



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Attached

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, March 30, 2025

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is

offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

### Members of our Parish Council are:

Carolyn Neiss- President      Greg Jankura -  
Vice President  
Boris Doph - Treasurer.      James Ifkovic -  
Secretary  
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large

Luba Martins - Member at Large   Brett  
Malcolm - Member at Large

### **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 322-2906, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

### **Announcements**

I would like to send the ladies of St Alexis invite to a "TEA CUP SOCIAL." sponsored by the Sts. Elizabeth and Barbara Sisterhood. It is our' very first event of this kind and we are excited to meet the ladies!

Can you please tell me the best way to get the message out to your ladies about our event?

We are in the process now of printing an invitational poster which we would like to send.

Our event will be held at Holy New Martyrs Church, 364 Canterbury Tpke, Norwich, CT 06360.

The date of the event is Saturday, May 3, from 2:00 pm to 4pm.

Holy New Martyrs website:

[Holynewmartrys.org](http://Holynewmartrys.org)

My contact info: 860-887-3145 and email: [camillatar@att.net](mailto:camillatar@att.net)

We are also excited to have Matushka Erin Kalish be our guest speaker. Her husband, Fr. Kevin Kalish, was our Rector for a number of years.

Matushka Erin's Topic of Discussion -"The joys and challenges of raising children in the Orthodox faith in today's society and how she and her family overcame some of those challenges.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Camilla Tarryk,  
Sisterhood President

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Holy New Martyrs Church, Norwich, CT  
06360 - Camilla Tarryk, Sts Elizabeth and  
Barbara Sisterhood  
[camillatar@att.net](mailto:camillatar@att.net)

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
  - All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

*Please let Fr. Steven know via email if you have more names for which to pray.*

- Departed: Nicholas, William
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne, Fr Vasily, Fr Justin
- Catechumen: James
- Individuals and Families: Luba,

- Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles, Victor, Susan, Gregory,
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Michael and Zachery Neiss (B-3 Mar), Matthew Kuziak (B-18 Mar)
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Katie and Aaron and their unborn child, Valery and Jason and their new born, Augusta Mary.
- Traveling: Mat. Anne
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Julia, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Matthew, Mark, Hermon, Sandra, Dorothy, Alan, Phyllis Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Matthew, Mark, Hermon, Sandra, Peter and Loretta

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 7. St. John Climacus (of *The Ladder*)**

Ven. John Climacus of Sinai, author of *The Ladder* (6th c.). St. Sophrony (Sophronius), Bishop of Irkutsk (1771). Prophet Joad (1 Kings 13:11—10th c. B.C.). Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Cephas, Cæsar, and Epaphroditus, of the Seventy (1st c.). St. Eubula, mother of St. Panteleimon (ca. 303). Ven. John the Silent of St. Savva Monastery (6th c.). St. Zosimas, Bishop of Syracuse (ca. 662).

- Again we pray for those who have

- lost their lives because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.
- Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East.
- Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

## Parish Calendar

### St Alexis Parish

March 30 to April 7, 2025

#### Sunday, March 30

Sunday of St. John Climacus  
 Alla Hamisevich  
 9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
 4:00PM Lenten Vespers - Terryville

#### Monday, March 31

The Holy Hieromartyr Hypatius, Bishop of Gangra  
 Repose of St Innocent

#### Tuesday, April 1

Jack Jankura  
 Mary of Egypt  
 8:30AM Matins  
 7:00PM Catechumen Studies

#### Wednesday, April 2

Titus the Wonderworker  
 4:00PM Open Doors  
 6:00PM PreSanctified Liturgy

#### Thursday, April 3

5th Thursday of Lent: The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete  
 8:30AM Matins  
 6:00PM Reading of the Life of St Mary

#### Friday, April 4

George the Righteous of Maleon  
 Maureen Skuby  
 6:00PM Akathist to the Theotokos

#### Saturday, April 5

5th Saturday of Lent: The Akathist Hymn  
 3:00PM Open Doors  
 5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, April 6

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt  
 9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
 4:00PM Holy Unction - Ansonia

#### Monday, April 7

Calliopus and Akylina the Martyrs  
 St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, Apostle to America

## Saints and Feasts

### March 30

#### Sunday of St. John Climacus

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. He is celebrated today because his book, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great

man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

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### **March 30**

#### **John Climacus the Righteous, author of The Divine Ladder of Ascent**

This Saint gave himself over to the ascetical life from his early youth. Experienced both in the solitary life of the hermit and in the communal life of cenobitic monasticism, he was appointed Abbot of the Monastery at Mount Sinai and wrote a book containing thirty homilies on virtue. Each homily deals with one virtue, and progressing from those that deal with holy and righteous activity (praxis) unto those that deal with divine vision (theoria), they raise a man up as though by means of steps unto the height of Heaven. For this cause his work is called "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." The day he was made Abbot of Sinai, the Prophet Moses was seen giving commands to those who served at table. Saint John reposed in 603, at eighty years of age. See also the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.

