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Saint John of the Ladder (Archimandrite Georgios Alendas)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Great Lent is a period of repentance, during which our stony hearts must become, through God's grace, softened in the flesh, and move from being callous to being sensitive, from cold and hard to warm and open to others, particularly God Himself.



Saint John of the ladder with his companions, 11th Century byzantine manuscript

Great Lent is a time of renewal when everything, as is the case every spring, makes a new beginning and our sunless lives are again brightened by all the intensity that God can give us, making us His confidants, through the Holy Sacraments and His costly gifts. This reconciliation is a joy; for both us and for God – a new beginning.

The fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John of the Ladder and I'd like to present a few of his sayings which are related to the period we're going through now.

“Repentance, that is the return to God, is the renewal of our baptism, the renewal of our pact with God, our promise to reform our lives. It’s a time during which we can acquire humility, which is peace, peace with God, with ourselves, with the whole of the created world. Repentance is born of hope, that is when we reject despair. And those who repent are the very people who deserve a guilty verdict- and yet leave the court without shame, since repentance is our peace with God. And this is achieved through a life which is worthy of us, far removed from the sins which we committed in the past. Repentance is the cleansing of our conscience. It involves a complete liberation from sorrow and pain”.

It’s worth listening to these few words on prayer if we wonder how we are to achieve this, how we can respond to God, Who receives us like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, to God Who awaits us with longing and Who, though we’ve rejected Him, has never left our side: “Don’t use fancy words when you pray, because it’s often the simple and plain murmuring of children that delights our heavenly Father. When you speak to God, don’t try to say much, because otherwise your mind will be looking for words and will get lost in them. The few words spoken by the Publican brought him the mercy of God; a few words, full of faith, saved the robber on the cross. Varying the words when we pray scatters the mind and inflames the imagination. One word addressed directly to God harnesses the mind to His presence. And if, while you’re praying, this one word touches you on the inside, if you feel it deeply, stay within it. Stay, because at moments such as that, our guardian angel’s praying with us, because we’re truly ourselves and are with God”.

Let’s not forget those words by Saint John of the Ladder.

Let’s remember his words because he was a person who knew what it means to turn to God, to be God’s joy and to exult in Him. This period is offered to us, as we proceed towards the days of the Passion, as an example of what the grace of God can achieve in transforming an ordinary and normal person into a light for the world.

Let’s learn that, let’s follow his example, let’s rejoice at seeing how the power of God can work within people and, with faith, with confidence, with triumphant and also peaceful joy, let’s follow his example, let’s listen to God imploring us to find the path of life and telling us that with Him and in Him we shall truly live, since He is the way, the Truth and Eternal Life (Anthony Bloom).