



Prayers  
from  
the Scriptures

Fasting and Prayer Program  
The Holy Great Fast  
2021

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# The Holy Great Fast

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, **'Prayers from the Scriptures.'**

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.

# Monday, 8 March

29 Amshir

*Martyrdom of St Polycarpus Bishop of Smyrna*

**Readings of 1st Monday of the Great Lent**

## Matins

*Psalm 6:1-2*

*Matthew 12:24-34*

## Mass

*Romans 1:26-2:7*

*James 2:1-13*

*Acts 14:19-28*

*Psalm 22:26*

*Mark 9:33-50*

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

*Mark 9:35*

# Lord, teach us to pray

## ***Bible: Luke 11:1-4***

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

<sup>2</sup> So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Give us day by day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins,

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one."

## ***Commentary:***

Forgive wicked offences that you may receive a royal pardon for your offences; but if any one has done thee great wrongs, the greater the wrongs you forgive, the greater will be the pardon which you will receive. Therefore we have been instructed to say "Forgive us, as we forgive," that we may learn that the measure of our forgiveness takes its beginning in the first place from ourselves. As a result in proportion to the severity of the evil which the enemy does to us is the greatness of the benefit which he bestows. Let us then be earnest and eager to be reconciled with those who have hurt us, whether they were right or not. For even if we have been unjustly ill-treated, we ought to grant pardon to those who have wronged us. Christ

says “Forgive your debtors in order that your Father may also forgive your trespasses.” For He did not propose a small reward, but one which far exceeds the magnitude of the achievement. Considering all these things then, and counting the reward which is given in this case and remembering that to wipe away sins does not entail much work and passion, let us pardon those who have wronged us. May the God of peace and love, having banished from our soul all wrath and bitterness, and anger, consent to grant that we being closely knit one to another, may with one accord, one mouth and one soul continually offer up our hymns of thanksgiving due to Him: for to Him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

— *Saint John Chrysostom,  
'To Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly'*

# Tuesday, 9 March

30 Amshir

*Departure of H. H. Pope Kyrillos VI*

## Readings of 1st Tuesday of the Great Lent

### Matins

*Psalm 23:1,3*

*Matthew 9:10-15*

### Mass

*Romans 9:15-29*

*1 Peter 4:3-11*

*Acts 5:34-42*

*Psalm 25:16-17*

*Luke 12:41-50*

*... For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

*Luke 12:48*

# The Remembrance of Pope Kyrillos VI

## ***Bible: Isaiah 52:7***

How beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the feet of him who brings good news,  
Who proclaims peace,  
Who brings glad tidings of good things,  
Who proclaims salvation,  
Who says to Zion,  
“Your God reigns!”

On March 9, the Coptic Orthodox Church remembers the departure of the Great Pope Kyrillos VI, the 116th Pope of Alexandria and successor of Saint Mark the Evangelist. He sat on the throne of Saint Mark for twelve years (1959-1971). Pope Kyrillos was a holy man of prayer who through full dedication to the life of prayer and fasting possessed many higher gifts which included performing wonders and miracles, the gift of knowledge, and an unusual ability to lead by example. He was undoubtedly a very spiritual man and brought the Coptic Church into a new era of spirituality. He was highly regarded by the people of Egypt from all walks of life, Christians and non-Christians alike.

## ***Commentary:***

Let your fast be also accompanied by prayer and by reading the Bible and spiritual books and the lives of the saints. Let your fast be also accompanied by meditation, especially concerning the holy and precious memories with which this blessed season abounds. Celebrate the holy Pascha, with all its profound chants and lections and moving memories, with all befitting asceticism and compunction,

knowing that this season, so profound in its spiritual rituals and prayers, is but a fountain for the spirit, that satisfies and satiates man and provides him with a wonderful provision that is profitable unto eternity.

Set your minds on all the spiritual means that avail unto your edification. Walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ, according to the vocation wherewith ye are called. (Eph 4:1). Be a light wherever ye dwell, that men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Mat 5:16), showing in your lives a good example and a living testimony to the Spirit of God that works in you. Offer unto all a bright image of your holy church, her true orthodox faith, her glorious and wonderful history and her profound and ever-felt influence in the Christian world.

And our Loving God, Who was with Abraham in the land of his sojourn and preserved him bound with His obedience, and Who was with Daniel and the three children in the land of their sojourn and preserved them in their faith, in their fasting and in their prayer, and Who was with Joseph the righteous in the land of his sojourn and preserved him in his purity and truth, the Same be with you also in the land of your sojourn. May He preserve you with His strong right hand, holy and perfect and abounding in every good work.

— *H.H. Pope Kyrillos VI, 'A Papal Message on Fasting'*

# Wednesday, 10 March

## 1 Baramhat

*Departure of St Narkisus Bishop of Jerusalem*

### Readings of 1st Wednesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 25:6-7*

*Luke 6:24-34*

#### Mass

*Romans 14:19-15:7*

*2 Peter 1:4-11*

*Acts 10:9-20*

*Psalm 25:20, 16*

*Luke 6:35-38*

*<sup>37</sup> "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*

*Luke 6:37-38*

## **We speak to Him, and He listens to us**

### ***Bible: Genesis 18:22-33***

<sup>22</sup> Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

<sup>24</sup> Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?

<sup>25</sup> Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

<sup>26</sup> So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

<sup>27</sup> Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:

<sup>28</sup> Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."

<sup>29</sup> And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

<sup>30</sup> Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

<sup>31</sup> And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon

myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

<sup>32</sup> Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

<sup>33</sup> So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

### ***Commentary:***

Prayer is a mighty weapon if it be made with suitable mind. And that you may learn its strength, continual pleas have overcome shamelessness, and injustice, and savage cruelty, and overbearing rashness. Again it has overcome sloth also, and what friendship did not effect, this continued entreaty did: and although he will not give him because he is his friend (He says), yet because of his appeals he will rise and give to him. Luke 11:8 And continued requests made her worthy who was unworthy. It is not meet (He says) to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. Yea! Lord! she says, for even the dogs eat [the crumbs] from their master's table. Matthew 15:26-27 Let us apply ourselves to Prayer. It is a mighty weapon if it be offered with earnestness, if without vainglory, if with a sincere mind. It has turned back wars, it has benefited an entire nation though undeserving.

If then we pray with humility, smiting our breast as the tax collector, if we utter what he did, if we say, Be merciful to me a sinner Luke 18:13, we shall obtain all. For though we be not tax collectors, yet have we other sins not less than his.

We need much penitence, beloved, much prayer, much endurance, much perseverance, that we may

be enabled to attain the good things which have been promised to us.

— *Saint John Chrysostom, 'Homily 27 on Hebrews'*

# Thursday, 11 March

## 2 Baramhat

*Departure of St Makarii Bishop of Nikia*

### Readings of 1st Thursday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 24:1-2*

*Luke 8:23-25*

#### Mass

*1 Corinthians 4:16-5:9*

*1 John 1:8-2:11*

*Acts 8:3-13*

*Psalm 118:13,18*

*Mark 4:21-29*

*<sup>22</sup> For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. <sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*

*Mark 4:22-23*

# Pursuing peace through Prayer

## ***Bible: Genesis 32:9-21***

<sup>9</sup> Then Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’:

<sup>10</sup> I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.

<sup>11</sup> Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children.

<sup>12</sup> For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”

<sup>13</sup> So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother:

<sup>14</sup> two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,

<sup>15</sup> thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

<sup>16</sup> Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves.”

<sup>17</sup> And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?’

<sup>18</sup> then you shall say, ‘They are your servant Jacob’s. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.’”

<sup>19</sup> So he commanded the second, the third, and all

who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;

<sup>20</sup> and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."

<sup>21</sup> So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

### **Commentary:**

The Lord does not permit us to offer the spiritual sacrifices of our prayers, if we are aware that another has any bitterness against us: saying, "If then you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave there your gift at the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." How then may we retain displeasure against our brother, I will not say for several days, but even till the going down of the sun, if we are not allowed to offer our prayers to God while he has anything against us? And yet we are commanded by the Apostle: "Pray without ceasing;" and "in every place lifting up holy hands without wrath and disputing." It remains then either that we never pray at all, retaining this poison in our hearts, and become guilty of disobeying this apostolic commandment to pray everywhere and without ceasing; or otherwise, deceiving ourselves, we venture to pour forth our prayers, contrary to His command, we must know that we are offering to God no prayer, but an obstinate temper with a rebellious spirit.

— John Cassian, *'The Institutes: Book 8'*

# Friday, 12 March

## 3 Baramhat

*Departure of St Cosmas 58th Pope of Alexandria*

### Readings of 1st Friday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 30:1-2*

*Luke 5:12-16*

#### Mass

*Romans 12:6-21*

*3 John 1:1-14*

*Acts 2:42-3:9*

*Psalm 13:5-6*

*Luke 11:1-10*

*<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

*Luke 11:9-10*

# A prayer that changes

## **Bible: 1 Samuel 1:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> And Hannah was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish...

<sup>12</sup> And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth.

<sup>13</sup> Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

<sup>14</sup> So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

<sup>15</sup> But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

<sup>16</sup> Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

<sup>17</sup> Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."

<sup>18</sup> And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

## **Commentary:**

Former Senator Hughes of Iowa was an alcoholic. His family left him. He lost all his money, his home, his friends, everything. In great desperation he decided one night to commit suicide. He took one last drink and went up to the bedroom to get the gun. Because he had seen other suicides with brains splattered all over the walls and floor, he was concerned that he not leave a mess. He wanted to make a clean job of it. So he got into the bathtub. Before pulling the

trigger, he decided to pray for God to forgive him for what he had done to his family and friends. He had not prayed for years. While praying – he said – something happened to him. He suddenly came to his senses. He had a conversion experience right then and there in the bathtub. God spoke to him and the whole direction of his life changed. As a result he gave his life completely to Jesus and entered full-time Christian service leading others to the source of renewal and power: Christ.

The miracle began when Hughes opened the door slightly through prayer to let God come into his life.

# Saturday, 13 March

## 4 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of St Hanulius*

### Readings of 1st Saturday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 119:57-58*

*Matthew 5:25-37*

#### Mass

*Romans 12:1-21*

*James 1:1-12*

*Acts 21:27-39*

*Psalm 5:1-2*

*Matthew 5:38-48*

<sup>44</sup> *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

*Matthew 5:44-45*

## Q&A - Faith

### **How do I strengthen my trust in God and faith in Christianity?**

Faith is the greatest free gift in Christianity. Through it we gain salvation and freedom from eternal condemnation incurred on us by sin. Without faith we cannot please God.

