

+ The Holy Lent:

The Holy Lent, also known as the Spring of the Church Liturgical Year, or the essence of the Liturgical life, is a period of fasting for 40 days. It is preceded by a week of preparation and ends with the Holy Week of Pascha. In this period of fasting we start a wonderful journey with our Lord Jesus Christ, aiming for His dwelling in our hearts. Undoubtedly, fasting paves the way for the dwelling of Christ inside us, as by fasting our hearts are purified.

The Great Lent is an opportunity to renew our repentance and receive many spiritual blessings:

1- Strict abstention from food and water, helps us control our body and fulfills our spirit. The spirit is nourished through prayers and communion.

2- Parts of the Bible readings emphasize God's acceptance to all who repent.

He accepts them no matter how horrendous their sin is (the prodigal son).

He accepts them no matter how long they have sinned (the paralyzed man).

He accepts even those who were born with sin- the blind man.

We get rid of all our sins through baptism and continuous repentance.



S M C O A

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The Sunday Gospel readings of The Great Lent:

1- Treasures in Heaven (Matt 6:19- 33)

- This reading encourages us to hold on to our heavenly treasure.
- "Where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matt 6:20).
- When we put our treasure in Heaven we raise our heart there, too...we raise it to God.



2-Temptation Sunday (Matt 4:1- 11)

- When a person starts his journey towards God, he expects many spiritual wars from Satan.
- However, God helps this person and gives him the ability to win this battle.
- He gives him the power to say: "Away with you, Satan!" (Matt 4:10) Let us be prepared for this battle and this holy victory.

The Sunday Gospel readings of The Great Lent:

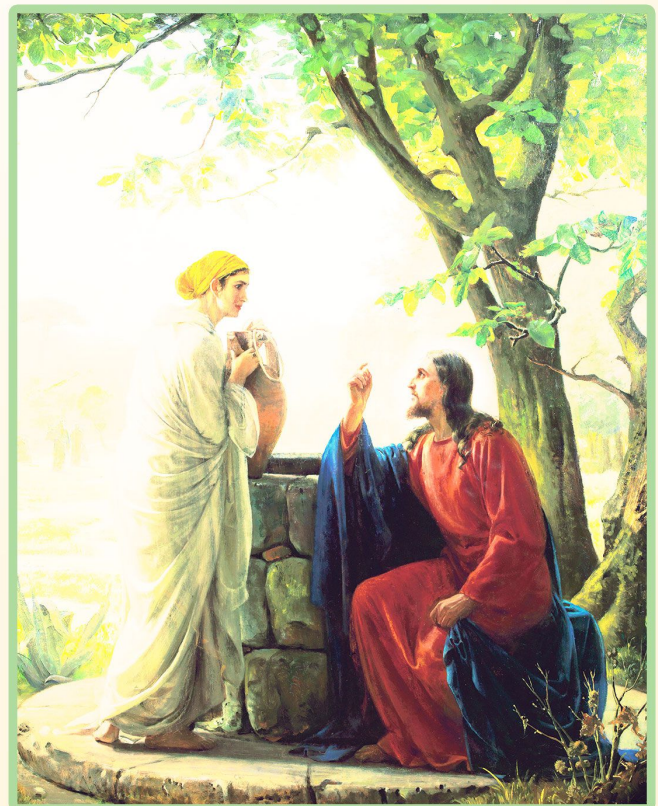


3-The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)

- Let us learn how to repent just like the prodigal son who returned to his father.
- Let us repent with him.
- This parable reveals to us the depth of God's love for sinners and how He accepts them no matter how horrendous their sin is.
- We should also avoid spiritual arrogance like the elder son who thought he was better than his younger brother and asked for his reward.

4-The Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1- 42)

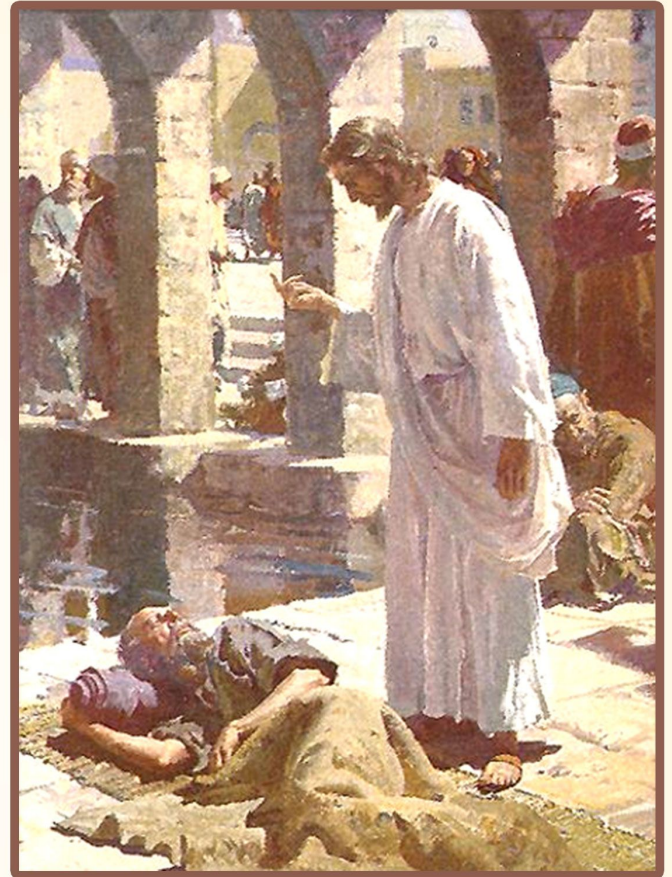
- Here, God opens the repentance door to each one of us, however repetitive our sins may be.
- Let us repent with her for our repetitive sins and falls.
- This woman, married to many, never felt happiness or peace until she met our Lord Jesus Christ.
- She then repented and changed to be an evangelist, spreading the good news.



The Sunday Gospel readings of The Great Lent:

5-The Paralyzed Man (Jn 5:1-18)

- This part of the gospel explains what sin has done in man.
- This man suffered from what is known as (GPI) (General Paralysis of Insane) and it is Syphilis- related quadriplegia in its late stage.
- Let us repent with him for our sins that long prevailed in our life.



6-The Man Born Blind (Jn 9:1-41)

- This represents our birth with the original sin, and our need for Him, who can raise us from the death of sin.
- We need Him who can renew our NATURE through baptism.
- Let us die with the Lord for our life to be renewed by His grace.
- Let us get enlightened through Baptism and drink from the Water of Life.

This is the wonderful journey

- This is the wonderful journey, the Sundays' Gospel readings take us through.
- After a person chooses to live for the Kingdom of Heaven and abide in the Lord, the enemy starts a war against him (Temptation reading).
- God, then, calls him to repent with the Prodigal son and the Samaritan woman and to rise up from his paralysis like the paralyzed man.
- He calls him to rise up from the death of sin through Baptism like the blind man.
- He invites him to experience the joy of the victorious entrance to Jerusalem (the Church), death with Christ and later His resurrection.
- Then our hearts ascend with our Lord, where Jesus Christ sits.
- He sends His Holy Spirit, the comforter, and establishes His Holy Church.
- We look for the resurrection of the dead and His second coming, we will come to take us to Him, to live with Him forever in Heavenly Jerusalem. Glory be to Him.

Amen.



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