

THREE-DAY LENT, MAYALTHO AND ALL DEPARTED HOLY FATHERS & PRIESTS **(FEBRUARY 1-4, 2007)**

In the first week of February 2007, we are commemorating four very important days in our church. The first one is: **THREE-DAY LENT**: The three-day lent is a lent of attrition and repentance commemorating the repentance of the people of Nineveh at the preaching of Prophet Jonah. This year it starts on Monday, January 29th and ends on Thursday, February 1st 2007. It is a time of intense prayer, fasting and meditations. This lent starts three weeks before the start of the Great Lent. To commemorate this Lent, we will have a Holy Qurbana on Wednesday, January 31st at 6.30 p.m.

The second one is: **MAYALTHO**: (Entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into the temple) The Church is remembering this day on Friday, February 2nd. Today is the memory of St. Simon and St. Hanna. According to the Jewish law, Joseph and Mary observed the law by consecrating Jesus and presenting Him in the temple. The Law of Moses required mothers to present an offering 40 days after a son was born. Therefore, Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem to present this offering at the temple. There was an old man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. The Holy Spirit told Simeon, that he would not see death until he would see the Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, he blessed Him and said, "My eyes have seen Thy salvation". Joseph and Mary were amazed. As it is explained in the bible, Simeon knew that the Messiah was coming and he waited and prayed for the day to arrive. Every time parents brought their children to the temple, he was filled with anticipation that possibly one of them was the child he was waiting for. Then Mary and Joseph arrived at the temple and Simeon, now an old man, took the child up into his arms and praised God saying: Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all peoples. Even though Jesus was only an infant, God was already at work in Jesus. (Readings: St. Luke 2: 22-40).

The third one is: **REMEMBERING ALL THE HOLY FATHERS**: Every year our Church remembers its Holy Fathers who led a divine life, and also on every Holy Qurbana, by reciting their names in the Tubden (Diptychs). It is the ultimate recognition for those who served the Church in commune with the God. Of the six Tubdens reading during the Holy Qurbana, the fifth one is for the departed Spiritual Fathers. According to the church calendar, this important day falls on Saturday, February 3rd 2007. Our Church has a long tradition of remembering the Holy Fathers of the Church in the liturgies. (Readings: St. Luke 6: 20-31).

And the fourth one is: **REMEMBERING ALL THE DEPARTED PRIESTS**: On Sunday, February 4th, we are commemorating all the departed priests of our Church. Every year, the first Sunday after the 3-day lent, the church recognizes all the priests who served the Church. According to the main theme of today's gospel, "If you knew in what part of the night the thief was coming, you would have watched". Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. God offers us the greatest treasure possible - His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. It is possible to lose this great treasure if we do not keep vigilant watch. It is certain that we have to watch for the Lord and the coming of His kingdom. As we pray daily - "May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Satan tries to make us spiritually dull and tells us that there is no hurry. His strategy is to make us think that there is plenty of time to get right with God and to do His will. Jesus gives us sufficient grace for today and he gives us time to turn to him, but that time is right now. We cannot guarantee that tomorrow will come.

Bible readings for Sunday, February 4th, 2007. **(Remembering all the Departed Priests of Our Church)**

Before Holy Qurbana:

Numbers - 20: 23-29
Deuteronomy - 34: 1-8
Isaiah - 65: 13-20

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles: Acts - 20: 26-38
Epistles of St. Paul: I Thessalonians - 4: 13 - 5: 11
Holy Gospel: St. Matthew - 24: 42-51

With prayers,
Thomas Alex