St Paul says, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." (Ephesians 3:17) and it is also by faith that the righteous live, "Now the just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).

We must strive to obtain and strengthen the virtues of faith, hope and love, because they are the main virtues in the life of a Christian (I Corinthians 13:13).

It is through faith that we come closer and closer to the Lord, until we become one with Him. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

It is not difficult to consolidate our faith in God. It first requires trust in God and belief in His words, promises, and revelations.

Trust and obedience, are the keys to a perfect relationship with God. I recommend reading the book "Life of Faith" by HH Pope Shenouda III.

**I try to ask God or one of his saints to appear before me and to see them with my physical eyes. I prayed for the past week to see Him physically, but there was no response. What can I do about this?**

To receive the greater blessing, one needs only to believe without seeing. Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to St. Thomas because of his [St.

Thomas'] doubts and demands to witness firsthand for himself in order to believe, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

If you wish to truly see God, do acts of mercy. Pay close attention to the Holy Scripture in the Gospel according to St. Matthew 25 to gain a deeper understanding of what Christ the King expects in order to reveal Himself to anyone who wishes to see Him. 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' To those on His left, the Lord rebukes them for their blindness toward those in need, "'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'" Thus, if you wish to see Christ, you will see Him in the faces of those whom you serve with love.

As for the apparition of saints, it is also a matter of faith that those who have reposed in the Lord are alive in the spirit in the Paradise of Joy with the righteous and the martyrs. Thus, we ask for their prayers, blessings, and intercessions. For what purpose do we benefit because of apparitions? Saints and angels are with all of us—the good and the bad. They are praying for us night and day that we may overcome all of life's challenges and struggles and repent and inherit eternal life.

# Sunday, 14 March

## 5 Baramhat

*Departure of St Sarabamun*

### Readings of 1st Sunday of the Great Lent

#### Vespers

*Psalm 17:1-2*

*Matthew 6:34-7:12*

#### Matins

*Psalm 18:1-2*

*Matthew 7:22-29*

#### Mass

*Romans 13:1-14*

*James 1:13-21*

*Acts 21:40-22:16*

*Psalm 25:1,2,4*

*Matthew 6:19-33*

*<sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

*Matthew 6:31-33*

# Sunday Gospel - Matthew 6:19-33

## Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

<sup>19</sup> “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## The Lamp of the Body

<sup>22</sup> “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> 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!

## You Cannot Serve God and Riches

<sup>24</sup> “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.

## Do Not Worry

<sup>25</sup> “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? <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

<sup>28</sup> “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> 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?

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

# Monday, 15 March

## 6 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of St Dioscorus*

### Readings of 2nd Monday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 38:11*

*Mark 9:25-29*

#### Mass

*Romans 1:18-25*

*Jude 1:1-8*

*Acts 4:36-5:11*

*Psalm 29:1-2*

*Luke 18:1-8*

*<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

*Luke 18:6-8*

# David's Thanksgiving

## ***Bible: 2 Samuel 7:18-29***

<sup>18</sup> “Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?

<sup>19</sup> And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

<sup>20</sup> Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant.

<sup>21</sup> For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.

<sup>22</sup> Therefore You are great, O Lord GOD.[a] For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

<sup>23</sup> And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?

<sup>24</sup> For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

<sup>25</sup> “Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.

<sup>26</sup> So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel.’ And let the house of Your servant David be established before You.

<sup>27</sup> For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you

a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

<sup>28</sup> "And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.

<sup>29</sup> Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."

### **Commentary:**

Isn't God good? Who in the wilderness fed with bread from heaven such countless thousands of the people, lest any famine should attack them, without need of toil, in the enjoyment of rest?— so that, for the space of forty years, their clothing grew not old, nor were their shoes worn.

Is He not good? Who exalted earth to heaven, so that, just as the bright companies of stars reflect His glory in the sky, as in a glass, so the choirs of apostles, martyrs, and priests, shining like glorious stars, might give light throughout the world.

Not only, then, is He good, but He is more. He is a good Shepherd, not only for Himself, but to His sheep also, for the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. He laid down His life to exalt ours

It is to my advantage to believe Him to be good, for it is a good thing to trust in the Lord. It is to my advantage to confess Him Lord, for it is written: Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.

# Tuesday, 16 March

## 7 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of Sts Philemon, Apollonius & Mary*

### Readings of 2nd Tuesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 41:4,13*

*Luke 12:22-31*

#### Mass

*2 Corinthians 9:6-15*

*James 1:1-12*

*Acts 4:13-22*

*Psalm 41:1-1*

*Mark 10:17-27*

*<sup>27</sup> But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."*

*Mark 10:27*

# Hearing God's gentle voice

## **Bible: 1 Kings 19:9-13**

<sup>9</sup> And there Elijah went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

<sup>10</sup> So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

<sup>11</sup> Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

<sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

<sup>13</sup> So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

## **Commentary:**

If your tongue is used to chattering, your heart will remain dim and foreign to the luminous intuitions of the Holy Spirit. But if your mouth is silent, your heart will ever be a flame with the spirit ... hush your tongue that your heart may speak, and hush your heart that God may speak.

- Saint John of Dalyatha, 'On the Gifts of the Spirit'

# Wednesday, 17 March

## 8 Baramhat

*Departure of Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of Alexandria*

### Readings of 2nd Wednesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 18:17-18*

*Matthew 5:17-24*

#### Mass

*Romans 3:1-18*

*2 John 1:8-13*

*Acts 5:3-11*

*Psalm 18:1-2*

*Matthew 15:32-38*

*<sup>35</sup> So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. <sup>36</sup> And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. <sup>37</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. <sup>38</sup> Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.*

*Matthew 15:35-38*

# The Prayer of Manasseh

## Bible: Manasseh 1:1-14

*(King James with Deuterocanonical books)*

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed; <sup>2</sup> who has made heaven and earth, with all their ornaments; <sup>3</sup> who has bound the sea by the word of your commandment; who has shut up the deep, and sealed it by your terrible and glorious name; <sup>4</sup> whom all men fear, and tremble before your power; for the majesty of your glory cannot be borne, and your angry threatening toward sinners is importable: <sup>5</sup> but your merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; <sup>6</sup> for you are the most high Lord, of great compassion, longsuffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. You, O Lord, according to your great goodness have promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against you: and of your infinite mercies have appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved. <sup>7</sup> You therefore, O Lord, that is the God of the just, hast not appointed repentance to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, which have not sinned against you; but you have appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: <sup>8</sup> for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied: my transgressions are multiplied, and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of my iniquities. <sup>9</sup> I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up my head, neither have any release: for I have provoked your wrath, and done evil before you: I did not your will, neither kept I your commandments: I have set up abominations, and have multiplied offences. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore I bow the knee of my heart, beseeching you of grace. <sup>11</sup> I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my iniquities: <sup>12</sup> wherefore, I humbly

beseech you, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not with my iniquities. Be not angry with me forever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me to the lower parts of the earth. For you are the God, even the God of them that repent; <sup>13</sup> and in me you will show all your goodness: for you will save me, that am unworthy, according to your great mercy. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I will praise you forever all the days of my life: for all the powers of the heavens do praise you, and yours is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Commentary:**

I will love You, O Lord, and thank You, and confess to Your name; because You have forgiven me these so great and wicked deeds of mine. To Your grace I attribute it, and to Your mercy, that You have melted away my sins as they were ice. To You grace I ascribe also for whatever evil I have not done; for what wouldn't I have committed, by loving sin for sin's sake?

Yes, all I confess to have been forgiven me; both what evils I committed by my own will, and what by Your guidance I didn't commit.

What man is he, who, weighing his own infirmity, dares to ascribe his purity and innocence to his own strength; that he should love You the less, as if he had less needed Your mercy?

For whoever, called by You, followed Your voice, and avoided those things which he reads me recalling and confessing of myself, let him not despise me. I am sick but was healed by the same Physician that healed them, and for this let them love You much more; let them see that You have restored me from such great sin, let them see themselves as weak and in need of help

*-Saint Augustine, 'Confessions'*

# Thursday, 18 March

## 9 Baramhat

*Departure of St Konan the Syrian*

### Readings of 2nd Thursday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 28:9-9*

*Matthew 11:20-30*

#### Mass

*Romans 16:17-27*

*James 3:1-12*

*Acts 12:12-23*

*Psalm 48:10-11*

*Matthew 19:16-30*

*<sup>20</sup> The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept [d]from my youth. What do I still lack?"*

*<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

*Matthew 19:20-22*

# The Prayer of Jabez

## **Bible: 1 Chronicles 4:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez,[a] saying, “Because I bore him in pain.”

<sup>10</sup> And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

### **Fathers:**

For things which often we have no strength to perform successfully from our own exertions, these we shall have power to accomplish easily through prayers which are persevering. For always and without intermission it is a duty to pray, both for him who is in affliction, and him who is in dangers, and him who is in prosperity— for those who are in relief and much prosperity must pray that they may remain unmoved, and may never change; and for those who are in affliction and many dangers, that they may see some favourable change brought about to them, and be transported into a calm of consolation. Are you in a calm? Then beseech God that this calm may continue settled to you. Have you seen a storm risen up against you? Beseech God earnestly to cause the crashing wave pass, and to make a calm out of the storm. Have you been heard? Be heartily thankful for this; because you have been heard. Have you not been heard? Persevere, in order that you may be heard. For even if God at any time delay the giving, it is not in hatred and hostility; but from the desire to keep you with himself forever by postponing an answer; just in the way also that affectionate fathers do

*-Saint John Chrysostom, 'Concerning Lowliness of Mind'*

**Friday, 19 March**

**10 Baramhat**

*Feast of the Holy Cross*

**Readings of the 17th of Tut**

**Vespers**

*Psalm 4:6-8*

*John 8:28-42*

**Matins**

*Psalm 59:4, 5*

*John 12:26-36*

**Mass**

*1 Corinthians 1:17-31*

*1 Peter 2:1-15*

*Acts 10:34-42*

*Psalm 64:1, 2*

*John 10:22-38*

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

*John 10:27, 28*

# Solomon's Prayer for God's Presence

## ***Bible: 2 Chronicles 6:12-42***

<sup>12</sup> Then Solomon[b] stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands <sup>14</sup> and he said: "LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. <sup>15</sup> You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.

<sup>18</sup> "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple[c] which I have built! <sup>19</sup> Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: <sup>20</sup> that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. <sup>21</sup> And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.

<sup>41</sup> "Now therefore, Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.

Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, And let Your saints rejoice in goodness.

<sup>42</sup> "O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed; Remember the mercies of Your servant David."

## **Commentary:**

This also is what God, the lover of mankind, does to the person who comes to him and ardently desires Him. But there is even much more. Impelled by love, he himself, by the goodness which is inherent in him and is all his own, enters with that person 'in to one spirit' (1 Cor 6:17), according to the apostolic saying.

When a person clings to the Lord and the Lord has pity and loves him in his coming and clinging to him, and when a person has the intention thereafter to remain constantly in the grace of the Lord, they become one spirit and one temperament and one mind, the person and the Lord. And though his body is prostrate on the earth, his mind has its complete conversation with the heavenly Jerusalem, rising up to the third [spiritual] heaven and clinging to the Lord and serving him there.

And he, while sitting on the throne of majesty in the heights, in the heavenly city, is totally turned toward him in his bodily existence. He has indeed placed his image above in Jerusalem, the heavenly city of the saints and he has placed his own image of the ineffable light of his godhead in his body. He ministers to such a person in the city of his body, while he serves him in the heavenly city.

*-Saint Macarius the Great, 'Homily 46'*

# Saturday, 20 March

## 11 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of St Basilaos the Bishop*

### Readings of 2nd Saturday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 25:7,8,11*

*Mark 9:43-50*

#### Mass

*Romans 14:1-18*

*James 1:22-27*

*Acts 22:17-30*

*Psalm 118:19-20*

*Matthew 7:13-21*

*<sup>13</sup> "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

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

*Matthew 7:13, 14, 21*

## Q&A - Faith and Works

**Do we get to heaven by faith alone, (John 3:16, Romans 3:28, Acts 13:39, and Ephesians 2:8-9) or by both works and faith?**

The Holy Bible clearly says "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). St. James continues saying that faith alone is not enough; for even the demons believe "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19-20)

Salvation is by the Grace of God alone. Our Lord died on the cross to save all humanity. That is why those who do not believe in this act on the cross will not be saved. So faith has to come first. In order for your faith to claim existence, it has to be manifested in your deeds. A man is justified by faith but righteousness must follow justification. You cannot be believing one thing and doing something that would contradict your belief. Faith is activated through our deeds.

Many verses in the Holy Bible show the importance of works "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works" (Mt 16:27). "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28).

Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us a glimpse of how judgment will be based on deeds. For He said, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world 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 25:34-36).

**The Holy Book of Ephesians 2:8-9 is often used by protestants to prove that faith alone saves and not works. I was wondering what our interpretation of this verse is.**

Unfortunately Protestants use this verse separately from the other verses of the Holy Bible. One needs to read into the spirit of the whole Holy Bible. How would protestants interpret;

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (Jam 2:14-17).

"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?" (Jam 2:24,25).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21).

"For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Rom 2:13).

I strongly recommend that you read His Holiness Pope Shenouda's books 'Salvation in the Orthodox Faith' and 'The Heresy of Salvation in a Moment'

Also you can read the section on Soteriology at

<http://suscopts.org/literature/orthodoxfaith.html>.

<https://www.suscopts.org/q&a/index.php>

# Sunday, 21 March

## 12 Baramhat

*Departure of Hegomen Pishoy Kamel of Alexandria*

### Readings of 2nd Sunday of the Great Lent

#### Vespers

*Psalm 51:1,9*

*Mark 1:12-15*

#### Matins

*Psalm 57:1-1*

*Luke 4:1-13*

#### Mass

*Romans 14:19-15:7*

*James 2:1-13*

*Acts 23:1-11*

*Psalm 27:8-10*

*Matthew 4:1-11*

*<sup>10</sup> 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.'" <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

*Matthew 4:10-11*

# Sunday Gospel - Matthew 4:1-11

## Satan Tempts Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. <sup>3</sup> Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

<sup>4</sup> 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.' "

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> 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.' "

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

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup> 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.' "

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

# Monday, 22 March

## 13 Baramhat

*The Forty Martyrs of Sabestea*

### Readings of 3rd Monday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 32:1-2*

*Luke 19:11-28*

#### Mass

*1 Corinthians 5:9-6:5*

*1 Peter 1:3-12*

*Acts 17:10-14*

*Psalm 32:5-5*

*Luke 11:33-36*

*<sup>34</sup> The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. <sup>35</sup> Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.*

*Luke 11:34-35*

## Job's genuine prayer

### ***Bible: Job 1:13-22***

<sup>13</sup> Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house;

<sup>14</sup> and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,

<sup>15</sup> when the Sabeans[c] raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

<sup>16</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

<sup>17</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

<sup>18</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

<sup>19</sup> and suddenly a great wind came from across[d] the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

<sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

<sup>21</sup> And he said: " Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

<sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

### **Commentary:**

When we read what great trials Job endured, it makes one shudder, it makes one shrink, it makes one quake. And what did he receive? The double of what he had lost. Let not a man therefore with an eye to temporal rewards be willing to have patience, and say to himself, Let me endure loss, God will give me back sons twice as many. Let none say, Let me bear evils, and God will repay me as He repaid Job: that it be now no longer patience but greed. For if Job didn't suffer with patience and endurance in order to bravely testify of the Lord's providence, why did he suffer? Have you observed, says the Lord, my servant Job? For there is not like him any on the earth, a man without fault, true worshipper of God. What a testimony, my brethren, did this holy man deserve of the Lord!... So then, because he had been brought low, he was to be exalted. And this the Lord did, in order to show it to men; as for His servant Job, He kept greater things for him in heaven. So then Job who was brought low, He exalted; the devil who was lifted up, He brought low: for He puts down one and sets up another. But let not any man, my beloved brethren, when he suffers any such-like tribulations, look for a reward here: for instance, if he suffer any losses, let him not perhaps say, The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord; only with the mind to receive twice as much again. Let patience praise God, not greed. If what you have lost you seek to receive back twofold, and therefore you praise God, it is of covetousness you praise, not of love.

*-Saint Augustine, 'A Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed'*

# Tuesday, 23 March

## 14 Baramhat

*Departure of Pope Kyrillos III Pope of Alexandria  
(75th)*

### Readings of 3rd Tuesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 32:10-10*

*Luke 12:54-59*

#### Mass

*Romans 4:1-8*

*1 John 2:1-11*

*Acts 27:9-12*

*Psalm 32:2-3*

*John 8:31-39*

*<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

*John 8:31-32*

# A Meeting with God

## **Bible: Job 42: 1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Then Job answered the LORD and said:

<sup>2</sup> "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

<sup>3</sup> You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

<sup>4</sup> Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

<sup>5</sup> "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

## **Commentary:**

The Son of God becomes man, our Lord Jesus Christ, preaches the Gospel, performs miracles, is crucified, is resurrected from the dead, ascends into heaven and sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. All this, in order to unite us with our God the Father, to restore our disturbed relationship with Him and to bring us to a personal meeting, communion and union with God.

Since God is personal, we can not meet Him except through the affectionate relationship with Him which prayer cultivates. If God was an idea, we could meet Him through logical evidence. "Pray and love God in order to know Him", we can say to someone who is searching for God.

Through prayer, the unapproachable God becomes approachable. The unknown God becomes known. The strange God becomes familiar and a friend.

*-Archimandrite George, 'The Lord's Prayer'*

# Wednesday, 24 March

15 Baramhat

*Departure of Sarah the Nun*

**Readings of 3rd Wednesday of the Great Lent**

## **Matins**

*Psalm 27:4-4*

*Luke 13:18-22*

## **Mass**

*2 Thessalonians 2:9-17*

*2 Peter 2:9-15*

*Acts 28:7-11*

*Psalm 27:7-8*

*Luke 4:1-13*

*<sup>3</sup> And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup> But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"*

*Luke 4:3-4*

# Disciplined Prayer

## **Bible: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

<sup>2</sup> Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

<sup>3</sup> For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

<sup>4</sup> 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—

<sup>5</sup> Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

<sup>6</sup> Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse[a] and destroy the work of your hands?

<sup>7</sup> For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.

## **Commentary:**

Let our speech and petition when we pray be under discipline, observing quietness and modesty. Let us consider that we are standing in God's sight. We must please the divine eyes both with the habit of body and with the measure of voice. For as it is characteristic of a shameless man to be noisy with his cries, so, on the other hand, it is fitting to the modest man to pray with moderated petitions. Moreover, in His teaching the Lord has bidden us to pray in secret— in hidden and remote places, in our very bed-chambers— which is best suited to faith, that we may know that God is everywhere present, and hears and sees all, and in the plenitude of His majesty penetrates even

into hidden and secret places, as it is written, I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off. If a man shall hide himself in secret places, shall I not then see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? (Jeremiah 23:23-24) And again: The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3) And when we meet together with the brethren in one place, and celebrate divine sacrifices with God's priest, we ought to be mindful of modesty and discipline— not to throw abroad our prayers indiscriminately, with unsubdued voices, nor to cast to God with tumultuous wordiness a petition that ought to be commended to God by modesty; for God is the hearer, not of the voice, but of the heart.

*-Saint Cyprian, 'On the Lord's Prayer'*

# Thursday, 25 March

## 16 Baramhat

*St Mary's Apparition at Shoubra-1986*

### Readings of 3rd Thursday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 9:11-12*

*Luke 20:20-26*

#### Mass

*Romans 4:6-11*

*James 4:1-10*

*Acts 28:1-6*

*Psalm 9:7-8*

*John 12:44-50*

*<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.*

*<sup>45</sup> And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. <sup>46</sup>*

*I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup>*

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

*John 12:44-47*

# The Praises of Creation

## ***Bible: Isaiah 55:8-13***

<sup>8</sup> “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> “ For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,

<sup>11</sup> So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> “For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

## **Commentary:**

When I prayed with my heart, everything around me seemed delightful and marvellous. The trees, the grass, the birds, the air, the light seemed to be telling me that they existed for man's sake, that they witnessed to the love of God for man, that everything proved the love of God for man, that all things prayed to God and sang his praise. Thus it was that I came to understand 'the knowledge of the speech of all creatures' . . . I felt a burning love for Jesus and for all God's creatures.

Shining through the heart, the light of the Name of

Jesus illuminates all the universe.

*-The way of the Pilgrim*

# Friday, 26 March

## 17 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of St Lazarus & St Sidhom Bishay*

### Readings of 3rd Friday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 16:10-11*

*Luke 20:27-38*

#### Mass

*Hebrews 11:1-8*

*Jude 1:17-25*

*Acts 23:6-11*

*Psalm 16:1-2*

*Luke 11:14-26*

*<sup>16</sup> Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup> But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.*

*Luke 11:16-17*

# Commemoration of the apparitions of Saint Mary in Shoubra

## The Song of Mary

Luke 1:46-55

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:“ My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

<sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.

