The Fifth Monday of the Great Fast

Father Joseph Jugan

"Now that we have passed beyond the middle point of the Fast, let us manifest in ourselves a beginning of divine glory, and let us hasten eagerly towards our journey's end: the life of holiness so that we might receive that joy which is ageless."

Vespers for the Fifth Greatfast Monday: Sticheron

As we begin this fifth week of the Holy Great Fast, we eagerly await the termination of our spiritual journey with Jesus. Having repented for our past sins with true contrition, we realize that we must endure the trials of the Passion with the Lord before we can participate in the divine glory and joy of His Holy Resurrection.

God loved His world so much that He gave us the Gift of His Divine Son for our salvation. And the Lord Jesus loved His Father so much that He was obedient to Him even to the death on the Cross.

The entire life of Christ was motivated by love as seen in His teachings and actions. However, love is a word that in today's world is misused constantly in conversation, and consequently it has lost much of its deeper meaning. Many times it is used without interior feeling and sentiment. We need to reawaken our perception of love for what it really means in our spiritual lives.

Love implies sacrifice as demonstrated by Christ. Love and sacrifice walk hand in hand throughout the length of the journey of life. Without sacrifice, love cannot exist. The more profound the love, the greater is the willingness to sacrifice. And the greater the sacrifice, the greater and deeper is the love that it serves. There are countless examples of this in everyday life, but Christ gives us the ultimate example in his Holy Passion and Precious Cross.

Suffering is an integral part of love. We never know how much one loves until we know exactly what that person is willing to endure for us. It is this element of suffering that measures life. Great are those individuals who willingly and perseveringly experience pain for us. But we must also be ready to bear and endure hardships and tribulations for others because of our love for them. We do this in imitation of the divine love manifested by Jesus—the strongest love that the world has ever known.

As we enter this fifth week of the Holy Fast, let's remember the love that Christ showed for us. Following His example, we can ease the pain and suffering of others and thereby help each other along that road which leads to Divine Love: Jesus.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 37:33 - 38:6
Genesis 13:12-18
Proverbs 14:27 - 15:4