

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021
THE EXPULSION OF ADAM FROM PARADISE
CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption.

The Church guides us to consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in, be fed by, and to be transformed by church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers on Sunday evening we will sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...."

On this eve of Great Lent, the day called Cheesefare Sunday and Forgiveness Sunday, we identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord's teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us.

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses (Mt 6.14–18).

GREAT VESPERS

***LORD I CALL: Six stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7
followed by four from the Triodion***

Resurrection, tone 7:

***Come, let us rejoice in the Lord,
Who destroyed the dominion of death!***

Let us sing to Him with the bodiless hosts,
for He enlightened the human race! //
Our Maker and Savior, glory to You!

You endured the Cross and burial for our sake.
By Your death, You destroyed death as God.
We fall down before Your Resurrection on the third day, //
O Savior, glory to You!

When the Apostles beheld the Resurrection of the Maker,
they were amazed and sang the angelic praise.
This is the glory of the Church.
This is the richness of the Kingdom. //
O Lord, crucified for our sake, glory to You!

You were held by lawless men, O Christ,
but to me, You are God, and I am not ashamed.
You were smitten on the cheek, but I do not deny You.
You were nailed to the Cross and I do not conceal it,
for I glory in Your Resurrection: Your death is my life. //
Almighty Lord and Lover of mankind, glory to You!

Fulfilling the prophecy of David,
Christ manifested His greatness in Zion to the disciples.
He is praised and always glorified,
together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
At first as the Word, He was bodiless,
but then He took flesh and was slain for our sake. //
He rose in power as the Lover of mankind!

You descended into hell as You freely willed, O Christ,
overthrowing death as God, and rising on the third day as Master!
With Yourself You raised Adam
from the bonds of hell and from corruption! //
Glory to Your Resurrection, only Lover of mankind!

Triodion, tone 6:

The Lord took a handful of dust from the earth.
He breathed into it, and created me, a living man!
He made me lord and master of all things on earth;
Truly I enjoyed the life of the angels!
But Satan the deceiver, in the guise of a serpent, tempted me:
I ate the forbidden fruit, and forfeited the glory of God.

Now I have been delivered to the earth through death.//
O my compassionate Lord, call me back to Eden!

When the enemy tempted me,
I disobeyed Your command, O Lord.
I exchanged the glory of my immortal body for shame and nakedness.
Now I must wear garments of skins and fig-leaves;
I am condemned to eat the bread of bitter hardship by the sweat of my brow.
The earth is cursed, and brings forth thorns and husks for me.
O Lord, you took flesh from the Virgin in the fullness of time://
Call me back and restore me to Eden!

O Paradise, garden of delight and beauty,
Dwelling-place made perfect by God,
Unending gladness and eternal joy,
The hope of the Prophets and the home of the Saints,
By the music of your rustling leaves beseech the Creator of all
To open to me the gates which my sins have closed,
That I may partake of the tree of life and grace//
Which was given to me in the beginning.

Adam was exiled from Paradise through disobedience;
he was driven from eternal bliss, deceived by the words of Eve;
he sat naked and weeping before the gates of Paradise.
Let us hasten to enter the season of fasting;
let us carefully obey the Gospel commands,
that we may be made acceptable to Christ our God,
and regain our home in Eden!

GLORY...Triodion, tone 6:

Adam sat before the gates of Eden,
Bewailing his nakedness and crying out:
Woe to me! I have listened to wicked deceit:
I have lost my glory, and now am driven away!
Woe to me! My open-mindedness has left me naked and confused!
No longer will I enjoy your delights, O Paradise;
No longer can I see my Lord, My God and Creator.
He formed me from dust, and now to the dust I return!
I beg You, O Compassionate Lord://
Have mercy on me, who has fallen!

NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 7:

No tongue can speak of your wonderful childbearing,
for the order of nature was overruled by God.
You were revealed to be a Mother above nature,
for you remained a Virgin beyond reason and understanding.
Your conception was most glorious, O Theotokos!
The manner of your giving birth was ineffable, O Virgin!
Knowing you to be the Mother of God,
devoutly we pray to you: //
“Beseech Him to save our souls!”

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7:

As the Savior of the world You arose from the tomb.
As God You resurrected the human race with Your flesh. //
O Lord, glory to You!

Come, let us worship the One Who rose from the dead,
and enlightened all creation!
By His death, He has saved us from the torments of hell. //
By His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life and great mercy.

You descended into hell, capturing death, O Christ.
In three days You arose again, resurrecting us who glorify Your Resurrection, //
O Lord and Lover of mankind.

When You were placed in the tomb as one asleep,
the sight was great and awesome.
But when You rose on the third day as almighty God,
You resurrected Adam with Yourself. //
Glory to Your Resurrection, only Lover of mankind!

GLORY... from the Triodion, tone 6:

Adam ate the forbidden fruit and was driven from paradise.
He sat outside, weeping bitterly:
Woe to me! What will become of me, a worthless man?
I disobeyed one command of my Master, and lost every good thing!
O Holy Paradise, planted for me by God
And closed by the weakness of Eve,
Grant that I may once again gaze on the flowers of your gardens!
The Savior said to him:
I do not wish the death of my creation!
I desire that all should be saved
And come to the knowledge of the truth, //

For he who comes to me I shall never cast out!

NOW AND EVER... Resurrection Theotokion in tone 6:

My Maker and Redeemer, Christ the Lord,
was born of you, O most pure Virgin.
By accepting my nature, He freed Adam from his ancient curse.
Unceasingly we magnify you as the Mother of God!
Rejoice, O celestial Joy!
Rejoice, O Lady://
the Protection, Intercession and Salvation of our souls!

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open paradise!
For the myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy!
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Resurrection Dismissal Theotokion, tone 7

Since you are the treasure of our Resurrection,
we put our hope in you, O all-praised One.
Lead us out of the pit and the abyss of transgressions,
for you have saved us, who are subject to sin, by giving birth to our Salvation.
Before giving birth you were a virgin, and a virgin while giving birth,//
and after giving birth you still remain a virgin.

VESPERS of FORGIVENESS for MONDAY March 15, 2021

The season of Great Lent is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Christ but it is not only this. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds in conformity with Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors.

In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of morbidity and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification. We are called to "anoint our faces"

and to “cleanse our bodies as we cleanse our souls.” The very first hymns of the very first service of Great Lent set the proper tone of the season:

*Let us begin the lenten time with delight . . . let us fast from passions as we fast from food, taking pleasure in the good words of the Spirit, that we may be granted to see the holy passion of Christ our God and his holy Pascha, spiritually rejoicing.
Thy grace has arisen upon us, O Lord, the illumination of our souls has shown forth; behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the time of repentance (Vespers Hymns).*

It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse. We sorrow for our sins, but we do so in the knowledge and joy of God’s mercy. We mortify our flesh, but we do so in the joy of the promise of our resurrection into life everlasting. We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ’s Resurrection and our own.

LORD I CALL,

Penitential Stikhera, tone 7:

Like the Prodigal I come and fall before You, O Lord:
accept me as one of Your hired servants,//
and have mercy on me, O compassionate One!

Like the man who fell among thieves and was wounded,
I have fallen, and my soul is bruised by my many sins.
To whom can I, the guilty one, run,
if not to You, the only merciful Physician of our souls?//
Pour out Your great mercy on me, O God!

O Savior, sinner that I am,
do not cut me down like the barren fig tree!
But grant me forgiveness all the year long,
watering my soul with tears of repentance,//
that I may bring forth acts of mercy as fruit for You!

Since You are the Sun of righteousness,
enlighten and guide the hearts of those who cry out to You://
“O Lord, glory to You!”

Triodion, tone 2:

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence.
As we follow the divine path of pure fasting.
With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord who saves us.
Let us put an end to anger crying out:

Save us who have sinned against Thee!
Save us, O Christ our King, as Thou didst save the men of Nineveh, //
And make us partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom, O compassionate One!

When I think of my deeds, O Lord,
I am filled with despair
And know that I am worthy of every torment.
I have despised Thy commandments, O Savior.
I have spent my life as a prodigal.
I pray to Thee, O only merciful One!
Cleanse me by repentance,
Enlighten me through prayers and fasting, //
And despise me not, O most gracious Benefactor of all!

Let us begin the fast with joy!
Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!
Let us cleanse our soul and cleanse our flesh!
Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!
Let us rejoice in virtues of the spirit and fulfill them in love!
That we all may see the passion of Christ our God, //
And rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!

GLORY...NOW AND EVER... tone 8:

Rejoice, O godly chariot of the Light,
temple and house of the Lord and tabernacle of holiness;
rejoice, for from your spotless womb, Light is risen on all,
thus making the ends of the world exceedingly bright,
for in His goodness, He has sanctified us.
Rejoice, O pure Maiden, the crown of our salvation and life; //
Rejoice, O report and fame of those who trust in you!

PROKEIMENON, tone 8: Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted.
Hear me speedily draw near unto my soul, and deliver me.

APOSTIKHA, tone 4:

Your grace has shone forth, O Lord:
the grace which illumines our soul.
This is the acceptable time!
This is the time of repentance!
Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light,
that passing through the Fast as through a great sea
we may reach the Resurrection on the third day //
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls.

You are glorified
in the memory of Your saints, O Christ God.//
At their supplications, send down on us Your great mercy!

GLORY...NOW AND EVER... tone 4:

The angelic hosts glorify you, O Mother of God,
for you gave birth to God,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
Who, by His own desire, created the angelic hosts out of nothing.
Beseech Him to deliver from corruption and to enlighten//
the souls of those who rightly praise you, O most pure one!

LENTEN VESPERS TROPARIA

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you;
Blessed are you among women and blessed is the Fruit of your womb,
For you have borne the Savior of our souls. (*prostration*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:
O Baptizer of Christ, remember us all,
That we may be delivered from our iniquities
For to you is given the grace to intercede for us. (*prostration*)

Now and ever and unto ages of ages, Amen.
Intercede for us, O Holy Apostles and all you saints,
That we may be delivered from perils and sorrows,
For we have acquired you as fervent pleaders before the Savior. (*prostration*)

Beneath your compassion we take refuge, O Theotokos;
Do not despise our supplications in adversity,
But deliver us from perils, O only pure, only blessed one.