<sup>50</sup> And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,

<sup>55</sup> As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

The Shoubra apparitions of Saint Mary began on March 26, 1986. These apparitions lasted for 6 months, Saint Mary appeared on top of St. Dimiana Church. Thousands of people witnessed the great and glorious event of her appearance. The news spread and people from all sects and religions came to see the apparitions. The very narrow streets surrounding the church became overcrowded with thousands in night vigils praying and singing doxologies, liturgies

and hymns to the Mother of True Light for whole nights.

Father Pishoy, the Church priest commented that, "The apparition has already cured the blind and the handicapped."

# Saturday, 27 March

18 Baramhat

*Martyrdom of St Isidore*

**Readings of 3rd Saturday of the Great Lent**

## Matins

*Psalm 60:4-5*

*John 12:26-36*

## Mass

*1 Corinthians 1:17-31*

*1 Peter 2:11-25*

*Acts 10:34-43*

*Psalm 65:1-2*

*John 10:22-38*

*<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and My Father are one."*

*John 10:27-30*

## Q&A - Fasting Before Communion

**Isn't fasting a decision made by a person according to his spiritual level? In the Catholic Church, it is logical that you shall not eat one hour before communion.**

In Christianity, fasting is not optional. In the Sermon on the Mount, regarded by Christians as the basis for Christian life, our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized on three points as requisites for living in Him. These are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

In preparing ourselves to partake of the Holy Communion, we need to be fully aware that the Bread of life is not ordinary bread, and the Blood of the Lamb is not an ordinary Cup but are the source of life. Preparation for Holy Communion has to be spiritual and has to do with our inner self. Before partaking of the Holy Communion, we need to examine our life, our values, and advance with a clean conscience that is worthy of the holy Mystery. Prayer is an essential prerequisite to preparing for Holy Communion. Nothing prepares the soul for receiving Christ as much as sincere prayer, asking God for His forgiveness and thanking Him for all the many blessings and gifts He bestows upon us.

Fasting is both a means of self-discipline and a tangible reminder that one is indeed to receive Christ in Holy Communion. Abstaining from food and drink should precede the receiving of Holy Communion, provided that one also abstains from other pleasures and entertainment, concentrating on prayer and religious and Scripture reading. If we actually believe that the Holy Communion is the Bread of Life, what other food should enter our mouth on that day? Abstaining from food and drink for at least nine hours is to remind us of the nine hours our Lord suffered on Good Friday from 9:00 AM. To 6:00 PM. At the third

hour (9:00 AM) Pontius Pilate condemned the Saviour to be crucified, then the path to crucifixion began with a long series of tortures, lashing, scourging, mockery etc. after which our Lord was led to be crucified. He suffered the pain of the crucifixion until He gave up His Spirit at the ninth hour (3:00 PM). Even after his death, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear. Then at the eleventh hour (5:00 PM) He was taken down from the Cross and after having His body anointed with spices, was laid in the tomb at the twelfth hour (6:00 PM). The Scriptures says For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Cor 11:26) so before partaking of this Body and Blood and proclaiming His death, we should also remember the great suffering He endured for us and for our salvation.

The night before receiving Holy Communion one should read the Scriptures, retire early, avoiding social engagements that do not glorify the Lord. I want to go further and say that whether preparing to receive Holy Communion or not, we should not eat or drink anything prior to attending the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is our invitation to partake of the Lord's banquet, so why should we eat before receiving the Holy Gift.

<https://www.suscopts.org/q&a/index.php>

# Sunday, 28 March

## 19 Baramhat

*Departure of St Aristobulus the Apostle*

### Readings of 3rd Sunday of the Great Lent

#### Vespers

*Psalm 88:1-2*

*Matthew 15:1-20*

#### Matins

*Psalm 55:1,2,16*

*Matthew 20:1-16*

#### Mass

*2 Corinthians 6:2-13*

*James 3:1-12*

*Acts 24:1-23*

*Psalm 79:8-9*

*Luke 15:11-32*

*<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "*

*Luke 15:31-32*

# Sunday Gospel - Luke 15:11-32

## The Parable of the Lost Son

<sup>11</sup> Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. <sup>14</sup> But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup> Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> "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! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'

<sup>20</sup> "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. <sup>21</sup> 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.'

<sup>22</sup> "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. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup> for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

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

and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> 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.'

<sup>28</sup> "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> 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.' "

# Monday, 29 March

## 20 Baramhat

*Departure of St Lazarus the Beloved of Christ*

### Readings of 4th Monday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 55:1-1, 27:7-8*

*Luke 14:7-15*

#### Mass

*Romans 8:12-26*

*James 5:16-20*

*Acts 11:2-18*

*Psalm 55:16-17*

*Luke 16:1-9*

*<sup>8</sup> So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. <sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.*

*Luke 16:8-9*

# Isaiah's prayer for God's presence

## **Bible: Isaiah 64:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence—

<sup>2</sup> As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil— To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence!

<sup>3</sup> When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.

<sup>4</sup> For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.

<sup>5</sup> You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways.

## **Commentary:**

If the Lord came upon earth and took such care of perishable bodies, how much more of the immortal soul, made after His own likeness? It is because of our unbelief, because of our divided mind, because we do not love Him with all the heart, nor really believe Him, that we have not yet found the spiritual cure and salvation.

Let us then believe Him, and come to Him in reality, that He may speedily work in us the true cure. He has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him- and to open to them that knock, and to be found of them that seek, and He that has made the promise cannot lie. To Him be glory and might for ever. Amen.

*-Saint Macarius the Great, 'Homily 20*

# Tuesday, 30 March

## 21 Baramhat

*Commemoration of the Virgin St Mary*

### Readings of 4th Tuesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 17:1-1*

*Matthew 21:28-32*

#### Mass

*Ephesians 4:1-16*

*2 Peter 2:2-8*

*Acts 27:1-3*

*Psalm 17:6*

*Luke 9:57-62*

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

*Luke 9:62*

# A prayer of Confession

## ***Bible: Isaiah 64: 5-9***

<sup>5</sup> You are indeed angry, for we have sinned— In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved.

<sup>6</sup> But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

<sup>7</sup> And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.

<sup>8</sup> But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not be furious, O LORD, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look—we all are Your people!

## **Commentary:**

The time for confession is now: confess what you have done in word or in deed, by night or by day; confess in an acceptable time, and in the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2) receive the heavenly treasure. be attentive in the church, and remember the things that shall be spoken, for they are spoken not for your ears only, but that by faith you may seal them up in the memory. Blot out from your mind all earthly care: for you are running for your soul. You are utterly forsaking the things of the world: little are the things which you are forsaking, great what the Lord is giving. Forsake things present, and put your trust in things to come.

Have you run in circles and busied yourself in vain with worldly things, and have you not forty days to be free (for prayer), for your own soul's sake? Be still, and know that I am God, says the Scripture.

Excuse yourself from talking many idle words: neither backbite, nor lend a willing ear to backbiters; but rather be prompt to prayer. Show in ascetic exercise that your heart is strong. Cleanse your vessel, that you may receive grace more abundantly. For though remission of sins is given equally to all, the communion of the Holy Spirit is bestowed in proportion to each man's faith. If you have worked little, you receive little; but if you have worked much, the reward is great

*-Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Catechetical Lecture 1'*

# Wednesday, 31 March

22 Baramhat

*Departure of Bishop Kyrillos of Jerusalem*

**Readings of 4th Wednesday of the Great Lent**

## Matins

*Psalm 18:37,40*

*Luke 14:16-24*

## Mass

*Ephesians 4:17-33*

*James 3:13-4:4*

*Acts 11:26-12:2*

*Psalm 18:17-18*

*Mark 4:35-41*

*<sup>39</sup> Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" <sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"*

*Mark 4:39-41*

# United prayer

## **Bible: Daniel 3:41-52**

*(New American Bible with Deuterocanonical books)*

<sup>41</sup> And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we pray to you.

<sup>42</sup> Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

<sup>43</sup> Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name, O Lord:

<sup>44</sup> Let all those be routed who inflict evils on your servants; Let them be shamed and powerless, and their strength broken;

<sup>45</sup> Let them know that you alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world.”

<sup>46</sup> Now the king's men who had thrown them in continued to stoke the furnace with brimstone, pitch, tow, and faggots.

<sup>47</sup> The flames rose forty-nine cubits above the furnace,

<sup>48</sup> and spread out, burning the Chaldeans nearby.

<sup>49</sup> But the angel of the Lord went down into the furnace with Azariah and his companions, drove the fiery flames out of the furnace,

<sup>50</sup> and made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it. The fire in no way touched them or caused them pain or harm.

<sup>51</sup> Then these three in the furnace with one voice sang, glorifying and blessing God:

<sup>52</sup> “Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever; And blessed is your holy and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages.

**Commentary:**

The Lord speaks to those who are in the Church, that if they are in agreement, if according to what He commanded and admonished, although only two or three gathered together with agreement should pray— though they be only two or three— they may obtain from the majesty of God what they ask. “Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, I,” says He, “am with them”; that is, with the simple and peaceable— with those who fear God and keep God’s commandments. With these, although only two or three, He said that He was, in the same manner as He was with the three youths in the fiery furnace; and because they abode towards God in simplicity, and in agreement among themselves, He gave them life, in the midst of the surrounding flames, with the breath of dew: in the same way He was with the two apostles shut up in prison, because they were simple-minded and of one mind, He Himself was present; He Himself, having loosed the bolts of the dungeon, placed them again in the market-place, that they might declare to the multitude the word which they faithfully preached... He shows that He is rather with two or three who pray with one mind, than with a great many who differ, and that more can be obtained by the unified prayer of a few, than by the disunited supplication of many.