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### **March 31**

#### **Innocent, Enlightener of Siberia & Alaska**

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### **April 01**

#### **Mary of Egypt**

When Mary was only twelve years old, she left her parents and departed to Alexandria, where she lived a depraved life for seventeen years. Then, moved by curiosity, she went with many pilgrims to Jerusalem, that she might see the Exaltation of the venerable Cross. Even in the Holy City she gave herself over to every kind of licentiousness and drew many into the depth of perdition. Desiring to go into the church on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, time and again she perceived a certain invisible power preventing her entrance, whereas the multitude of people about her entered unhindered. Therefore, wounded in heart by this, she decided to change her way of life and reconcile herself to God by means of repentance. Invoking our Lady the Theotokos as her protectress, she asked her to open the way for her to worship the Cross, and vowed that she would renounce the world. And thus, returning once again to the church, she entered easily. When she had worshipped the precious Wood, she departed that same day from Jerusalem and passed over the Jordan. She went into the inner wilderness and for forty-seven years lived a most harsh manner of life, surpassing human strength;

alone, she prayed to God alone. Toward the end of her life, she met a certain hermit named Zosimas, and she related to him her life from the beginning. She requested of him to bring her the immaculate Mysteries that she might partake of them. According to her request, he did this the following year on Holy and Great Thursday. One year after this, Zosimas again went thither and found her dead, laid upon the ground, and letters written in the sand near her which said: "Abba Zosimas, bury here the body of wretched Mary. I died on the very day I partook of the immaculate Mysteries. Pray for me." Her death is reckoned by some to have taken place in 378, by some, in 437, and by others, in 522. She is commemorated also on the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent. Her life was recorded by Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem.

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#### **April 04**

##### **Righteous Zosimas**

Saint Zosimas was a monk from Palestine who lived in a monastery since his infancy. He became famous for his spiritual qualities, but searching for further illumination he went to a new monastery in the desert. The monks of this particular monastery left every year for the desert from the first week of Great Lent until Palm Sunday so as to live in complete isolation.

One year, Zosimas saw a shadowy figure in the distance and, chasing after it, discovered a female ascetic by the name of Mary (see April 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday

of Great Lent). Mary instructed Zosimas to meet her at the Jordan River on Holy Thursday of the following year to give her Holy Communion. He did this and was again instructed by her to meet her yet again the next year during Great Lent. Zosimas entered the desert at the appointed time the following year and found the body of the blessed Mary lying dead near the place he first encountered her. A lion approached to dig a grave for Mary, and Zosimas recited the usual burial prayers. He returned to his monastery and spread the news about this blessed woman. Zosimas remained in that monastery until his death the age of 100.

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#### **April 05**

##### **5th Saturday of Lent: The Akathist Hymn**

About the year 626, the Persians, Avars, and Slavs came with a great host and besieged the imperial city of Constantinople while the Emperor Heraclius and the main body of the Byzantine army were absent in the East. Enemy ships filled the sea, especially the Golden Horn, and on land the adversaries were ready for attack with foot-soldiers, horses, and engines of war. Though the citizens courageously withstood them, yet they were few in number and would be unable to repulse the attack of such a great host. Hence, they could not count on any other means of salvation, except the protection of the Theotokos. And truly, suddenly a violent tempest broke up all the ships and submerged them, and the bodies of the invaders were cast out near

