is not primarily obligation but desire – we give not because it is something we should do but because it is something we want to do. Of course, there may be some sense of obligation. We are generally expected to give gifts for our loved ones at certain times and on certain occasions regardless of how we feel about it. Still, in a healthy relationship, we do not give only or always out of a sense of obligation. We take a certain excitement in providing gifts, for those we love and, sometimes we may give them things for no reason at all. The point is not what the person needs or whether they will use the gift in a manner we find acceptable; the point is simply expressing our devotion through an offering of love. The young man in the story above did not stop to ask, 'Does she need flowers? Maybe school supplies would be more practical.'

....Giving as an act of worship takes us beyond duty to delight."[21]

Mark Allan Powell

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

"HERE, THEN, IS A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP: EVERYTHING WE ARE AND EVERYTHING WE HAVE BELONGS TO GOD...STEWARDSHIP PUTS INTO PRACTICE OUR FAITH IN GOD AS OUR CREATOR, OUR REDEEMER, AND OUR SUSTAINER."[22]

MARK ALLAN POWELL

"First, faithful stewardship involves giving to God as an **act of worship**. We give out of glad and generous hearts as an expression of love and devotion to the God who is so good to us. When we do this, we discover the very essence of Christianity: a heartfelt relationship with God in which joy and thanksgiving replace self-interest or guilt.

Second, faithful stewardship involves giving to God as an **expression of our faith.** We confess that all we are and everything we have belongs to God and we put this faith into action when we offer ourselves and our possessions to God to be used as God sees fit. When we do this we discover the practical value of our faith: the God who creates, redeems and sustains us is ready and willing to rule our lives and provide us with everything we need to be content.

Third, faithful stewardship involves giving to God as a **discipline for spiritual growth.** We practice a degree of renunciation and self-denial in recognition of the spiritual principle that 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:21). When we do this we discover that such giving becomes a bond that brings us closer to God and helps us to become the sort of people we most want to be."[23]

Mark Allan Powell

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

"THE TRULY RICH ARE NOT THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR RICHES TO THEMSELVES BUT THOSE WHO GIVE TO OTHERS. HAPPINESS COMES NOT FROM POSSESSING WEALTH BUT FROM GIVING IT AWAY. WHATEVER IS GENEROUSLY GIVEN AWAY BECOMES A FRUIT OF THE SOUL."[24]

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

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

WHICH SEA ARE YOU?

"There are two seas in Palestine. One is fresh, and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing waters. Along its shores the children play, as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables. And on a rolling plain not far away He fed five thousand people.

The River Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine. And men build their houses near to it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The River Jordan flows on south into another sea. Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.

What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the river Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie not the country about.

This is the difference. The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure.

The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.

The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. This other sea gives nothing. It is named The Dead. There are two kinds of people in the world. There are two seas in Palestine"[25]

Bruce Fairchild Barton

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."

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

"The Christian life does not require us to perform extraordinary displays of asceticism and piety, but instead to become living icons of our Lord's love and mercy in the mundane details of our lives, in our interactions with others, in our use of time, energy, and all our gifts and resources."[26]

Fr. Philip LeMasters

"You ask, 'Must one do something?' Of course one must! And do whatever comes along - in your circle of friends and in your surroundings - and believe that this is and will be your real work. More will not be demanded of you. It is a great misconception to think, whether for the sake of heaven or, as the modernists put it, to 'make one's mark on humanity,' that one must undertake great, reverberating tasks. Not at all.

It is necessary only to do everything according to the commandments of God. Just what exactly? Nothing in particular - only those things, which present themselves to everyone in the circumstances of life, those things which are required by the every day happenings we all encounter.

This is how God is. God arranges the fate of each man, and the whole course of one's life is also the work of His most gracious foreknowledge, as is, therefore, every minute and every encounter.

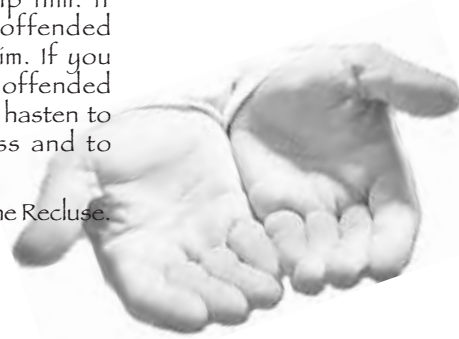
Let's take an example: a beggar comes up to you; it is God who has brought him. What should you do? You must help him. God has brought the beggar, of course, desiring you to act toward this beggar in a manner pleasing to Him, and He watches to see what you will actually do ...If you do what is pleasing to God, you will be taking a step toward the ultimate goal, the inheritance of heaven.

Generalize this occurrence, and you find that in every situation and at every encounter one must do what God wants him to do. And we know truly what He wants from the commandments He has given us. If someone seeks help, then help him. If someone has offended you, forgive him. If you yourself have offended someone, then hasten to ask forgiveness and to make peace."[27]

St. Theophan the Recluse.

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



"...know that your alms are but earth and dust; know that any material charity must absolutely be accompanied by spiritual charity: kind, brotherly, open-hearted, loving behaviour towards your neighbour."[28]

St John of Kronstadt

"Almsgiving is good and salutary when to it is united the amendment of the heart from pride, malice, envy, slothfulness, indolence, gluttony, fornication, falsehood, deceitfulness, and other sins. But if the man is not careful to amend his heart, trusting only to his alms, then he will obtain but little benefit from them, for he builds with one hand and destroys with the other."[29]

St John of Kronstadt

3rd Tuesday of the Holy Great Fast

Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Prov 2:1-15; Josh 7:1-26	Is 10:12-20;
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

Day 17

Give Alms

4 March 2015

"He who gives alms in imitation of God does not discriminate between the wicked and the virtuous, the just and the unjust, when providing for men's bodily needs."[30]

St. Maximos the Confessor

"The Spirit of God says in His goodness, `Do not desist doing good to anyone who is in want, as long as your hand has the means of doing so. Do not say, go and come back; tomorrow I will give you something.' By those words the Holy Spirit actually teaches us not to put things off from day to day, but to do to our soul all the good that is possible, so as to adorn it with every virtue worthy of heaven, so as to clothe it with brilliant vestments according to this agreeable voice, `Let your clothes be brilliant at all times; let your head not lack in oil.'"[31]

Pachomian Koinonia, V. 3, Instructions

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

"You must not think of giving alms to the poor as an expense but as a source of income. It is not an outlay of money, but it is a profitable business. For you get back more than you give. You give bread and get back eternal life. You give a coat and get back a garment of immortality. You give your house to be shared, and you receive back a heavenly Kingdom."[32]

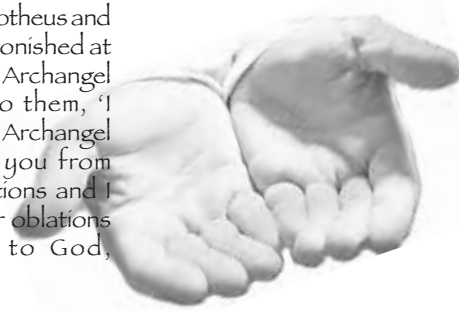
St. John Chrysostom

"An example of one of [Archangel Michael's] wonders: A God-fearing man whose name was Dorotheus and his wife Theopista, held a festival of commemoration for the honoured angel Michael on the twelfth day of each month. It happened that this righteous family fell on hard times and had nothing to celebrate with for the commemoration of the honoured Michael. They took their clothes to sell so that they might have a feast. Michael the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus and commanded him not to sell his clothes, but to go to a sheep-master and to take from him a sheep worth one-third of a dinar. He was also to go to a fisherman and to take from him a fish worth one-third of a dinar but Dorotheus was not to slit open the fish until he came back to him. Finally, he was to go to a flour merchant and to take from him as much flour as he needed.

