



# GREAT LENT

## BIBLE READING LECTORY



**St. THOMAS ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, DUBAI**  
**MGOCSM INITIATIVE**



# GREAT LENT

## FIRST MONDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### MORNING

Genesis 1: 1-12

Isaiah 29: 15-24

St. James 1: 2-12

Romans 1: 18-25

St. Matthew 4: 1-11

### GURU MOZHI

We embark on the pilgrimage today. Any pilgrimage demands that the devotee is taking part in it with clear mind having no ill feeling towards fellow beings. The Holy Church, has rolled out a unique process by which we get reconciled with all our brethren during the Shubknono service, at church. “First go and be reconciled to your brother or sister who has anything against you; then come and offer your gift”. (St Mathew 5: 24. We need to take each step in this journey, confessing our sins, with fasting and prayers, in humility and simplicity, compassion and love. During this lent, let us get transformed and renewed of our souls and bodies. Let’s pray that we too be able to withstand temptations and win over Satan, the same way our Lord did as mentioned in today’s assigned scripture reading (St Mathew 4:1-11)

# GREAT LENT

## FIRST TUESDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Luke 4: 1-15

### MORNING

Exodus 32: 30-35

Hosea 14: 1- 9

Isaiah 30:1-4

St. James 1: 12-27

Ephesians 4: 32-5: 21

St. Matthew 6: 1-6

Lent is an opportunity to assess our own faith and commitment to it. There are at least three elements in the test, viz, prayer, almsgiving and fasting. If we are able to put to work all the three elements, then we would be able to gain the fruit of the Holy Spirit - Gal 5:22 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The first feature needs to be prayer. Have we done our part to reinforce our discipline of praying at least twice a day with prostration? During prostration (Sashtanga pranamam), eight parts of our body touch the ground, viz, forehead, nose, two hands, two knees and two feet. We keep on chanting 'Kurielaison ', a Greek word meaning Lord, have mercy on me. Have we thought about opening and reading a passage from the Treasure that we keep in our homes – Holy Bible? Almsgiving goes hand in hand with fasting. At least the amount you have saved by abstaining from food should be channelized for the betterment of the less fortunate.

# GREAT LENT

## FIRST WEDNESDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

#### EVENING

St. Matthew 6: 19-24

St. Luke 16: 14-18

#### MORNING

Genesis 1: 14-18

Isaiah 13: 6-13

St. James 2: 1-13

Romans 2:7-24

St. Matthew 6: 25-34

The real observance of fasting falls far beyond mere abstinence from certain foods; but it aims at overcoming all material desires of the world that divert our attention away from our spiritual communion with God. It also aims at strengthening our ability to focus constantly and consciously upon God, to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (St. Matthew 6:33) before all else; it is a period earmarked to cultivate our strength to know us deeply, to practice sincerity and honesty, and to resort to repentance as a means of constant transformation and purification of heart. By assigning main priority in our lives to God, we restore to our minds a proper view of reality about the creator of all seen and unseen. In the very same way Moses led his people, the Church leads Her children through the fifty-day sojourn of Great Lent. In this transformation the faithful people of God become the new-born children from the secular wilderness who will be able to experience the joy of the Promised Land.

# GREAT LENT

## FIRST THURSDAY *Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Matthew 7: 1-12

### MORNING

Exodus 22:5-6

I Kings 18: 16 -24

II Kings 17: 7- 23

Isaiah 36: 1-7, 37: 1-7

St. James 2: 14-26

Romans 2: 28-3: 8

St. Matthew 7: 13-27

During the Lenten journey we need to shed our ego and be clean at heart. When we make the prostration, we humble ourselves and touch our head on the floor, often behind the feet of another person who is in front of us. Although we do not do it deliberately, it so happens that we become part of that process. Church fathers have taught us that we are actually kissing the feet of our Lord when we humble ourselves at the ground. When we fast, we also try to contribute something to the needy. Are we totally satisfied with such an action only? Even removing a stone or a thorn from the walkway will be considered as a charitable act. When you have a good word told to a person who is in distress that also will make that person comfortable. There is a need to pray for such people who are in need of our prayers. It is important that we take some time to examine our lives, noticing where our resistance to the call of Christ lies, and doing something, however insignificant, to break down any barriers we have placed in the way of Christ's desire to serve others in and through us. It is like the transformation of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ becoming the tree of everlasting life.

# GREAT LENT

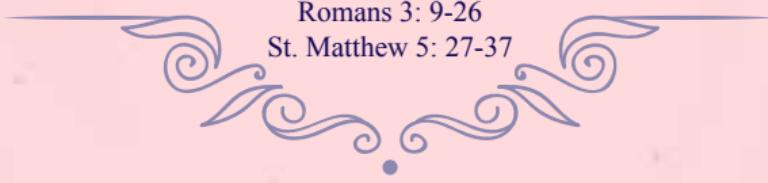
## FIRST FRIDAY

### *Of Great Lent*



EVENING

St. Matthew 5: 17-26



MORNING

Ezekiel 18: 20-32

Hosea 4:1-11

Deuteronomy 6 : 1- 13

Isaiah 1:1-9

St. James 3: 13- 4: 5

Romans 3: 9-26

St. Matthew 5: 27-37

This is the first Friday during the Great Lent period. Today we reflect upon the powerful Lenten theme of fasting. During this first part of Lent, Isaiah, chapter 58 is our guide. Reading this passage slowly and carefully, can be a wonderful help to immerse ourselves in the sense of the Lent. In Isaiah's preaching to the people, we have a contemporary message for our hearts. God wants the prophet to deliver this message to the people, to point out some powerful issues for their conversion. It begins with tough irony. God says that the people ask God "to declare what is due them," "Why do we fast, and you do not see it? The contemporary version of this is that we, too, often blame God for the troubles we get ourselves in. And, we want to make a request of God to make our lives happier, or to relieve some distress, and expect God to jump to our desires. Isaiah really challenges the people for their lack of sincerity and integrity. The answer to their question is simple: the reason they don't have access to their God is that their supposed "days of fasting" are actually days insincere or hypocrite activity by which they ill-treat others. Then Isaiah gives us some tips about true fasting: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

# GREAT LENT

## FIRST SATURDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

EVENING

St. Matthew 10: 24-38

MORNING

St. John 15: 17-16: 3

#### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Genesis 2: 4-17

Zechariah 7: 8-14

Isaiah 1: 24-31

#### HOLY QURBANA

Acts 12:1-24

Romans 12: 10-21

St. John 4: 46-54

Cross is a symbol of absolute self-denial, an act of thorough eradication of every seed of selfishness. It points out to the absolute dedication of Son to the Father's plan. The Holy Church guides the faithful to the same experience through the various liturgical and ascetic practices of the Lenten period. Jesus' death and resurrection is recalled in word and sacrament in Holy Week and Easter. "On this lent days, only a true believer can appreciate and follow Him by going through the days of Jesus sufferings from the time when Jesus seized in the Garden of Gethsemane and crucified on Calvary, and His joyful resurrection and His appearances to the disciples. Life is too short to rage against demons and bad guys. Ritual can grow stale; authority can stifle the spirit. But the split between spirituality and religion is overdrawn. Faith must be lived through steps taken each day. During the period of fasting one makes a special attempt to evaluate his calling as a Christian; to listen to the voice of the Gospel and heed its commandments; to accept the constant invitation to enter Christ's Kingdom.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND SUNDAY

*Of Great Lent*  
**(Garbo - Lepers' Sunday)**

EVENING

St. Mark 1: 32-45

MORNING

St. Mark 9 : 14-29

**BEFORE HOLY QURBANA**

Genesis 7: 6-24 • II Kings 5: 1-14 • Isaiah 33: 2-9

Jeremiah 50: 4- 7; 15 : 15-21

**HOLY QURBANA**

Acts 5: 12-16 :19 :8-12 • Acts 9: 22-31 • Romans 3: 27- 4: 5

St. Luke 5: 12-16, 4: 40-41

St Luke describes about the miracle of Jesus healing the Leper in a very peculiar manner: "And it came to pass when he was to a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face and besought him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." The first thing to be noticed is his way of presentation of his need. He fell on his face means he had presented his body entirely on the feet of Lord Jesus. In Malayalam he had a sashtanga pranamam, or Kumbideel. Secondly he prayed, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. This should be the real style of Christian prayer. The leper was confident that the Lord was able to cure him though his disease was so severe and serious. Still he gave prominence for God's will. Those who might complain that there are no prayers for the needs among the faithful in our Church must realize what is to be prayed and how to be prayed. While praying for our needs, let us not give importance for the need, or the depth and width in the human assessment, whereas we are obliged to give prominence to the will of God. Let us pray for the complete cleaning of our body and mind.

