

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 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

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

A WORD ON PRAYER – I

St. Gregory of Shlisselburgit

It's natural for a living Christian soul to aspire to God. The aspiration for God finds its expression first of all in prayer to God. Prayer is an appeal to God, a conversation with God. Therefore, it's natural for a seeker to turn to what he seeks, for one who loves to surrender to the one he loves.

But it's very hard to pray well. What does this mean? You would think that when the soul aspires to God, prayer should flow out of it freely, without any strain, as a natural expression of this aspiration; prayer should be happiness for a man, as natural as it is for a man to turn to his beloved in earthly relationships, and as natural and easy as it is for one who loves. Obviously, if prayer to God has become an unbearable task for a man, this is the result of not having such an aspiration for God or being captured by love, as we see in the earthly relationships of men, when addressing the object of our affection is no labor at all, but happiness and satisfaction.

This is why prayer is laborious. We're not seized by love, because our soul can't gather its strength; it's sick and enfeebled.

What should we do? Wait for love to come, for it to capture us, for the soul to gather its strength? You might think so, but no! If the body's in pain and disordered, then we treat it to regain its strength. But we tend to think there's no need for medicine for the soul. For the soul, the one who gives it strength and heals its infirmity is God. The scattered state of the soul, that it's not seized by love, and the difficulty of prayer must be treated with the same appeal to the Giver of its healing, that is, by the same prayer. That means we mustn't wait for prayer to come. This is where the art of prayer comes into its own. What a great art it is! Men have dedicated their lives to it. The deepest experiential insights are passed down in order to teach it. And they're preserved by the Church in the treasury of ascetic works.

One of the greatest enemies of good prayer is distraction, when the human mind, fleeting as a winged horse, doesn't concentrate on the words of prayer but flitters around from one thought to another. Or it happens that besides the words of prayer, the mind relentlessly pursues some obsessive idea and there's no escape from it. Or it happens that the words of our prayer barely penetrate into our consciousness, remaining on the periphery of thought and failing to capture the soul; they're read like a mandatory assignment, and prayer becomes almost mechanical.

How can we struggle against this?

The means of battling the thoughts during prayer fall into two groups. The first includes a list of general conditions that ensure concentration and stability of thought in prayer, which in itself will guarantee a firm order of thoughts and will contribute to the successful fight against unwanted thoughts that have penetrated our consciousness. The second group includes a list of tools that conditionally ensure stability of thought, indicating how to correct our consciousness if the enemy has already broken in and scattered our prayerful thought.

The first condition for well-ordered thoughts and a successful struggle against the tur-

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN MARCH

Saturday Afternoon, March 22

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 23

**THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS**

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Saint Joseph Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Monday Evening, March 24

Great Vespers: 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday Evening, March 25

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Divine Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.

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

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

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.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

22 March: Edward & Dorothy Abda
from children & grandchildren
23 March: Aziz Simon✙
from M/M Hall
29 March: Aziz Simon✙
from M/M Hall

LENTEN SERVICES

GREGORY GREAT ACADEMY:

Monday & Wednesday: **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.**

2024 WEEKLY COLLECTION

March 16

Weekly Offering:	\$ 400.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 425.00

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, give me not a spirit of lust for power."

What is the spirit of ambition (lust for power)? It is the desire to be always first, to have authority over others. It destroyed the archangel, the chief of all angels, making him satan and casting him down from heaven; it destroyed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who envied the glory of Moses when he led the people of Israel through the desert to the land of Canaan. Ambition motivated all the heretics, who wanted to install their own teachings in place of the teachings of the Church and become the leaders of the Church. There have also been writers with depraved thoughts, who have corrupted whole generations.

The Lord Jesus Christ condemned love of power—the passion of the scribes and Pharisees to be first, their desire to sit at the head of the table at feasts, to receive greetings appropriate for rulers of the people. The Lord said to His disciples and through them to us, *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all* (Mk. 9:35). Love of power is against the spirit of the Gospel, against the spirit of humility. Nevertheless this passion has a grip on everyone, and there is no one who is not infected with it—even little children.

Everyone tries to attain a high position, thirsts for promotions, desires honor. Many parents raise their children to be ambitious, to have the passion for being first, and corrupt them this way.

Is it so hard to understand that top positions are for the few? Everyone can't be first. Essentially this is the destiny of exclusive people, marked by God. An extraordinarily large number of people strive to occupy high positions in society, and are not beneath any means in order to attain this goal; they will use connections, curry favor, or become lackies only so that they can get their aim.

Very often the Lord punishes them; their wretched passion ends in

failure. They become embittered, refuse to do any community work, retreat into family life and close themselves up in it. But love of power torments them even there, and they torment their family members. There is no peace in their souls.

This is why St. Ephraim the Syrian in his great prayer asks God to save him from the corrupting spirit of ambition so contradictory to humility.

We have all been shown the path to honor, an honor above all honors, with which no earthly achievements can compare. It is the path to the Kingdom of God, where we can become friends, children of God. We will achieve this goal only by striving to fulfill all the commandments of Christ.

We have to remember that the Lord can bring us out to the broad path when we do not seek it, when we do not aim for earthly glory. He often gives us this glory aside from our own strivings and will. True glory flees from those who chase after and thirst for it, and finds those who run from it.

Without thinking about authority over other people, we need to delve into how we can develop our abilities and talents given to us by God, to further the development of our abilities quietly, unknown to the world. And it can turn out the way it has turned out many times, that the Lord raises such a person up to an unreachable pinnacle of glory. Remember that the Lord knows how to indicate people, to distinguish human works done according to Christ's commandments. *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

Pray with St. Ephraim the Syrian to be delivered from the serious vice of love of power!