Dorotheus did as the Angel commanded him. He invited the people, as was his custom, to the feast honouring the Archangel Michael. When he went into his storeroom looking for wine for the offering, he found that all the containers had been filled with wine and many other good things. He marvelled and was astonished.

After they had finished the celebration and all the people had departed, the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus as before and commanded him to cut open the belly of the fish. He found 300 dinars of gold and three coins each is a third of a dinar. He told him these three coins were for the sheep, the fish and the flour, and the 300 dinars were for him and his children. God had remembered them and their oblations and had rewarded them here, in this world and in the kingdom of heaven on the last day. As Dorotheus and his wife were astonished at this matter, the Archangel Michael said to them, 'I am Michael the Archangel who delivered you from all your tribulations and I have taken your oblations and alms up to God, you shall lack no good thing whatsoever in this world.' They prostrated themselves before him and he disappeared and went up into heaven. This was one of the innumerable miracles of this honoured Angel."[33]

The Coptic Synaxarium (Lives of the Saints)



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

"For it is in giving that we receive."[34]

St Francis of Assisi

"Agaiby was a 100 year old man from Edfu in Upper Egypt. His eldest son was 75 years old. Agaiby was poor having a very simple job and with a minimal wage. Despite that, he was very faithful with his tithes. God blessed his little wage over time and from his giving, he was able to support 400 families much poorer than him.

At 100 years of age, he was able to see four generations of his family. Then he got very sick, such that he was hardly breathing. He was expected to die any time, so the Doctor wrote his death certificate in advance and his family and friends started making the funeral arrangements.

When Mina, his son went to check on him expecting the worst, he found him sitting up in bed fully alert and breathing normally.

Agaiby called all his family and friends to tell them about a vision that he had. An angel appeared to him and said 'your spirit was going to depart from your body but for the sake of the 400 families that you support, God will extend your life for another 15 years as he extended Hezekiah's life.' He lived for another 15 years in very good health."[35]

As told on Alhorreya TV, 'Why?' Program, Episode of Sep 26, 2014

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

"You, Lord, are loving and always giving;
You give continually,
You give without our asking,
You give more than we ask, and generously."[36]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"An old man and a brother lived their ascetic life together. Now the old man was charitable. It happened that there was a famine and people came to his door seeking alms, and in charity the old man gave to all who came. Seeing what was happening, the brother said to the old man, 'Give me my share of the loaves, and do what you like with yours.' The old man divided the loaves and gave alms from his share.

Now many people hastened to the old man, learning that he supplied everyone, and God -- seeing that he supplied everyone -- blessed these loaves.

But when the brother had consumed his own food he said to the old man, 'Since I have only little food left, Abba, take me back into the common life again.' The old man said, "I will do as you wish.' So they began again to live in common.

When scarcity broke out again, the needy came back seeking alms. Now one day the brother came in and saw they were short of loaves. A poor man came, and the old man told the brother to give him alms. He said, 'It is no longer possible, father.' The old man said to him, 'Go in and look.' The brother went inside and found the bin full of loaves. When he saw that, he was filled with fear, and taking some he gave to the poor. In this way, he learned the faith and virtue of the old man, and he gave glory to God."[37]

The Desert Fathers

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.' "

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 20:1-16
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

Day 22

Give to the Poor and Needy

9 March 2015
Commemoration of
St. Pope Kyrillos VI Departure

"Whereas we receive benefactions from God every minute, we ourselves don't benefactor even once our neighbour."[38]

St Basil the Great

"A wealthy Hindu lady came to see me [Mother Teresa]. She sat down and told me, 'I would like to share in your work.' In India more and more people like her are offering to help. I said, 'That is fine.' The poor woman had a weakness that she confessed to me. 'I love elegant saris,' she said. Indeed she had on a very expensive sari that probably cost 800 rupees. Mine cost only 8 rupees.

Then I asked the Virgin Mary to help me give an adequate answer to her question of how she could share in our work. It then occurred to me to say to her, 'I would start with the Saris. The next time you go buy one, instead of paying 800 rupees, buy one that costs 500 rupees and with the extra 300, buy saris for the poor.....'

The good woman now wears 100 rupee saris, and that is because I have asked her not to buy cheaper ones. She confessed to me that this has changed her life. She now knows what it means to share and assures me that she has received more than what she has given.

One thing will always secure heaven for us: the acts of charity and kindness with which we fill our lives."

- Mother Teresa

"Like the wealthy hindu woman, let's accept the advice and select something we can cut back or partially sacrifice. Maybe its spending $27 a week on lunch rather than $30. Start small and strive to secure heaven through this wonderful virtue."[39]

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

"THE RICH EXIST FOR THE SAKE OF THE POOR. THE POOR EXIST FOR THE SALVATION OF THE RICH."[40]

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"Human beings have accumulated in their coffers gold and silver, clothes more sumptuous than useful, diamonds and other objects that are evidence of war and tyranny; then a foolish arrogance hardens their hearts; for their brothers in distress, no pity. What utter blindness!... Attend not to the law of the strong but to the law of the Creator. Help nature to the best of your ability, honour the freedom of creation, protect your species from dishonour, come to its aid in sickness, rescue it from poverty.... Seek to distinguish yourself from others only in your generosity. Be like gods to the poor, imitating God's mercy. Humanity has nothing so much in common with God as the ability to do good."[41]

St Gregory of Nazianzus

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

"FEEDING THE HUNGRY IS A GREATER WORK THAN RAISING THE DEAD."[42]

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"In Christianity, the custom of doing good to the poor is worth more than kingly awards, for it raises the vagabond to the level of royalty. He who in Christ shows charity to a beggar wins the favour of the Lord of Glory and is honoured by the highest place in God's heavenly home! Who of his own merit can be worthy of such glory? And who is the one who grants him the honour of visiting the brothers of the Lord? In other words, he who gives food to a needy person is in fact feeding the Lord in the guise of a beggar! The Lord thundered in the heavens and shook the earth, when He left His glory to take on the image of man and become human. Therefore, shake O heavens, and shake O earthly dwelling of humans! Tremble in fear, for the Lord of glory has come in the flesh and has put on the body of the poor—the bedridden, the suffering and the hungry! Who can bear the sight or sound of such a thing?"[43]

Fr Matthew the Poor (Abouna Matta El Meskeen)

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

"LOVE THE POOR, AND THROUGH THEM YOU WILL FIND MERCY."[44]

ST ISAAC OF SYRIA

"[The power of charitable works] is so great that they not only cleanse sins but even do away with death itself. Let me explain how.

And who, someone might claim, has become greater than death through charity? Don't worry, my beloved. Learn, from looking at things as they actually are, that the power of charity has destroyed even the tyranny of death.

There was once a woman called Tabitha, which translates as Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43). It was her daily task to earn spiritual riches for herself through charitable works. She clothed the widows and gave them all her possessions. It happened, however, that she fell ill and died.

But see how these women who'd been helped by her were able to repay their benefactress at the right time. They went to Saint Peter, say the Scriptures, and showed him the clothes and other things Tabitha had made and done when she was with them. They missed their mother-figure, probably shed tears, and gave the apostle cause to feel sad on their behalf.

So what did the blessed Peter do? He 'got down on his knees and prayed. Turning towards the dead woman, he said, 'Tabitha, get up'. She opened her eyes, and, seeing Peter, sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive' (Acts 9:40-41).

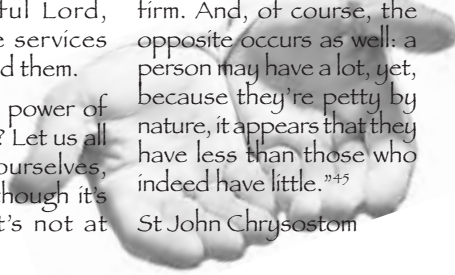
Do you see the power of the apostle, or rather of the Lord who acted through him? Do you see what a reward she received- even in this life- for her good works? Because tell me, what did she give to the widows that was as great a thing as they gave her? She gave them food and clothing, but they brought her back to life and helped her to be released from death. Or rather, not them, but our merciful Lord, because of the services she had rendered them.

Do you see the power of the medicament? Let us all prepare it for ourselves, because, even though it's so powerful, it's not at all expensive. In fact, it's really cheap, so it doesn't require any great outlay. Because the value of charitable works doesn't depend on vast amounts of money, but on the open-handedness of the people who do the giving. This is why somebody who gives a glass of cold water is well-received: so that we'll learn that the Lord of all asks good will from each of us. It often happens that a person will do a great act of charity, even though they haven't actually got that much themselves. This happens when their good intentions are very firm. And, of course, the opposite occurs as well: a person may have a lot, yet, because they're petty by nature, it appears that they have less than those who indeed have little."[45]

St John Chrysostom

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



"THE BREAD YOU DO NOT USE IS THE BREAD OF THE HUNGRY. THE GARMENT HANGING IN YOUR WARDROBE IS THE GARMENT OF THE PERSON WHO IS NAKED. THE SHOES YOU DO NOT WEAR ARE THE SHOES OF THE ONE WHO IS BAREFOOT. THE MONEY YOU KEEP LOCKED AWAY IS THE MONEY OF THE POOR. THE ACTS OF CHARITY YOU DO NOT PERFORM ARE THE INJUSTICES YOU COMMIT."[46]

ST BASIL THE GREAT

CONTINUED...

"So, from the good things that the Lord has given us, let's give generously to those in need. And what He's given us, let's give back to Him, so that they'll become ours again, very much multiplied. Because the noble pride of the Lord is so great that, even though He receives what He Himself has given, He doesn't consider that He's receiving His own things, but promises to repay us for them with even greater generosity. But only if we want to demonstrate our own [generosity]. In other words, to give to the poor as if we were putting our gift into the hand of God, bearing in mind that the hand that receives our gift will not merely return it, but will grant us a hundred times more, thus demonstrating His great kindness towards us.

And why does He multiply this gift? Because, if we're willing to give away something of what's been given to us by the Lord Himself, and so long as we are willing to do that, then His hand not only returns the gift to us, but, along with it, He grants us the Kingdom of Heaven and acclaims us and crowns us and gives us innumerable good things.

So, is He asking something burdensome or difficult of us? Whatever is uselessly and pointlessly shut away in chests and store-rooms, He wants us to share out, as we should, we ourselves, so that from this He can find occasion to crown us with all due ceremony. Because He hastens and rushes and is careful to ensure that what He's promised us does actually come about.

I would beg you, therefore that we should not deprive ourselves of such wonderfully good things... What we have pointlessly stored, we should share for the upkeep of the poor. In this, there's no chance that we'll ever miss the mark; neither need we fear failure, which is what happens here on earth. Because it says: 'He scattered, he gave to the poor.' And listen to what follows: '**And His righteousness endures unto the ages of ages**' (Ps. 111:3)."[47]

St John Chrysostom

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

"POOR PEOPLE ARE JUST CARRIERS WHO TRANSFER OUR LUGGAGE FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN... SO GIVE THEM WHAT YOU HAVE AND THEY WILL CARRY IT TO HEAVEN."[48]

ST AUGUSTINE

"Some people see the houses in which they live as their kingdom; and although in their minds they know that death will one day force them to leave, in their hearts they feel they will stay forever. They take pride in the size of their houses and the fine materials with which they are built. They take pleasure in decorating their houses with bright colours, and in obtaining the best and most solid furniture to fill the rooms. They imagine that they can find peace and security by owning a house whose walls and roof will last for many generations. We, by contrast, know that we are only temporary guests on earth. We recognize that the houses in which we live serve only as hostels on the road to eternal life. We do not seek peace or security from the material walls around us or the roof above our heads. Rather, we want to surround ourselves with a wall of divine grace; and we look upward to heaven as our roof. And the furniture of our lives should be good works, performed in a spirit of love."[49]

St John Chrysostom

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?"

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

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 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."

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

"I USED TO PRAY THAT GOD WOULD FEED THE HUNGRY, OR DO THIS OR THAT, BUT NOW I PRAY THAT HE WILL GUIDE ME TO DO WHATEVER I'M SUPPOSED TO DO, WHAT I CAN DO. I USED TO PRAY FOR ANSWERS, BUT NOW I'M PRAYING FOR STRENGTH. I USED TO BELIEVE THAT PRAYER CHANGES THINGS, BUT NOW I KNOW THAT PRAYER CHANGES US AND WE CHANGE THINGS."[50]

MOTHER TERESA

"How often do we hear the complaint, 'Why doesn't God do something? Why doesn't He feed the hungry? Why doesn't He stop this war?' We seem to forget that God often chooses to do something through us. We are His instruments and members of His Body the Church. God has chosen us to do His work in the world today.

This is clearly illustrated in the Gospel reading of Matthew 14:14-22. Before the Feeding of the 5000, the disciples saw the great number of people and said to Jesus: 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.'

But Jesus said to them, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'

'You give them something to eat…You do it…You take care of it.' Often, people respond with, 'What, who me? I only have five loaves and two fish.' Yes, whatever we have seems like it is not enough, that it is never enough. Until what? Until we bring them to Jesus. That's what Jesus said, 'Bring them here to Me' (v.18). We must bring what little we have, our five loaves and our two fish, to Jesus.

…We do not possess great talents to serve God but think of what an influential ministry each local Church would have if all the people offered to God what they had. The next time we start thinking, 'But I am only one person, what can one person do?,' we should remember that in the other account of this same event in the Gospel of John, Andrew points out that it is only one young person who as the five loaves and two fish (Jn.6:9). Just one person!

