**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

“Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Time goes by, and now we have passed more than half of Lent. Today is the 4th Sunday of the holy time of fasting. This Sunday we honor the memory of St. John of the Ladder – the great ascetic and monastic mentor.   
“So we, have already passed most of the Great Lent, must sum up some of the results of our endeavor of fasting. We must honestly answer how we practiced in fasting and prayer, in deeds of piety. Did we use the time that was given to us? Did we go up the stairs? After all, the Lord has given us this period of time, these four weeks for our spiritual perfection. So, did we do it? Or was our time spent on other things and cares?”  
“The Lord says that we ​​will have to give an account for all of our life. And telling us thus, the Lord calls us to appreciate the time we have been given, and that we must not give a chance to our enemy, the enemy of the human race, to capture our soul. And we should not seek false comfort, a feeling that that our enemy does not bother us.   
“Today’s Gospel lesson is telling us about a boy who was possessed by an unclean spirit. His father desired him to be healed and he brought this boy to the Disciples of Christ. But, unfortunately, at that time they themselves were not spiritually mature, they could not cast out the evil spirit from that boy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the only one who could accomplish such a healing.   
“The Lord says to the father of the possessed boy, *“Everything is possible to him who believes”* (Mk. 9, 23). And He says to His Disciples that *“this kind can come out by nothing prayer and fasting”* (Mk. 9, 29).”

How would we have reacted if this was our child? What kind of faith would Christ find in each us if He would appear today? What evidence of faith would He see in our everyday actions? Would He see us trying to deal with everything, both the blessings and that which require us to show patience and humility, with the faith that God has sent them to us for our own benefit? Do we have the faith to act according to His will? Do we act as though this world is only a passing phase and that His obedience to the Father, even to death on the cross is the source of eternal life? Do we ask Him in prayer to strengthen our faith and use it in all our decisions and judgments?

In nowadays, we can find a lot of insurance companies that want to secure our life, our houses, cars and properties. Few years ago one rich man in England refused to insure his wealth and life, instead of that, he has relied on God’s help and protection. Couple months after, this man brought to the church a certain amount of money and said: “ it’s going to be my annual donation to the church for protection of my house from fire”. This man said: “Recently, my neighbors house burned down, because of the strong wind the fire has shared on other houses, my house was on the middle of the fire, but was not touched by the fire. Isn’t that a God’s mercy? This example is clearly showing us that how we faith and relate toward God, in the same way God relate toward us.

Here is another example: In one village, during the summer, was very dry weather, was no rain for a month, people started to worry about their crops, their livestock, about their stocks of food for winter, because nothing grow without rain. So priest announce in the church that this Sunday going to be a Moleben to God, to sending them the rain. Whole village came on the Moleben. And one little boy brought the umbrella on the Moleben, a woman that stand near him, asked that boy: Why did you bring the umbrella in such a hot weather?” The boy said to her; Don’t we come here to ask God for the rain?. The whole village came to pray for sending them the rain, but Only one little boy came to pray with faith, who really, trusted and relied to God.

Therefore, let not believe to those who say that there is enough to have some kind of “faith in the soul”, and not a sincere and firm Christian faith. Let not be deceived those who believe that you don’t need the Church prayers, services and Sacraments. Let not be deceived those who believe that fasting is a relative matter and that it means little. We heard the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The only one weapon in the fight against sin, against the power of the devil is fasting and prayer! And there is no other weapon. And if we do not use this weapon in the fight against evil, our soul will be in the same position as the son of that man, about whom we heard today in the Holy Gospel.”  
“At the same time, we have to remember that our own strength is not enough to pray and fast appropriately, but we need the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross, and who conquered the power of the devil and who had risen. Then our souls will also be resurrected, like that boy in today’s reading: the boy who first was numb, and everyone thought that he was dead, and then he began to live.”  
“Dear brothers and sisters! Let us use all our strength for the spiritual warfare and let us spend the remaining time of the holy Lent in fasting and prayer. Let us accept Christ’s power as supreme in our lives and allow Him to take the spirit of despair from us. Amen.