The Lenten prayers give due importance for repentance and sanctification. Surprising all the ones who had ill feeling towards the leper, who rushed himself to the presence of Lord Jesus, ignoring the social restrictions, our Lord touched him and cleaned him free and completely. Our Lord made only one condition to show himself to the priest. Our Lord insisted him to have a true confession.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND MONDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### MORNING

Genesis 35: 1- 5

II Samuel 16: 5-12

Hosea 2: 21-3: 5

St. James 4: 7-5: 6

I Timothy 2: 1-15

St. Luke 6: 27-36

Adam and Eve disobeyed God; they refused to fast from the forbidden fruit. They became slaves of their own desires. But now through fasting, through obedience to the rules of the Church regarding the use of spiritual and material goods, we may return to the life in Paradise, a life of communion with God. Thus, fasting is a means of salvation, this salvation being a life we live in accordance with the Divine will, in communion with God. Because of the liberating effect of fasting, both material and spiritual, the Church has connected fasting with the celebration of the major feasts of our tradition. "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8: 5-6) We need to live in accordance with our spirit and not our natural desires if we want to overcome temptation.

# GREAT LENT

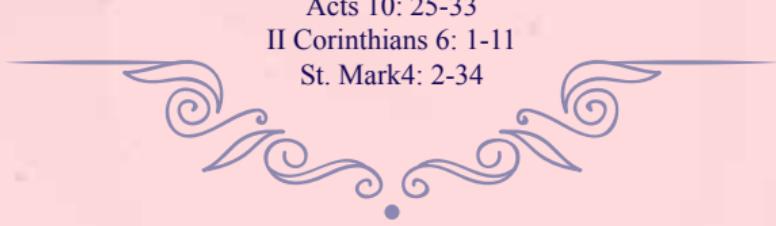
## SECOND TUESDAY

*Of Great Lent*



EVENING

St. Luke 6: 37-49



MORNING

Exodus 16: 15 -27

Acts 10: 25-33

II Corinthians 6: 1-11

St. Mark 4: 2-34

The totality of the Orthodox life centers on the Resurrection. Great Lent is intended to be a "workshop" where the character of the believer is spiritually uplifted and strengthened; where his life is rededicated to the principles and ideals of the Gospel; where fasting and prayer culminate in deep conviction of life; where apathy and disinterest turn into vigorous activities of faith and good works. Lent is not for the sake of Lent itself, as fasting is not for the sake of fasting. Rather, these are means by which and for which the individual believer prepares himself to reach for, accept and attain the calling of his Saviour. The purpose of fasting is to remind us of the Scriptural teaching, "Man does not live by bread alone." The needs of the body are nothing compared to the needs of the soul. Above all else, we need God, Who provides everything for both the body and the soul. Fasting teaches us to depend on God more fully. The first sin of our parents, Adam and Eve, was eating from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-19). We fast from food, food items, as a reminder that we are to fast from sinning and doing evil. There are several benefits of fasting. Fasting helps us pray more easily. Our spirit is lighter when we are not weighed down by too much food or food that is too rich. Through fasting, we also learn to feel compassion for the poor and hungry and to save our own resources so that we can help those in need. The purpose of Great Lent is to prepare the faithful to not only commemorate, but to enter into the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND WEDNESDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Matthew 18: 1-11

### MORNING

Exodus 34: 1-17

Proverbs 7: 1-11

Zechariah 8: 1-8

III John 1: 1-15

I Corinthians 8: 1-13

St. Luke 11: 1-13

Fasting is a beautiful period to do good deeds by helping the poor, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and taking care of the needs of others. The person who fasts by not yielding to the needs of the flesh, will feel the needs of others and his heart will be moved to serve them. The asceticism of fasting teaches us to care for the heavenly and not be concerned with the earthly. Thus it becomes easy to forsake our material possessions and offer them to the needy. Lent is training for simple life. Fasting and vegetarianism during the Lent are invitation to overcome the enslaving power of consumerist culture which is based on greed. In the midst of prosperity and over consumption we are trained to enjoy the beauty of a simple life based on need. Lent gives us a wonderful experience of simple life. This freedom from the grip of over luxurious life and enslaving consumerist culture make us sensitive to the basic needs of the poor and the suffering and share with them our resources. Fasting is more than not eating food. It is more important to fast from sin. Besides controlling what goes into our mouths, we must control what comes out of our mouths as well. Are our words pleasing to God, or do we curse God or our brother? The other members of the body also need to fast: our eyes from seeing evil, our ears from hearing evil, and our limbs from participating in anything that is not of God. Most important of all, we need to control our thoughts, for thoughts are the source of our actions, whether good or evil. Let the words of GOD overcome all our five senses on this lent days.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND THURSDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

#### EVENING

St. Luke 16: 1-13

#### MORNING

Numbers 16: 1-10

Isaiah 20: 20-25

Acts 10: 34-48

I Corinthians 9: 1-12

St. Luke 18:1-8

St. Matthew 18: 18-22

Fasting was practiced by the Lord Himself. After prayer and fasting for forty days in the wilderness, the Lord victoriously faced the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:1--11). The Lord himself asked the disciples to use fasting as an important spiritual weapon to achieve spiritual victories (Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37). The example of the Lord was followed by His disciples (Acts 14:23; 27:9; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:5, 11:27.). The importance of fasting depends on its meaning. Fasting is not abstaining from food only; it is first of all, abstaining from sin. By detaching us from earthly goods and realities, fasting has a liberating effect on us and makes us worthy of the life of the spirit, a life similar to that of angels. Fasting, as abstinence from bad habits and sin, is the mother of Christian virtues, the mother of sound and wholesome thinking; it Church fathers advocate that fasting is the feast of the soul and good fasts are like medicine which cures our soul and mind, and, along with other virtuous works, it leads us to the eternal life. In our spiritual battle, fasting protects us from the evil one. It not only resists the attack but also trains our body and mind for the battle. Fasting is a great weapon against the evil one. Through fasting Christ defeated the Satan and has given us this weapon to overcome the evil. Fasting and abstinence are the two weapons for cultivating the field of Christian life.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND FRIDAY *Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Matthew 16: 21-28

### MORNING

Exodus 21: 20-27

Job 25: 1-6

Acts 11:1-18

Romans 1:16-25

St. Matthew 5: 38-48

Fasting is the root by which all the fruits of sanctity are sustained and on this same root grows purity and rejoices patience. Fasting dispels immodesty, controls the lust and offers the body as a holy temple of God. Therefore, the Church exhorts the faithful to love and practice this highly acceptable form of Christian life so that it may lead them to the great eternal fast which is going to happen in the eternal bride chamber of life. The prayers of the great Lent highlight Moses, Elijah and Jesus as the great champions of fasting. According to the scripture they observed fasting for forty days and it was these three who are seen in unusually bright light on the transfiguration mount. It is recorded in the book of Ezra that they did not ask the King to send soldiers to ensure their security so that the gentiles could not laugh at the shallow nature of their faith. In our transient journey in this planet to eternity our ultimate trust and security is to be in God who strengthens us to conquer all kinds of evil and to progress. Through fasting we humble ourselves and surrender fully to God who empowers us to face all challenges and sinful tendencies. Fasting must be undertaken voluntarily and it must be of divine dispensation'. This is the primary teaching of our Church on Fasting.