the Blachernae quarter of the city where the famous Church of the Theotokos stood. Taking courage from this, the people went forth from the city and repulsed the remaining forces, who fled out of fear. In 673, the city was miraculously delivered yet again, this time from an invasion of the Arabs. Then in 717-718, led by the Saracen general Maslamah, the Arab fleet laid siege once more to the city. The numerical superiority of the enemy was so overwhelming that the fall of the Imperial City seemed imminent. But then the Mother of God, together with a multitude of the angelic hosts, appeared suddenly over the city walls. The enemy forces, struck with terror and thrown into a panic at this apparition, fled in disarray. Soon after this, the Arab fleet was utterly destroyed by a terrible storm in the Aegean Sea on the eve of the Annunciation, March 24, 718. Thenceforth, a special "feast of victory and of thanksgiving" was dedicated to celebrate and commemorate these benefactions. In this magnificent service, the Akathist Hymn is prominent and holds the place of honour. It appears that even before the occasion of the enemy assaults mentioned above, the Akathist Hymn was already in use as the prescribed Service for the Feast of the Annunciation, together with the kontakion, "When the bodiless one learned the secret command," which has the Annunciation as its theme. It was only on the occasion of the great miracle wrought for the Christian populace of the Imperial City on the eve of the Annunciation in 718 that the hymn "To thee, the Champion Leader" was composed, most likely by Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople.

Historians have ascribed the Akathist Hymn to Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (638), to Saint George the Confessor, Bishop of Pisidia (818), or even to Saint Photius the Great (891), all of whom lived either at the time of or after the above-mentioned sieges. However, it appears most likely from its language, content, and style that the true composer of the Akathist Hymn is Saint Romanus the Melodist (6th century).

## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)**

By Your Cross You destroyed death.  
To the thief You opened Paradise.  
For the Myrrhbearers  
You changed weeping into joy.

And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,  
to proclaim that You are risen, //  
granting the world great mercy.

### **Tone 4 Troparion (St. Alexis)**

O righteous Father Alexis, our heavenly intercessor and teacher, ☩divine adornment of the Church of Christ! ☩Entreat the Master of All to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America, ☩to grant peace to the world and to our souls great mercy.

### **Tone 1 Troparion (St. John Climacus)**

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,  
you were a wonderworker, O our

God-bearing Father John.  
You received heavenly gifts through fasting,  
vigil and prayer,  
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn  
to you by faith.  
Glory to Him Who gave you strength!  
Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//  
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

### **Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

The dominion of death can no longer hold  
men captive,  
for Christ descended, shattering and  
destroying its powers.  
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and  
cry:  
“The Savior has come to those in faith;//  
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

### **Tone 5 Kontakion (St. Alexis)**

Let us, the faithful praise the Priest Alexis,  
a bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America, a  
model of patience and humility,  
a worthy shepherd of the Flock of Christ.  
He called back the sheep who had been led  
astray  
and brought them by his preaching to the  
Heavenly Kingdom.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit*

### **Tone 4 Kontakion (St. John Climacus)**

The Lord truly set you on the heights of  
abstinence,  
to be a guiding star, showing the way to the  
universe,//  
O our father and teacher John.

*Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

### **Tone 6 Kontakion (Steadfast**

### **Protectress)**

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,  
□Constant Advocate before the Creator;  
despise not the entreating cries of us  
sinners, □but in your goodness come speedily  
to help us who call on you in faith. □Hasten  
to hear our petition and to intercede for us,  
□O Theotokos, for you always protect those  
who honor you!

*(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing the  
following)*

### **Hymn to the Theotokos**

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of  
Grace:  
the assembly of angels and the race of men.  
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,  
the glory of virgins,  
from whom God was incarnate and became a  
Child -  
our God before the ages.  
He made your body into a throne,  
and your womb He made more spacious than  
the heavens.  
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of  
Grace.  
Glory to you!

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest!  
The righteous shall be in everlasting  
remembrance! He shall not fear evil  
tidings! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

#### **Prokeimenon. 7th Tone. Psalm 28.11,1.**

The Lord will give strength to his people.

Verse: Bring to the Lord, O sons of God,  
bring to the Lord honor and glory.

#### **The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20.**

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

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## Gospel Reading

### **Sunday of St. John Climacus**

#### **The Reading is from Mark 9:17-31**

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said

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to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Seest thou how He now proceeds to lay beforehand in them the foundation of His doctrine about fasting? ... See, at any rate, how many blessings spring from them both. For he that is praying as he ought, and fasting, hath not many wants, and he that hath not many wants, cannot be covetous; ...

### St. John Chrysostom

*Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century*

... he that is not covetous, will be also more disposed for almsgiving. He that fasts is light, and winged, and prays with wakefulness, and quenches his wicked lusts, and propitiates God, and humbles his soul when lifted up. Therefore even the apostles were almost always fasting.