Fr. Anthony Coniaris, in his book 'Gems from the Sunday Gospels vol.2' (p.108), shares a short poem, 'I am only one—but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do—I ought to do. What I ought to do—by the grace of God—I will do.'… God does not ask you about your ability—only your availability. He provides the ability. The supreme question is: are we available to Him? Moses made himself available and God provided the ability for him to do great works in His name; so too with the humble fisherman and countless others….One never knows how God will use us but He can never use us unless we make ourselves available to Him."[51]

Rev. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews

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

"Be like a fragrant flower whose task is to give fragrance to people, whatever kind of person they may be. Giving is its nature; to every person that passes by it, and even to whoever plucks it, it will continue to give fragrance to them. This is its principle of giving and part of its nature – may we learn from it."[52]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"The spiritual person does not live only for himself…

There is a well known saying: 'He who lives only for himself never lived.' Then in the service, you must get out of your shell to meet others. You must get out of the 'I' sphere to spread your love among all. You feel that your message in life is to do good to all those whom God sends your way. The more you gain experience in life and broadness in the heart, the circle of your service will get bigger. It would not be limited to your house and your family, and not only to your relatives, neighbours, friends and colleagues, but it will reach to a range that is wider and wider…

The service, in its essence, is an expression of love that is stored in the heart towards God and people…

It is required from each faithful to love God with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his might. This is a commandment since the Old Testament (Deut 6:5). And it was repeated in the New Testament also (Mt 22:37- 39). Love is not just a theoretical thing, because the Bible says: 'Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth' (1 Jn 3:18). Practical love shows in the service. Because you love God, you express your love for Him by spreading the word about His Kingdom, by serving the church and serving the Word. And because you love people, you serve them by all means that are available for you and useful for them…

The important thing is that the element of sacrifice and giving is present in everyone's life, everyone.

And so you find that the service has given you a spiritual virtue, that is, love, giving and sacrificing."[53]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

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

"THE SPIRITUAL PERSON IS THE ONE WHO ALWAYS DOES GOOD, AS AN IMAGE OF GOD WHOM WE DESCRIBE AS 'THE BENEFICENT', AND AS IT WAS SAID ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT HE: 'WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD.' (ACTS 10:38). ARE YOU LIKE THAT?"[54]
H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

"There are various types of service: some are social and others are spiritual...

About the spiritual service, the Bible says: 'He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins' (Jas 5:20). Also: 'Take heed to yourself and save both yourself and those who hear you' (1 Tim. 4:16). Then it is a service that concerns saving the soul. How glorious!!

As for the social service and because of its sublimity, God made it a scale for judgment in the last day:

As He says to those on His right side: '... For I was hungry and you gave Me food: I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me' (Mt 25:35-40). Then He explained this by saying: '... Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Considering all those needy people exactly as Himself... And the Bible also says: 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world' (Jas 1:27).

We have seen types of services that include the whole society and have exceeded to an international level...

World organizations such as the Red Cross and ambulance societies, world organizations for aid and the like, they offer help to those who are in need wherever they are, whether in countries where natural disasters, such as floods occurred, or military disasters or famines. Relief comes to them from far away countries that maybe they never knew before and never had any relationships with them. But it is the humanitarian feeling and the love towards all that automatically rushes to help those who are in need.

These secular world organizations have no relation to the church to do such things, so how much more appropriate for us?

You are required to do something for your brother, the human being. God gave us the example of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 30-37) who helped a man on the road, although there was animosity between his people and this man's people. But it is the love that does not know discrimination. Nobody should say to himself: 'I am not called for service!' No, you are called to love all and to express this love by serving. As for the educational service, it needs you to be sent by the church (Rom 10:15), because not everyone is suitable for preaching and teaching...

CONTINUED...

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

Then there are many types of service and each one can serve according to the grace given to him from God.

Nobody can ever say that God did not grant him any abilities for service. He must be able to do something... The serving person, I mean the one who has the spirit of service, you find him serving in all fields: at home, at the work place or at school, at church, on the road... with everyone and everywhere; he is a giver and whoever meets him has to receive something from his giving.

Ask yourself then: what is the share of others in my life?

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

Consecration needs a call. As for the general service, it needs only love and the desire of the heart to serve others. This in itself is a call from the heart... I remember once that a surgeon asked me what could he do for others. I said to him: At least one tenth of the fees you receive for the operations that you perform should be given to the poor and the needy. And so God would have a share in your knowledge and in your work. And you express your love for the poor by reducing your fees when you charge them...

The service strengthens the spirituality of the servant. And the spirituality of the servant strengthens the service. By serving, you give and take. Therefore we consider service as one of the spiritual means. As you give those whom you serve love from your heart, your heart will also be satisfied by this service. There is no doubt that the one who serves the orphans, the sick, the disabled, the poor or the needy in general, his heart is enriched by deep feelings that will elevate his soul and make him in no need of the world's vain emotions. The feeling that one acquires from facing pain and suffering is stronger than the feelings offered by places of entertainment and pleasure. And so you take from your service much more than what you give. Just the mere feeling that you made somebody happy, or you solved a problem, will make your heart overflow with deep feelings."[55]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"THE HAND THAT IS MOVED BY LOVE DOES NOT FEEL TIRED."[56]

H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

"... there is the treasure of service to others in the name of Christ. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, while preaching on the Last Judgment scene in Matthew 25, proclaimed:

'I am fearful of that 'left hand side' and of 'the goats' ... because they have not ministered to Christ through those in need ... Let us take care of Christ then, while there is still time: let us visit Christ in his sickness, let us give to Christ to eat, let us clothe Christ in his nakedness, let us do honour to Christ, and not only at table as some do, not just with precious ointment, like Mary, nor just with a tomb, like Joseph of Arimathea ... but let us give Him His honour in His needy ones, in those who lie on the ground here before us this day."

A recently canonized martyr, St. Maria Skobtsova, a Russian Orthodox émigré nun who lived in France came to this conclusion about the same passage in Matthew 25:

'The way to God lies through love of people. At the Last Judgment I shall not be asked whether I was successful in my ascetic exercises, nor how many bows and prostrations I made. Instead I shall be asked, did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners. That is all I shall be asked. About every poor, hungry, and imprisoned person the Saviour says 'I'; 'I was hungry, and thirsty, I was sick and in prison.' To think that he puts an equal sign between himself and anyone in need ... I always knew it, but now it has somehow penetrated to my sinews. It fills me with awe.'

These, then, are the treasures that really count in God's eyes, treasures that are not 'rust collectors' but that will last forever: the treasures of....service to our fellow human being through the fast of love.

A ruler once threatened that he would take everything away from St. John Chrysostom. The great saint replied, 'My treasure is in heaven and you can never take that away from me.'"[57]

Fr Anthony Coniaris

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

"GIVING THEN IS THE SHARING OF YOURSELF WITH OTHERS."[58]

H.H POPE SHENOUDA III

"A priest from Egypt who went to serve in the Diaspora for a period of time was shocked to see a deacon in his youth with very long hair. The priest was not at ease and inside him judged the youth.

After the mass, the priest of the church was talking to the priest and said, "There are also good servants here as in Egypt. That deacon with the long hair serves and cares for cancer patients. He grows his hair for two years, and then he gets it cut and made into expensive wigs and pays for it and donates the wigs to the patients. "

The priest was amazed and embarrassed and admitted his mistake of judging the youth just because of his appearance. That youth was giving his own hair, his emotional support and care to those patients."[59]

As told on Alhorreya TV, 'Why?' Program, Episode of Sep 26, 2014

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

"Give me health and strength and with them I will serve You. Whenever I get tired in serving You and whenever I give in serving You, I do not ever consider that I have given anything... Because health is from You, strength is from You, the love to serve is also from You. Even I, myself, am from You. It was possible not to be born or to exist. You gave me this existence by which I serve You, and gave me the word to speak... In all my service and my labour for You, I say: "Of Your own we have given You."[60]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"As Christians, we believe that the grace of the Holy Spirit works in all of us to the extent that we are willing to open our hearts and place ourselves in the Mighty Hands of God. The late Fr. Pishoy Kamel Is'hak (1931-1979) exemplifies the Christian person, who allows himself to be a tool for God to use. God gives each of us gifts, but what makes Fr. Pishoy unique is the vast number of gifts God has combined and blessed him with; it is rare to have so many combined in one person. But he used all of them and all his talents for the glory of God's Name.

