

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki. Sue Solsman. Sus. Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk. ✱Rev. Frank Milienewicz ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charl. & James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia Assaf. ✱Joe Barron. ✱Paul & Mary Ann Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann & John Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Margt. Dillenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Jos. King. ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱Frank Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L. Mooty. ✱Karen Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱Char. Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon.

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline0:00 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; following any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

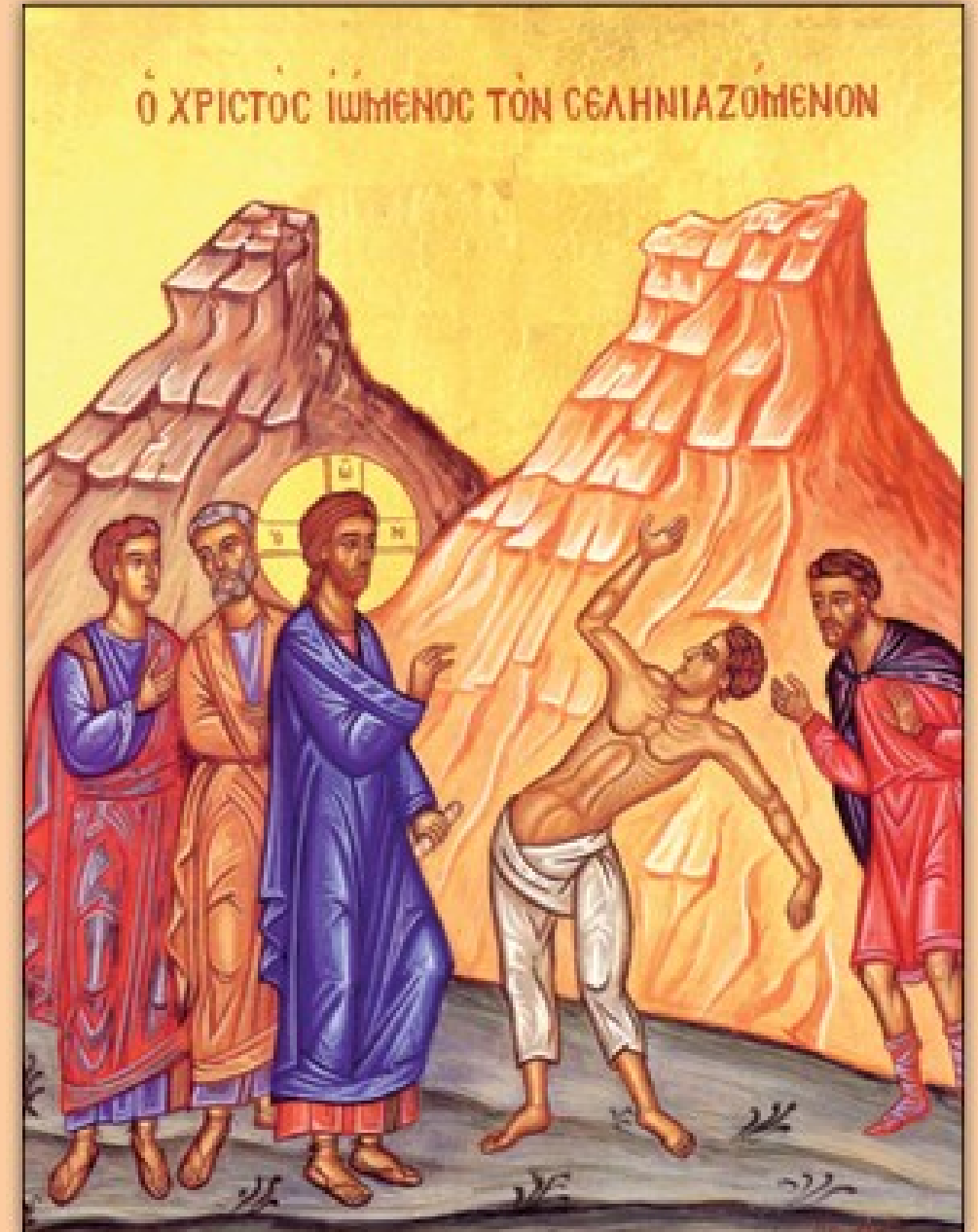
HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS



Icon of Healing the Boy with a Demon

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

10 MARCH 2024 ♦ TONE 08 EOTHINON 08 † FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT / SUNDAY OF JOHN CLIMACUS

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| <u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 17</i> |
| <u>ANTIPHNS:</u> | |
| FIRST: | <i>Liturgy Book p. 29</i> |
| SECOND: | <i>Liturgy Book p. 32</i> |
| THIRD: | <i>Liturgy Book p. 36/ p.46</i> |
| <u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 38</i> |
| <u>APOLYTIKIA:</u> | |
| Resurrection (Tone 8) | <i>Liturgy Book p. 46</i> |
| St. John Climacus | <i>Lenten Supplement p. 4</i> |
| St. Joseph the Betrothed | <i>Liturgy Book p. 47</i> |
| <u>KONDAKION:</u> Annunciation | <i>Lenten Supplement p. 6</i> |
| <u>TRISAGION:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 50</i> |
| <u>PROKIMENON:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 60</i> |
| <u>EPISTLE:</u> | <i>Hebrews 6:13-20</i> |

Brethren, when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “*I will surely bless you, and will surely multiply you* Gn.22: 14).” And so, after patient waiting, Abraham obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath given as a guarantee is the final settlement of all their disagreements. Hence God, meaning to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the firmness of his will interposed an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to deceive, we may have the strongest comfort — we who have sought refuge in holding fast the hope set before us. This hope we have as a sure and firm anchor of the soul, reaching even behind the veil where our forerunner Jesus has entered for us, as he became a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

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| <u>ALLELUIA:</u> <i>Psalm 91: 1. 2</i> | <i>(Tone 8)</i> |
| It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High! | |
| To proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night. | |

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| <u>GOSPEL:</u> | <i>St. Mark 9:17-31</i> |
| <i>At that time</i> one of the crowd came to Jesus and bowed to him saying: “Master, I have brought to you my son, who has a dumb spirit; and whenever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth; and he is wasting away. And I told your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” And he, answering him, said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought him to him; and the spirit, when it saw Jesus, immediately threw the boy in convulsions, and he fell down on the ground and rolled about foaming at the mouth. So he asked his father, “How long is it since this has come upon him?” And he said, “From his infancy. Oftentimes, it has thrown him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if you can do anything have compassion on us and help us.” But Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to the man of faith.” At once the father of the boy cried out and said with tears, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, go out of him and enter him no more.” And crying out and violently convulsing him, it went out of him, and he became like one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him and he stood up. And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind can be cast out in no way except by prayer and fasting.” And leaving that place, they were passing through Galilee, and he did not wish anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been killed, he will rise again on the third day.” | |

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| <u>HIRMOS:</u> | <i>Lenten Supplement p. 17 / Liturgy Book p. 178</i> |
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TRADITIONAL FAST OF GREAT LENT

† On weekdays of Great Lent, Monday through Friday, there are restrictions on both the number of meals taken daily and on the types of food permitted; but when a meal is permitted, there is no limitation to the quantity of food that may be eaten. † On weekdays, fast is broken [the first meal of the day is taken] at/after the noon hour. † Throughout Great Lent, the fast excludes the eating of meat and meat products, cheese, milk, butter, fish, olive oil, wine and alcoholic beverages. † On the Feast of Palm Sunday the eating of fish is permitted. Olive oil, as well as wine, is permitted on various feastdays (consult the calendar), as well as on Saturdays and Sundays. † While the above rules of fasting are to be encouraged, in all things the Christian is called to exercise moderation and charity. The elderly and those in poor health, especially, are urged to be prudent. If in

mind only to serve God, he sought for some place where he might attain to the desire of his holy purpose; and in this sort he departed [from Rome], instructed with learned ignorance and furnished with unlearned wisdom” (*Dialogues*, II).

