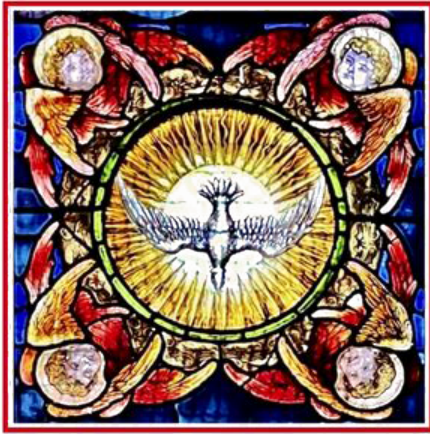


CATECHETICAL CLASSES



THE BASICS OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Holy Fathers on Fasting

St. John Chrysostom: "Let us enter the Fast with joy, O faithful. Let us not be sad. Let us cleanse our faces with the waters of dispassion, blessing, and exalting Christ forever." This quote is taken from the writings and homilies of St. John Chrysostom, specifically his sermons on fasting.

Didache: "Before the baptism, moreover, the one who baptizes and the one being baptized must fast, and any others who can. And you must tell the one being baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand. Your fasts must not be identical with those of the hypocrites." This quote is from the Didache, an early Christian text that provides instructions on Christian practices, including fasting.

1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

St. John of the Ladder: "The devil is like an enemy who is always lying in wait and seeking to catch you off guard. Therefore, be vigilant and watchful at all times." This quote is from "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," a spiritual treatise written by St. John Climacus (St. John of the Ladder).

St. John Chrysostom: "Fasting is a medicine. But what good is it if the physician of the soul gives medicine to one who suffers and the cure increases the affliction?" This quote is from the homilies of St. John Chrysostom, specifically discussing the purpose and practice of fasting.

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica: "Do not push children too hard in their spiritual lives, especially in fasting. Let them grow naturally in the faith and lead by example." This is a teaching from Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, known for his spiritual guidance and advice on the Christian life.

St. Basil the Great: "In the case of beginners, a light regimen of fasting is advisable until they have gained strength to endure the full discipline." This quote is from the writings of St. Basil the Great, who provided practical advice on fasting and other ascetic practices.

Holy Fathers on Temptations

Venerable Anthony the Great:

Rejoice in the temptations that will be allowed to you: through them, spiritual fruit is acquired.

Abba Isaiah:

If you are reviled and you grieve because of this, there is no true weeping in you.

Abba Moses:

A brother asked Abba Moses what a man should do in every misfortune that happens to him or in the attack of every enemy thought. The elder answered: "He must weep before the goodness of God, so that it will help him, and he will soon feel peace if he prays wisely."

Venerable Poimen the Great:

We fall into many temptations for the reason that we do not preserve our rank. Do you not see that the Canaanite woman accepted the name given to her and that the Savior consoled her? Likewise, do you not see that Abigail said to David: "On me is sin" (1 Samuel 25:24), and that David, hearing these words, loved her? Abigail is an image of the soul, and David is an image of God: if the soul reproaches (condemns, accuses) itself before God, then God will love it.

Venerable Sisoies the Great:

Whatever temptation happens to a person, he must surrender himself to the will of God and confess that the temptation happened for his sins. If something good happens, one must say that it was arranged by God's providence.

Saint Ephraim the Syrian:

He, before Whom every creature of heaven, earth, and the underworld trembles, held under the power of the devil, Who gave us the power to trample the devil, He was pleased to continue the fast for forty days and forty nights and then be tempted by the devil. Did the Passionless One need fasting? Was it necessary to toil for the repose of all who labor? Why did the abundant Source thirst, Who turned water into wine, Who pours out rivers of living waters from the wombs of those who believe in Him? Of course, He wants to show us an example and a model of life by this, so that, practicing the same, we may be delivered from the evil deeds of the devil and attain the eternal Kingdom of Christ.

Venerable Isidore of Pelusium:

If Christ, God, incarnate for our sake, "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted" (Matt. 4:1), then why be surprised that ... you struggle with temptations? Remember the victory of Christ, won lawfully: vanity is overcome, pride is suppressed, love of money is destroyed and the enemy, who was unable to wound with his arrows, is put to shame. You too, by right, be brave, and, having acquired dispassion, overcome the swords that wound the soul. And after this victory, angels will serve you, not rendering slavish services, because they are obliged to serve only God, but crowning you as a winner, for such is the reward for courageously accomplishing this feat.

