

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Mich. Abda. Jos. Bartnicki. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Lois Cianci. James Kane. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Charl. & Joe Prezgia. Johanna Simon. 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. Jos. Daratony. ✱Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charl. & James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia Assaf. ✱Joe & Marie Barron. ✱Paul & Mary Ann Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Natey Cheffers. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimacosky. ✱Ann & John Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson. ✱Joe. & Margt. Dillenburg. ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Joe 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.

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 MEMORY OF OUR HOLY FATHER JOHN CLIMACUS



Ladder of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

A WORD ON PRAYER – II

St. Gregory of Shlisselburgit

2. Standing in prayer, you needn't burden your mind with the thought that you have to complete some specific prayer assignment, task, rule. If such a thought prevails, the enemy will tempt you with the thoughts, "Will I make it? I have to hurry... How much more?..." The enemy thereby brings confusion into our thoughts and superficial haste and distraction. Given the business of everyday life, it's better to think of our prayer rule in terms of a certain amount of time rather than the number of prayers being read. That is, you should do it like this:

After careful reflection and consultation with your spiritual father, establish a daily rule for yourself to read during your evening prayer. Let's assume that an attentive, unhurried fulfillment of this rule requires an hour, so you allocate this hour in your daily routine. Try to begin prayer with the thought that you must weep before the Lord during prayer, and it doesn't matter how many prayers you manage to read. If you don't get tempted by the thought of, "Will I manage to read so many prayers?" then you'll see that your prayer will be deeper, and you'll be able to do everything, and even say your own prayers from yourself.

3. When your thoughts are scattered or you're overwhelmed by some thought, when your consciousness poorly assimilates the words of prayer and it becomes mechanical, it's good to strive for complete awareness by repeating the same phrase and thought of prayer, forcing the consciousness to be imbued with this thought. Moreover, we must repeat the same thought with focused attention on it until our entire consciousness enters into this thought, which brings the soul the satisfaction that it has mastered the mind, subdued it, and that it's obedient in its hands.

When you achieve this by repeating a phrase, then you can continue reading your prayers. This happens more than once during prayer. We have to immediately stop our thoughts from leaping off somewhere, and forcing the consciousness through persistent repetition of one phrase, one thought, thereby forcing our thought to return to the correct path and then subjugate it again.

4. When there's a prolonged, persistent assault by some thought, for example, when the thought of some deviation in your behavior, of an interest in someone or something, of all sorts of plans for the future persistently arises, you can give apparent satisfaction to the thoughts, as if yielding to them, but in reality you disarm them and strengthen yourself. Then you can interrupt your prayer and give your thoughts a go, as if entering into conversation with them.

"Okay, and then what? And then?" And the thought will lead itself to self-destruction, because if the believer's ideology is strong and his disposition is determined by the ascetic struggle of life, then of course the further the thought and what it's suggesting as something new and enticing progresses, the more obvious the contradiction between what's being suggested and the tested way of life that the Christian maintains.

Thus, the thought set free will lead itself into a dead end, revealing its inner falsehood, and thereby weaken itself. Then, both the forbidden nature of the thought (it's been satisfied) and its allure will disappear. All that will remain of the thought is its falsehood, promising the

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Afternoon, March 29

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 30

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF THE JOHN CLIMACUS**

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Parish Meeting:

2025 Food Festival Planning Meeting

EVENTS IN APRIL

Saturday Afternoon, April 05

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, April 06

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF MARY OF EGYPT**

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

LENTEN SERVICES

GREGORY GREAT ACADEMY:

Mon. & Wed.: **Presanctified:** 5:00 p.m.

Friday: **Presanctified:** 11:15 a.m.

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED:

Tuesday: **Presanctified:** 7:00 p.m.

Thursday: **Presanctified:** 7:00 p.m.

Friday: **Akathist Hymn:** 6:00 p.m.

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.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

29 March: Aziz Simon✕
from M/M Hall
30 March: Aziz Simon✕
from M/M Hall
05 April: Aziz Simon✕
from M/M Hall
06 April: Aziz Simon✕
from M/M Hall
12 April: Aziz Simon✕
from M/M Hall

2024 WEEKLY COLLECTION

March 23

Weekly Offering:	\$ 995.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 1,020.00

Thank you for your support!

PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM-IV

By St. Luke, Archbishop of Simferopol and All Crimea

"Lord and Master of my life, the spirit of idle talking give me not."

St. Ephraim prays for this, the holy prophet David says in his psalm, *Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips* (Ps. 140:3), and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said that *That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment* (Mt. 12:36). How serious and difficult it is to give account of every such word. And could there be anything else that could be easier to regard than words?

Our ability to say words to a significant degree makes us like unto God Himself. God created the world with a word, and the word of God has enormous, mighty power. The human word is also powerful. With a word the prophet Elias raised the dead, closed the heavens, brought rain to the earth and stopped it.

What is the power contained in a word? A word lives; it lives a hundred, a thousand years. The words uttered by God's great prophets, who lived many centuries before the birth of Christ, the holy apostles, and divine ascetics are still alive today. The teaching of God's Church has lived for millennia. And if a word lives a thousand years, that means it is very important. A word that leaves our lips always produces an extraordinarily profound effect not only on those around us but even on people far away from us.

The grace-filled and wise words of the saints foster righteousness in the world, create eternal goodness, while evil, sinful words bring dishonor, hatred, and enormous harm to all mankind. Words live, they are carried off like radio waves into space and pour into people's hearts and minds.

A word is a huge force that either unites or divides people. If people were deprived of words they would be like the animals, and human life would be undone. How great and profound is the meaning of the human word!

We have met no few people in our lives, particularly women, who gab unrestrainedly and endlessly, and their tongues know no fatigue. Everything they say is empty and of no use to anyone.

St. Ephraim the Syrian prayed to God to deliver him from idle talk. He was afraid of falling, so that his tongue would not destroy him, and these wretched chatterers have no fear. People often put up with them—might as well let them chatter. They think that they are being listened to with pleasure, but everyone in the depths of their hearts is tired of them. If the tongue wags and talks idly, then the thoughts roam aimlessly, not concentrating on anything profound, true, or important. The soul hungers, the person is obnoxious to others, and causes serious harm to his own self. Such is the meaning of idle talk. Wise people who live a spiritual life never talk idly. They always tend to be silent and concentrated.

How can we get away from the vice of idle talk, what can we do with our unrestrained tongue? We need to do what St. Ephraim the Syrian does: pray to God for deliverance from this vice, and the Lord Jesus Christ will grant what we ask. We need to avoid communication with idle talkers, and seek the company of a few wise people, who only open their lips to say something beneficial. We need to be extremely attentive to ourselves, to acquire the habit of watching what our tongue says, what it is occupied with, and get used to keeping a reign on it—not allow it to wag idly.

The more a person concentrates on the most important, the interior, the true, the more time he has to read the Gospel, the Holy Scripture, the works of the holy fathers, and especially fathom their wisdom and aversion to idle chatter.

It is a great thing to acquire power over the tongue! The holy apostle James in his epistle wrote, *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body* (Jas. 3:2). This means that subjugating the tongue is the highest goal of spiritual life—to bridle everything bad, to which the flesh is drawn. Start with bridling the tongue, and if you achieve this goal, you will achieve perfection and bridle your whole body. And once you have bridled your whole body you will be pure and righteous before God.

May the Lord vouchsafe all of you this purity and righteousness, and may the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian always remind you of this.