

## The Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

### Mark 9:17-31

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. (KJV)

St. John Climacus

Matthew 4:25-5:12

And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, his disciples came unto Him: And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (KJV)

God's Holy Church has arrived at the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. The journey to Pascha is well underway. Believers seriously participating in Great Lent are making a wise investment.

The Fourth Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to St. John Climacus, author of the book, [The Ladder of Divine Ascent](#). Believers serious about Christian growth will take time to read [The Ladder of Divine Ascent](#) and will benefit.

St. John Climacus defines the thirty steps necessary for believers to grow to the fullness in Jesus Christ in his book. Though written for monastics, the Church in her wisdom makes the book available for the benefit of all believers.

Great Lent intends Christian growth for all members of God's Holy Church. Participation in Great Lent is encouraged and expected. Participation is completely voluntary. Investing in Great Lent is an investment in God's Kingdom.

Believers benefit from Great Lent in proportion to the degree of participation. Great Lent focuses on care of the soul. Repentance is a primary consideration. Repentance is facilitated by increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

God's Holy Church provides the Gospel teachings to enrich and strengthen believers during the Lenten journey. Today's Gospel verifies the value of prayer and fasting as essential in the healing of the spirit-tormented boy.

St. Matthew's Gospel for today expresses the Beatitudes which have become an integral part of the Diving Liturgy. The Beatitudes set forth Jesus' teachings on the blessed way of life.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those that mourn, the meek, those that hunger after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake.

The Beatitudes deserve the deepest thought in the heart, mind and soul throughout earthly life. Believers choosing to seriously live in Jesus Christ will cherish the wisdom of the Beatitudes.

The time remaining until the arrival of Holy Week is precious in the Lenten journey. Each day remaining is an opportunity to repent and to grow in Jesus Christ. Each day offers benefits to the soul.

Worldly matters need to be put aside during the Lenten journey. The focus on Jesus Christ is to increase with the arrival of each day of Great Lent. Jesus Christ's goodness, mercy and love deserve our complete attention.

St. Mark's Gospel for today reminds believers of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' death and resurrection always deserve to be foremost in believers' hearts and minds. Jesus' love demonstrated by His going to the Cross surpasses all love.

Jesus is Love. Every person benefits from Jesus' love. Jesus' love heals the sick and is sufficient to cure every illness and disease. Jesus' love triumphs over death. Great Lent is a primary opportunity to show appreciation for Jesus' love.

Jesus healed the afflicted son in today's Gospel. Jesus is present to heal our afflicted souls. Great Lent exists for each believer to put sin behind and embrace the life of blessedness described in the Beatitudes.

Thank Jesus today for His healing love. Thank Jesus for the willingness to receive believers' desiring to repent. May the remaining days of Great Lent be used wisely for the benefit of our souls.

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The Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. St. John Climacus. Venerable Mary of Egypt. April 1/14, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic