



THE
TRIODION

Preparing for the Lenten Period and Holy Week

What is the Triodion?

During the three week pre-Lenten season the church prepares us for repentance. She urges us to prepare ourselves through gradual diet modification and instructing us with themes of humility, judgment, repentance and forgiveness. The period is bounded by four Sundays.

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

This first Sunday of the Triodion, the Church reminds us to be humble, unlike the Pharisee in Christ's parable. The Pharisee, although religious, was arrogant and thought of himself as better than the tax collector. Christ desires a humble heart when we pray, fast and give to the poor. This is the first lesson of the Triodion because this time of year requires us to become closer to God, and that is only possible through humility.



Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The second Sunday of the Triodion, again teaches us a lesson from one of Christ's parables. It teaches that God will always accept us back after we sin against Him. All that is necessary is a repentant heart, and God will not only accept us, but run out and meet us with open arms, making us heirs of His Kingdom as the father in the parable. It also teaches us not to be jealous of our brother. God will give each of us what is needed to survive and inherit eternal life.



Meatfare Sunday

(Sunday of the Last Judgment)

The Church devotes this Sunday as the last day to eat meat products until the Resurrection of our Lord.

The major focus however is on the fact that Christ will come once again to judge the entire earth based on the works of our life. Christ states in the Gospel that whatever we do to the least of His brethren, it is as if we did it to Him. We should treat all people just as

we would treat Christ, and if we succeed in serving our fellow man, God's judgment will be more favorable towards us.



Cheesefare Sunday

(Sunday of the Expulsion from Paradise or Forgiveness Sunday)

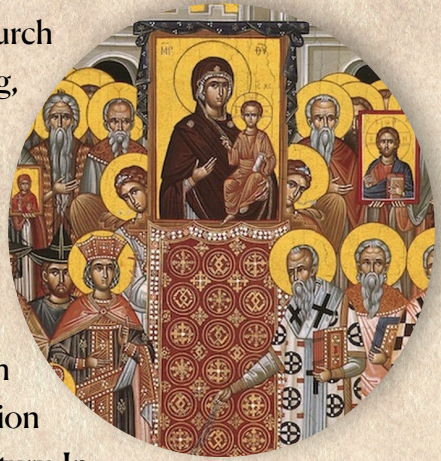
This is the last day before the start of Great Lent. There are several themes that occur. One of the most important is that we forgive each other. The Gospel teaches that all good things we do should be in secret, and not for man to reward us. Also on this day, we are given an image of Adam being sent out of paradise because of the misuse of his

freedom. Through the fasting, praying and alms giving that we will be doing during Lent, we will work toward restoring ourselves to our original state of living together with God in Paradise.



Great Lent

During Great and Holy Lent, the Church has us focus on God by fasting, praying and giving to the poor in order for us to grow closer to Christ. It is in denying ourselves that we can restore our likeness to God. The Church assigns a different theme to each week of Lent starting with Orthodoxy Sunday, or the restoration of icons to the Church in the 8th Century. In modern day America, it is known as a day of unity for all Orthodox across all of the many ethnic jurisdictions.



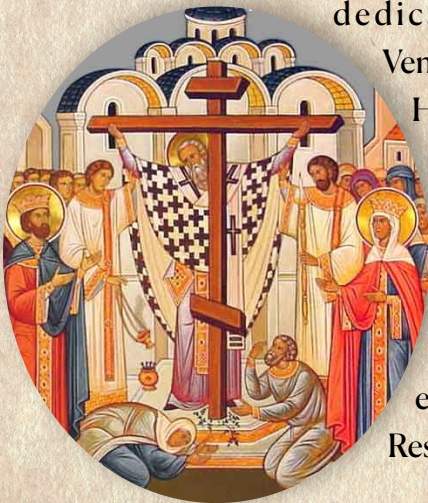
The second Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the commemoration of St Gregory Palamas who dedicated his life to fasting and prayer as we do during Lent. The third Sunday is dedicated to the

Veneration of the Holy Cross. This

marks the half-way point in our

Lenten journey, and

reminds us of the struggles that Christ endured as well as His sufferings which eventually lead to His, and our Resurrection.



On the fourth Sunday, we celebrate the memory of St John of the Ladder. St John wrote a book with thirty chapters, each chapter as a step on how to reach the height of a Christian life. The image of this ladder is how we should view our journey to paradise, and all things in this book should be things that we practice, especially during Lent.



On the fifth Sunday, we commemorate St Mary of Egypt. St Mary was a harlot who lived the early part of her life contrary to that of a Christian. After a revelation, she dedicated her life completely to repentance for her previous lifestyle, and became

one of the most holy saints in our Church through her tremendous prayer and fasting. Other occasions that the Church celebrates are the Raising of Lazarus from the Dead (Lazarus Saturday), and Christ's entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).



There are several services that the Church offers to assist us during our Lenten journey. Among these are the Great Compline, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, and the Akathist to the Mother of God. The only way to get the most out of our Lord's sacrifice to us, is to completely give of ourselves in order to allow God's love and grace to dwell in us.



Holy Week



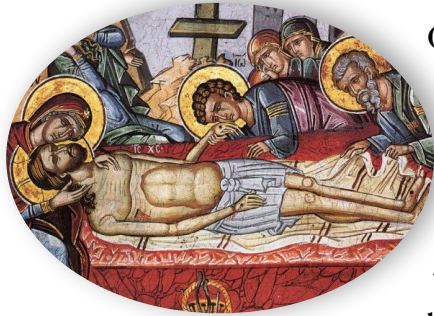
Holy Week is a most special time of the year when we come to church daily to journey alongside Christ to the Cross, the Tomb, and the Resurrection! The official start of Holy Week is on Palm Sunday night, where the Church moves our soul to feel the spirit of Christ's suffering, keeping in mind, always, the hope and joy of the Resurrection.

Each night of the week has a special theme, although the services from Sunday night to Tuesday night are all the same basic structure (The Bridegroom Matins), in which one of the major themes is to be aware that Christ could come back at any time, and that only those who are vigilant and prepared will enter into the Kingdom.



While the Bridegroom service could be served on Wednesday night, most Churches choose to do the service of Holy Unction or as some may know it, the healing service. On Thursday morning, we celebrate the service of the Mystical Supper of Christ. This will be the last time that Communion will be offered until the Resurrection.

On Thursday night, the service with the 12 Gospels is perhaps one of the most beautiful services that the Church has to offer. The entire account of Christ's arrest and crucifixion are recounted, and a procession around the Church with the Crucifix of Christ takes place as the Crucifixion Hymn is chanted.



On Friday, the removal of Christ's body from the Cross and burial service with the singing of the Lamentations takes place. Churches all around the world have different local traditions on how they celebrate the funeral of our

Lord, but almost all of these Churches have some kind of major procession with the tomb of Christ to give the King of Kings a proper funeral service which He never received at the time of His death.

On Saturday morning, a service sometimes known as the "First Resurrection" is celebrated to commemorate Christ's victory over the power of death and Hades. Finally, on Saturday night /Sunday morning, the Priest declares the Resurrection Exclamation, "Christ is risen!" in which all the faithful respond, "Truly He is risen!", speaking of Christ's Resurrection from the Dead!



Join us as we journey together
towards the empty tomb of Christ!



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