# GREAT LENT

## SECOND SATURDAY *Of Great Lent*

### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Deuteronomy 30: 1 -7

Isaiah 35: 1-10

### HOLY QURBANA

Acts 13: 37 -52

II Corinthians 8: 1- 9

St. Mark 1: 21-31

Great Lent is a period of repentance and transformation of our body and spirit to the LORD the creator. Fasting without repentance and changing one's life becomes useless. Unless the fasting person changes his life during fasting, he will only be hungry and exhausted without gaining anything else. Therefore, the Church constantly reminds us of the importance of repentance during fasting. Before Great Lent, we fast Nineveh Fast and we live the story of Jonah and the Ninevites' repentance. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "The one who comes to me I will by no means cast out." (John 6: 37) Christ "has come to save that which was lost." (Matt. 18:11) God desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth (1Tim. 2:4). Christ is the True Physician who is needed by those who are ill by sin. He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Mark 2: 17).Repentance is a result of divine action; it is the Spirit of God, Who moves the hearts of sinners to repent. God's pleasure is in the return of a sinner so that he will not die in his sin. When God sees his sinful child returning to Him, He has compassion and goes to him, kissing him, and welcomes his return by saying, "It is right that we should make merry and be glad." (Luke 15: 32)

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD SUNDAY

*Of Great Lent*

(M'Shariyo- Paralytic Sunday)

EVENING

St. Luke 5: 17-26

MORNING

St. John 5: 1-18

### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Ezekiel 34: 1-16 • Exodus 4 : 10-17

II Kings 2 : 1-11 • Isaiah 5: 20-25

### HOLY QURBANA

Acts 5:12-16. 19: 8 -12 • Romans 5:1-11

2 Corinthians 12: 7-10 • St. Mark 2:1-12

Today's miracle of the healing of the paralytic is most apt for today's world, for this world lies like a paralytic, in a spiritual and moral paralysis, seeming not to know how to overcome the problems that it has invented for itself. The paralytic was taken by some of his friends and by seeing their faith, our Lord was moved. Here comes the importance of our Saints and Martyrs who intercede for us.

If the world shows no sign that it wants to be healed, then it too will continue to lie in the paralysis of its old hatreds and evil ways. Repentance is the sacrament which God gave us for our salvation. Repentance is the act of our co-labouring with the Creator; the miracle of transforming the old into new, dirty into clean, ill into whole. Only he who understands that he is ill will run to the Physician; only he who sees that he is perishing will call out to the Saviour; and only he who wants to be well will follow the rubrics prescribed by the Physician and take the necessary Medicine. In repentance, a man separates himself from sin, learns not to be one with it, and begins to understand that he is an image of God, but sin is a horrible caricature, corruption, and illness.

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD MONDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

#### MORNING

Genesis 18: 20-33

Judges 6: 11-21

Acts 28: 1-10 or Revelations 2: 1-7

I Timothy 6: 1-12

St. Mark 2: 13-22

In the Old Testament God's Greatest act of Deliverance was at the Exodus when God's people were rescued from the confinement of slavery in Egypt and they were brought into the wide expanse of freedom of the Promised Land. That Exodus event had many insights and connections to another historical saving event – the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All of God's saving acts, even from famine and hardship; point to God's final and full saving act in Christ and the Cross of Salvation. The whole New Testament was written to proclaim that Jesus is our Saviour. The Old Testament points to the Saviour to come. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus was tempted by Satan in the desert, "Save yourself!", but Jesus did not come to save himself. He came to save us. At the end of his ministry, Jesus was hanging on the cross. His enemies came to taunt him, "He saved others. Why can't he save himself?" Once again we get the message that he came to save us. The cross is a symbol of Christ's humility, but it is also the place where he showed his strength, defeating Satan, overcoming our sin and engaging Death at its worst.

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD TUESDAY *Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Mark 10: 17-27

### MORNING

Exodus 20: 1-19

Job 31: 1-15

Proverbs 3: 1-12

St. James 1: 27-2: 13

Ephesians 2: 1-18

St. Mark 4: 1-20

During this Great Lent we have to wear the Cross of Reconciliation – the Cross of Peace. Psalm 34:14 urges us to "seek peace and pursue it." Peace will not come to us, indeed we are prone to create conflict and division rather than be at peace. That is music to Satan's ears. He enjoys seeing people in conflict, especially brothers and sisters of Christ. But God is one who will seek peace. God pursued peace between himself and us by sending his Son, Jesus Christ. It was God who took the initiative, not us. In Psalm 34 he urges those who know his peace to be the first to risk seeking peace with others. Jesus was talking to his Disciples in Matthew 5 about the destructive nature of tearing people down with words. When destructive words have been spoken, Jesus told them what to do. "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar, but go first and be reconciled to your brother – then come and offer your gift." By using the Cross of Reconciliation our worship is now acceptable to God. In the same way Christ's Reconciling death on the cross has made us acceptable to God.

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD WEDNESDAY

*Of Great Lent*



EVENING

St. Luke 9: 44-50, 57-62

MORNING

Leviticus 25: 35-46 • I Samuel 9: 18-27

Isaiah 65: 16-25 • Acts 13: 1-3

Ephesians 6: 1-9 • St. Luke 12: 32-40



The Bible is a living testimony of some of the greatest calls in history. When we think of these calls we immediately think of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, and others whom God called into his service. We would like to explore three calls in particular, which the bible highlights. The first call we would like to explore is the call of Moses. God chose Moses to deliver his people from the bonds of the Egyptians. Yet how did God call Moses? One day, while tending his father-in-law's sheep, God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush and called him to deliver his people. Moses did not listen to God at first. He tried to evade God's call to him. Moses told God that he was incapable of accomplishing the feat of delivering the Israelites from the hands of the Egyptians. To that God responded, "I will be with you." Again, Moses tried to evade God's call by saying that the Israelites would not believe him. To that God allowed Moses to perform signs as proof-the ability to turn his staff into a snake, to turn his hand leprous, and to make the water of the Nile turn to blood." Even still, Moses tried to evade God's call by saying that he was not eloquent and that he was "slow of speech and slow of tongue." Finally, Moses relented and accepted God's call. God's call to Moses was quite dramatic and came to Moses when he was about eighty years old. Even if we heard God's call several times in our life, our reasons are unacceptable to hear his calls, but now God is saying to us that (1) I will be with you (2) I will give you the God's signs (3) I will allow you to be strengthen in your voice and take your brothers for achieving God's plan. We will relent and accept God's call.

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD THURSDAY

### *Of Great Lent*



EVENING

St. Luke 13: 18-30



MORNING

Numbers 12: 1-10 • II Chronicles 26: 16-21

Micah 6: 1-8 • St. James 4: 1-17

Philippians 1: 1-11 • St. Mark 9: 30-42

The second call which we will focus on is quite different from the first and concerns a small boy. This second call is found in the opening chapters of the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. Samuel had been brought to the temple when he was still a child by his mother, Hannah. Hannah had dedicated her son to the Lord and entrusted Samuel to Eli, the priest. One evening, when Samuel was twelve years old, and both he and Eli were sleeping in their rooms, the Lord called out to Samuel by saying, "Samuel! Samuel!" Thinking that Eli, the priest had called him, Samuel ran into Eli's room and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Eli said to Samuel, "I did not call you, lie down again." So Samuel returned and lay down. The Lord then called again, "Samuel!" Samuel then got up, and went to Eli again and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. Again, for a third time, Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." When Samuel came for a third time, Eli perceived that it was God who was calling Samuel. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went again and lay down in his place. For a fourth time, the Lord returned again and called "Samuel! Samuel!". This time, Samuel responded, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel responded to God's call and God revealed Himself to Samuel. Whenever God calls us we tend to go to some other places and to some other persons. It is the time to listen to him from the place where we are standing right now, and say to God "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" - St. Luke 13:24

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD FRIDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Matthew 6: 5-15

### MORNING

Deuteronomy 8 : 1-20

Isaiah 1:10-20

I Peter 3: 7-15

Romans 2: 2-13

St. Luke 18 : 9-17

The third call which we will explore is indeed the calling of all callings. There is no other call in the entire history of the human race as great as this call, and there is no response which impacted the fate of the human race as much as this response. This call is the Annunciation, - the call of the Virgin Mary. Recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke, the story of the Annunciation tells us how the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth. We celebrate that day of days, this feast of feasts. For through the call and response of one girl all humanity has the opportunity for salvation. Today, the church commemorates this day to remind us that God has called us as well. These three stories prove God has called you. Make no mistake. God does not care about your age. Are you as old as Moses or as young as Samuel? God has called you. God has called you as he called Moses and Mary. God calls you regardless of your race, regardless of your talents, regardless of your poverty, regardless of your wealth. This calling - to be a Christian - is as great as the call of Moses and as profound as that of Mary's. Therefore, go and respond to God's call. And every day, remember to pray, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." This Great Lent is a time for us to listen to our call and to respond to His call like Moses, Samuel and Mother Mary.

