

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent

Mark 10:32-45

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.(KJV)

St. Mary of Egypt

Luke 7:36-50

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace .(KJV)

God's Holy Church has come to the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent. The Church is moving with certainty to Holy Week and to Pascha. Believers around the world are called to repentance and to faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Mark's Gospel for today describes the Lord Jesus Christ's persecution, death and resurrection. Believers are always to be mindful of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

Daily life is to be guided by and founded in Christ's love demonstrated on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection. Earthly life is not sufficient in length for believers to learn from and appreciate Christ's love, suffering and resurrection.

St. Mark's Gospel for today is a lesson for believers to be servants. Jesus Christ's words on being servants have lasting instructive value for believers to actively serve others in love. Jesus is the exemplary example of being the Servant.

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent is always dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt. St. Mary is a lasting example of the possibility and way of repentance. St. Luke's Gospel verifies and teaches of Jesus' power to forgive sins for those who repent.

The remaining days of Great Lent offer every person the opportunity to repent and follow Jesus Christ. St. Mary of Egypt's life is an enduring example of the possibility of repentance when a person has sinned extensively.

There is always hope for salvation in Christ regardless of the extent of personal sin. Jesus Christ looks at the heart, the mind and the soul to determine the sincerity of the believer's repentance.

God's Holy Church encourages repentance throughout life as persons continue to sin and benefit from always returning to Christ to begin again. Heaven rejoices when persons repent of their sins. (Lk. 15:7)

The Divine services of the Church nurture and strengthen believers to remain faithful to Jesus Christ. Confession and Communion unite the believer with Jesus Christ. (Jn.6:56)

The saints and martyrs are ordinary persons having taken Jesus Christ most seriously. Each person can follow Christ in a similar fashion. Great Lent fosters and encourages complete repentance.

Believers can draw strength and inspiration to repent through the prayers of St. Mary of Egypt. St. Mary established the definitive example to place resolute hope in Jesus Christ.

The remaining days of Great Lent hold life-changing value for all persons. Believers baptized into Jesus Christ can restore and continue the healthy relationship with Christ by repenting.

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent. St. Mary of Egypt. March 20/April 2, 2023.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic