### ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

# Melkite Greek-Catholic Church 130 St. Francis Cabrini Avenue Scranton, PA 18504

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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 Prezzia. 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. 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 Cimakosky. \*Ann & John Coury. Mary Sue Betress. Cecilia Davidson. Joe. & Margt. Dillenburg. Fric 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:

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



Icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

## DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

#### 30 March 2025 ♦ Tone 04 Eothinon 01 † Fourth Sunday of the Great Lent ♦ Sunday of John Climacus

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST: SECOND: THIRD: Liturgy Book p. 29 Liturgy Book p. 32 Liturgy Book p. 36/p. 42

Liturgy Book p. 38

Liturgy Book p. 42

Liturgy Book p. 47

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 4)
John Climacus
Patron

Glory to the Father....
KONDAKION: Annunciation

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON: EPISTLE: Tone 7

Lenten Supplement p. 6 Liturgy Book p. 50 Liturgy Book p. 60 Hebrews 6:13-20

Lenten Supplement p. 4

**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.

ALLELUIA: Psalm 91: 1. 2

(Tone 8)

*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.

GOSPEL:

St. Mark 9:17-31

At that time 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."

HIRMOS:

Lenten Supplement p. 17/Liturgy Book p. 178

#### 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 doubt, speak

moon and stars but destructive in its essence. We as if gave in to the enemy, but with the "cunning" purpose of exposing his "resources" and putting him to shame, while strengthening ourselves even more in what is eternal and unshakable for us.

- 5. For mental discipline during prayer, it's good to use the method that, in your experience, provides the greatest concentration and elevates your prayer; that is, if you can better concentrate when you have the text of the prayers before your eyes, then always pray with a prayer-book. If you pray better when there's nothing to distract you, not even your faculty of sight, then close yourself up in your mind and only use the book occasionally to recall the words of the prayers (especially when the prayers are familiar).
- 6. In order to instill concentration in prayer, it's also worth following this order: If you begin to sense warmth of heart during prayer, the soul's longing for God, then you should focus on those words of prayer that have especially touched and captured your soul and add your own words of prayer to them; when the burning of the soul is satisfied, continue with the written words of prayer. However, here you should be guided by this consideration: If you're following a prescribed prayer, then when you switch to a prayer from yourself, you mustn't jump to other subjects. Thus, avoid disorder in your prayer, but rather deepen with the sighs of your soul the thought that the prayer has evoked in you.

It's another matter when after completing the prescribed prayer the soul has become inflamed and asks for its own prayer. Then you must give it complete freedom to pray with such signs as God places on your heart. Heartfelt prayer, not from a book, but from yourself, must always be satisfied, not constrained by either subjects or time, because this is a prayer of complete concentration, when the Lord is invisibly felt. The soul then as if stands before Him and gives itself to Him without distraction.

These are the ways, with God's help, by which you can direct yourself in prayer and battle both with scattered thoughts and an obsessive thought. However, we must always remember that we mustn't look at these means as medical remedies, which will inevitably bring the desired result even when applied mechanically.

It should be clarified that prayer is always an ascetic struggle, accomplished with great difficulty and only with God's help.

It's our duty to pray humbly, to pray with all possible spiritual skill, without weakening or being troubled by the fact that, with our human infirmity, our prayer will always be insufficient and inconsistent.

There are days when the Lord, seeing our sincere labor, gives us great consolation in prayer, when the soul overflows and takes to flight, leaving the body and earth behind. And there are days when the infirmity of Adam asserts itself... Sometimes there's spiritual fatigue, sometimes physical illness and fatigue, and then the mind is fettered and can't enter deeply into prayer and our sighs are lifeless and our words sluggish. But we must never grieve or lose heart! We must still persistently offer prayer to the Lord, trusting that with God, no word raised in faith will fail.

Amen.

## 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 AMOUNCEMENTS

#### 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. EPHREM-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 <u>unites</u> 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.