



**3 - 9 Mar, 2019**

**Lent, part 2**

**'And above all things have fervent love for one another,  
For 'love will cover a multitude of sins' 1 Peter 4:8**

**How to walk the spiritual journey during Lent**

- † **Fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and on His Cross and let the fruit of all that we do be the fruit of the Holy Spirit, full of joy, peace and love**
- † **Biblically, faith, prayer and fasting go together *(Mar 9:29)***
- † **Let us appreciate the Great Lent with the many blessings it carries**

**The Lenten period helps us put things into perspective**

- † **First, let us remind ourselves who we are in Christ**
  - **We are connected to Jesus the way the branch is connected to the vine; the vine is the source of life for the branch *(Joh 15:5)***
- † **The second step is to fight our battles by daily crucifying our old selves and renewing our minds *(Rom 12:2)***
  - **Daily repentance**
  - **Daily reading of the Bible**
  - **Daily personal prayer**
  - **Be committed to my parish**
- † **The third step is to enjoy the Grace of God which embraces us daily to overcome our sins and difficulties *(Rom 16:4)***

**The closer we get to Jesus Christ and His Cross the more compassionate we become with our brothers and sisters in Christ**

***(Isa 58; Mat 25: 31-46)***

- † **God calls us to serve each other with love. John 3:16 says that God so loved the world that that He gave His only Son. His love was not a matter of feelings and words, His love was translated into acts of service**
- † **God calls us to do simple acts of service by serving every person He has put on our way, with love and according to God's calling**
- † **The goats might have one good and given to charities. This is not enough. Did I recognize the needs of my brother in Christ and did I help him?**
- † **God will definitely bless our loving service**
  - **Jesus said in Matthew 25: *'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'***

## Loving each other is the only way to love Jesus Christ (*Rut 1; 1 Joh 4:20*)

- † Ruth was faithful in small matters
- † She was extra sincere
  - She surrendered all her life to God
  - she left her homeland not knowing where she is going, trusting the Lord's guidance (*Heb 11:8; Gen 12:1*)
- † She sought God's plan in her life, not hers
  - Her plan would make her ordinary, the way Orpah was
  - She was pious and wise
  - Ruth became the great-grandmother of Israel's great king David, and the ancestor of Christ

## Lent is a reminder to seek the Kingdom of Heaven first and believe that all other things will be given to us as well (*Mat 6:25-34; 10:26-31*)

- † Stephen called the 'first Christian martyr' (*Act 6, 7*)
- † Stephen belonged to the group of seven deacons who were responsible for helping and serving the Apostles by taking care of the needs of the needy of the early Christian community
- † He was wrongly accused of having spoken against the Temple, the law of Moses, and even God
- † He was brought in front of the Sanhedrin which decided to impose on him the death penalty
- † But Stephen instead of defending himself, he started preaching them the Word of God; he pinpointed their history starting with Abraham, all through until Jesus. He was not afraid of them (*1Joh 4:18*)
- † Stephen had his eyes fixed on Heaven not on the people around him, even when they were stoning him to death (*2Cor 4:18; Heb 12: 2; Act 20: 24*)
- † At the moment of his death, he was concerned with the salvation of those who were torturing him

## Saint John Chrysostom on Fasting

- † Fasting is a medicine. But medicine, as beneficial as it is, becomes useless because of the inexperience of the user. He has to know the appropriate time that the medicine should be taken and the right amount of medicine and the condition of the body which is to take it, the weather conditions and the season of the year and the appropriate diet of the sick and many other things. If any of these things are overlooked, the medicine will do more harm than good. So, if one who is going to heal the body needs so much accuracy, when we care for the soul and are concerned about healing it from bad thoughts, it is necessary to examine and observe everything with every possible detail
- † Fasting is the change of every part of our life, because the sacrifice of the fast is not the abstinence but the distancing from sins
- † Are you fasting? Show me your fast with your works. Which works?
  - If you see someone who is poor, show him mercy

- If you see an enemy, reconcile with him
- If you see a friend who is becoming successful, do not be jealous of him!
- If you see a beautiful woman on the street, pass her by

✚ In other words, not only should the mouth fast, but the eyes and the legs and the arms and all the other parts of the body should fast as well

