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# Great Lent—the Great Fast

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Metropolitan Savas, Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Father George Livanos, Igumen Patrick, Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Fr. Vasyl Sendeha, Father Steve Hutnick [COVID-19], Father Victor Wronskyj [COVID-19], Father George & Dobrodijka Oksana Bazylevsky, Fr. Volodymyr Muzychka [COVID-19], Diakonissa Mary Ann Cherkas, Father Harry Linsinbigler [COVID-19], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia

Luciow, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer

Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Steven—Harry Batch's cousin, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Dollie Irvin, Joe Mrvos, Alexandra & Bowen, Katherine Kulik, Micky Delans [COVID-19], Pastor Terry Polen, Eleanor Kitt, Stacie & Gary, Dolores Wachnowsky, Maria Warholak, Stacie & Gary, Anna Sekelik, Christy, Mariruth, Rich & Judy Previc, Ben Williams, Denis Strittmatter, Deacon Joe Uzar—vocations, Tim—surgery, Archimandrite Raphael—COVID-19, John Wakin, Olivia—young girl with a brain tumor, Rick & Uzar—vocations, Tim—surgery, Archimandrite Raphael—COVID-19, John Wakin, Olivia—young girl with a brain tumor, Rick & Sharon Morgan, John Stasko [triple by-pass], John, Kris & Kait, Jeff & Mary Jane Double [COVID-19], Terri Crosby-Vega [COVID-19], Kristi Wilson, Wendy LaGamba, Melissa Gross [hip replacement], Mike, Amy, Nathan, & Ben Forbeck [COVID-19], David Salazar, Ann Zurasky [knee replacement], James Mary, Barb Bookser, Dr. Paul Riley, Barbara Shegat & Chaplain Rachelle Zazzu, Joyce [stroke], Toni Weber, Camdace Irvin, Carol Muschick, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**From a fortune cookie: Some say Faith is nowhere. I contend Faith is now here!**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ... There is **NOTHING** to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well, and be **SAFE!!!** God Bless!**

**Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and ALL American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!**

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

**AT ANY TIME**—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at **[412] 279-5640**.

**SERVICES IN SLICKVILLE**

**SUNDAY, April 25      OBEDNITZA—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM—UPSTAIRS  
10:30 AM**

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; PALM SUNDAY; ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO  
JERUSALEM; VENERABLE BASIL THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP OF PARIUM;  
HIEROMARTYR ZENO-BISHOP OF VERONA; VENERABLE ISAAC THE  
SYRIAN-ABBOT OF SPOLETO, ITALY; MARTYRS MENAS, DAVID, & JOHN OF  
PALESTINE; VENERABLE VIRGIN ANTHUSA OF CONSTANTINOPLE;  
VENERABLE ATHANASIA-ABBESS OF AEGINA**

**\*\*\*\*\*BLESSING OF PALMS & PUSSY WILLOWS\*\*\*\*\***

*Tone 5*

Philippians 4:4-9

John 12:1-18

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Catherine and Nicholas Behun—Behun Family*

**SUNDAY, May 02      PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY 10:30 AM  
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

*Resurrection Tone*

Acts 1:1-9

John 1:1-17

**SUNDAY, May 09**

**OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS**

**10:30 AM**

**2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SAINT THOMAS SUNDAY; HIEROMARTYR  
BASIL-BISHOP OF AMASEA; RIGHTEOUS VIRGIN GLAPHYRA OF  
NICOMEDIA**

*Tone 1*

Acts 5:12-20

John 20:19-31

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Charles Cherepko, Joseph Baloga, Daniel Pysh, Jr.,  
Nicholas Homyrda, Anna Metrick, Carol Rose, Bogdan Mural, Esther  
Tylavsky, Evdokia "Josephine" Repa, +Metropolitan Constantine, Metro  
Warholak, Khorja Joann Abdalah, Katherine Tomson, Walter Golofski, Jr.,  
Michael Yarmeak, Anna Vangrin, & Stella Cherepko—Fr. Bob*