# GREAT LENT

## THIRD SATURDAY

*Of Great Lent*

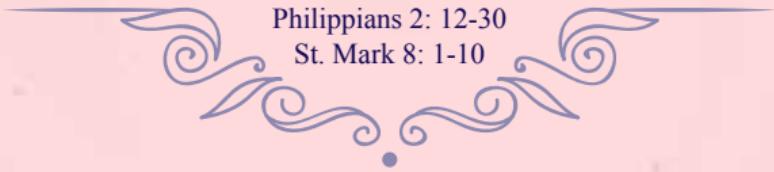


### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Exodus 16: 1-10

II Kings 4: 38-44

Hosea 2: 18-23



### HOLY QURBANA

I Peter 2: 1-10

Philippians 2: 12-30

St. Mark 8: 1-10

When the disciples were confronted by Jesus with the task of feeding four thousand people many miles away from any source of food, they exclaimed: Where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them? The Israelites were confronted with the same dilemma when they fled Egypt and found themselves in a barren wilderness. Like the miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness, Jesus, himself provides bread in abundance for the hungry crowd who came out into the desert to seek him. The gospel records that all were satisfied and they took up what was left over. When God gives he gives abundantly, more than we deserve and more than we need. He nourishes us with his life-giving word and with the bread of heaven. This supernatural food is healing for both body and soul and strength for our journey heavenward. When you approach the Table of the Lord, what do you expect to receive? Healing, pardon, comfort, and rest for your soul? The Lord has much more for us, more than we can ask or imagine. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist is an intimate union with Christ. As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens us in charity and enables us to break with disordered attachments to creatures and to be more firmly rooted in the love of Christ.

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH SUNDAY

*Of Great Lent*  
**(Knanaitho/ Canaanite Woman)**

EVENING

St. Mark 7: 24-37

MORNING

St. Luke 7: 1-10

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

I Samuel 7: 10-17 • Numbers 17: 1-8 • Isaiah 56: 1-7

HOLY QURBANA

Acts 4: 1-12 • Romans 7: 14-25

St. Matthew 15: 21-31

Jesus was journeying through the borderland of Tyre and Sidon when a Canaanite woman came out to meet Him, beseeching, "Lord have pity on me, my daughter is tormented by an evil spirit." How does Jesus respond to her? He completely ignores her. It says, "He did not answer her at all." How often do we bring our concerns, our pleas for help, to God and we hear nothing? No answer, no sign of hope, nothing comes our way. Either in desperation or in anger, we begin shouting at God and still nothing. Do we give-up at this point? The Canaanite woman does not. Even after Jesus' disciples tell Him to send her away, she draws very near to Him and kneels before Jesus saying, "Lord, help me." Does Christ help her now? She's persistent, she's humble and she's self-less, asking for someone else's healing. He should heal her now, right? Christ responds by saying, "No." Worse yet, He likens her to a dog, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." How often has God told us, "No"? How often have we felt that He is even kicking us while we are down? Do we give up at this point? The Canaanite woman does not. Accepting Jesus' canine label, she does not accept His rebuke but comes back at Him with some profound words, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." In other words, "I am not giving up. I will take whatever little you will offer to me." How does Jesus respond this time? Finally, He openly acknowledges her great faith and grants her wish and heals her daughter instantly.

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH MONDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### MORNING

Leviticus 16: 1-17

Amos 6: 1-9

Acts 14: 19-15: 3

II Corinthians 11: 1-15

St. Mark 12: 35-44

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55: 6-11  
Prophet Isaiah reminds us of God's grace in the day to day, the sun that shines, the rain that falls, the plants that grow. We seek God knowing that he may be found; we call on him knowing that he is near. The Lord does not hide from us; he has spoken his word so that he may be found. And because God longs for us to know him he has sent the Living Word, our Lord Jesus, in whom Isaiah's prophecy is ultimately fulfilled. During this Lent, may our hearts be filled with the sense of joy and expectancy that Isaiah's words excite in us!

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH TUESDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Matthew 20: 1-16

### MORNING

Numbers 28: 1-8

I Samuel 21: 1-9

Acts 14 : 8-22

I Corinthians 16: 13-24

St. Matthew 11: 25-12: 8

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them. At the end of their long sojourn through the desert—only a stone's throw away from the Promised Land but not quite there yet, Prophet Moses calls on his people to affirm with him their joint commitment to God and his promises. For Moses, this is made all the more urgent since he has been told that he will not cross the Jordan with his people. For him the end of the journey of life, and his pilgrimage has come. As he faces death, he speaks passionately of life—in this short passage he mentions the word ‘life’ or ‘live’ six times. Like the people of Israel on the banks of the river Jordan, we too are invited to reject all that denies life and choose instead what is life-giving, life enhancing. This is a choice we make not only for ourselves, but for all generations.

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH WEDNESDAY

*Of Great Lent*  
**(Mid Lent)**



EVENING

St. Matthew 17: 22-27

MORNING

St. John 3:13-21

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Numbers 21: 4-9 • Psalms 34:1-9 • Zechariah 12: 6-14

HOLY QURBANA

Acts 15: 22 -33 • II Corinthians 9: 1-15

St. John 3:13-21



How precious the gift of the cross, how splendid to contemplate! In the cross there is no mingling of good and evil, as in the tree of paradise: it is wholly beautiful to behold and good to taste. The fruit of this tree is not death but life, not darkness but light. This tree does not cast us out of paradise, but opens the way for our return. This was the tree on which Christ, like a king on a chariot, destroyed the devil, the lord of death, and freed the human race from his tyranny. This was the tree upon which the Lord like a brave warrior wounded in hands, feet and side, healed the wounds of sin that the evil serpent had inflicted on our nature. A tree once caused our death, but now a tree brings life. Once deceived by a tree, we have now repelled the cunning serpent by a tree. What an astonishing transformation! That death should become life, that decay should become immortality that shame should become glory! By the cross death was slain and Adam was restored to life. The cross is the glory of all the apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the sanctification of the saints. By the cross we put on Christ and cast aside our former self.

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH THURSDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Luke 15: 11-32

### MORNING

Deuteronomy 5: 6-22

Psalms 41: 1-3

Proverbs 22: 1-12

Acts 15: 35-40

II Corinthians 1: 13-22

St. Matthew 19: 16-26

We are in Mid-Lent. Having climbed the mountain up to this point, we begin to see the end of our pilgrimage, and the rays of Easter grow in their intensity. Lent is our self-crucifixion, our experience, limited as it is, of Christ's commandment heard in the Gospel "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). But we cannot take up our cross and follow Christ unless we have His Cross which He took up in order to save us. It is His Cross, not ours, that saves us. It is His Cross that gives not only meaning but also power to others. As we are in midst of Lent, Christ shall lead us up to the spiritual Jerusalem by His Resurrection for the Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is the tree that was planted in Paradise, and for this reason our fathers have planted it in the midst of Holy Lent, remembering both Adams bliss and how he was deprived of it, remembering also that partaking of this Tree we no longer die but are kept alive. Thus, refreshed and reassured, we begin the second part of Lent with a body and mind of purified, repented and spiritually activated.

