

# Our Lenten Journey

## Preparing for the Passion & Resurrection of Our Lord



Great Lent is a period of, approximately, 40 days before Easter; a time of preparation and a journey to the Great Feast, Easter, the Feast of Feasts. Each year, Lent offers us a providential opportunity to deepen the meaning and value of our Christian lives and it stimulates us to rediscover the mercy of God so that we, in turn, may become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters.

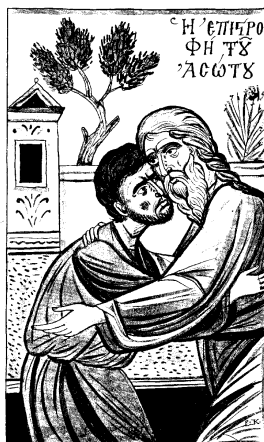
Lent reminisces the forty days of our Lord's fasting in the desert, which He undertook before His public ministry. We read in the Gospel: *Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry* (Mt 4:1-2). Like Moses, who fasted before receiving the tablets of the Law (Ex 34:28) and Elijah, who fasted before meeting the Lord on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), the Lord, too, through prayer, fasting and retreat, prepared Himself for the mission that lay before Him, marked at the start, by a serious battle with the tempter.

May every family and person use well this Lent of 2010. Cast aside all that distracts our spirits, souls and bodies and grow in whatever nourishes us. I am thinking, especially, of a greater commitment to prayer, sharing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) and active participation in the Eucharist.

With this interior disposition, let us enter the penitential spirit of the Great Lent! May the Most Holy Theotokos and Virgin Mary accompany and support us in this effort and this Journey!

*Fr. Nick*

## Repentance & Confession



Repentance, or *metanoia* (μετάνοια in Greek), is the time when we “change our mind”; an understanding of the situation we are in and a resolution to change that by changing our lifestyle, our mentality and our attitude towards our life. Repentance was preached by our Lord when He started His public ministry: *Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Mt 3:2, 4:17). Without repentance, there can be no entrance into the Kingdom of heavens!

Great Lent is the most characteristic time for repentance. In the words of the Triodion:

*The springtime of the fast has dawned, the flower of repentance has begun to open. O brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all impurity, and sing to the Giver of Light: Glory be to Thee, who alone lovest mankind.*

In the most dramatic repentance story of the Gospels, the Prodigal Son, when he realized his situation and repented (changed his mind) he went back to his father for forgiveness, reconciliation; our way to do that, to be forgiven and reconciled with God, our merciful Father, is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation most commonly known as Confession.

Confession is not a judicial act where the Priest is the judge but rather a time of healing, of reconciliation, on our part, with God where the Priest, entrusted with the authority to bind and to loose, stands as a witness and the chanel through which the grace of God is bestowed upon the confedant.



## Guidelines for Fasting



The fast for the forty days of Lent is indicated below, though many are not able to hold to the strict fast. We offer the following guidelines to be considered prayerfully with the guidance of your spiritual father and in consideration of any medical condition or dietary requirements.

### STRICT FAST

No Meat, Fish, Milk, Dairy Products, Oil, or Oil Products

### PALM SUNDAY

Fish, Oil & Wine permitted

### FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION/MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>

Fish, Oil & Wine Permitted

### ON SUNDAYS

Oil & Wine Permitted

Shellfish are permitted throughout Great Lent

### **Jesus' Instructions on Fasting**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."*

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 6:16-18

### St. John Chrysostom on Fasting

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.

If you see a poor man, take pity on him.

If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet  
and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast,

by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.

Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes,  
but bite and devour our brothers?

May He who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us  
to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.



*Let us receive with joy, O faithful, the divinely inspired announcement of Lent.  
Like Ninevites of old, like harlots and publicans who heard John preaching  
repentance through abstinence, let us prepare for the Master's communion performed  
in Zion.*

*Let us wash ourselves with tears for its divine purification.*

*Let us pray to behold the fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation.*

*Let us prepare for adoring the Cross and Resurrection of Christ our God!*

*Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of Man!*

Cheese-Fare Week, Tuesday Vespers, Apostikha