**BULLETIN INSERT FOR 25 APRIL 2021**

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; PALM SUNDAY; ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO  
JERUSALEM; VENERABLE BASIL THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP OF PARIUM;  
HIEROMARTYR ZENO-BISHOP OF VERONA; VENERABLE ISAAC THE SYRIAN-ABBOT**

OF SPOLETO, ITALY; MARTYRS MENAS, DAVID, & JOHN OF PALESTINE; VENERABLE  
VIRGIN ANTHUSA OF CONSTANTINOPLE; VENERABLE ATHANASIA-ABBESS OF  
AEGINA

\*\*\*\*\*BLESSING OF PALMS & PUSSY WILLOWS\*\*\*\*\*

**The First Antiphon Tone 2 (Psalm 116)**

I love the Lord because He has heard the voice of my supplication.

**Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

Because He inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.

**Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell laid hold on me.

**Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

I suffered distress and anguish; then I called upon the name of the Lord.

**Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

**The Second Antiphon Tone 2 (Psalm 116)**

I kept my faith even when I said: "I am greatly afflicted!"

**O Son of God who sat upon the foal, save us who sing to Thee :  
Alleluia!**

What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has given me?

**O Son of God who sat upon the foal, save us who sing to Thee :  
Alleluia!**

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

**O Son of God who sat upon the foal, save us who sing to Thee :  
Alleluia!**

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

**O Son of God who sat upon the foal, save us who sing to Thee:  
Alleluia!**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God, Who for our  
salvation didst will to be incarnate of the holy Theotokos and ever-  
virgin Mary, Who without change didst become man and wast  
crucified, Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit: O Christ our God, trampling down death by  
death, save us!**

### **The Third Antiphon Tone 1 (Psalm 18)**

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!  
**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

Let the house of Israel say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!  
**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

Let the house of Aaron say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!  
**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

Let all those who fear the Lord say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

### **The Introit of the Little Entrance**

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!

**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee: O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

### **Another Troparion Tone 4**



When we were buried with Thee in Baptism, O Christ God, we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection! Now we praise Thee and sing: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **Kontakion Tone 6**

Sitting on Thy throne in heaven, carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God! Accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: Blessed is He that comes to recall Adam!

### **Prokeimenon Tone 4 (Psalm 118)**

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!

**Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!**

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

**Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!**

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

**God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!**

### **Alleluia Verses Tone 1 (Psalm 98)**

O sing to the Lord a new song, for the Lord has done marvelous things! All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God!

### **The Hymn to the Theotokos (Replaces "It is Truly Meet")**

**God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Celebrate the feast and come with gladness! Let us magnify Christ with palms and branches, singing: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!**

### **Communion Hymn (Psalm 118)**

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!



# EXORCISM, FAITHFULNESS, PRAYER & FASTING

FR. ANDREW STEPHEN DAMICK

When I was asked if I would preach this Sunday, I thought to myself, “Ah, good—an opportunity to show that I don’t preach about just demons all the time now.” But then I looked at the Gospel, and it’s an exorcism story. So, here we are. But there are a lot of exorcism stories in the Gospels.

In this account from Mark 9, a man brings his demon-possessed son to Jesus for him to be healed. The demon threw the boy into seizures, which often injured him and even threatened his life. Now, some might say, “He just has epilepsy.” But Jesus did not say that. Instead, He said, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.” So that rules out a mere medical problem. We’re definitely dealing with a demon here.

Jesus recognized that and acted on it.

There is a lot in this passage that we can connect with, even if we are not subject to demon possession. But we need to back up a little and talk about *that* first.

It is true that most of us are not *possessed* by demons. Most of us have not had a demon actually take control of our bodies and force us to do things as this boy did. And lest we get too scared that it could happen to anyone, we should remember that this doesn’t happen randomly. How did this boy get possessed? We don’t know, but we do know that possession happens because of some kind of intense participation with demonic powers, such as great sin or engaging in the occult. We can’t imagine a mere boy opening himself up to this, but is his father to blame somehow? It’s possible, but more on that in a moment.