# GREAT LENT

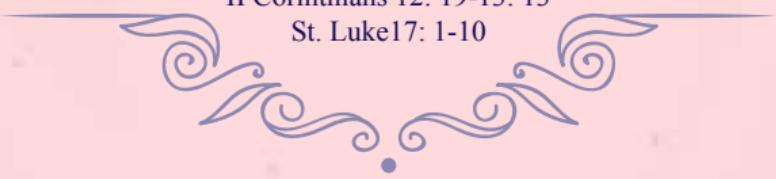
## FOURTH FRIDAY

*Of Great Lent*



### EVENING

St. Luke 16: 19-31



### MORNING

Leviticus 19: 9-18

Daniel 9:1-11

Acts 16: 1-7

II Corinthians 12: 19-13: 13

St. Luke 17: 1-10

How marvellous the power of the cross; how great beyond all telling the glory of the passion. Here is the judgment-seat of the Lord, the condemnation of the world, the supremacy of Christ crucified. Through the cross the faithful receive strength from weakness, glory from dishonour, life from death. The different sacrifices of animals are no more: the one offering of your body and blood is the fulfilment of all the different sacrificial offerings, for you are the true Lamb of God: you take away the sins of the world. In yourself you bring to perfection all mysteries, so that, as there is one sacrifice in place of all other sacrificial offerings, there is also one kingdom gathered from all peoples. God's compassion for us is all the more wonderful because Christ died, not for the righteous or the holy but for the wicked and the sinful, and, though the divine nature could not be touched by the sting of death, he took to himself, through his birth as one of us, something he could offer on our behalf. The power of his death once confronted our death.

# GREAT LENT

## FOURTH SATURDAY

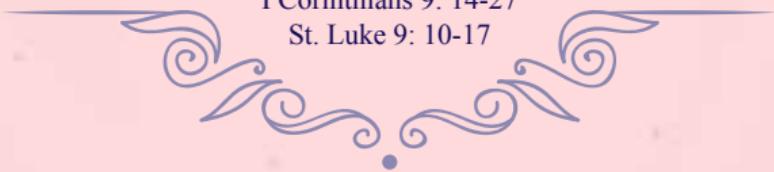
*Of Great Lent*



### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Genesis 18: 1-15

II Samuel 9: 1-8



### HOLY QURBANA

Acts 16: 8-15

I Corinthians 9: 14-27

St. Luke 9: 10-17

When mankind was estranged from him by disobedience, God our Saviour made a plan for raising us from our fall and restoring us to friendship with himself. According to this plan Christ came in the flesh, he showed us the gospel way of life, he suffered, died on the cross, was buried and rose from the dead. He did this so that we could be saved by imitation of him, and recover our original status as sons of God by adoption. Taking Christ for his model, St. Paul said that he wanted to become like him in his death in the hope that he too would be raised from death to life. We imitate Christ's death by being buried with him in baptism. If we ask what this kind of burial means and what benefit we may hope to derive from it, it means first of all making a complete break with our former way of life. In other words, we have to begin a new life, and we cannot do so until our previous life has been brought to an end. Baptism cleanses the soul from the pollution of worldly thoughts and inclinations: You will wash me, says the psalmist, and I shall be whiter than snow. We receive this saving baptism only once because there was only one death and one resurrection for the salvation of the world, and baptism is its symbol.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH SUNDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

### (Klifho - Crippled Woman)

EVENING

St. Luke 10: 25-37

MORNING

St. Luke 7:11-17

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Genesis 9: 1-7

Jeremiah 51: 1-9

Isaiah 50: 1-5

HOLY QURBANA

I Peter 3: 8-16

Romans 12: 1-15

St. Luke 13: 10-17

By the grace of God we are entering the fifth week of the Great Lent of the year. In today's reading we find the bowed woman being noticed compassionately by our Lord and as a result she is cured from her illness.. Though the evil spirit made her suffer physically, her spirit was vigil and energetic to have a very strong spiritual relationship with her Lord God. All those eighteen years she must have lead a sound and effective spiritual life. She might have ignored her physical disorder and might have considered her spiritual growth. No one could say that this was the first time that she had attended the divine class of Lord Jesus. Though the bowed woman might have taken a seat far away from the stage where our Lord would have been speaking, still He saw her and called her to Him and said, 'you are loosed from your infirmity.' As soon as He placed His hands on her head, she was made straight. Let us make use of this Lent and Lenten prayers to get the tender touch of our Lord and freedom from all sorts of infirmities.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH MONDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### MORNING

Genesis 20: 8-18

II Kings 2: 19-25

Acts 19:13-22

Romans 9: 14-21

St. Luke 4: 31-41

In the cross of Christ we see the triumph of Jesus over his enemies -- sin, Satan, and death. Christian writers down through the centuries have sung the praises of the Cross of Christ. Paul the Apostle exclaimed, "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). "A few drops of blood renew the whole world!" Hear what Gregory Nazianzen, a 6th century church father, has to say: "Many indeed are the wondrous happenings of that time: God hanging from a cross, the sun made dark and again flaming out; for it was fitting that creation should mourn with its creator. The temple veil rent, blood and water flowing from his side: the one as from a man, the other as from what was above man; the earth shaken, the rocks shattered because of the rock; the dead risen to bear witness to the final and universal resurrection of the dead. The happenings at the sepulchre and after the sepulchre, who can fittingly recount them? Yet no one of them can be compared to the miracle of my salvation. The cross of Christ is the door to heaven, the key to paradise, the downfall of the devil, the uplifting of mankind, the consolation of our imprisonment, the prize for our freedom." The Cross of Christ is the safeguard of our faith, the assurance of our hope, and the throne of love. It is also the sign of God's mercy and the proof of forgiveness. By his cross Jesus has redeemed our sin and atoned for our punishment.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH TUESDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Mark 3: 1-12

### MORNING

Exodus 14: 21-31

Isaiah 40: 12-24

Acts 18: 18-28

Romans 1: 26-32

St. Mark 5: 1-20

When the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years, confused and disoriented, and wishing they were back in their familiar huts at Egypt, God made his presence known to them through a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day. This light not only brought them assurance of safety and care, but it literally guided them through a trackless wasteland. Around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Festival of Lights, Jesus proclaims that he is the "light of the world". For eight nights the great candelabras which stood in the Temple courtyard lit the Jerusalem skyline with a blaze of dazzling light. Jesus' statement very likely came at the end of the Festival when the great lights where extinguished. In so many words, Jesus says he is the one, true light which no one can extinguish or diminish (John 1:4-5). He is light not only for God's chosen people Israel, but for all people and nations as well. The word light was especially associated with God. Just as natural life depends on light (without it nothing could live or grow), so the light of heaven produces spiritual life in those who receive it. The light which Jesus gives enables us to walk freely and confidently without stumbling in the darkness of sin and disbelief.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH WEDNESDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

EVENING

St. Mark 6: 30-46

MORNING

Deuteronomy 31: 16-23

Isaiah 41: 8-17

Acts 5: 1-6

I Corinthians 10: 1-13

St. Matthew 14: 14-23

The way of greatness in God's kingdom is the way of servant hood and humility, putting others first in our care and concern. Jesus willing laid down his life for our sake because he loved us first (John 3:16). He calls us to love as he did, by laying down our lives in sacrificial service for the good of others. An early church father summed up Jesus' teaching with the expression: to serve is to reign with Christ. We share in God's reign by laying down our lives in humble service of one another as Jesus did for our sake. He loved us so much that, sinless himself, he suffered for us sinners the punishment we deserved for our sins. How then can he fail to give us the reward we deserve for our righteousness, for he is the source of righteousness? How can he, whose promises are true, fail to reward the saints when he bore the punishment of sinners, though without sin himself? Let us then fearlessly acknowledge, and even openly proclaim, that Christ was crucified for us; let us confess it, not in fear but in joy, not in shame but in glory. The way to glory and victory for us is through the cross of Jesus Christ. We have to be ready to take up our cross and follow Christ in his way of victory.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH THURSDAY

### *Of Great Lent*

#### EVENING

St. Matthew 14: 23-36

#### MORNING

Genesis 50: 14-22

Isaiah 42: 1-9

Acts 19: 8-12

Colossians 3: 1-17

St. Mark 6: 47-56

There was much proclaimed by the prophets about the mystery of the Passover: that mystery is Christ, and to him be glory for ever and ever. For the sake of suffering humanity he came down from heaven to earth, clothed himself in that humanity in the Virgin's womb, and was born a man. Having then a body capable of suffering, he took the pain of fallen man upon himself; he triumphed over the diseases of soul and body that were its cause, and by his Spirit, which was incapable of dying, he dealt man's destroyer, death, a fatal blow. He was led forth like a lamb; he was slaughtered like a sheep. He ransomed us from our servitude to the world, as he had ransomed Israel from the hand of Egypt; he freed us from our slavery to the devil, as he had freed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. He is the Passover that is our salvation. He was seized from the flock, dragged off to be slaughtered, sacrificed in the evening, and buried at night. On the tree no bone of his was broken; in the earth his body knew no decay. He is the One who rose from the dead, and who raised man from the depths of the tomb.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH FRIDAY

*Of Great Lent*

### EVENING

St. Mark 5: 21-43

### MORNING

Deuteronomy 27: 16-28: 8

II Kings 4: 32-37

Hosea 6: 1-6

Acts 16: 16-23

I Timothy 1: 1-20

St. Matthew 9: 18-31

And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. St John 13:3-5. For Jesus to wash his disciple's feet was an act of humbling himself in order to provide service. Jesus' example demonstrates his love, but also sets an example for the disciples to follow. Like the disciples, if we want to follow the path of Jesus, it must be a path of humility, love, and service. The disciples were not to acquire power and lord it over people, but to use their positions of authority and power to serve and love others. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. John 13:15-17.