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

Carrying the Cross of Others in Service:

Fr. Pishoy exemplified how love of God is manifested through love of neighbour through true and pure sacrifice. He loved all those he served and considered himself their father, offering himself as a sacrifice for them. We define true Christian love as giving of oneself to everyone, without limits. Abouna Pishoy gave of his time, his effort, his energy, his talents, and everything he had to his children. For Abouna Pishoy, service was not a duty, an obligation, or a responsibility. It was a passion for the salvation of everyone, and it came from the heart. He felt his mission was to show the power of the Cross to everyone by being a sacrifice like our Lord was on the Cross. His heart ached whenever a sheep was about to get lost or was lost, and this was one of the heaviest burdens for him. Whenever he heard that a person was weakening and may abandon his faith, he would seek this lost sheep with all his might and pour himself as a sacrifice in prayer before the altar, determined, by the grace of God, to bring that soul back. Many of us know the story of how he held on to a police car that was taking away a young woman, who forsook Christ. He would not let go of the car to the point that he was being dragged on the road, and they had to stop the car to avoid severely injuring him.

His love for the flock was seen when he helped them carry their own crosses. He shared in their sufferings and, by God's wisdom, helped those, who came to him, to rise to a higher spiritual level by teaching them to carry their crosses with joy. He did not believe that the Cross was a punishment, which one should 'bear and grin". On the contrary, he taught us that the Cross should be a daily desire. He used to tell us that we have to enter "the school of the Cross" and going to school must be done daily. He taught us that carrying the Cross was carrying the Throne of our King, and that through it Christ rules over our hearts. To those who came to him with problems, he taught them that every cross that came their way was a blessing. But he

also would help them lift their burden by offering to do something concrete. Abouna Pishoy was not a passive man; he worked without ceasing. He was known for his thoughtful deeds and sensitivity towards the feelings of others, extending help, without being asked. That is why he was so endeared by his children and loved by his flock. We all smelled the aroma of his loving sacrifice to everyone without favouritism.

...It was known that he financially helped many college students and families. But it became evident after his departure that he even helped some Moslem families, showing that the true Christian servant gives of himself to everyone so all can see the icon of Christ in him and smell the aroma of Christ's sacrifice. One time as Tassoni Angele was buying bread from the young boy, who brought the bread to their apartment, he was accompanied by another young Moslem boy, who told her that he had no shoes. She turned him away and told him to go to their mosque and they will buy him shoes. When she retold the story to Abouna Pishoy, he became quite upset and told her, 'Is this what Christ taught us? This afternoon, you go and buy shoes for this child!' So, although he was known for his firm and courageous stands during time of trouble with authorities, yet he still fulfilled the commandment of love on an individual level."[61]

lacopts.org

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."

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
	Catholicon	2 Pet 3:1-18
	Acts	Acts 26:19-27:8
	Psalm	Ps 33:5-6
	Gospel	John 5:1-18

"A SACRIFICE TO BE REAL MUST COST, MUST HURT, AND MUST EMPTY OURSELVES. GIVE YOURSELF FULLY TO GOD. HE WILL USE YOU TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS ON THE CONDITION THAT YOU BELIEVE MUCH MORE IN HIS LOVE THAN IN YOUR WEAKNESS."[62]
MOTHER TERESA

"... they first gave themselves to the Lord." (2 Cor. 8:5)

"St Paul speaks here of the generosity of the Christians in Macedonia. Though they were poor, they gave beyond their means to help their suffering brethren in Jerusalem. Paul says that this happened because 'first they gave themselves to the Lord.' Here is the essence of all true giving to God: the giving of one's self.

The gift without the giver is always bare and empty and perhaps even hypocritical. There are people who send a check to the church once a year but they do not participate in the life of the church. They give money but they do not give themselves. This is not real giving. This is not true giving. This is not Christian giving. Giving involves much more than writing a check. The check is really worthless unless it symbolizes the gift of oneself. Someone said once, 'I had been giving my money to God all my life, but I had never given myself.' Without the giving of oneself no gift has value.

When the offering plate was passed in church one day, a little boy asked the usher to place the plate on the floor. The lad then stepped in the plate and said, 'I want to give myself to God. It is all I have to give.' 'First they gave themselves to the Lord.'"[63]
Fr Anthony Coniaris

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

"There will come a time when not the persecutions but money and the goods of this world will take people far from God. Then many more souls will be lost than in the time of the persecutions."[64]

St Seraphim of Viritsa

"What hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments?

The flesh and the world: that is, pleasant food and drink which men like, in which they delight both in thought and in fact, which make the heart gross and hard—a partiality for elegant dress and adornment, or for distinctions and rewards; if the dress or adornments are made of very beautiful coloured and delicate materials, then care and anxiety arise how to avoid staining or soiling them, or getting them dusty or wet, whilst care and anxiety how to please God in thought, word, and deed vanish and the heart lives for dress and adornment, and becomes entirely engrossed in these things, ceasing to care about God and being united to Him…

Therefore fight against every worldly enticement, against every material enticement that hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments, love God with all your heart, and care with all your strength for the salvation of your own soul, and the souls of others, be soul-loving."[65]

St John of Kronstadt

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

"I HOPE THAT WHAT YOU GIVE ME COMES NOT FROM YOUR SURPLUS BUT IT IS THE FRUIT OF A SACRIFICE MADE FOR THE LOVE OF GOD. YOU MUST GIVE WHAT COSTS YOU, GO WITHOUT SOMETHING YOU LIKE, THEN YOU WILL TRULY BE BROTHERS TO THE POOR WHO ARE DEPRIVED OF EVEN THE THINGS THEY NEED."[66]

MOTHER TERESA

"There was a Sunday school servant whose parents had passed away and he was living on his own. He had a simple income and had great love for the children. He used to spend most of his income on the service and the children. Abouna (Reverend Father) told him that one day he will get married and so he needed to start saving. The servant told Abouna that he had a strong faith that as long as he was spending his money on the service and God's children, that God will never leave or desert him.

Later on, he met a woman whom he wanted to marry and so he took Abouna with him to propose to her. Her father asked him, 'Do you have a flat?' he replied, 'Yes, but it is not furnished and it is empty.' The father refused and said, 'I cannot give my daughter away to someone who has nothing.' So they left, and Abouna was embarrassed from the situation but the servant had strong faith that God will solve the problem.