Benedict, along with “a company of virtuous men,” settled in a small town in the mountains above Rome to live in simplicity. He was tonsured as a monk by a monk from a nearby monastery and lived for three years as a hermit in a mountain cave. When the abbot of that monastery died, the community asked Benedict to succeed him. Benedict went on to establish twelve monasteries in the area, but left to avoid controversy with a neighboring priest. He built a new monastery on the site of a ruined pagan temple at Monte Cassino, which still stands. Benedict spent the rest of his life forging a monastic rule, based on principles which St John Cassian had absorbed in Palestine and Egypt. Benedict envisioned monasticism essentially as living in community, working and praying together. Monasteries were to develop their own resources so as to be able to help those in need. Monks were to work for the support of the monasteries in any way which did not keep them from the daily services or distract them from their personal life of prayer.

The “Benedict Option”

As the Western empire further disintegrated with the incursions of barbarians, monasteries following St. Benedict’s rule would become increasingly important as anchors of civilization and service to God in a world without them. As Cardinal Newman described that age, “Silent men were observed about the country, or discovered in the forest, digging, clearing and building; and other silent men, not seen, were sitting in the cold cloister, tiring their eyes and keeping their attention on the stretch, while they painfully copied and recopied the manuscripts which they had saved. There was no one who contended or cried out, or drew attention to what was going on, but by degrees the woody swamp became a hermitage, a religious house, a farm, an abbey, a village, a seminary, a school of learning and a city.”

Proponents of the Benedict Option hold that our age needs such anchors: monasteries or churches around which might gather fellowships of believers committed to forming their lives and work on the Gospel, making every other goal in life secondary to serving God. The Benedict Option calls Christians to live in communities centered on the prayer, worship, fellowship and service which characterize a fuller Christian life than is generally available in our world.

Many Christians, especially in the middle class, will find it extremely difficult to live a fuller life of faith. We live in a culture that expects family men and women to work so hard and so long that they have no time, or insufficient time, for religious life. Proponents of the Benedict Option are convinced that such a culture, devoted to materialism and the “better life,” will only exterminate faith within its participants and their children.

Eastern Christian Churches are perhaps better equipped than their Western counterparts to become Benedict Option communities, provided that we use the resources already available to us. Parishes need to become the best expression of authentic Eastern Christianity they can be. Our churches need to nurture those disposed to a fuller Christian life through weekday services (vespers, compline, paraclisis, etc.) joined to simple fellowship meals and opportunities for learning and service. Periodic visits to monasteries or shrines support such a commitment. Partnering with other churches to celebrate the Great Feasts or major saints’ days will enrich our own faith life and may draw others to share it. Sharing fellowship and prayer with other congregations, Eastern or Western, may help witness that a fuller Christian life is both possible and rewarding for those who choose to live it.

MARCH 14: SAINT BENEDICT OF NORCIA

MEMBERS OF MANY RELIGIOUS GROUPS in the West have become concerned about the number of people divorcing themselves from the religions of their parents or grandparents. Some join other communities but most cease to identify with any religion at all. They identify themselves as “nones” – members of no religion.

A growing number of these “nones” come from minimally observant families who may attend church from time to time but whose religion has little impact in their lives. Their congregations may encourage this kind of minimal observance by functioning more as social clubs than as true faith communities.

Young people who are raised in such families and congregations are especially susceptible to the influences of the wider society, even when its values contradict traditional values drawn from the Scriptures. Modern life in the West is based on a radical individualism in which truth and morality are completely subjective. When people define truth as “what works for me,” they are not likely to submit themselves to any religious tradition.

In this country most people, even the poor, have more at their disposal than the elite of other ages and cultures. We do not feel the need to look to God for “our daily bread” when we have four TVs in the house. In these circumstances people whose only idea of prayer is begging God to meet their needs find they no longer need to beg and, that therefore, they no longer “need” God.

This situation has led some commentators to observe that churches which are just coasting along as social communities simply will not survive in a secular age. They feel that religious people need to construct communities in which they can live out their entire lives formed by their authentic faith and a Christian culture, rather than a media-driven and dysfunctional popular culture.

Some thinkers have found hope in the words of Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. In his 1981 book *After Virtue*, he compared our age with the last day of the Western Roman Empire when old pagan values were being abandoned. He wrote that “A crucial turning point in that earlier history occurred when men and women of good will turned aside from the task of shoring up the Roman imperium and ceased to identify the continuation of civility and moral community with the maintenance of that imperium. What they set themselves to achieve instead – often not recognizing fully what they were doing — was the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness.”