# GREAT LENT

## FIFTH SATURDAY

### *Of Great Lent*



#### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Deuteronomy 27: 16-28; 8  
II Kings 4 : 32-37  
Hosea 6: 1-6



#### HOLY QURBANA

Acts 5: 33-42  
I Thessalonians 2: 13-20  
St. Luke 6: 1-11

After Jesus is arrested and brought to the high priest, Peter follows and waits in the nearby courtyard. Peter is then asked by a woman if he is a disciple of Jesus: Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are you also one of this man's disciples. Peter denies being a disciple of Jesus out of fear, as he is worried that he too might be arrested. Yet Peter also wants to remain close to Jesus and the action, presumably to witness what takes place. Peter denies knowing Jesus and then warms himself next to the charcoal fire. Peter warms himself with the charcoal fire after denying Jesus. He is in the dark, and receiving warmth from a charcoal fire which produces very little light. Peter is in the dark, yet he has enough warmth and light to be comfortable. Peter's denial is perilous because he is in danger of being overtaken by darkness. What is subtle and seductive, is that Peter hardly notices the absence of light, the true light of Christ. Good Friday poses for Peter, and ultimately for us, the question of light and darkness. Will we walk in the light of Christ or be consumed, little by little, by the forces of darkness?

# GREAT LENT

## SIXTH SUNDAY

*Of Great Lent*

(**Samiyo / The Blind Man Sunday /  
The Catholicate Day**)

EVENING

St. Mark 10 : 46-52

MORNING

St. Matthew 9: 27-31

**BEFORE HOLY QURBANA**

Deuteronomy25: 13-16, 26: 1-13

Job 42: 1-10 • Malachi 3:7-12

**HOLY QURBANA**

I Peter 4: 12-19 • II Corinthians 9: 6-15 or Ephesians5: 1-14

St. John 9: 1-41

In today's reading we find a man who had been blind from his birth. In fact he was brought to our Lord's attention when the blessed disciples asked Him their doubt. "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" The blind man had never seen Lord Jesus till then. When our Lord felt compassion on the poor guy, "He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.)" When our Lord anointed his eyes with clay, he did not respond. He never knew what was pasted in his eyes and he could not see who had done so. So also he was unaware of the purpose too. Still he remained patiently and calmly. Though he was blind, he was moving around through the paths and ways known to him. Now our Lord asked him to go to the pool of Siloam. He did not say "I don't know Siloam or how I could reach there". The Gospel says that he had gone to the pool and washed his eyes and enjoyed the great blessing to see the world around.

# GREAT LENT

## MONDAY BEFORE HOSANNA

### MORNING

Genesis 49: 8-12

I Kings 17: 10-16

Zechariah 9: 9-14

Acts 2: 37-47

I Thessalonians 4: 1-12

St. Luke 18: 31-34, 19: 1-10

While it is certainly true that Jesus offers "good news" to Zacchaeus by proclaiming "today salvation has come to this house," there is more to this story than meets the eye. Tax collectors in Jesus' time were considered liars and cheats, and were a branch of the Roman Empire. Zacchaeus is said to be the "chief tax collector" and as a Jewish man collecting taxes for the Romans from his fellow Jews, he was public enemy number one. This is why the crowd was so shocked and disturbed when Jesus calls him down and goes to Zacchaeus' house. It wasn't that Zacchaeus was just a sinner, he was actively exploiting and cheating his own people. Jesus however comes to each of us with a radical gift of grace. Grace is given to all people and is a gift none of us deserve. We can take this story even deeper when we think of how Jesus offered grace to Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus saw Jesus coming he went up in a Sycamore tree, presumably to get a better look. Zacchaeus certainly could see more from his tree but he also was a safe distance away. Perhaps Zacchaeus knew in his heart that Jesus was coming to change his life, perhaps he knew he wasn't worthy of being loved, perhaps he was not wanting to personally engage his faith. This story has a lot to do with evangelism and how we can be God's agents of grace. He consistently seeks out the lost and invites them to experience God's love. We find when Jesus actually went to Zacchaeus' house to be significant in this story. Jesus doesn't wait for us to come to him, he comes to us. By coming to Zacchaeus' he also forms a relationship of trust.

# GREAT LENT

## TUESDAY BEFORE HOSANNA

### EVENING

St. Luke 9: 18-27

### MORNING

Genesis 41: 38-52

I Samuel 17: 34-51

Acts 21: 1-14

Romans 8: 12-27

St. Mark 10: 32-45

The anointing at Bethany is a truly beautiful and remarkable incident. A woman pours expensive ointment on Jesus' body. The disciples are shocked and appalled by this extravagant "waste" of money, and go so far as to scold the woman. Jesus rebukes the disciples saying: "But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'" St. Mark 14:6-9. Jesus was being prepared for his journey to the cross, burial, and resurrection. There was nothing more important to Jesus, the disciples, and the world than Jesus' mission. The woman spent time and considerable resources in an act of loving service to prepare Jesus. Therefore, we need to spend our time and our considerable resources in an act of loving service to prepare Jesus' for his journey to the cross, burial, and resurrection.

# GREAT LENT

## WEDNESDAY BEFORE HOSANNA

EVENING

St. Matthew 8: 23-9: 1

MORNING

Genesis 46: 1-7

Isaiah 63: 7-19

Daniel 7: 9-18

Acts 14: 8 -19

Galatians 5: 13-26

St. Mark 4: 35-41

Besides being referred to as the lamb, Jesus is also described as a shepherd, who watches over his flock (mankind). Jesus is the "good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep," (St John 10:11). We also know that even when we feel abandoned and alone, Jesus, the shepherd, will not flee or leave us desolate. Jesus is always faithful to us and gives us a chance for eternal life with Him, His Father, and Spirit in their Kingdom, but like Judas we have betrayed Jesus and like Peter we have denied Him. Because of these acts, Jesus was arrested and turned over to the Romans. They "stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him and plating a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him," (St. Matthew 27:28-31). Jesus, Son of God the Father, suffered this humiliation for us. By His death we live, by His descent into Hades we ascend into Heaven.

# GREAT LENT

## THURSDAY BEFORE HOSANNA

### EVENING

St. Matthew 7: 1-12

### MORNING

Exodus 15: 19-21

Joshua 6: 1-5

Isaiah 51: 1-8

Acts 16: 23-40

II Corinthians 6: 1-10

St. Mark 8: 22-26

St. Matthew 20: 17-19

God the Father did not ask anything of Abraham that He himself would not one day do. However, for Abraham and Isaac the call to sacrifice was only a test. Not so for God the Father and his only son, Jesus Christ. There is no ram caught in the bushes nearby, bringing at the last moment a welcomed deliverance. No, the die was cast in the eternal heart of God and sealed by Adam's first sin, then made final and sure by every sin that followed after. The cup of sacrifice has been raised to Jesus' lips and it will not pass him by. There is no reprieve for the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. When we look within this one all-encompassing sacrifice, we see the echoes of all the sacrifices that God has in the past, or will at any time in the future, ask each of us to make. Every effort will find its proper place, its appointed purpose within this single transforming moment.