Saint Basil the Great:

There are two kinds of temptations: sorrows test hearts, like gold in a furnace, revealing their beauty in patience, and often prosperity itself serves as a test for many.

One should not rush into temptations before the time before God allows it, but on the contrary, one must pray, so as not to fall into them.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa:

In every attack of temptation, we have only one defense: repentance. And the one who repents is always the victor over the one who always attacks.

Saint Macarius of Egypt:

Man is given over to enemies and temptations for exercise and "training", as Job was in temptation; because evil, although not by good will, cooperates with good.

God, knowing exactly the state of everyone and how much strength each has, allows and subject to temptation in the right measure...

Souls... not tested and not tried by various sorrows... remain for now in infancy... and are not yet worthy of the Kingdom.

The Lord knows human weakness, that man quickly becomes exalted, therefore He stops him and allows him to be in constant exercise and agitation. For if when you receive even a little, you become unbearable for everyone and become arrogant, then you will become even more unbearable if they allow you to be satisfied once. But God, knowing your weakness, according to His providence sends you sorrows, so that you become humble and seek God more zealously.

Venerable Abba Isaiah:

Always expect some great and terrible temptations, sorrows, disasters and death, so that they do not overtake you unprepared.

Venerable Ephraim the Syrian:

Do you want temptation not to overcome you? - Cut off all your will.

During temptation, the dignity of the faithful is revealed. But one must not be faint-hearted during temptation, but be sober in prayer and good deeds.

Venerable Nilus of Sinai:

During temptations, use short and intense prayer.

What food is for a healthy body, so are temptations for a courageous soul.

When you truly love heavenly blessings... then, precisely then, you will see terrible temptations, then you will experience terrible battles.

Saint John Chrysostom:

There is much benefit from temptations, and none of those for whom God cares much is without sorrow...

The severity of temptations can lighten the burden of sins...

From... temptation comes salvation and... dangers serve as the greatest purification of the soul for those who endure them with gratitude.

The soul, grieved by temptations, is freed from passions and other illnesses; then it especially enjoys peace.

The ability to endure (temptations) depends on God's help, which we acquire through our own disposition.

Do not challenge yourself to temptations when pious deeds are going according to your desire - why bring upon yourself unnecessary dangers that bring no benefit?

To spend life amid temptations is the lot of especially valiant people, God has always acted this way with wonderful and great men.

If our spirit is well-disposed, then even if countless storms rise from all sides, we will always remain in a quiet harbor.

As long as God is our helper, even if temptations stronger than any storms attack us, they will be like grass and leaves, easily carried away by the wind.

Abba Dorotheus:

We are tempted to learn the faith, so that we may be tested and learn to fight.

St. Isaac the Syrian:

Through temptations (the saints) acquire wisdom.

Without entering into temptations, no one acquires spiritual wisdom.

No one can endure temptations except he who is convinced that something greater than physical rest can be taken for sorrows.

God always allows temptations to those who love Him, to enlighten them, to make them wise, and to teach them His will.

Without allowing temptations, it is impossible to know the truth.

He who flees from temptations flees from virtue.

Outside of temptations, it is impossible to draw near to God; because Divine rest is prepared among them.

Outside of temptations, it is impossible to acquire boldness before God, it is impossible to learn the wisdom of the Spirit, nor is there any possibility for Divine love to be established in your soul.

Saint Isidore of Pelusium:

Although temptation seems endless, one must put an end to it with wisdom and virtue, and not with despair; ... a man stops it ... when he gets used to enduring what he encounters with courage. For if it is difficult, then the virtuous man lightens the burden with prudence, knowing how to endure sorrows with indifference.

With compassion and meekness ... try to alleviate the misfortunes of those who have fallen into temptations, with a gentle word bringing them to good spirits and freeing them from despondency. For if they learn from you that temptations, although sent to them justly, bring relief in falls, and although allowed on those who have done nothing bad, but bring them crowns, they will not only not give in to despondency, but will also be filled with joy.

Stand firm, and the temptations that befall you will remain ineffective, and those conceived will disappear before you experience them; because the steadfastness of the spirit will not allow tricks to be fulfilled.

Skete Patericon:

A certain tempted brother came to an elder and revealed to him the temptations that he had endured. And the elder said to him: "Let not the temptations that come upon you lead you to despair. Seeing the soul ascending and approaching God, the enemies are indignant, dried up by envy. But it is impossible that in temptations God and His holy Angels will not come to the rescue. Just do not stop calling on Him with deep humility. So, if something like this happens to you, remember the presence of God - our Helper, our weakness, the cruelty of the enemy, and you will receive God's help."