- Let the hands fast, remaining clean from stealing and greediness
- Let the legs fast, avoiding roads which lead to sinful sights
- Let the eyes fast by not fixing themselves on beautiful faces and by not observing the beauty of others. You are not eating meat, are you? You should not eat debauchery with your eyes as well
- Let your hearing also fast. The fast of hearing is not to accept bad talk against others and sly defamations
- Let the mouth fast from disgraceful and abusive words, because, what gain is there when, on the one hand we avoid eating chicken and fish and, on the other, we chew-up and consume our brothers? He who condemns and blasphemes is as if he has eaten brotherly meat, as if he has bitten into the flesh of his fellow man. It is because of this that Paul frightened us, saying: 'If you chew up and consume one another be careful that you do not annihilate yourselves'

✚ Let us therefore in every way cast off every destructive madness so that we may gain the goods which have been promised to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

 refers to mandatory readings

### Verse to memorize

'If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen' 1 John 4:20

### References

1. *A Crowd of Witnesses, Enzo Crocetti and Mario Giordano*
2. *Rijal al-Kitab al-Muqaddas, Reverend Elias Muqar*
3. *Good News Bible, with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha*
4. *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible*

### During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon
2. for CrossTalk to find a locale
3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim
4. to become more of saints and less of sinners
5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think
6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth
7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him

8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor
9. to all the sick
10. to all those in prison
11. to the unity of the Christians
12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity
13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management
14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them
15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights
16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region

**During this coming week, we will lift the Armenian Catholic Church in prayer**

<p>الصَّلَاةُ الرَّبَّانِيَّةُ  أَبَانَا الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ  لِيَتَقَدَّسَ اسْمُكَ  لِيَأْتِ مَلَكُوتُكَ  لِتَكُنْ مَشِيئَتُكَ  كَمَا فِي السَّمَاءِ  كَذَلِكَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ  أَعْطِنَا خَبْرَنَا كَفَافَتِ يَوْمِنَا  وَاعْفُرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَخَطَايَانَا  كَمَا نَحْنُ نَعْفُرُ  لِمَنْ أَخْطَأَ وَأَسَاءَ إِلَيْنَا  وَلَا تُدْخِلْنَا فِي التَّجَارِبِ  لَكِنْ نَجِّنَا مِنَ الشَّرِّيرِ  أَمِين</p>	<p>قانون الإيمان  نُؤْمِنُ بِإِلَهِ وَاحِدٍ  أَبٍ ضَابِطِ الْكُلِّ  خَالِقِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ  كُلِّ مَا يُرَى وَمَا لَا يُرَى  وِوَرَبِّ وَاحِدٍ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ  ابْنِ اللَّهِ الْوَحِيدِ  الْمَوْلُودِ مِنَ الْآبِ قَبْلَ كُلِّ الدَّهْوَرِ  إِلَهُ مِنْ إِلَهُ، نُورٌ مِنْ نُورٍ، إِلَهُ حَقٌّ مِنْ إِلَهُ حَقٍّ  مَوْلُودٍ غَيْرِ مَخْلُوقٍ، مَسَاوٍ لِلْآبِ فِي الْجَوْهَرِ  الَّذِي بِهِ كَانَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ  الَّذِي مِنْ أَجْلِئِنَا نَحْنُ الْبَشَرِ وَمِنْ أَجْلِ خَلَاصِنَا  نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ  وَتَجَسَّدَ بِالرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَمِنْ مَرْيَمِ الْعَذْرَاءِ  وَصَارَ إِنْسَانًا وَصُلِبَ عَنَّا عَلَى عَهْدِ بِيلاطسِ الْبَنْطِي  وَتَأَلَّمَ وَمَاتَ وَفُيِّرَ وَقَامَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ كَمَا جَاءَ فِي الْكُتُبِ  وَصَعِدَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَجَلَسَ عَنِ يَمِينِ الْآبِ  وَسِيَّاتِي أَيْضًا بِمَجْدٍ عَظِيمٍ لِيَدِينِ الْأَحْيَاءِ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ  الَّذِي لَا فَنَاءَ لِمَلِكِهِ  وَبِالرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ  الرَّبِّ الْمُحْيِي  الْمُنْتَبِثِ مِنَ الْآبِ وَالْإِبْنِ  الَّذِي هُوَ مَعَ الْآبِ وَالْإِبْنِ  يُسَجَّدُ لَهُ وَيُجَمَّدُ  النَّاطِقِ بِالْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالرَّسْلِ  وَبِكَنِيسَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، جَامِعَةٍ، مَقَدَّسَةٍ، رَسُولِيَّةٍ  وَنَعْتَرَفُ بِمَعْمُودِيَّةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ لِمَغْفِرَةِ الْخَطَايَا  وَنَنْتَظِرُ قِيَامَةَ الْأَمْوَاتِ وَالْحَيَاةَ فِي الدَّهْرِ الْآتِي  أَمِين</p>
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