

Catechism Lesson for Adults and Teens
Sunday of St John Climacus

The Healing of a Boy With An Evil Spirit

Read the Gospel Passage AND the verses before it of this Sunday:

Mark 9:17-31

Contextual Background:

-This Sunday, we remember St. John Climacus. He wrote one of the most popular books in the Orthodox Church: The Ladder of Divine Ascent. This book was written for monks and nuns to encourage their spiritual growth, to pay attention to bad habits and impulses, and had suggestions how to deal with these impulses and struggles.

-Fasting and prayer are repeated themes in the book The Ladder of Divine Ascent, and the Gospel Reading also encourages us towards praying and fasting.

Discussion Questions:

1. Whom do you identify with in this story?
 - a. The Disciples—Because I can never seem to give people the help they need
 - b. The Boy—because I often feel afflicted or tempted by evil
 - c. The Father—because I find it hard to believe sometimes
 - d. Jesus—because I get called often to fix things when others mess up

2. What do you learn about evil spirits from this story?
 - a. I think there must be some other explanation
 - b. They are very real
 - c. They are very powerful
 - d. Jesus has authority over them
 - e. Some are harder to cast out than others
 - f. They don't like it when we fast or pray

3. What do you have a hard time believing?
 - a. That God exists at all
 - b. That Jesus is God's Son
 - c. That a good God controls the world
 - d. That there is life after death
 - e. That God loves me
 - f. That miracles still happen today
 - g. That evil/demons exist

4. Jesus highlights the importance of prayer
 - a. When do you find it the easiest or most appropriate times to pray?
 - b. What do you find yourself addressing most in prayer?
 - c. In what ways have you seen or do you expect God to answer prayer? And how do you respond to seeing His answer?

5. Jesus highlights the importance of fasting.
 - a. From what are you fasting this year?
 - b. How has fasting been different this year compared to last year? How has it stayed the same?
 - c. What benefits do you think come from fasting?

6. What are some challenges you struggle with in fasting or prayer? In what ways do you wish you could receive help?

7. The Ladder of Divine Ascent that we celebrate today encourages us to keep growing in our lives
 - a. What do you **hope** your life will look like 10 years from now?
 - b. What do you **think** your life will look like 10 years from now?
 - c. What are some obstacles that you imagine might affect your spiritual growth?
 - d. What are some things in your control that you can change to promote spiritual growth?