A friend of Abouna who was working in an Arab country contacted him and told him that he had accumulated his tithes for years and wanted to give it to someone who is in need for marriage. He knew the difficulties faced with getting married in Egypt and requested the money be given to only one person so all his marriage needs are met. While the man was speaking to Abouna, the image of the servant appeared before him and he felt that because of the servant's strong faith, God had intervened and solved his problem. Abouna felt that the servant's faith was stronger than his own faith, as a priest. Abouna took the money and gave it to the servant to use it for his marriage."[67]

As told on Alhorreya TV, 'Why?' Program, Episode of Sep 5, 2014

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

Day 39

Give Your Life as a Living Sacrifice

26 March 2015
Commemoration of
Fr. Mikhail Ibrahim's Departure

"Seek the simplest in all things, in food, clothing, without being ashamed of poverty. For a great part of the world lives in poverty. Do not say, 'I am the son of a rich man. It is shameful for me to be in poverty.' Christ, your Heavenly Father, Who gave birth to you in the baptistery, is not in worldly riches. Rather He walked in poverty and had nowhere to lay His head."[68]

St Gennadius of Constantinople

"Let no man then accuse poverty as being the cause of innumerable evils, nor let him contradict Christ, who declared it to be the perfection of virtue, saying, '**If you will be perfect.**' (Matthew 19:21) For this He both uttered in His words, and showed by His acts, and taught by His disciples. Let us therefore follow after poverty, it is the greatest good to the sober-minded.

Perhaps some of those who hear me, avoid it as a thing of ill omen. I do not doubt it. For this disease is great among most men, and such is the tyranny of wealth, that they cannot even as far as words endure the renunciation of it, but avoid it as of ill omen. Far be this from the Christian's soul: for nothing is richer than he who chooses poverty of his own accord, and with a ready mind."[69]

St John Chrysostom

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

"I AM NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT HEAVEN WILL BE LIKE, BUT I KNOW THAT WHEN WE DIE AND IT COMES TIME FOR GOD TO JUDGE US, HE WILL NOT ASK, 'HOW MANY GOOD THINGS HAVE YOU DONE IN YOUR LIFE?' RATHER HE WILL ASK, 'HOW MUCH LOVE DID YOU PUT INTO WHAT YOU DID?"[70]

MOTHER TERESA

"Anba Abraam was a saintly monk of the twentieth century. As it is said, 'Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in Heaven is perfect' (Matthew 5:48) so did St. Abraam live his holy life. Born in a small town near Cairo, Egypt, Anba Abraam grew up in a Christian home with the Lord Jesus Christ ever before him. He would gain renown not only in Egypt but far beyond because of his great love for the Lord which was shown through his sanctity, spirituality, and intense compassion for all the needy.

When Anba Abraam was appointed a deputy bishop in the City of Minya, he converted the bishopric into a shelter for the homeless, orphans, poor and the strangers. Some years later he moved and became head of El-Moharak Monastery and opened the doors of the monastery to the needy, poor and the widows. Satan moved against some of the monks residing in the monastery and he was accused of wasting the resources of the monastery upon the poor. They persisted until Anba Abraam was dismissed as head of the monastery and they turned out the poor whom he cared for.

Then he went to live in El-Baramus Monastery. The saint had been brought to the same sanctuary in which Yohanna-n-Nasikh lived. Consequently when the later became St. Mark's successor and the Fayoum people needed a Shepherd, Yohanna-n-Nasikh ordained Anba Abraam whom he loved greatly. When ordained Bishop of Fayoum, he excelled in doing mercy to the extent that he gave everything he owned.

One day a penniless man came to ask him for money to spend on his wife who gave birth to a baby. The Bishop gave him one pound, all he had at that moment. When the poor man went out, a deputy of the Bishop who knew that he had received a pound met him. The deputy took the pound from him and replaced it by a fourth of a pound. The poor man returned to the Bishop and told him what had happened. The Bishop called his deputy, rebuked him for his hard heart, and lack of his faith and asked him to return the pound to the poor man, not to take back the fourth of the pound and to give him also a quilt because it was winter. When the deputy protested the Bishop said, 'The Lord will provide.' After the poor man left, the Bishop received from one of the believers a money order for ten pounds and an invoice for receiving ten units of wheat.

Another day, a poor woman went to him when the Bishop had no money. But someone had given him a shawl, which he never used. He apologized to the woman that he had no money, gave her the shawl saying that she may

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

sell it and use the money. The woman took it and went to the market to sell it. There the owner of the shawl saw her, bought it from her and returned it to the Bishop. Before giving the shawl to the Bishop, he asked, 'Father why did you not use the shawl as it is cold these days?' The Bishop replied, 'The shawl is Upstairs my son' meaning that it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the man presented the shawl to him. The Bishop said, 'I hope you gave the poor woman the right price.' The man replied, 'Yes father, I gave her the right price.'

Anba Abraam was endowed with extraordinary gifts including that of healing. He used these gifts to cure and relieve all those who sought him, however numerous.

These are but a few of the examples of Anba Abraam's generous giving. This saint always gave with the Spirit of Love. Love in every matter, in every virtue, and in every practice is like the soul to the body. If the soul left the body it would immediately die and not exist.

Likewise, God rejects any virtue without the Spirit of Love. Christianity lifts up our compassion and we sense the feelings of others, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep' (Romans 12:15). Our teacher, St Paul says, 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing' (1 Corinthians 13:3)."[7]

H.G. Bishop Youssef

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

"YOU WILL NEVER OVERCOME GOD'S GENEROSITY, EVEN IF YOU GIVE AWAY ALL THAT YOU HAVE.... AND HOWEVER MUCH YOU BRING TO HIM, ALWAYS MORE REMAINS."[72]

ST GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN

Did St. Antony Give or Take?

"There is no doubt that St. Antony gave to God everything he possessed; He did according to the commandment: 'He went and sold all he had and gave it to the poor.' (Mt 19:21) He gave to God 300 acres of the most fertile land in Beni-Suef. He gave to God all that awaited him of wealth and authority as the single heir to his father. He gave up marriage, the children he could have had, and all there is in the world of knowledge, science, pleasure, and human relations.

This brings up two questions. Did this Saint give or take? Or did he give then take? Does being a monk involve giving or taking? Is it a process of giving, which gets transformed into taking. Or is it a process of giving that is rewarded by taking, so that at the end, taking is more than giving?

This Saint has given up to God a plot of land (300 acres). But God has given him the whole earth, and the heavens too. In every city he now has a monastery, convents, churches, and shrines. All the wilderness became his, including the monasteries that are in other Saints names, because he is the Father of monasticism in the whole world. So, did he give more or take more.

When I see the land and property that now belong to the monastery of St. Antony in Egypt alone, I find that they exceed what St. Antony had given up in the small city of Kamn El-Arouss!

See how our Lord Jesus Christ's promises never fail: 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundred fold now in this time, and in the age to come, eternal life.' (Mark 10:29).

What did St Antony give up, other than land? Did he give up children? Suppose that young Antony, instead of pursuing monastic life, had gotten married and had children. How many could he have had? Five, ten, twenty. He now has thousands of monks as sons, in every generation that call him father. They may total up to millions from the beginning of monasticism in the third century till the present time, plus millions of spiritual children like you. Truly, when Christ said, 'you will be compensated hundred fold', He was denying Himself in his generosity, for he has given back a thousand fold.

Christ even made St. Antony cross boundaries of time and space. He who has left his village and lived in solitude in the mountains for the sake of God, who left the world behind for the sake of God, became the person that the whole world talks about, one whose name sounds in all corners of the world. Not

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

one of the six continents of the world does not know St. Antony. His name crossed the boundaries of his village, the frontiers of Egypt, the boundaries of Africa while he was alive. He has children, monasteries, and churches in every place, and his shrines are innumerable. Truly, did he give or take?