*-Saint Cyprian, 'On the Unity of The Church'*

# Thursday, 1 April

23 Baramhat

*Departure of Daniel the Prophet*

**Readings of 4th Thursday of the Great Lent**

## **Matins**

*Psalm 11:7*

*Mark 3:7-12*

## **Mass**

*1 Corinthians 12:31-14:1*

*James 4:11-5:3*

*Acts 4:19-31*

*Psalm 47:10,11*

*Luke 18:35-43*

*<sup>40</sup> So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, <sup>41</sup> saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?"*

*He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."*

*<sup>42</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." <sup>43</sup> And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

*Luke 18:40-43*

# Daniel's Prayer for the People

## ***Bible: Daniel 9:3-19***

<sup>3</sup> Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. <sup>4</sup> And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, <sup>5</sup> we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. <sup>6</sup> Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. <sup>7</sup> O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

<sup>16</sup> "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. <sup>18</sup> O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake,

my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

### **Commentary:**

Sometimes the Holy Spirit draws a man so completely to Himself that he forgets all created things and gives himself entirely to contemplation of God. But when the soul remembers the world again, filled with the love of God, she feels compassion for all and prays for the whole world. In thus praying the soul may again forget the world, only to return once more to her prayer for all mankind.

The two great movements of the soul have always been withdrawal and return: withdrawal into God's presence through prayer for strength and vision and return to the world to serve God and His people. Without prayer, the quality of our service deteriorates. Without prayer we forget the world; with prayer we remember. Prayer is the dynamic for involvement.

**Friday, 2 April**

**24 Baramhat**

*St Mary's Apparition at Zeitoun-1968*

**Readings of 4th Friday of the Great Lent**

**Matins**

*Psalm 28:6-7*

*Luke 4:31-37*

**Mass**

*Hebrews 13:7-16*

*1 John 4:7-16*

*Acts 22:17-24*

*Psalm 28:2-2*

*Matthew 15:21-31*

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

*Matthew 15:28*

# Commemoration of the apparitions of Saint Mary in Zeitoun

## ***Bible: Nehemiah 1:5-11***

<sup>5</sup> “I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments,

<sup>6</sup> please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned.

<sup>7</sup> We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

<sup>8</sup> Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations;

<sup>9</sup>but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’

<sup>10</sup> Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand.

<sup>11</sup> O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

For more than a year, starting on the eve of Tuesday, April 2, 1968, the Blessed Holy Virgin Saint Mary, Mother of God, appeared in different forms over the domes of the Coptic Orthodox Church named after Her at Zeitoun, Cairo, Egypt.

The late Rev. Father Constantine Moussa was the church priest at the time of these apparitions. The apparitions lasted from only a few minutes up to several hours and were sometimes accompanied by luminous heavenly bodies shaped like doves and moving at high speeds.

The apparitions were seen by millions of Egyptians and foreigners. Among the witnesses were Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Moslems, Jews and non-religious people from all walks of life.

The sick were cured and blind persons received their sight, but most importantly large numbers of unbelievers were converted.

# Saturday, 3 April

## 25 Baramhat

*Departure of St Onesiphorous the Apostle*

**Readings of 4th Saturday of the Great Lent**

### Vespers

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### Matins

*Psalm 142:5,7*

*Luke 16:19-31*

### Mass

*Philippians 4:4-9*

*James 3:13-4:6*

*Acts 24:24-25:12*

*Psalm 61:1,5*

*Matthew 21:33-45*

*<sup>43</sup> "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. <sup>44</sup> And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." <sup>45</sup> Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.*

*Matthew 21:43-45*

## Q&A - Fate

- **Who is behind accidents or diseases that bring about the cessation of the soul and departure of the spark of life?**
- **Is man a toy in the hands of fate and circumstances?**
- **Is it Divine Power that decides the time and place at which and from which a man leaves this world regardless of the cause and the consequences?**

God has created man with a free will. That is why man is responsible for all the decisions that he makes. Diseases are a bi-product of sin. Accidents occur due to negligence and because we live in a world that has been corrupted by sin. God does not design an accident nor does he t decide that the person involved should die on such date. If one crosses the street without looking and gets hit by a car, it is his carelessness and not God that has decided the time of this person's death. If one gets hit by a drunk driver, although it is not his fault, yet it is not God's fault that a drunk man would drive and cause an accident to happen. The bottom line is that it is man's free will and choices that lead to these accidents. God knows exactly the time of everyone's death not because He sets it up but because of His foreknowledge, He knows that this would happen.

<https://www.suscopts.org/q&a/index.php>

# Sunday, 4 April

26 Baramhat

*Departure of St Euphrasia the virgin*

## Readings of 4th Sunday of the Great Lent

### Vespers

*Psalm 27:14,13*

*Luke 12:22-31*

### Matins

*Psalm 31:24,23*

*Matthew 22:1-14*

### Mass

*Ephesians 6:10-24*

*James 4:7-17*

*Acts 25:13-26:1*

*Psalm 105:3,4,5*

*John 4:1-42*

*<sup>42</sup> 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."*

*John 4:42*

# Sunday Gospel - John 4:1-42

## A Samaritan Woman Meets Her Messiah

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), <sup>3</sup> He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. <sup>4</sup> But He needed to go through Samaria.

<sup>5</sup> So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> 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? <sup>12</sup> 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?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> 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."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water,

that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

<sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

### **The Whitened Harvest**

<sup>27</sup> And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

<sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” <sup>30</sup> Then they went out of the city and

came to Him.

<sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

<sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> 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! <sup>36</sup> And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

### **The Savior of the World**

<sup>39</sup> 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.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of His own word.

<sup>42</sup> 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.”

# Monday, 5 April

27 Baramhat

*Departure of St Macarius the Great*

## Readings of 5th Monday of the Great Lent

### Matins

*Psalm 88:2-4*

*Luke 12:16-21*

### Mass

*Philippians 2:1-16*

*1 Peter 3:10-18*

*Acts 10:25-35*

*Psalm 86:3-4*

*Luke 9:12-17*

*<sup>16</sup> Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. <sup>17</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.*

*Luke 9:16-17*

## Commemoration of Saint Macarius the Great

On this day we commemorate the departure of the blessed father, the lamp of the wilderness, Saint Macarius the Great. He departed in the year 392 A.D.

When Satan saw St. Macarius growth in virtues, he brought on him a severe temptation. He inspired a girl that had defiled herself with a man to claim that St. Macarius is the one who had defiled her. When her family heard that, they went to him, insulted and beat him severely, inflicting much pain on him, which he endured silently. Macarius reproached himself saying "O Macarius now you have a wife and a child, and it is meet for you to work day and night for your own food and for that of your child and your wife." He worked continually at weaving mats and baskets, and he gave them to the man who ministered unto him; and he sold them and gave the money to the woman. When the day of her delivery drew near her labor was exceedingly difficult, she continued to suffer for four days and did not deliver until she confessed her false accusation against the Saint and named the man that defiled her. When the family of the girl heard that, they decided to go to ask for his forgiveness for what happened from them. When St. Macarius heard that, he fled away from them running from the vain glory of this world.

Saint Macarius taught a wonderful simplicity. "Christians," he said, "should judge no one, neither an open harlot, nor sinners, nor dissolute people, but should look upon all with simplicity of soul and a pure eye. Purity of heart, indeed, consists in seeing sinful and weak men and having compassion for them and being merciful." On the subject of prayer he counselled, "It is enough if you will often repeat from your whole heart, 'Lord, as it pleases Thee and as

Thou knowest, have mercy on me.' And if temptation comes upon you: 'Lord, help me!' The Lord knows what is profitable for us and has mercy on us."

Peacefulness and humility and the tranquillity of a good life is fitting for all Christians, according to the word of the Lord, who looks to none other man than to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at His word, it the more necessary that you who confess Christ, to be an example to the rest of those who believe, to observe and fulfil this calling. Your character should provoke to imitation the life and conduct of all. For as the Jews were alienated from God because, on account of their behaviour the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (Romans 2:24). So also, those are dear to God who conform to the discipline involved in confessing and praising His name.

The Lord Himself warns us, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven'. And Paul the apostle says, 'Shine as lights in the world.' And similarly Peter exhorts: 'Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation' (1 Peter 2:11-12). Your good works are indeed the greatest part of you... Guard and preserve this glory by tranquil and virtuous lives.

*-Saint Cyprian, 'Epistle 6'*

**Tuesday, 6 April**

**28 Baramhat**

*Departure of Emperor Constantine the Great*

**Readings of 5th Tuesday of the Great Lent**

**Matins**

*Psalm 86:5,6*

*Mark 9:14-24*

**Mass**

*Philippians 2:22-26*

*1 John 3:2-11*

*Acts 24:10-23*

*Psalm 86:17-17*

*John 8:12-20*

*<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

*John 8:12*

# Yet I will Rejoice in the Lord

## ***Bible: Habakkuk 3:3-19***

<sup>3</sup> His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise.

<sup>4</sup> His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden.

<sup>5</sup> Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet.

<sup>6</sup> He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting.

<sup>13</sup> You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck.

<sup>17</sup> Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—

<sup>18</sup> Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

<sup>19</sup> The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.

## **Commentary:**

Because our Father is in heaven we too must intellectually be in heaven, there, where our homeland is, the Higher Jerusalem, and not have our mind, as the swine do, down here on the earth. Our mind must be in our sweetest Saviour and Master and on the heavenly beauties of Paradise. Not only in time of

prayer but always and at all times we must keep our mind on heaven, so that the mind is not dispersed down here on perishable and temporary things

*-Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite*

**Wednesday, 7 April**

**29 Baramhat**

*Feast of the Annunciation*

**Readings of the 29th of Baramhat**

**Vespers**

*Psalm 144:5, 7*

*Luke 7:36-50*

**Matins**

*Psalm 72:6, 7*

*Luke 11:20-28*

**Mass**

*Romans 3:1-13*

*1 John 1:1-2:6*

*Acts 7:23-34*

*Psalm 45:10-11*

*Luke 1:26-38*

*For with God nothing will be impossible. Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

*Luke 1:37, 38*

## The secret place

### ***Bible: Matthew 6:5-6***

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

<sup>6</sup> But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

### **Commentary:**

That there are different reasons for prayer being heard according to the varied and changing condition of souls the words of the gospels and of the prophets teach us. For you have the fruits of an answer pointed out by our Lord's words in the case of the agreement of two persons; as it is said: If two of you shall agree upon earth touching anything for which they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 18:19) You have another in the fullness of faith, which is compared to a grain of mustard-seed. For, He says, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain: Be removed, and it shall be removed; and nothing shall be impossible to you. (Matthew 17:19) You have it in continuance in prayer, which the Lord's words call, by reason of enduring perseverance in petitioning: For, verily, I say unto you that if not because of his friendship, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as much as he needs. (Luke 11:8) You have it in the fruits of almsgiving: Shut up alms in the heart of the poor and it shall pray for you in the time of tribulation. (Sirach 29:15)...

Before all things however we ought most carefully to observe the Evangelic precept, which tells us to

enter into our chamber and shut the door and pray to our Father, which may be fulfilled by us as follows: We pray within our chamber, when removing our hearts inwardly from the din of all thoughts and anxieties, we disclose our prayers in secret and in closest intercourse to the Lord. We pray with closed doors when with closed lips and complete silence we pray to the searcher not of words but of hearts. We pray in secret when from the heart and fervent mind we disclose our petitions to God alone, so that no hostile powers are even able to discover the character of our petition.

*-John Cassian, 'The Conferences: Conference 9'*

# Thursday, 8 April

30 Baramhat

*Commemoration of Archangel Gabriel*

**Readings of 5th Thursday of the Great Lent**

## **Matins**

*Psalm 86:14-14*

*Luke 9:37-43*

## **Mass**

*1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1*

*1 Peter 1:2-8*

*Acts 21:5-14*

*Psalm 86:17-17*

*Luke 13:10-17*

- <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity."  
<sup>13</sup> And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*

*Luke 13:11-13*

## Not many words

### ***Bible: Matthew 6: 7-13***

<sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

<sup>8</sup> “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

<sup>9</sup> In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### **Commentary:**

Before all else, let us list sincere thanksgiving first on the scroll of our prayer. On the second line, we should put confession and heartfelt contrition of soul. Then let us present our petition to the King of all. This is the best way of prayer, as it was shown to one of the monks by an angel of the Lord.

Do not be over-complicated in the words you use when praying, because the simple and unadorned lisping of the children has often won the heart of their Heavenly Father. Try not to talk excessively when you pray, lest your mind be distracted in searching for words. One word of the tax collector appeased God, and one cry of faith saved the thief. Talkative prayer often distracts the mind and leads to fantasy, whereas brevity makes for concentration.

If during your prayer some word evokes delight or compunction within you, linger over it; for at that moment our guardian Angel is praying with us

*-John Climacus, 'The Ladder of Divine Ascent: Step 28'*

**Friday, 9 April**

**1 Baramudah**

*Departure of St Silvanus the Monk*

**Readings of 5th Friday of the Great Lent**

**Matins**

*Psalm 86:9-10*

*Mark 12:28-34*

**Mass**

*Hebrews 12:5-16*

*1 Peter 4:15-5:5*

*Acts 15:36-16:3*

*Psalm 138:1-2*

*John 8:21-27*

*<sup>25</sup> Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."*

*John 8:25-26*

# Stay awake and pray

## ***Bible: Matthew 26:36-41***

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

<sup>37</sup> And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

<sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

<sup>39</sup> He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

<sup>40</sup> Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

<sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

## **Commentary:**

Let us who are in Christ- who are always in the light- not stop praying even at night. The widow Anna never stopped praying and watching, but persevered in pleasing God. As it is written in the Gospel of Luke, "who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day"... Beloved, who are always in the light of the Lord, consider night the day. Believe that we always walk in the light, and don't be hindered from the darkness we have escaped from. Don't fail to pray in the night hours... You who are newly created and newborn by the Spirit through God's mercy, imitate what we will be someday. Since in the kingdom of heaven we will only have day without night. Since we are going to pray

and give thanks to God forever, let us not stop praying  
and giving thanks in this life also.

*-Saint Cyprian*

# Saturday, 10 April

## 2 Baramudah

*Martyrdom of St Christopher*

### Readings of 5th Saturday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 65:2-3*

*Luke 15:3-10*

#### Mass

*Galatians 5:16-6:2*

*James 5:7-11*

*Acts 26:1-18*

*Psalm 143:1-2*

*Matthew 23:14-39*

*<sup>37</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> See! Your house is left to you desolate; <sup>39</sup> for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "*

*Matthew 23:37-39*

## Q&A - Fear

**Fear is a fruit of sin, but is it considered a sin itself? I mean do I commit a sin when I fear?**

Fear results from a lack of faith and trust in God. When God created man, He did not intend for him to fear "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7). It is a sin because it is against the commandment of God. St. Paul teaches us, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6).

God is love and He wants us to love Him and trust in Him "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). One of the best Psalms to recite when one is troubled with fear is Psalm 23 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps 23:4).

<https://www.suscpts.org/q&a/index.php>

# Sunday, 11 April

## 3 Baramudah

*Departure of St John Bishop of Jerusalem*

### Readings of 5th Sunday of the Great Lent

#### Vespers

*Psalm 39:12-12*

*Luke 18:1-8*

#### Matins

*Psalm 102:1,2,12*

*Matthew 21:33-46*

#### Mass

*2 Thessalonians 2:1-17*

*2 Peter 3:1-18*

*Acts 26:19-27:8*

*Psalm 33:5-6*

*John 5:1-18*

*<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." <sup>9</sup> And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.*

*John 5:8-9*

# Sunday Gospel - John 5:1-18

## A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda

<sup>1</sup> After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> 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?"

<sup>7</sup> 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."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." <sup>9</sup> And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup> The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

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

<sup>12</sup> Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" <sup>13</sup> But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. <sup>14</sup> 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."

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

### **Honor the Father and the Son**

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”

<sup>18</sup> 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.

# Monday, 12 April

## 4 Baramudah

*Martyrdom of Saints Victor, Decius & Eirene*

### Readings of 6th Monday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 38:9-9*

*Mark 12:1-12*

#### Mass

*1 Thessalonians 4:1-18*

*James 4:7-12*

*Acts 18:9-18*

*Psalm 35:1-2*

*Luke 13:1-5*

*<sup>3</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*

*Luke 13:3*

# Ask and it will be given to you

## ***Bible: Luke 11:5-13***

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

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

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

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

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

<sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> If a son asks for bread[d] from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

<sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

<sup>13</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

## **Commentary:**

Diligently apply yourself to the reading of the sacred Scriptures. Pay close attention to them, I say. For we who read the things of God need to study them diligently, lest we should say or think anything too rashly about them. And applying yourself thus to the study of the things of God... knock at its locked

door, and it will be opened to you by the doorkeeper, of whom Jesus says, To him the doorkeeper opens. And applying yourself to the divine study, and with unwavering trust in God, seek the true meaning of the holy Scriptures, which so many have missed. Be not satisfied with knocking and seeking; for prayer is essential to the knowledge of the things of God. For to this the Saviour exhorted, and said not only, Knock, and it shall be opened to you; and seek, and you shall find, but also, Ask, and it shall be given unto you. My fatherly love to you has made me thus bold; but whether my boldness be good, God will know, and His Christ, and all partakers of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. May you also be a partaker, and be ever increasing your inheritance, that you may say not only, We have become partakers of Christ, but also partakers of God.

*-Origen, 'Letter to Gregory'*

# Tuesday, 13 April

## 5 Baramudah

*Commemoration of Ezekiel the Prophet*

### Readings of 6th Tuesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 35:13-13*

*Luke 4:22-30*

#### Mass

*1 Corinthians 14:18-28*

*James 1:22-2:1*

*Acts 19:11-20*

*Psalm 42:1-1*

*Luke 9:18-22*

*<sup>18</sup> And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" <sup>19</sup> So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again." <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."*

*Luke 9:18-20*

# The Kingdom of God is within

## **Bible: Luke 17:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

<sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

## **Commentary:**

You seek the Lord? Seek, but only within yourself. He is not far from anyone. The Lord is near to all who truly call upon Him. Find a place in your heart, and speak there with the Lord. It is the Lord's reception room. Everyone who meets the Lord meets him there; He has fixed no other place for the meeting of souls.

Strive to enter within your inner chamber and you will see the chamber of heaven. For the two are the same and the one entrance leads to both

You preserve inner attention and solitude in the heart. May the Lord help you always to remain this way. This is the most important thing in our spiritual life. When consciousness is within the heart, there too is the Lord; and so the two become united and the work of salvation progresses successfully. The name of the Lord by itself disperses everything alien to it and attracts everything like it.

*Saint Theophan the recluse*

# Wednesday, 14 April

## 6 Baramudah

*Appearance of the Lord to St Thomas the Apostle  
and the departure of St Mary of Egypt*

### Readings of 6th Wednesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 102:17,21*

*Mark 7:1-20*

#### Mass

*Romans 2:12-24*

*2 Peter 1:20-2:6*

*Acts 26:1-8*

*Psalm 9:11-12*

*Luke 11:45-52*

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

*Luke 11:52*

# Men always ought to pray

## ***Bible: Luke 18: 1-8***

<sup>1</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

<sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

<sup>3</sup> Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup> And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

<sup>5</sup> yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.

<sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

<sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.

## **Commentary:**

Preparing the heart means unlearning evil prejudices. It is dusting off the tablet before attempting to write on it. Now solitude is most useful for this purpose. It quiets our passions and makes room for holiness to cut them out of the soul.

So then, set aside a place for yourself, separate from contact with other people so that your spiritual exercises won't be interrupted. Pure, devoted exercises nourish the soul with godly thoughts. What can be better than imitating angel choruses on earth, or beginning the day with prayer and honoring our Maker with hymns and songs, or, as the day brightens, praying throughout our duties and seasoning our work with hymns, as with salt? Soothing hymns compose

the mind, bringing it into a calm, cheerful state.

So then, as I have said, quiet is the first step in our sanctification. It is the tongue that has been purified of the world's gossip. It is the eyes that are unexcited by beautiful color or lovely shape. It is the ear that doesn't relax the tone or mind by sensual songs, nor talk flippantly and joke about people. In this way, the mind is saved from external sensations. It falls back on itself and not on worldly senses. As a result, the mind rises up to contemplating God.

*-Saint Basil the Great, 'Epistle II'*

# Thursday, 15 April

## 7 Baramudah

*Departure of St Joachim, the father of St Mary*

### Readings of 6th Thursday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 72:6-7*

*Luke 11:20-28*

#### Mass

*Romans 3:1-31*

*1 John 1:1-2:6*

*Acts 7:23-34*

*Psalm 45:10-11*

*Luke 1:26-38*

*<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.*

*<sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible."*

*<sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

*Luke 1:35-38*

# Receiving righteousness through prayer

## ***Bible: Luke 18:10-14***

<sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

<sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

## **Commentary:**

Let us then drive away from our ears and minds those who say that all we need is our own free will and not prayer to God to help us keep from sin. By such darkness as this even the Pharisee was not blinded; for although he was wrong in thinking that he needed no addition to his righteousness, he nevertheless gave thanks to God that he was not like other men, unjust, extortioners, adulterers, or even as the tax collector; for he fasted twice in the week, he gave tithes of all that he possessed. (Luke 18:11-12). By giving thanks to God, he confessed that all he had he had received was from Him

Even so, he was not approved, both because he asked for no additional righteousness, as if he were already filled, and because he arrogantly preferred himself to the tax collector, who was hungering and

thirsting after righteousness. What, then, is to be said of those who, while acknowledging that they have no righteousness, yet imagine that they can get it from themselves alone instead of seeking it in their Creator, who is the source of all righteousness and its fountain?