# GREAT LENT

## FRIDAY BEFORE HOSANNA (40th Friday)

EVENING

St. Luke 4: 1-13

MORNING

St. Matthew 4: 1-11

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Deuteronomy 1: 3-14

II Samuel 24: 18-25

Isaiah 58: 1-8

HOLY QURBANA

I Peter 1: 13-22

Romans 13: 11-14: 9

St. Matthew 4: 1-11

The number forty is used by God to represent a period of testing or judgment (the length of time necessary to accomplish some major part of Gods plan in his dealings with various portions of mankind). The 40 days of rain in the days of the flood were the judgments of God. The 40 day periods of fasting, testing, and communing with God that were faced by Moses and Jesus were a form of God's judgments. The forty years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness were also the judgments of God. Various leaders in Israel who reigned for 40 year periods were put there by God according to His Will and Judgments. We all have done our 40 days Noyambu (lent) to rejuvenate the Holy Spirit, now we walk with master the God, with His strength, with His power and with truth.

# GREAT LENT

## SATURDAY BEFORE HOSANNA (Lazarus' Saturday)

EVENING

St. Luke 10: 38-42

MORNING

St. John 11: 1-8, 11-27

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Leviticus 27: 30-33 • Isaiah 61: 1-9

HOLY QURBANA

I Peter 2: 6-10 • Ephesians 1: 15-2: 7

St. John 11: 28-46

On this Saturday we remember how our Lord Jesus Christ raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. He knew Lazarus was grievously ill, but He waited till he died before He answered Martha and Mary's call for Him. Only after four days did He bring Lazarus back to life, so that His disciples would see that He had power over life and death and was indeed "the Resurrection and the Life." It was this miracle that prepared the way for Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem and gave us the certain assurance of the physical resurrection of all the dead.

Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, the friends of Jesus, had given Him hospitality and served Him many times (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:23). They were from Bethany, a village of Judea. He asked, "Where have ye laid him?" and He wept over him. When He drew nigh to the tomb, He commanded that they remove the stone, and He lifted up His eyes, and giving thanks to God the Father, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that had been dead for four days came forth immediately, bound hand and foot with the grave clothes, and Jesus said to those standing there, "Loose him, and let him go."

This is the supernatural wonder wrought by the Saviour that we remember on this day. In Malankara, we call this day as 'Kozhukkatta Perunnal' also.

# GREAT LENT

## HOSANNA PALM SUNDAY

### EVENING

St. Matthew 21: 1-17

### MORNING

St. Luke 19: 28-44

### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Genesis 49: 8-15 • I Samuel 2: 18-26, 16: 1

Daniel 1: 16-20 • Micah 4: 1-5 • I Kings 3: 4-14

Zephaniah 3: 11-20 • Jeremiah 30: 18-22

### HOLY QURBANA

I John 5 : 1-12 • Romans 8 : 18-25

Ephesians 6:1-24 • St. John 12: 12-19

### FOR PROCESSION

(AT THE WESTERN ENTRANCE)

St. Luke 19: 28-40

### FOR THE BLESSING OF THE PALM LEAVES

Zechariah 9: 9-12 • Isaiah 51: 9-11 • I John 2: 7-14

Romans 11: 13-24

St. Mark 11: 1-11

Blessed Hossana! Many Jews have seen that how Jesus went around and performed so many miracles. As the climax of all these wonders He raised Lazarus from the dead. Seeing all these and recognizing him as the Messiah they had been expecting for generations, His disciples and the believers greeted Him with Hosanna while he was coming to Jerusalem. Then the crowd that went ahead and the others that came behind raised the shout: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Heavens" (Mathew 21.9). The celebration of Hosanna is also looking forward for the glorious Second Coming of the Lord. While singing Hosanna using fresh palm leaves they are joining the crowd who were robed in whites and had palms in their hands. During this Hosanna celebration let us accept Christ as our Lord, Saviour and King. He is humble and meek and coming towards the New Jerusalem or the dwelling place of the glorious King which is our heart itself (1Cor.3.16). Let us remember His Glorious Second Coming and prepare us with white robes and simple Hosanna leaves. Let us remember our responsibility towards the whole world and the entire nature and bring it before God as good, acceptable and perfect offering to the Lord our God.

# GREAT LENT

## MONDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK

EVENING

St. Luke 19: 41-20: 8

MORNING St. Luke 19: 28-44

MIDNIGHT

FIRST QAUMO St. Matthew 21: 33-46

SECOND QAUMO St. Luke 14: 12-24

VADHE DHALMEENO St. Matthew 25: 1-13

THIRD QAUMO St. Matthew 22: 1-14

MORNING

Genesis 3: 1-21 • Judges 11: 30-40 • Isaiah 28: 5-13 • Acts 25:6-12

Hebrews 1: 6-2: 4 • St. Matthew 21: 23-32, 17: 10-13

THIRD HOUR St. Matthew 19: 1-12 • St. Luke 9:43-45

NOON

St. Matthew 22: 41-23: 12

In St John chapter 12 we are shown Judas as a man who deals eloquently with facts. Mary takes a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard and anoints Jesus with it and then wipes his feet with her hair. It a very intimate and intense moment, the perfume that fills the air makes it feel almost as if one can't breathe outside of it. But Judas who can see the facts of the situation asks why this perfume has not been sold and the money given to the poor. Judas looks after the common purse of the disciples he is in charge of the money and his mind is focused on the right measurement of things – on an obvious reality which deals with hard facts. Christ's suffering and death which is about to unfold, the mocking, the flogging, the humiliation, the walk to the place of crucifixion and finally the death on a cross all share the cruel reality of facts. We begin Holy week with this desire to seek God.

Vade Dal Meeno (The depiction of the 10 virgins' parable)

On Tuesday, the Church commemorates the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), which forms one of the themes of the first three days of Holy Week, with its teaching about vigilance, and Christ as the Bridegroom. The bridal chamber is used as a symbol not only of the Tomb of Christ, but also of the blessed state of the saved on the Day of Judgement.

We see the wise virgins step out into the night. This is commemorated on Monday evening.

# GREAT LENT

## TUESDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK

EVENING

St. Matthew 22: 15-33

MIDNIGHT

FIRST QAUMO

St. Matthew 12: 38-45 • St. Luke 11: 53-55

SECOND QAUMO St. John 2: 12-25, 3: 13-21

THIRD QAUMO St. John 5: 30-6: 4

MORNING

Deuteronomy 31: 14-21 • Zephaniah 1: 11-18

I John 1: 1-9 • Hebrews 2: 5-18 • St. John 8: 28-59

THIRD HOUR St. John 7: 45-52, 8: 12-20

NOON St. Luke 11: 37-54

NINTH HOUR

St. John 6: 30, 8: 21-30

This day is referred to as Great and Holy Tuesday. The theme of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is also developed in the hymns of this day. The five wise virgins are on a passage. As we see them they are en-route into the dangers and the glories that will be seen at the consummation of the age.

It is God's Spirit which brings the Life and the Light into our lives. Without Him, our lives would be in darkness. Our lamps are ready be fuelled with an external yet personal supply of oil. This is how the spirit of the wise is maintained. The extra jar of oil is the key. The lives of the pilgrim saints down through time give abundant testimony to this. The Light of God shines from their lamps without wavering. These are the people who arise and shine, even in valley of the shadow of death. They are prepared to go out, - even in the midnight hour, - and to go beyond

The Morning service for Monday through Wednesday of Holy Week is known as the Bridegroom Service or Bridegroom Prayer, because of their theme of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church. The four Gospels are divided up and read in their entirety at the Little Hours (Third Hour, Sixth Hour and Ninth Hour) during the course of the first three days of Holy Week).