What else did St. Antony give to God, did he give him his life? Behold, God, has allowed St. Antony's life to cross the boundaries of all ages. The lives of many people ends with their death, and their generation eventually forgets them. Sixteen centuries have passed since St. Antony's death, but he is still living among us, living in his principles, in his teachings, in his children, in the path he trod, and in his memory.

He is one of the eternal names that cannot be forgotten, he is a great soul that was greater than death. Physical death could not put an end to his message, so his life did not only include his generation, but has extended across the generations. He is still among us for he lived a life that had a beginning but no end.

When a monk is anointed, we pray the prayer for the dead over him, as though he is dead to this world. But St. Antony, by dying to this world, has entered a life that never ends, and through it he is still alive among us. Did he give his life to God, or did he take a life that never ends? Did he, for God's sake, leave a life of greatness, power, glory and fame?

His father was a man of power and greatness and as his son he would have inherited the same power. Imagine that Saint Antony had stayed in his father's place, what future awaited him? Was he to become the mayor of the city of Keman El Arous or the greatest man in the town of Beni Suef for the rest of his life, then be forgotten as his father was, despite his position, wealth, and power?

In contrast, Saint Antony the simple monk, Emperor Constantine sends to ask for his blessings; philosophers and noblemen come from all over the world seeking his wisdom. He gained fame that nobody had, and the church calls him, 'Saint Antony the Great.'

Our relation with God is one of continuous taking; not giving. Do you think you give time to God in prayer? No, you do not give time to God in prayer; rather you receive unmeasurable blessings and gifts and the Holy Spirit works in you. God gives you life for a week, and you give him a day of the week from which He has given you. Are you then giving? No, you are taking the blessing of that day. And as the Bible says, 'The Sabbath was made for man' (Mark 2:27).

When you give your life to God, you are giving Him your emptiness and He will fill it. You are giving your weakness and taking God's strength. As the one who gives tithes, 'The windows of heaven will be opened to him and God will pour down blessing on him until he cries enough!' (Malachi 3:10).

Advance toward God. Give Him your will so that he can give you back strength and victory."[7]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

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

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

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 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.

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

"If you give something to one in need, let the cheerfulness of your face precede your gift, and comfort his sorrow with kind words. When you do this, by your gift the gladness of his mind surpasses even the needs of his body."[74]
St Isaac the Syrian

"He always takes from himself to give to others.

The virtue of giving is always mixed with self-denial. In it, the self is always placed last while others are given priority. One does not think about his personal needs and requirements but gives preference to others. That is what the widow of Zarephath did at the time of the famine when she offered the Prophet Elijah the handful of flour and the little oil that she had. Therefore God greatly blessed her home (1 Kings 17:11-19).

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

The widow who put two mites into the treasury did the same. The Lord blessed her more than anybody else. Why? Because: 'She out of her poverty has put in all the livelihood that she had' (Lk 21:4). And it was not only out of her poverty, but also because 'she put in all the livelihood that she had,' everything that she possessed. We see here the same principle that we mentioned before, which is giving preference to others... Let others live even if I die. I will satisfy others needs, or help in satisfying what they need, no matter how much I myself am in need. In the Lord's blessing of this widow, we notice an important rule, which is:

That God looks at the depth of giving and not at its amount.

Among the features of this depth is the linking of giving to love. You love to give and you love the one you give to. Therefore the giving which benefits you spiritually is that which you give without discontent, complaint or compulsion, but with all feelings of satisfaction and joy. As the Bible said: 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:7).

You love the one who is in need and urged by this love, you give him. Your love shows in your treatment when you give. The needy would feel your love and that would make him more joyful than his joy with what he took. He takes from you feelings before he takes material things. And he would feel that your giving is not a type of formality but a sentiment and contribution. You too when you give him would not be less joyful, like the mother who rejoices when she gives to her son, a joy that precedes the giving, and accompanies it because of her son's joy..."[75]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"Do not give, as many rich men do, like a hen that lays an egg, and then cackles."[76]

Henry Ward Beecher

"Therefore in all this, giving should be without glory.

Whether it be by the tongue, by the heart, by feelings from inside or by the thoughts... As if you have given from what is yours!!... I remember here the depth of the words that the Apostle said: 'What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?' (1 Cor 4:7)... And if all that we give, we received from God, would not our glory in giving be in vain?!

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

Therefore God commanded that giving should be in secret.

He said: 'Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.' And He said, '... Your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly' (Mt 6:1,4). And God does not mean to keep your deed secret from people only, but from yourself also. Do not count and check on how much you have given, but: 'Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing' (Mt 6:3).

Do not mention how much you have given and do not recall how much you have given... Do not count your gifts but try to forget them all, lest the devil of vain glory fights you with that and also lest you receive your rewards on earth by glorifying yourself...

It was told about St Milania at the beginning of her spiritual life, before becoming a nun, that she used to offer much to the monasteries and to the monks... It happened once that she put five hundred pieces of gold in a bag and gave it to Abba Bemwah to give to the monks who lived in the inner wilderness. The saint called his disciple, gave him the bag without opening it and asked him to distribute the contents among these monks... Here, Milania said: 'But you have not opened it, father, to know how much is in it?' The saint replied: 'If you have given this money to God, then God knows how much it is...' And this was a lesson for Milania."[77]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"The seed that is sown is scattered with an open hand. The sower in order to have a harvest has to turn loose the seed. He can't grip it in his fist; he can't hesitate to let it go; he can't just sprinkle a little bit here and there – he's got to generously sow it, he's got to let it go and let it go liberally, if he expects to have a great harvest. If he sows sparingly, that's the way he's going to reap; if he sows liberally and bountifully, that's the way his harvest is going to be."[78]
C.H. Spurgeon

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

"Another quality of giving is liberality.

The Bible says: 'He who gives, with liberality' (Rom 12:8). He also commands us to be: 'Ready to give, willing to share' (1 Tim 6:18), and says: 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully' (2 Cor 9:6), and the Lord justifies that by saying: 'For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you' (Lk 6:38).

Then it is not enough to give, but to be generous in giving.

We have a beautiful example in the Bible about Araunah the Jebusite, when King David wanted to buy the threshing-floor from him to build an altar to the Lord. Araunah rejoiced for that and wanted to donate the threshing-floor and whatever was on it. So he said to David: 'Let my lord the King take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood' (2 Sam 24:22). Araunah offered everything to the King, but David said: 'No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing' ... Each of them wanted to pay cheerfully, joyfully and with liberality...

Let us remember the story of our father Abraham when three men visited him: He said to our mother Sarah: ''Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.' And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender, good calf, gave it to a young man and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them' (Gen 18:6-8)... Do three men need three measures of meal... and a complete calf, adding to that butter and milk? Or was it the liberality of our father Abraham?... It was his joy with the guests and he wanted for all to eat with them, his men and the shepherds to eat from the calf and the freshly baked bread...

With the same liberality in giving, so God treats us...

And so He said: 'Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into your bosom' (Lk 6:38). And also: 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse... and prove me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts: 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it...' (Mal 3:10). It was also said: 'Honour the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine' (Prov 3:9).