And yet this is not a question about prayers alone, as if we don't need to include our wilful efforts. God is said to be our Helper; but nobody can be helped who does not make some effort of his own accord. For God does not work our salvation in us as if he were working in dull stones, or in creatures in whom nature has placed neither reason nor will.

*-Saint Augustine, 'On forgiveness of sins and baptism'*

# Friday, 16 April

## 8 Baramudah

*Martyrdom of Saints Agape, Eirene and Shiona*

### Readings of 6th Friday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 51:7-8*

*John 3:14-21*

#### Mass

*1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

*1 John 2:12-17*

*Acts 8:9-17*

*Psalm 35:5,4*

*John 3:1-13*

*<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

*John 3:5-8*

## Making time

### ***Bible: Acts 2:42-47***

<sup>42</sup> They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

<sup>43</sup> Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

<sup>44</sup> Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

<sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

<sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

### **Commentary:**

Most modern industries now schedule morning and afternoon coffee breaks when a worker can pause for a moment and refresh himself. Efficiency experts have determined that a person will be more productive if he is given a break from his work.

Our spiritual life is similar to this in many ways. We need "prayer breaks" throughout the day – special and scheduled times to spend with God in prayer. Such "prayer breaks" become in reality "power breaks" for us, making us more poised and productive Christians in the world.

# Saturday, 17 April

## 9 Baramudah

*Departure of St Zosimus the Priest*

### Readings of 6th Saturday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 79:8-9*

*Matthew 9:1-8*

#### Mass

*Ephesians 4:1-7*

*1 Peter 1:13-21*

*Acts 27:9-26*

*Psalm 32:1-2*

*Mark 10:46-52*

*<sup>51</sup> So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"*

*The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."*

*<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has [b]made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

*Mark 10:51-52*

## Q&A - Forgiveness

**An unpleasant scenario took place between some friends and me causing much hurt and pain. I have apologized and asked for forgiveness. In turn, I have forgiven them. However, it seems that the others have not forgiven me and would not talk about it nor talk to me. I am finding that I am having episodes of anger against them because of their unwillingness to solve things. Does this mean that I have not truly forgiven them; and that I am fooling myself? Also, should I continue to try to get their forgiveness or do I let them have their space?**

It is difficult to admit an error and take responsibility for it. You have already taken this very important step.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask Him to "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We cannot ascertain the degree of forgiveness others grant us. Rather, focus on the sins you want God to forgive you. If the mistake you made is repetitive, work on it so it does not become a character flaw. Ask God to help you overcome any residual bitterness you may have in your heart regarding this matter; in order that it does not interfere with your spiritual life. You can give your friends some space but still remain kind and friendly. Continue this dialogue with your spiritual father in confession.

Your personal relationship with God is far more important than any other relationship.

<https://www.suscpts.org/q&a/index.php>

# Sunday, 18 April

## 10 Baramudah

*Departure of St Isaac the Disciple of St Apollo*

### Readings of 6th Sunday of the Great Lent

#### Vespers

*Psalm 17:3,5*

*Luke 13:22-35*

#### Matins

*Psalm 26:2-3*

*Matthew 23:1-39*

#### Mass

*Colossians 3:5-17*

*1 John 5:13-21*

*Acts 27:27-37*

*Psalm 143:7,1*

*John 9:1-41*

*<sup>35</sup> 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?" <sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" <sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." <sup>38</sup> Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.*

*John 9:35-38*

# Sunday Gospel - John 9:1-41

## A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

<sup>1</sup> Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

<sup>9</sup> Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him."

He said, "I am he."

<sup>10</sup> Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

<sup>11</sup> 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."

<sup>12</sup> Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

## The Pharisees Excommunicate the Healed Man

<sup>13</sup> They brought him who formerly was blind to the

Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

<sup>20</sup> His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup> 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." <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup> 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."

<sup>25</sup> 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."

<sup>26</sup> Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

<sup>27</sup> 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?"

<sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."

<sup>30</sup> 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! <sup>31</sup> Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup> Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

<sup>34</sup> They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

### **True Vision and True Blindness**

<sup>35</sup> 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?"

<sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

<sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

<sup>38</sup> Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

<sup>39</sup> 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."

<sup>40</sup> Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would

have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

# Monday, 19 April

## 11 Baramudah

*Departure of St Theodora*

### Readings of 7th Monday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 32:10-11*

*Luke 16:19-31*

#### Mass

*Romans 14:10-15:2*

*James 2:5-13*

*Acts 9:22-31*

*Psalm 86:12-13*

*John 5:31-47*

*You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*

*John 5:37-47*

# The Prayer of Jonah

## ***Bible: Jonah 2:1-10***

<sup>1</sup> Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly.

<sup>2</sup> And he said: " I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.

<sup>3</sup> For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.

<sup>4</sup> Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

<sup>5</sup> The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.

<sup>6</sup> I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.

<sup>7</sup> "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup> "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.

<sup>9</sup> But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

<sup>10</sup> So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

## **Commentary:**

Even fearful things are useful and very valuable to the wise. For although we pray that they wouldn't happen, when they do they instruct us. The afflicted soul, as Peter says, is near to God. Those who

escape danger are brought closer to the One who preserved them. So then, don't be frustrated that we had to struggle, but give thanks that we were saved. Don't be one thing to God in the time of peril and another when the danger is over. Instead, resolve to follow the One who preserved you whether you are at home or away, in private life or in public office. Attach yourself to His side and don't think much of earth's little concerns. Let those who come after us, tell our story not only for our glory and the benefit of our soul, but as a very useful lesson to everyone else – that danger is better than security and misfortune is preferable to success. For if we belonged to the world before our fears, after them we belong to God.

- *Saint Gregory the Theologian, 'Letter 20'*

**Tuesday, 20 April**

**12 Baramudah**

*Departure of St Alexander the Bishop of Jerusalem*

**Readings of 7th Tuesday of the Great Lent**

**Matins**

*Psalm 37:18,19*

*Luke 17:1-10*

**Mass**

*1 Corinthians 14:5-17*

*2 Peter 3:8-15*

*Acts 22:17-24*

*Psalm 50:2,3*

*John 12:36-43*

*<sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.*

*John 12:36*

## Heart and lips in harmony

### ***Bible: Romans 10: 8-11***

<sup>8</sup> ...“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”(that is, the word of faith which we preach):

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

<sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

<sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

### **Commentary:**

The words of our confession must not be lazy or deliberately vague: there must be no interval between heart and lips, lest what ought to be the confession of true reverence becomes a mask for evil. The word must be near us, and within us; no delay between the heart and the lips; a faith of conviction as well as of words. Heart and lips must be in harmony, and reveal in thought and utterance a religion which does not waver. The Apostle Paul explains the Prophet's words, that is the word of Faith, which we preach; because if you shall confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him up from the dead, you shall be saved. True devotion consists in rejecting doubt, righteousness in believing, salvation in confessing. Don't delay with ambiguities, be not stirred up to vain babblings, do not debate in any way the powers of God, or impose limits upon His might, stop searching again and again for the causes of unsearchable mysteries: confess rather that Jesus is the Lord, and believe that God raised Him from the dead; in this is salvation. In simplicity then is faith, in faith righteousness, and in confession true godliness. For God does not call us

to the blessed life through difficult investigations. He does not tempt us with rhetoric. The way to eternity is plain and easy; believe that Jesus was raised from the dead by God and confess that He is the Lord... Jesus Christ died, that we might live in Him.

*-Hilary of Poitiers, 'On the Trinity'*

# Wednesday, 21 April

## 13 Baramudah

*Martyrdom of Sts Joshua & Joseph*

### Readings of 7th Wednesday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 56:1*

*Luke 14:28-35*

#### Mass

*Romans 16:4-13*

*James 1:13-21*

*Acts 19:23-26*

*Psalm 50:2-3*

*John 6:35-45*

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

*John 6:35*

# Praying for all men

## ***Bible: 1 Timothy 2:1-8***

<sup>1</sup> Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

<sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

<sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

<sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

<sup>7</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

<sup>8</sup> I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

## **Commentary:**

How can God be your Father, if you do not accept your fellow men as your brethren, especially those of the same faith?

“The Lord teaches us”, writes St. John Chrysostom, “to pray for all people, to mention in our supplication about the common body and not to pursue at all our personal interests, but on every occasion to pursue the interests of our fellow man. Thus, man avoids hate, he bridles imprudence, he emits envy, he brings about love, the mother of all goods, and he exiles abnormality of human things and shows that the equality of rank between the king and the poor is very

great, since we all partake in the same greatest and the most necessary gifts of our God.

By accepting to be called Father of us all, He gave to all of us the same noble origin, and consequently equality. Thus, we are united and no one possesses more than the other, neither the rich from the poor, neither the lord from the slave, neither the ruler from the reigned, neither the king from the soldier, neither the philosopher from the barbarian, neither the wise from the illiterate one”

The rest of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer help us overcome our morbid individualism, our self-centeredness, and our selfishness. They help us open our heart and offer ourselves to God the Father, and to our brethren. That is to say, they help us to obtain love towards God, which is inseparably linked to benevolence and brotherly love.

*-Archimandrite George, 'The Lord's Prayer'*

# Thursday, 22 April

## 14 Baramudah

*Departure of Abba Maximus (15th Pope of Alexandria)*

### Readings of 7th Thursday of the Great Lent

#### Matins

*Psalm 63:1-1*

*Matthew 20:20-28*

#### Mass

*2 Corinthians 4:5-18*

*1 John 3:13-24*

*Acts 25:23-26:6*

*Psalm 122:1-2*

*Mark 12:18-27*

*<sup>26</sup> ... , have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living."*

*Mark 12:26-27*

# Prayer avails much

## ***Bible: James 5:13-16***

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

<sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

<sup>16</sup> Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

## **Commentary:**

If for five minutes a day we can quiet our imagination, close our eyes to the things of our senses, enter within our soul which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and there commune with our Lord, life will flow happily, serene and consoled even in the midst of pain.

When you are on an ocean-going vessel you are not meant to remain indefinitely in any harbor, no matter how attractive it might be. You are to sail the seas of life. Your visits to any harbor should have only one purpose – to make you a more seaworthy vessel. The purpose of prayer is just that: not to keep us anchored in safe harbors but to enable us to sail the seas of life no matter what the weather.