Based on MacIntyre’s observation, a number of authors have called for Christians of all traditions to adopt what they call the “Benedict Option.”

Who is this Benedict and what is his option?

St Benedict of Norcia The Benedict in question is the father of Western monasticism, St. Benedict of Norcia in southern Italy, whom our Church commemorates on March 14. Born in c. 480 to a noble family, he was educated in Rome when its culture was in decline. Over a century before, that city had been replaced as capital of the empire by Constantinople, the Christian “New Rome” built by St Constantine the Great. Old Rome remained a pagan city and its citizens led increasingly empty and dissolute lives.

As Pope St Gregory I described it, Benedict “was in the world and was free to enjoy the advantages which the world offers, but drew back his foot which he had, as it were, already set forth in the world... giving over his books, and forsaking his father’s house and wealth, with a

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Evening, March 09

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 10

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

SUNDAY OF THE JOHN CLIMACUS

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Saturday Evening, March 16

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 17

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

SUNDAY OF ST MARY OF EGYPT

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

ST. JOSEPH BREAKFAST

Church Hall 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

SAINT JOSEPH BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024

Dine in or Take Out

9:00 a.m. –1:00 p.m.

Adults: \$12.00 / Children: \$6.00

PALM SUNDAY BAKE SALE

St. Ann Maronite Church

(maamoul, baklawa, sesame cookies and other favorites)

Sat. MARCH 23, after 4:30 p.m. Mass

Sun. MARCH 24, after 10:30 a.m. Mass

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

LENTEN SERVICES

GREGORY GREAT ACADEMY:

Monday & Wednesday: **Presanctified: 5:00 p.m.**

Friday: **Presanctified: 11:00 a.m.**

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED:

Tuesday: **Cancelled: March 12, 2024**

Friday: **Final Akathist Hymn: 6:00**

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

09 March: Mary Ann Bauman
from James & Karen Kane
10 March: Deceased members of the Shehadi & Barron Families from Marie Barron
16 March: Edward & Dorothy Abda
from children & grandchildren
17 March: Katarina & Baby Daniel
23 March: Richard Benbenek
24 March: Alexander & Kevin Gall
30 March: Mary Ann Bauman
From St. Joseph Ladies Society

JOHN CLIMACUS: FRUIT OF THE DESSERT

AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT SINAI, in the Egyptian peninsula of the same name, sits the monastery of St Catherine. It has been inhabited continuously for over 1700 years, making it one of the oldest such places in the world. Its unique climate has preserved icons and manuscripts from the first millennium AD that look as if they were just made. The greatest treasures it has produced, however, are its spiritual riches: over 170 saints honored in the Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches, chief among them being St John Climacus.

A native of the region, St John lived in the sixth century. At 16 he became a monk and spent the rest of his life as an ascetic. For most of his life he lived in a hermitage at the foot of the mountain. When he was 75, he was chosen as abbot of St Catherine's Monastery but ended his life back in solitude, as a desert-dwelling ascetic.

In the early seventh century another John, abbot of the Raithu monastery on the shores of the Red Sea, asked our John to write a guide to the spiritual life for the monks of Raithu. The result was the *klimax* or *Ladder* by which John of Sinai has been known ever since. Using the imagery of Jacob's ladder (see Gen 28:10-19), he portrays the ascetic life as a climb to heaven with each rung on the ladder being a virtue to be acquired.

A twelfth-century icon preserved at the monastery shows monks climbing this ladder. Some acquire all the virtues and complete the ascent to God; others fall off, pulled down by the passions, unable to endure the ascetic life to the end.

It has long been the custom in monasteries to read *The Ladder* each year during the Great Fast. This in turn gave rise to the commemoration of St John on the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.

The Rungs of the Ladder

The first seven rungs portray the most basic virtues necessary for an ascetic life: renunciation of the world, detachment from what was left behind, exile from all we have known, obedience (which is voluntary death of the ego), repentance, the remembrance of death, and cultivating a spirit of mourning.

The remaining rungs detail steps needed to make progress on this way of life, such as freedom from anger and irritability, forgetting of wrongs suffered, avoiding gossip and slander, and conquering despondency. Battling gluttony, lust and greed through fasting from food, drink and sleep are depicted as the daily work of the monk. "The farmer's wealth is gathered on the threshing floor and in the wine-press, but the wealth and knowledge of monks is gathered during the evening and the night hours while standing in prayer and engaging in spiritual activity" (Step 20).