One of the verses that also call to liberality in giving is the Lord's saying: '...Go, sell what you have and give to the poor' (Mt 19:21). And also: 'Sell what you have and give alms' (Lk 12:33). The Lord said: 'Give to everyone who asks of you, and from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back' (Lk 6:30). The Bible also says: 'He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none, and he who has food, let him do likewise' (Lk 3:11)."[79]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

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

"You shall not turn away the needy, but shall share everything with your sibling, and shall not say it is your own, for if you are sharers in the imperishable, how much more in the things which perish?"[80]

The Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)

Other beautiful qualities of giving:

"+ To give without being asked to do so.

This is what our Father in heaven does for us. This is also what the father and the mother do with their children. Have sensitivity towards people's needs without waiting for them to ask you.

+ Do not postpone giving.

Delay may cause harm to those who are in need. The Bible says about this: 'Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbour 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it, when you have it with you' (Prov 3:27,28).

+ Train yourself to give from the best that you have.

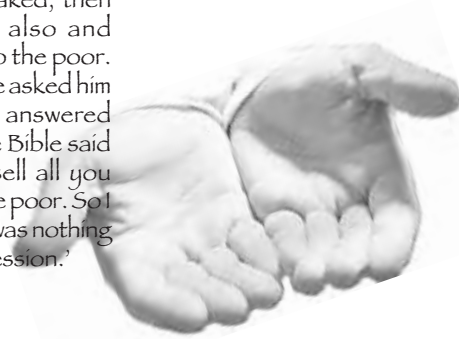
Many do not give except the old and torn clothes and what is out of order or rejected by them... They are in fact giving these to Christ, as well as to the poor. Would that in all this we remember the offerings of Cain and Abel, as it was said that: 'Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering' (Gen 4:4). 'Of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat' means of the best of what he had.

History gave us amazing examples of giving.

St Abraam, the Bishop of Fayoum and St Sarabamoun of the veil, the Bishop of Manoufia, and their many amazing stories of giving. Now however, time does not permit us to discuss their lives... and St John the Merciful who sold everything and gave to the poor. Then when there was nothing else to sell, he sold himself as a slave and gave the money paid for him to the poor. St Serapion also gave his tunic to a poor man who was naked, then sold his Bible also and gave the price to the poor. When his disciple asked him about that, he answered him saying: 'The Bible said to me go and sell all you have and give the poor. So I sold it, as there was nothing else in my possession.'

During the Apostolic period, it was said: 'All who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need' (Acts 4:34,35). Where is our giving then, compared to them!"[81]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III



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

"Know that money is a means and not an end. You take it in order to store treasure in heaven. Change it from being a temporal materialistic currency into a lasting spiritual currency."[82]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"The Tithes

The tithes are more ancient than the written law. We hear about our father Jacob when he saw a ladder set up on the earth and its top reached to heaven, that he said: 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God... And of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You' (Gen 28:20-22).

All the money that you receive, set aside its tithe for the Lord...

7th Friday of the Holy Great Fast

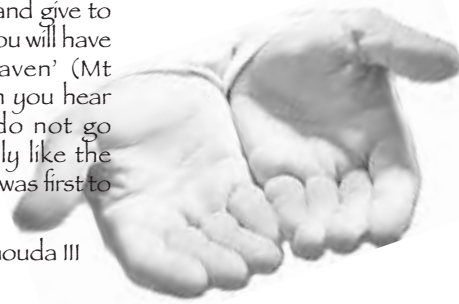
Vespers:	Psalm	-
	Gospel	-
Prophecies:	Gen 49:33-50:26; Prov 11:27-12:22; Is 66:10-24; Job 42:7-17	
Matins:	Psalm	Ps 32:10-11
	Gospel	Luke 16:19-31
Mass:	Pauline	2 Tim 3:1-4:5
	Catholicon	James 5:7-16
	Acts	Acts 15:1-18
	Psalm	Ps 98:8-9
	Gospel	Luke 13:31-35

Whether it was your fixed pay or other additional resources, or unexpected gains. Whether it is cash or in assets that you know their value then you pay the tithe... Set aside the tithe of all, put it separately in a box especially for the Lord. Do not fall in the error where many do fall: as they spend from their income first, then check to see if there was anything left for God or not!! They put the Lord's due at the end of the list, or they may even forget it! Or they may consider their other expenses under the title of necessities. As for the Lord's due, it is considered as luxuries or left over! As for you, set it aside from your income immediately, just like other official deductions.

In your giving, elevate yourself above the level of the tax collector...

As the Lord Jesus Christ, to Him is the glory, said: 'Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees, no doubt, used to pay the tithes. Then you must pay more. Do not be a lawyer taking the law literally. But in your giving, deal with your heart and your love. Do not be neglectful of the poor with your possessions. Remember the Lord's saying: 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven' (Mt 19:21), and when you hear these words, do not go away sorrowfully like the young man who was first to hear them..."[83]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III



"God shares in your possessions to bless them, not to take from them, as He is the source of all riches. He shares in your possessions to make you share in the good deeds that He is capable of doing on His own. But, because of His humility, He loves to see good deeds being done by you."[84]

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

"THE FIRSTLINGS

We hear about the firstlings in the offering of the righteous Abel who: 'Brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat' (Gen 4:4), which meant the best he had.

Offering the firstlings is stronger than the tithes...

Because it is all one possesses at that time, as when Hannah offered her only son Samuel to the Lord, and also John the Baptist, the only son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. The Lord Jesus Christ is also the first-born of the Virgin and also her only son ... Offering him to the Lord means giving priority to the Lord over oneself, in respect of the giver.

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

How do we then fulfil the commandment of the firstling these days?

Not all people's possessions are of the produce of land, sheep or cattle. In our present time:

+ You give to the Lord the first pay that you receive from your job, preferably the first month of your pay.

+ You also offer the Lord your first pay rise and the first increase when you are promoted and the first allowance and the first pay for over-time work. For a doctor, that could be, for example, the fees of the first patient or the first surgery. For the teacher, it is the first private lesson... And so on with all the other vocations.

THE VOWS

The vows are different from the tithes and the firstlings. It is your promise before God, in case something good is being granted to you by God, or support in a specific manner or being saved from a hardship. One of the most beautiful and comprehensive sayings about the vows in the Bible is what is written in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 5, as it includes:

Paying the vow without delay and without change...

It was said: 'When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed. It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay" (Eccles 5:4,5).

When we talk about vows, we mean either a vow about money or a vow about life...

Do not rush and make a vow to God about something that later on you might not be able to carry out. For example, do not vow your virginity while in a state of spiritual excitement then realize that you are unable to live this life. Instead of the vow, offer your desire as a prayer. Say to Him: 'Lord, this is my heart's desire. If You see that it is good and possible for me, grant it and give me the strength to carry it out. Let it be according to Your will in my life.'

THE OBLATIONS

The oblations, by which you come closer to God:

The church remembers all these gifts in the "Prayer for the Oblations"... Those who present to the church the wine, the oils, the

incense, the coverings of the altar, the books of the readings and vessels of the altar, and asks the Lord to give them things incorruptible in place of things corruptible, heavenly in place of earthly, eternal in place of temporal, those in abundance or those in scarcity. The church even prays for 'those who desire to offer to You and have none,' which means those who have the intention of offering.

What sums up the words of the Bible about giving is the Lord's saying: 'None shall appear before Me empty' (Ex 23:15) and (Ex 34:20)."[85]
H.H. Pope Shenouda III

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

Day 49

5 April 2015

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).

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).

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).

Day 52

8 April 2015

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.

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.

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.

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.

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