Anyway, even if we are not *possessed* by demons, we are certainly *involved* with them. What do I mean? We know as Christians that if we do the works of God, by being faithful to Him, loyal to Him, obedient to Him, imitating Him, then we become more like Him. This process is called *theosis*. But there is an opposite process, too. If we do the works of demons—if we sin—then we become like them instead. There is no neutral ground.



So this means that we all have an interest in and the need for exorcism. The Christian life starts with exorcism at baptism. And then it continues with exorcistic actions every day—because whenever we participate in God’s works, we turn away from demonic works and drive the demons out. So this Gospel account is directly relevant to us, like all the exorcism passages.

So there is something at play in this one that I think is really critical for us to understand clearly, but it gets hidden beneath the way that English translation treats it. After Jesus’ disciples admit that they can’t cast out this demon, Jesus talks about living among a “faithless” generation. And then when the boy’s father tells Jesus about the demon and what it does, Jesus says to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” And the man replies, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” So if you just read that translation, when the disciples ask Jesus later, “Why could we not cast it out?” you would expect that Jesus’ response would be, “It’s because you didn’t believe.”

Right? But that is not what He says.

Instead, He says, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”

Wait a minute! I thought this whole thing was about not believing! It’s a faithless generation that doesn’t believe.

But everything is possible for someone who believes, right? But don’t they believe enough? Apparently not. But then... “prayer and fasting”? What’s going on?

Here’s where translation is a problem. Because if you look at the Greek that lies beneath those various words, you discover that *faith* and *belief* and *faithless* and *believe* are actually all the same word in Greek. If it’s the noun, it’s *pistis*, and if it’s the verb, it’s *pistevo*. Whatever that word means, Jesus keeps using it. And the man who replies to Him uses it, too.

And whatever it means, Jesus says that the lack of *pistis* requires prayer and fasting.

Now I will show you how a better translation makes sense of this whole passage by translating all these words consistently, and consistent with the admonition for prayer and fasting: Jesus says, “O *unfaithful* generation! How long am I to be with you?”

And He says, “If you can be *faithful*, all things are possible to him who is *faithful*.”

And the man replies, “Lord, I am *faithful*! Help my *unfaithfulness*!”

So in some way this man was unfaithful, which may be how his son became possessed. We don’t know. Anyway, when the disciples ask Jesus why they failed in their attempts at exorcism, He tells them they had to pray and fast—that is, they had to be *faithful* to the disciplined spiritual life

that He had given them. If the problem was that no one was “believing” hard enough, how would prayer and fasting help? Would they believe more? No, it’s not about agreeing with something harder. It’s about being *faithful* to God. It’s action, not thought or feeling.

See how much more sense this now makes? In fact, while *pistevo* does sometimes mean “believe” in some places in the New Testament (such as in James 2:19, which talks about the “belief” of demons), it almost always actually refers to being faithful. Faithfulness is the means by which we receive the benefits of God’s grace, not simply agreeing with it.

So now it should be clear how this applies to all of us. If we are afflicted by demonic attack, if we are bound up in sinfulness, if we are plagued by anger, hatred, holding grudges, addiction, etc.—then the response is not “believe harder.” The response is to be faithful. That is why prayer and fasting is what Jesus prescribed here, because it’s part of what it means to be faithful.

By this point in Great Lent, we may be a bit weary either of fasting or the increased prayer. Or we may be starting to feel guilty about how we have neglected the fasting and prayer. And it is tempting to just go ahead and say “yes” to temptation.

And I don’t mean a temptation to eat meat. Eating meat is not in itself a sin. I mean the temptation to fall away from our faithfulness to Christ. It is the temptation to pursue our own desires rather than the desires of God. It is the temptation to slouch back into our weariness in doing good. It is the temptation to despondency, to selfishness, to gluttony, to anger. These tend to be the temptations we experience most in Great Lent, because they are precisely the temptations that turn us away from the virtues that Great Lent especially cultivates. It’s very targeted.

One of the great questions of our time, and one I have heard many times in confession, is the problem of having faith. People often have the sense that they just don’t believe hard enough. And they point to feelings of doubt, of unforgiveness, and so on. And they conclude that they are bad Christians, or that maybe God doesn’t care or doesn’t even exist. And what defines this crisis is the need to be emotionally or intellectually certain.