On subsequent rings the monk confronts more dangerous enemies – pride and vanity – through humility and the revealing of one's inmost thoughts. Only through the acquisition of these virtues can the monk attain to prayer, love, and heaven on earth: the state of communion with God.

Some Excerpts from *The Ladder*

"Blessed is he who, though maligned and disparaged every day for the Lord's sake, constrains himself to be patient. He will join the chorus of the martyrs and boldly converse with the angels.

"Blessed is the monk who regards himself as hourly deserving every dishonor and disparagement. Blessed is he who mortifies his own will to the end, and leaves the care of himself to his director in the Lord; for he will be placed at the right hand of the Crucified. He who will not accept a reproof, just or unjust, renounces his own salvation. But he who accepts it with an effort, or even without an effort, will soon receive the remission of his sins." *From the Fourth Rung*

"Greater than baptism itself is the fountain of tears after baptism, even though it is somewhat audacious to say so. For baptism is the washing away of evils that were in us before, but sins

committed after baptism are washed away by tears. As baptism is received in infancy, we have all defiled it, but we cleanse it anew with tears. And if God, in His love for mankind, had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed." *From the Seventh Rung*

"Forgetting the wrongs we have suffered is a sign of true repentance. But he who dwells on them and thinks that he is repenting is like a man who thinks he is running while he is really asleep." *From the Ninth Rung*

"He who has become aware of his sins has controlled his tongue, but a talkative person has not yet come to know himself as he should." *From the Eleventh Rung*

"He who has tasted the things on high easily despises what is below; but he who has not tasted the things above finds joy in possessions." From the Seventeenth Rung "It is not darkness or the desolateness of place that gives the demons power against us, but barrenness of soul. Through God's providence this sometimes happens in order that we may learn by it." *From the Twenty-First Rung*

"Blasphemous thoughts, that deceiver and corrupter of souls, has often driven many out of their mind. No other thought is so difficult to tell in confession as this. That is why it often remains with many to the very end of their lives. For nothing gives the demons and bad thoughts such power over us as nourishing and hiding them in our heart unconfessed." *From the Twenty-third Rung*

"The natural property of the lemon tree is such that it lifts its branches upwards when it has no fruit; but the more the branches bend down, the more fruit they bear. Those who have the mind to understand will grasp the meaning of this." *From the Twenty-Fifth Rung*

"Before all else let us first list sincere thanksgiving 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 brethren by an angel of the Lord."

"If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us." "Your prayer will show you what condition you are in. Theologians say that prayer is the mirror of the monk." *From the Twenty-Eighth Rung*

And if You Are Not a Monk...

"Some people living carelessly in the world have asked me 'We have wives and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the solitary life?'

"I replied to them, 'Do all the good you can. Do not speak evil of anyone. Do not steal from anyone. Do not lie to anyone. Do not be arrogant towards anyone. Do not hate anyone. Do not be absent from the divine services. Be compassionate to the needy. Do not offend anyone. Do not wreck another man's domestic happiness and be content with what your own wives can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven.'" *From the First Rung*

"Let us observe and we shall find that the spiritual trumpet serves as an outward signal for the gathering of the brethren, but it is also the unseen signal for the assembly of our foes. Some of them stand by our bed and, when we get up, urge us to lie down again. 'Wait,' they say, 'until the preliminary hymns are finished, then you can go to church.' Others plunge those standing at prayer into sleep. Some produce severe, unusual pains in the stomach. Others urge us on to make conversation in church. Some entice the mind to shameful thoughts. Others make us lean against the wall as though from fatigue. Sometimes they involve us in fits of yawning. Some of them bring on waves of laughter during prayer... Some force is to hurry the reading or chanting merely from laziness; others suggest that we should chant more slowly for the pleasure of it, and sometimes they sit at our mouths and shut them so that we can scarcely open them. He who reckons with feeling of heart that he is standing before God in prayer shall be an unshakable pillar, and none of the afore-said demons will make sport of him." *From the Nineteenth Rung*