

Saint Mary and Saint Joseph Coptic Orthodox Church
11308 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1K9

SMSJ YOUTH NEWSLETTER

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THE ROCK

"The Lord is **MY ROCK**"
Psalm 18:2

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Questions or Feedback?

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reflections, poetry, art, or
any other content at:
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"The Lord is **MY ROCK**, and my fortress, and
my deliverer; my God, **MY STRENGTH**, in
whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of
MY SALVATION, my stronghold." - Psalm 18:2

All David had was faith and a **ROCK** and he
defeated a giant. **ALL YOU NEED IS FAITH
IN THE ROCK** to defeat yours!

"When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to
THE ROCK that is **HIGHER THAN I**."
- Psalm 61:2



PRAYER

Evagrius Ponticus says, "**Prayer is an ascent of the mind to God. If you love God, you converse with Him continually as you would with your father, banishing every passion from your mind**". What does this all mean? When you go to pray, remove all distractions, and only focus on God to allow your mind to ascend to Him. Secondly, if you love Him, talk with Him as you would speak with a person you love. Sometimes we pray, expecting our desires granted. But, God isn't a genie. We often fail to see the full picture God is painting because we are in this painting ourselves; we are part of His masterpiece and cannot fully comprehend the goodness that is evident when His will is done. The amazing thing about God is that even a "no" from Him has goodness written all over it. So when you pray, always pray patiently, knowing that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."- Romans 8:28



FASTING

Fasting is not exclusive to the bodily restrictions, but rather, is a self-redeeming exertion of the soul working with the body. Fasting is sport to the soul, not the body. Fasting is food that strengthens the soul, freeing it from all its shackles, giving it wings to fly up to the heights. Standing next to someone who is fasting, you will smell the sweet aroma of prayer diffusing through the eyes, tongue, and all his organs. **Thus, fasting is not something weary, but rather is a gift that we can freely accept, through which we grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and develop an intimate relationship with Him.** He who fasts becomes agile, and prays fervently, as though with wings, suppressing his evil desires by entreating God to humble him. It is no wonder why the Apostles fasted continually.' - St. John Chrysostom

'Lord as You will and as You know best, have mercy on me'

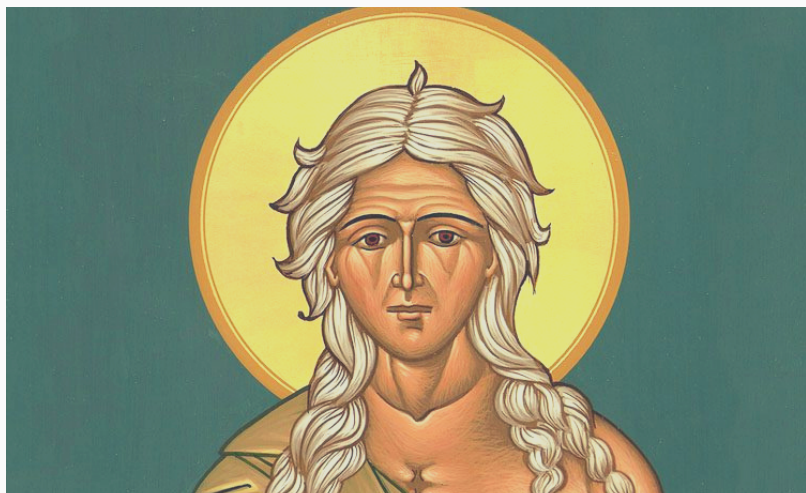
- ST. MACARIUS OF EGYPT





AN ICON OF REPENTANCE: SAINT MARY OF EGYPT

At the age of 12, St. Mary ran away from her parents, tempted by the devil, to the city of Alexandria. There, she lived an incredibly lustful life, being a harlot and being so driven by her lustful passions. She lived like that for 17 years. One day, she met people going to Jerusalem and went with them. Since she couldn't pay for the trip, she gave herself to the owners of the ship instead. While she was there, she wanted to enter a Church, but felt a power pulling her from the back, preventing her from entering.



She attempted to enter a couple of times but the same thing happened - she couldn't enter. She then realized that it was so because of her uncleanness. Filled with sorrow and with a broken heart, she looked up and wept asking St. Mary to intercede on her behalf before her Son. She then was able to enter the Church with everyone else. In the Church, she asked God to guide her to whatever pleases Him. She was also praying before an icon of St. Mary when she heard a voice coming out of the icon saying **"If you cross the Jordan river you will find rest and salvation"**. So she immediately ran outside and crossed the Jordan river to the wilderness where she lived for 47 years a true life of repentance and holiness. Satan fought her with very hard fights, but she overcame them through the grace of God. After her departure, St. Zosima found her body protected by a Lion that helped him dig the grave for her body. May God help us to have true repentance like this great saint during this fasting season and may her precious prayers be with us all.





THE GREAT LENT: PATRISTIC MEDITATIONS ON THE SUNDAY GOSPELS

In the period of Lent, the Church selects specific Sunday readings that pertain to the objective and goal of this most important of fasts. The Sundays of Lent are as follows: Treasures in Heaven, Temptation on the Mount, Prodigal Son, Samaritan Woman, Paralyzed Man, Man Born Blind, Palm Sunday, and finally Resurrection Sunday. This book contains excerpts from patristic writings on the readings and themes of the Sundays of the Great Lent according to the Coptic Orthodox tradition. The book features several commentaries and notes on the rites of the Great Lent to enhance the believer's understanding and appreciation of the rites of the Church. **Through these meditations of the 'Doctors' of the Church we can experience Lent in a new light, and gain a new perspective on many topics such as fasting, repentance, and prayer among many others.**

“Repentance is a divine privilege that God has given sinners to purify them and pacify their consciences, giving them inner peace and ensuring their return to their original nature before the first sin.”
- Pope Shenouda III