# GREAT LENT

## WEDNESDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK

### EVENING

St. John 11: 47-12: 2, 9-11

### MIDNIGHT

### FIRST QAUMO

St. John 10: 15-38

**SECOND QAUMO** St. John 12: 19-33

**THIRD QAUMO** St. John 12: 34-50

### MORNING

Leviticus 6: 24-7: 7 • I Samuel 16: 1-13 • Isaiah 5:1-7  
Acts 19: 21-41 • Colossians 1: 9- 23 • St. John 6: 63-7: 13

**THIRD HOUR** St. John 7:14-27

**NOON** St. John 7:28-44

### NINTH HOUR

St. Luke 13: 31-35

St Mark and St Luke, Jesus again returns to Jerusalem where he is confronted by the Temple leadership for what he did before. They question his authority. He also teaches extensively using parables and other forms. There is the parable of the vineyard (St Mt 21:33-46), the parable of the wedding banquet, (St Mt. 22:1). There is also the teaching on paying taxes (St Mt 22:15) and the rebuke of the Sadducees who deny the resurrection St Mt. 22:23). There is also the fearful prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem if the inhabitants do not come to faith in him. He warns that not one stone will be left on another (St Mt 24). Continue to pray with Jesus and listen carefully to his final teachings just before his passion.

Traditionally this day was called “Spy Wednesday” for it was on this Wednesday before the crucifixion that Judas conspired to hand Jesus over. For this he was paid thirty pieces of silver (St Mt. 26:14). Jesus likely spent the day In Bethany. In the evening Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus with costly perfumed oil. Judas objects but Jesus rebukes him and says Mary has anointed him for his burial! (St Mt 26:6). The wicked are besetting Jesus and plotting against him.

# GREAT LENT

## PASSOVER (Maundy Thursday)

EVENING

St. John 7: 45-52, 8: 12-20

MIDNIGHT

FIRST QAUMO St. Matthew 26: 1-30

SECOND QAUMO St. John 6: 24-40

THIRD QAUMO St. John 6:41-63

MORNING St. Luke 22: 1-13

THIRD HOUR (9 A.M.) St. John 12: 20-36

NOON (12 P.M.) St. Luke 7 : 36 -50 • St. Mark 14: 1- 2

BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Exodus 12: 1-11 • Leviticus 16: 3-10 • Ezekiel 45: 18 – 25

HOLY QURBANA

Acts 1:15-20 • I Corinthians 5 : 1 -8 11: 23 – 34 • St. Luke22: 14-30

NINTH HOUR (3 P.M.) St. Matthew 26: 31-35

FOR FEET WASHING SERVICE

Exodus 34: 18-26 • II Kings 23: 21-25 • Isaiah 50: 4-10

I Peter 3: 17-22 • Hebrews 10: 19-29

St. John 13: 1-20

Earlier this day Jesus had given instructions to the disciples on how to prepare for this most holy meal, which will be his last supper. Through the day they make these preparations (St. Mathew 26:17). In the Mass of the Lord's Supper conducted at our parishes, we remember and make present that Last Supper which Jesus shared with his disciples. We are in the upper room with Jesus and the Apostles and do what they did. Through the ritual of washing the feet (St. John 13:1) of 12 acolytes, we unite in service to one another. Through our celebration of Holy Qurbana (St. Mathew 26:26), we unite ourselves to Jesus and receive his Body and Blood as if for the first time. At this Eucharist, we especially thank God for his gift of the ministerial priesthood. After the Last Supper the apostles and Jesus made a short journey across the Kidron Valley to the Garden where he asks them to pray and he experiences his agony (St Mt 26:30). We are with Jesus in the Garden and pray as he goes through his agony. It was near Midnight that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, was arrested and taken to the house of the High Priest (St Mt. 26:47). Feet washing ceremony is conducted today in the church.

# GREAT LENT

## GOOD FRIDAY

EVENING

St. Luke 22: 1-30

MIDNIGHT

FIRST QAUMO St. Matthew 26: 31-46

SECOND QAUMO St. Mark 14: 27-52

THIRD QAUMO St. Luke 22: 31-62

MORNING

Leviticus 4: 1-7, 16; 3 – 34 • Numbers 19: 1-11 • Acts 22: 30-23: 16

I Corinthians 1: 18-31 • Hebrews 9: 11 -14 • St. Matthew 27: 3 -10

St. Mark 15: 1-10 • St. Luke 22: 63-71

THIRD HOUR

St. Matthew 27: 26-31 • St. Luke 23:2-3, 4-16 , 23 : 23-25

St. John 18 :28-40 • St. Mark 15: 12-18

NOON

St. Luke 23: 26-34 • St. Matthew 27:34. • St. John 19:23-24.

St. Matthew 27: 36-37,39-43 • St. Luke 23: 39-45 • St. John 19: 25-27

NINTH HOUR

St. Matthew 27: 55-56,49 • St. Mark 15: 33-41

St. Luke 23: 44-49 • St. John 19: 23-30

VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Genesis 22: 1-14 • Exodus 17: 8-14 • Isaiah 52: 13-53: 12

I Peter 2: 19-25 • Galatians 2: 20-3: 14, 6: 11-18

St. Luke 23: 55-56

St. John 19: 31-42

All through the night Jesus has been locked in the dungeon of the high priest's house. Early this morning he was brought before a Pilate who transferred his case to Herod. Herod sent him back to Pilate who, sometime in the mid-morning, bowed to the pressure of the Temple leadership and the crowds, and condemned Jesus to a horrible death by crucifixion. In the late morning Jesus was taken by the soldiers through the city and up the hillside of Golgotha. By noon he is nailed to the cross where he hangs in agony for some three hours. He dies around three in the afternoon. He is taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb hastily before sundown. Today is a day we devote ourselves to communal prayer and worship. To acknowledge the power of the cross in our lives today, we one by one come forward to venerate the cross with a kiss. We are in the mood of a house where death happened. We gather quietly in our Church to enter into time of prayer as we reflect on Jesus death on the cross. There will be full night vigil prayers. We also pray for the needs of the world. It is similar to how the apostles might have gathered that night together in fear and prayer reflecting on all that happened.

# GREAT LENT

## **GOSPEL SATURDAY (Saturday of Good Tidings)**

### EVENING

St. Matthew 27: 6, St. Luke 23: 55-56  
St. John 19: 31-42

### MORNING

St. Matthew 27:62-66

### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Genesis 8: 1-12 • Zechariah 12: 11-13: 7  
Jeremiah 38: 2-13 • Micah 7: 8-13

### HOLY QURBANA

I Peter 3: 13-22 • Romans 6:1-14 • St. Matthew 27: 62-66

### SHUB-KHONO

I John 4: 11-21 • I Corinthians 13: 4-10  
St. Matthew 18: 12-35

The body of Jesus is in the tomb but His soul is among the dead to announce the kingdom. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear it will Live (St John 5:25). We pray for all departed souls and there will be Holy Qurbana at 11 AM. We commemorate the incident of our Lord visiting Sheol and proclaiming good news. Meanwhile The Disciples, heartbroken at the death of Jesus, observed the Jewish Sabbath in sorrow. They did not remember the promise of Jesus that He would rise. We cannot forget His promise. Tonight in our church after sundown we gather for the Great Easter Service where we will experience Jesus rising from the dead. We gather in darkness and see light which reminds us that Jesus is light in the darkness. He is the light of the world. We enter into the church and attentively participate in the Services and listen to God's word describing God's saving work of the past. He Lives! Our Vigil ushers in an Easter joy that never ends!

# GREAT LENT

## EASTER

### EVENING

St. Mark 16: 1-8

### MORNING

St. John 20: 1-18

### BEFORE HOLY QURBANA

Leviticus 23: 26-32

Isiah 60:1-7, 11-16, 61: 10-62: 5

Joel 2: 21-32

### HOLY QURBANA

Acts of Apostles-2: 22-36

1 Corinthians-15: 1-19

St. Matthew 28: 1-20

### Christ is Risen! Indeed he is Risen!

In Christ's Resurrection, let's think of three main aspects.

- (1) Before Crucifixion and Resurrection, Our Lord Jesus Christ was a teacher and a shepherd
- (2) During Crucifixion until Resurrection, He was a reconciliator and a liberator
- (3) After Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ was present and became a companion to every man.

After His Resurrection, Christ appeared to individuals like Mary Magdalene,

then to the two disciples of Emmaus. Then to the disciples without Thomas, then to them with Thomas with them, then to others, etc. The appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ during the forty days after His Resurrection meant that Christ was present there. He also appeared during catching the 153 fishes for both St. Peter and St. John. The appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ meant His presence.

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# GREAT LENT

## BIBLE READING LECTORY

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