

Living Lent 5 Weekly Reflections by Metropolitan Tikhon

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon offers a series of reflections on the themes contained in the Triodion hymns sung on Monday of each week during Great Lent.



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“Now that we have venerated the lifegiving Wood, with gladness let us advance upon the path of the Fast to the Passion of Christ.”

This hymn from Matins of the fifth week of the Fast, in a very simple and direct way, points us to the purpose of our Lenten effort. But as all the simple and direct hymn, which in many ways echo the simple and direct words of Jesus Christ, these words also point us to the deepest purpose of our Christian life.

Our existence on this earth is often very complex, and we often project that complexity on our life in the Church. But sometimes it is good to remember that, though there are temptations and struggles, our true task is to “advance upon the path of the Fast to the Passion of Christ.”

This is not a frightening or dark endeavor at all, even if we look at ourselves as full of the darkness of impurity and passions.

“The most beautiful of seasons is at hand, the much praised day of abstinence has dawned. Let us make haste, brethren, to be cleansed, that we may appear in purity before our Maker and share in His beauty, at the prayers of her who bore Him, the only pure Mother of God.”

All of us will struggle to attain this purity of the Mother of God, and many of us will get discouraged when we fail to make even a small degree of progress towards that lofty goal. But we should never despair, but rather be humbled, in this effort, which is, in the end, a journey towards the light and life brought about by God’s grace:

“The grace of abstinence, radiant with the light of God, shines this day more brightly than the sun; illumining our souls, it drives away the clouds of sinful passions. Embracing it with joy, let us all run with good courage, and finish its course rejoicing; and filled with gladness let us cry to Christ: sanctify those who complete the Fast with faith, O loving Lord.”