### St. John Chrysostom

*Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



Christ was transfigured on Mount Tabor, revealing His divine nature to His disciples. Immediately after the manifestation of His glory, He began to speak of the coming suffering and death He was to experience, followed by His Resurrection. In this way, He prepared His disciples

for the most significant trial to come and taught them about faith and hope.

After the Transfiguration, as Jesus and the disciples come down from the mountain and continue their travels around the region of Galilee, a desperate father seeks out the Lord to help his son. The boy is possessed by an evil spirit, which causes seizures and prevents him from speaking. Besides the tremendous suffering the boy and his family are enduring, his life is also in danger. At the time of his greatest need, the boy's father has some measure of hope, which is why he brings his son to Christ's disciples. The father is desperate for help because he

loves his son and has heard that Jesus is known for healing those who come to Him. However, the disciples were not able to help, and when Jesus returns, He rebukes them. "O faithless generation," the Lord says, "how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." They bring the boy to Him, and when the evil spirit is in the presence of the Lord, it immediately causes convulsions in the boy. The father tells the Lord that this has been happening since the boy's childhood. He pleads for pity and help, hoping Jesus could do something for them.

The Lord teaches us that all things are possible for those who have faith in Him. Faith is the key to our spiritual life. Faith needs to be nurtured so that it develops and grows. On the other hand, the absence of faith can be a stumbling block in our lives. Faith connects us to God and becomes the channel through which our lives can be transformed.

Through faith, we draw near to the Lord and open ourselves to His will. By faith, we "entrust ourselves and one another, and our whole lives to Christ our God," as we petition in the Divine Liturgy. Through faith, God's grace enters our lives and fills our whole being, enabling us to turn away from sin and towards God, even when we face challenging trials and powerful temptations. As Saint Paul

writes, "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The disciples could not help the boy because they did not yet completely trust the Lord, so their faith faltered. When the boy's father brought his son to the Lord, he also was unsure that Jesus could help. The Lord answers him and tells him not to doubt because all things are possible for those who believe. Immediately, the father cries out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" The Lord satisfies the father's request because of His great love and mercy.

This simple yet honest and powerful prayer — I believe; help my unbelief! — can become our own prayer as our confidence and faith in Christ continue to grow every day, with His help and guidance. The Lord says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). The father in the Gospel lesson seeks to increase his faith so that his son may be healed, and the Lord responds with love and compassion. He answers the prayer, and it becomes a kind of resurrection for the boy. The son who could not speak and appeared lifeless is healed by the

Son of God, who would Himself rise from the dead, forever changing the course of humankind. Faith in Christ requires trust in Him, and through faith, He who rose from the dead also restores our lives to renewal. Sickness in Scripture is often connected to demonic possession because the physical world is intertwined with the unseen world. As human beings, we are comprised of soul and body. The spiritual and physical worlds are united within us in ways that transcend our understanding. Ultimately, we aim to draw near to God as integrated human beings in soul and body with faith and love. In this way, we can be healed of our spiritual infirmities and transfigured by God's grace. This begins with repentance and humility. Metaphorically, it is a journey to scale the mountain of faith and climb the ladder of spiritual ascent. The father in the Gospel reading shows humility by kneeling, but he still lacks faith. The disciples also lack faith, but Christ rebukes the man for reproaching the disciples since the boy's healing was prevented by his own lack of faith. In effect, Jesus publicly defends His disciples, only to rebuke them privately later. We are similarly encouraged to graciously correct others first in private and avoid publicly embarrassing them. In this regard, Saint Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia

generally instructs us to "exercise ourselves in patience and endurance" and to approach all situations "with love, kindness, meekness, patience and humility." When the disciples ask the Lord why they could not cast out the spirit from the boy, Jesus says that spiritual bondage can only be broken by prayer and fasting. Banishing spiritual enemies requires an inclusive approach based on faith, prayer, and fasting. In this light, we come to understand the spiritual purpose of fasting. As Saint Nektarios of Aegina explains, "Fasting is recommended as a means of preparing the mind and the heart for divine worship, for long prayer, for rising from the earthly, and for spiritualization." During this time of Great Lent, we have been given the opportunity to increase our efforts in the spiritual disciplines — fasting, praying, and almsgiving — and grow in faith. If we trust in the Lord when we ask for His help, He will answer us according to our spiritual needs. He will come to our rescue because the Lord is always with us. He loves us and longs for our salvation.

<https://www.goarch.org/documents/32058/66d2a2-cea4-3b5a-a0440eda86eb>