But certainty is not what it means to be Christian. It is not what faith is about. So if you have these feelings or these thoughts, they are actually irrelevant to Christianity. Christ does not call us to have particular thoughts or feelings of agreement. He calls us to faithfulness.

So we hear this exorcism story today and its conclusion: “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.” The targeted demonic attacks we experience especially in this holy season are real, and we can spot them because of how they are so specifically designed to pull

us away from participating in it. But these things do indeed come out by prayer and fasting. So, don't give up. Be encouraged Because Christ has come to heal us.

### **Evil**

***Isaiah 1:4-Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. (KJV)***

The Holy Prophets are certainly relevant for attentive believers in today's world. Serious believers seek wisdom from the Prophets to address contemporary life. Evil is not time limited nor is the Lord's wisdom to address evil time limited. Contemporary believers are consistently challenged to address evil in daily life. The soul's need for personal peace requires great wisdom to address existing evil. Evil triumphs when vigorous efforts are not effectively employed to counter evil.

***Isaiah 1:16-Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; (KJV)***

Believers are challenged to look deep within the self to ensure evil is not abetted. Attitudes and beliefs merit examination to eradicate evil hiding deep in the heart. The believer's heart, mind and soul are to conform to Jesus Christ in opposing evil. Love of God and love of neighbor are effective efforts to counter evil's presence. The believer's active desire for peace is a strong antidote against evil in the world. A believer's complacency aides and abets the advancement of evil in the world.

***Isaiah 3:9-The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. (KJV)***

Vigilance, prayer and fasting will enable the believer to vigorously oppose evil. Singular efforts against forces of evil make a decided difference in the community. God's Church has examples through the centuries of voices speaking against evil. The Prophets offer treasures of wisdom for believers desiring to overcome evil. The Lord's wisdom is within reach of the believer guarding the soul against evil. Believers seeking to care for the soul will cherish the wisdom of the Prophets.

***Isaiah 5:20-Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (KJV)***

The truths revealing evil are to be tested to ensure they are from the Lord God. Always shine the Lord God's Light upon evil to reveal and uncover its true origin. Trust in the Lord God with the firmest of faith and hope to overcome evil in life. Do not confuse falsehood with truths and be

fooled into being overcome by evil. The Lord God protects and preserves believers holding truth dear to the soul. Joy arises when evil is overcome and the Lord's peace reigns deep in the heart.

*Venerable John Climacus. March 30/April 12, 2021. Monday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

Bishop Melchisedek Pleska:

**The power of thy Cross, O Christ, has worked wonders, for even the woman who once was a harlot chose to follow the ascetic way.**

**Casting aside her weakness, bravely she opposed the devil, and having gained the prize of victory, She intercedes for our souls**

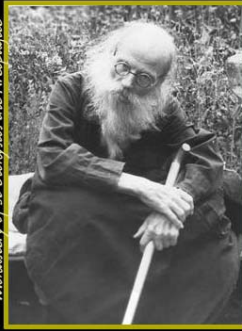
Tone 4 Doxasticon, St. Mary of Egypt, fresco: 18th C.





