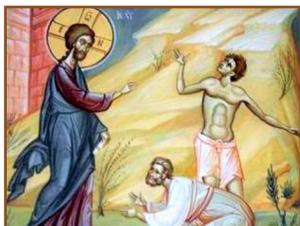




■ † Tenth Sunday of St. Matthew

**Pray and Fast\***  
**What protection!**



“**T**his kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (St. Matthew 17:21).

If this kind [of demon] goes out by the prayer and fasting of another person, then how much more difficult it is for such a demon to enter one who

**fasts and prays himself.**

**What protection!**

Even though there exist hordes of demons and the air is filled with them, they can do nothing to those who are protected by prayer and fasting.

Fasting is universal temperance; prayer is universal communication with God. The former protects us from external enemies, whereas the latter directs a fiery weapon against the internal.

The demons can sense from afar a person who fasts and prays, and they flee from him so as to avoid being dealt a painful blow.

Is it possible that where prayer and fasting are lacking, there is concealed a demon? Yes, it is possible.

When demons take up their abode in a person, they do not always reveal their presence. They lurk there, stealthily teaching their host every evil and deterring him from everything good. The person is convinced that he is doing what he himself wishes, all the while fulfilling the will of the enemy.

Simply begin to pray and fast, and the enemy will immediately step back, waiting for an opportunity to return.

And he truly will return, as soon as we leave off prayer and fasting.



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(\*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.