Dive into prayer often. Let the words not remain only on your lips. Let them go from your lips to your mind to your heart. Let your heart be without words but never your words without heart. As you so pray, the strengthening presence of Jesus will be with you. The healing love of Jesus will be poured upon you. The resurrecting power of Jesus will flow through you

to touch, bless and heal your mind, soul and body.

**Friday, 23 April**

**15 Baramudah**

*Commemoration of the Consecration of the First Altar  
for St Nicholas*

**Readings of 7th Friday of the Great Lent**

**Matins**

*Psalm 32:10-11*

*Luke 17:20-37*

**Mass**

*2 Timothy 3:1-4:5*

*James 5:7-16*

*Acts 15:1-18*

*Psalm 98:8,9*

*Luke 13:31-35*

*<sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "*

*Luke 13:34-35*

# Dwelling with God

## ***Bible: Revelation 7:9-15***

<sup>9</sup> I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

<sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

<sup>12</sup> saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

... "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

## **Commentary:**

God is invisible; not with the eye but with the heart must He be seen. But just as if we wished to see the sun, we should purge the eye of the body; wishing to see God, let us purge the eye by which God can be seen. Where is this eye? Hear the Gospel: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8) But let no man imagine God according to what he wants to see. For we would make God either a huge image, or a certain immense expanse. His figure would extend in all directions like the light we see with our eyes. Or, we would see Him like as it were an old man of venerable form. None of these things you

should imagine. There is something you may imagine, if you would see God; God is love. What sort of face has love? What form has it? What stature? What feet? What hands has it? No man can say. And yet it has feet, for these carry men to church: it has hands; for these reach forth to the poor: it has eyes; for thereby we consider the needy: Blessed is the man, it is said, who considers the needy and the poor. It has ears, of which the Lord says, He that has ears to hear let him hear. (Luke 8:8) These are not separate parts of love, but bring complete understanding and sight to those who have love. Live in love, and love will live in you; dwell, and you will be dwelt in.

*-Saint Augustine, 'Homilies on 1 John'*

# Saturday, 24 April

## 16 Baramudah

*Martyrdom of St Antipas Bishop of Pergamos*

### Readings of 7th Lazarus Saturday

#### Matins

*Psalm 88:2-4*

*Luke 18:35-43*

#### Mass

*1 Corinthians 2:1-8*

*1 Peter 1:25-2:6*

*Acts 27:38-28:10*

*Psalm 129:8,2*

*John 11:1-45*

*<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

*John 11:25-26*

## Q&A - Future

### **Is it wrong or against union with God to think of and hence make plans for the future?**

In the Holy Book of Jeremiah 29:11 we are given a reference to future anticipation given by the Lord Himself, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Our future is to look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning His Kingdom.

Other than this, the Lord Jesus Christ should be the centre of our lives today and in the present in which we live. If we live in His Will He will take care of our future.

Planning how to read the Holy Bible in one year, evangelizing your next-door neighbour, or organizing an upcoming feast day in the church is devotion to God. Be preoccupied with the work of God and you will oblige Him to be preoccupied with fulfilling His promises to you. Simply wanting a day to be over and wondering what the next day will unfold, only encourages "worrying" about the future. We should live each day to its fullest, saying with the psalmist, "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

We are specifically told in the Holy Gospel of St. Matthew "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today" (Matthew 6:34).

<https://www.suscopts.org/q&a/index.php>

**Sunday, 25 April**

**17 Baramudah**

*Palm Sunday*

**Readings of Palm Sunday**

**Vespers**

*Psalm 118:26-27*

*John 12:1-11*

**Matins**

*Various*

*Various*

**Mass**

*Hebrews 9:11-28*

*1 Peter 4:1-11*

*Acts 28:11-31*

*Psalm 65:1-2*

*John 12:12-19*

*“Hosanna!*

*‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’*

*The King of Israel!”*

*John 12:13*

# Sunday Gospel - John 12:12-19

## The Triumphal Entry

<sup>12</sup> The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

The King of Israel!”

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

<sup>15</sup> “Fear not, daughter of Zion;

Behold, your King is coming,

Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. <sup>18</sup> For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. <sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

# Monday, 26 April

## 18 Baramudah

### *Pascha Monday*

*Gospel of the First Hour of Monday of the Holy Pascha*

*Mark 11:12-24*

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

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

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

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

*16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.*

*17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

*18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.*

*19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.*

*20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw*

*the fig tree dried up from the roots.*

*<sup>21</sup> And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.”*

*<sup>22</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God.*

*<sup>23</sup> “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*

*<sup>24</sup> “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them].*

*Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

# Monday of the Holy Pascha

## **Events:**

- Our Lord Jesus Christ cursed the fig tree that had no fruit, while on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem. He spent the rest of the day cleansing the Temple and teaching.

## **Rites:**

- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hour prayers).

## Tuesday Eve

## **Events:**

- In the evening, Our Lord Jesus Christ returned to Bethany.

## **Rites:**

- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hour prayers).

# Tuesday, 27 April

## 19 Baramudah

### *Pascha Tuesday*

*Gospel of the Third Hour of Tuesday of the Holy Pascha*

*Matthew 23:37-24:2*

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

*<sup>38</sup> “See! Your house is left to you desolate;*

*<sup>39</sup> “for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ “*

*<sup>24:1</sup> Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.*

*<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not [one] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

*Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

## Tuesday of the Holy Pascha

### **Events:**

- On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, the disciples saw that the fig tree was withered.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ spent the day with the disciples in the temple, teaching them by parables, telling them about the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming

### **Rites:**

- In the 'Thok Te Ti-Gom' praise of the 11<sup>th</sup> 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  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 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  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hour prayers).

# Wednesday, 28 April

## 20 Baramudah

### *Pascha Wednesday*

*Gospel of the Ninth Hour of Wednesday of the Holy Pascha*

*Matthew 26:3-16*

*<sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup> and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill [Him].*

*<sup>5</sup> But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”*

*<sup>6</sup> And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup> a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured [it] on His head as He sat [at] [the] [table].*

*<sup>8</sup> But when His disciples saw [it], they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste?*

*<sup>9</sup> “For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to [the] poor.”*

*<sup>10</sup> But when Jesus was aware of [it], He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.*

*<sup>11</sup> “For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.*

*<sup>12</sup> “For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did [it] for My burial.*

*<sup>13</sup> “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”*

*<sup>14</sup> Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.*

*<sup>16</sup> So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*

*Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

# Wednesday of the Holy Pascha

## **Events:**

- Our Lord Jesus Christ spent the day in Bethany.
- A woman poured fragrant oil on Our Lord's blessed head.
- The betrayal of Judas Iscariot who agreed on a price with the chief priests, to deliver Our Lord Jesus Christ to them with the sign of a kiss.

## **Rites:**

- No exchanging of a kiss.
- 5 hours of the Pascha prayers  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 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  
(1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hour prayers).
- In the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour, Psalm 55:21,1 'Av-etchee-non' ('His words were softer than oil') is chanted.

# Thursday, 29 April

## 21 Baramudah

### Covenant Thursday

#### Gospel of the Covenant Thursday Liturgy

#### Matthew 26:20-29

<sup>20</sup> When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. <sup>21</sup> Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

<sup>22</sup> And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" <sup>23</sup> He answered and said, "He who dipped [his] hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.

<sup>24</sup> "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

<sup>25</sup> Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

<sup>26</sup> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." <sup>27</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

<sup>28</sup> "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

<sup>29</sup> "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

## Holy Thursday

### **Events:**

- Our Lord Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover with His disciples. The word 'Passover' is Hebrew which means 'to cross over,' indicative of the passing of the destroying angel from the Israelites to kill the first born of the Egyptians.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ washed the feet of the disciples.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ established for us the Lordly Supper, the Eucharist, with His disciples.

### **Rites:**

- The prayer of the Morning (1<sup>st</sup>) 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> hour of the Pascha prayers, the Paraclete chapters are read.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hours of the Pascha prayers are prayed as usual. The four Gospels are read in each hour.

# Friday, 30 April

## 22 Baramudah

### Good Friday

*Gospel of the Sixth Hour of Good Friday of the Holy Pascha*

*Matthew 27:27-45*

*27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.*

*28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.*

*29 When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put [it] on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His [own] clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. 32 Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.*

*33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted [it], He would not drink. 35 Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." 36 Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.*

*37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

<sup>38</sup> Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

<sup>39</sup> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

<sup>41</sup> Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said,

<sup>42</sup> "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. <sup>43</sup> "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' " <sup>44</sup> Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. <sup>45</sup> Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

# Good Friday

## **Events:**

- The trial of Our Lord Jesus Christ, condemning Him to be crucified.
- The Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the 6<sup>th</sup> hour.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ's words on the Cross.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ's death on the Cross at the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> hour.
- The burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ in a new tomb at the 12<sup>th</sup> hour.

## **Rites:**

- The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hours of the Pascha prayers are prayed in the second chorus.
- In the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> hour from the Agpia, then the 'O-mo-no-ge-nees' hymn is chanted. After the 6<sup>th</sup> hour is prayed, the Right thief's creed is read.
- In the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> hour from the Agpia, then continues as usual.
- The prayers of the 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

# Saturday, 1 May

23 Baramudah

*Saturday of Light*

## Readings of Saturday of Light

### Vespers

*Psalm 33:17,18*

*Matthew 10:16-22*

### Matins

*Psalm 33:19,20*

*Mark 8:34-9:1*

### Mass

*Romans 8:28-39*

*1 Peter 4:1-11*

*Acts 16:16-34*

*Psalm 96:11,12*

*Luke 21:12-19*

*<sup>14</sup> Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.*

*<sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head shall be lost. <sup>19</sup> By your patience possess your souls.*

*Luke 21:14-19*

# 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.

**Sunday, 2 May**

**24 Baramudah**

*Easter Sunday*

**Readings of Easter Sunday**

**Prophecies**

*Deutoronomy 32:39-43*

*Isaiah 60:1*

**Matins**

*Psalm 77:65,69*

*Mark 16:2-11*

**Mass**

*1 Corinthians 15:23-50*

*1 Peter 3:15-22*

*Acts 2:22-38*

*Psalm 117:24-25,27*

*John 20:1-18*

*<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*

*John 20:17*

# Sunday Gospel - John 20:1-18

## The Empty Tomb

<sup>1</sup> Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

<sup>3</sup> Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

## Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup> Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

<sup>14</sup> Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that

it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

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