**"The demonic hosts tremble when they see the Cross, for by the Cross the kingdom of hell was destroyed".**

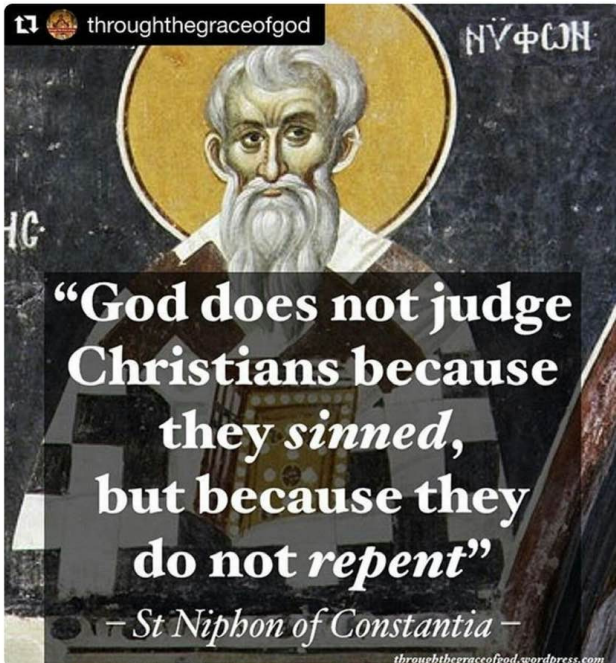
**-Saint John Maximovitch.**



Monastery of St. Dionysios the Areopagite

***If he fights sin and is wounded but continues the struggle, repents, asks forgiveness and help from God, then he is a holy soldier of Christ. In this battle with sin he acquires many spiritual treasures which he could not do otherwise.***

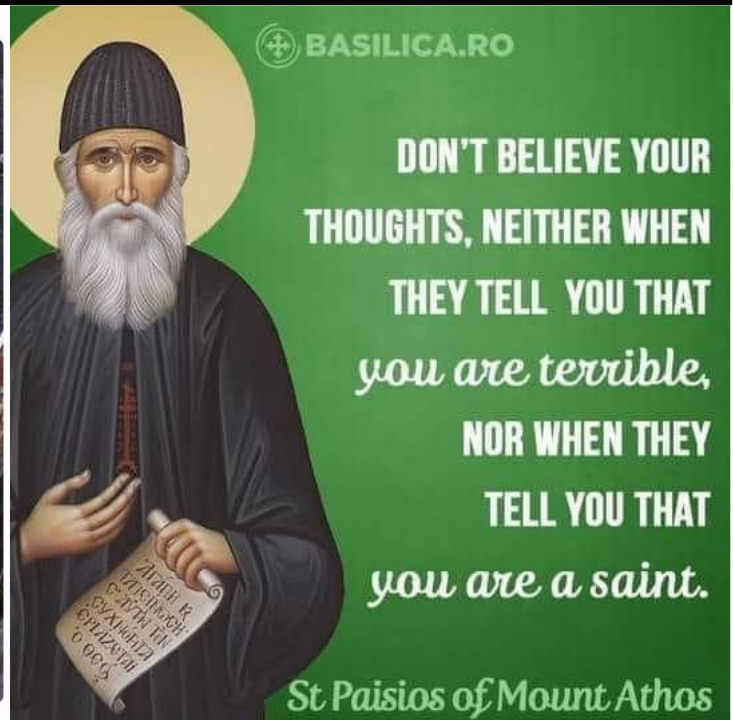
**Abbot Nikon Vorobiev  
Abbot Nikon Letters to Spiritual Children p.113**



**"God does not judge Christians because they *sinned*, but because they do not *repent*"**

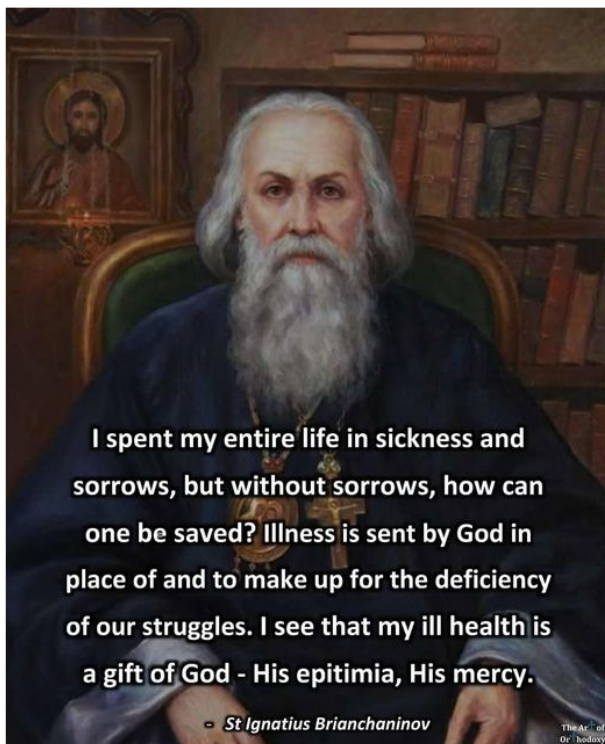
**- St Niphon of Constantia -**

throughthegraceofgod.wordpress.com



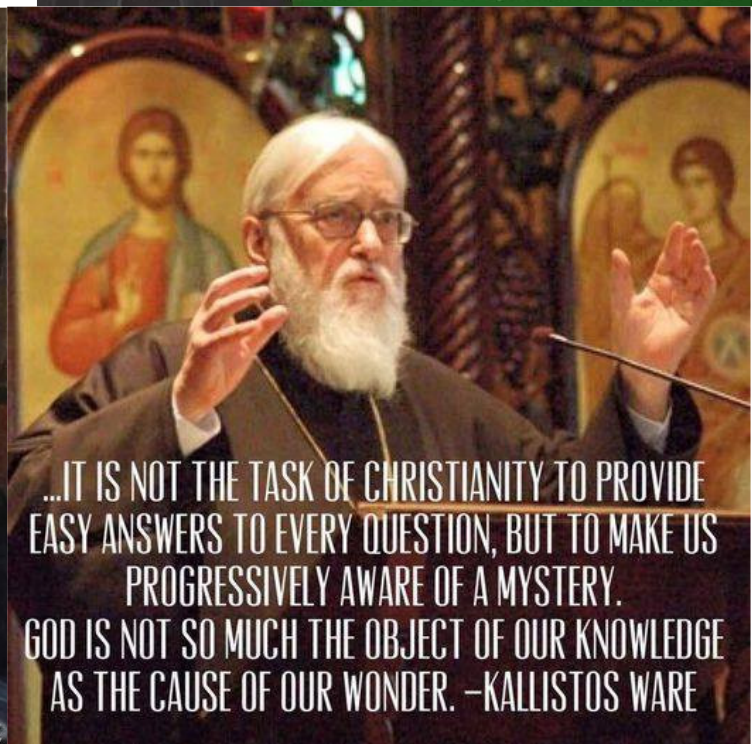
**DON'T BELIEVE YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER WHEN THEY TELL YOU THAT you are terrible, NOR WHEN THEY TELL YOU THAT you are a saint.**

**St Paisios of Mount Athos**



**I spent my entire life in sickness and sorrows, but without sorrows, how can one be saved? Illness is sent by God in place of and to make up for the deficiency of our struggles. I see that my ill health is a gift of God - His epitimia, His mercy.**

**- St Ignatius Brianchaninov**



**...IT IS NOT THE TASK OF CHRISTIANITY TO PROVIDE EASY ANSWERS TO EVERY QUESTION, BUT TO MAKE US PROGRESSIVELY AWARE OF A MYSTERY. GOD IS NOT SO MUCH THE OBJECT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AS THE CAUSE OF OUR WONDER. -KALLISTOS WARE**



### **SOME THOUGHTS ON HOLY WEEK:**

**As we focus more closely on prayer and fasting during this week, consider allowing some quiet time to reflect on yourself AND to hear God! We are too involved in the world—phones, tablets, television, and the internet seem to totally control our lives, leaving little to no time for God! Think about this small change: take FIVE MINUTES to escape from the outside world! Turn off the phone, radio, TV, computer, and whatever devices are eating up your time...sit quietly ALONE and spend time with God! If the weather is nice, sit on the porch or under a tree...wherever you can find peace and quiet. Say a quick prayer, then set a timer and just LISTEN... It will seem like FOREVER and you will be tempted to do SOMETHING...but fight that urge! The first time, all you will think about will be, "Am I done yet?" As the week goes on, it should be a little easier every day to do this. If you'd like, you MIGHT add another 5 minutes...maybe this would be good during Bright Week! If you think it's beneficial to you, add another 5 minutes the week after...or when it's the right time for YOU!**

**Remember: the point is to set aside 5 minutes of your 1,440 minutes of each day [far less than 1%!!!] for your time with HIM!!!**

**Stay SAFE!!! God Bless!**

**In His Love, Fr. Bob**