

**CHEESEFARE (Forgiveness) SUNDAY**

**February 27, 2022**

9:10 AM Rosary  
9:30 AM **H/B for all Parishioners**

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**DIVINE SERVICES/EVENTS FOR THE WEEK**

*Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>* **FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST**

6:00 PM CANON OF ST ANDREW OF CRETE

*Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>* NO SERVICES

*Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>*

5:00PM Confessions in the Sacristy (or by appointment)  
**6:00PM Moleben in Times of War: For the Suffering Land of Ukraine and her Children**  
6:30PM BIBLE STUDY

*Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>* NO SERVICES

*Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>*

6:00 PM LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

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*Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>*

3:30PM Book Study  
5:00 PM **+ Mitrat Archpriest Wolodymyr Woloszczuk – by the Ross Family**

***Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>* FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST**

9:10 AM Rosary  
9:30 AM **H/B for all Parishioners**

Our parish is pleased to announce we will be hosting a one day Liturgical Music Convention on **Saturday, March 12, 2022**. The theme will be: **Make a Joyful Noise...Music of the Divine Liturgy!** Music presented will be of the Galician, Carpathian (Ruthenian) and Kiyivan traditions. Any cantors, priests and singers interested are encouraged to attend! The tentative schedule will be as follows:

- 10:00am - Noon Morning session
- Noon - 1:00pm. Lunch and fellowship
- 1:00pm - 3:00pm Afternoon session
- 3:00pm - 3:15pm Break
- 3:15pm - 4:30pm Recap/Review and discussion/feedback on the day's events
- 5:00pm Divine Liturgy for the Second Sunday of the Great Fast (Convention participants will lead the congregation in the responses featuring music learned that day) Contact **Greg Jindra**

**CONGRATULATIONS:**

This week **Joel Lehner (3/05)** celebrates his birthday. We wish you a wonderful celebration, and a year of health and blessings flavored with pure joy, and **many blessed years... mnohaya i blahaya lita!**

**ALL SOULS SATURDAYS (SOROKOUSTY):**

The first All Souls Saturday of 2022 will be on **March 12<sup>th</sup>**. There will be a general **Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM with Panakhyda for All +Souls** submitted to the pastor for prayers. The corresponding green envelope is in your new envelope boxes. *These days remind us that love is stronger than death, that Christ's death for us means that our beloved deceased who believed in Christ are very much alive.*

**Book Study:**

Our Book study group is excited to announce a new season, which starts Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm in the Church hall. Our book this time is by Fr. Charles Arminjon "The End of the Present World." All things pass. Glory fades. Nature groans in labor. The day of the Lord is coming, and with it will come the end of the entire created order. And yet so many live with our eyes fixed on this passing world only, rather than on the everlasting world to come. Preoccupied with the earthly pleasures and cares, we ignore our eternal destiny.

**Today's Readings:**

Tone 7;  
Vespers Readings: Zechariah 8:18-23  
Matins Gospel VII  
Epistle: §112, Romans 13:11-14:4  
Gospel: §17, Matthew 6:14-21

**Russian invasion of Ukraine:**

Please read the letter from our bishop and pass it along to others. As you may know, the warning bells of war have been exchanged for the explosions of a tyrannical aggressor. A call to arms has been raised throughout Ukraine. A call to defend its territorial integrity, to defend its people, its history, language, customs and honor.

- What we can do as the community:
1. Pray
  2. Inform and tell the truth about the aggression
  3. Humanitarian Help

**MISSION SUNDAY IN SOLON:**

Protection Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church invites everyone to join them for a Mission Sunday on **March 20, 2022**, at 11:30. Father Fr. David Blin will be our special guest. Afterwards, everyone is welcome to the church hall for fellowship while enjoying a delicious lunch of soup, salad, bread, and dessert. A free-will donation for the lunch is welcome.

**Lock-in-Retreat Event Details:**

**Audience:** Teenagers/Young Adults  
**Theme:** "May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!" Psalm 29:11 (NRSVCE)  
**Key Note Speaker:** Father Andriy Kelt, Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Revloc PA and St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Northern Cambria, PA.  
**Date:** March 19<sup>th</sup> (10:00 am to 6:00 pm)  
**Location:** Saint Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church, 4310 Kirk Rd, Austintown, Ohio 44511.  
**Cost:** \$25.00/person  
**Contact:** Deacon Myron Spak @ 412-303-9086 / [mjspak@verizon.net](mailto:mjspak@verizon.net)  
**RSVP:** by Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

**Emergency Relief Fund:**

Parishioners can contact Father Sal with total confidentiality to request assistance along with prayers and counseling. Thank you everyone for contributing to this cause!

*The Church was a mother to you in life, providing for your spiritual needs; please remember the Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma in your last will and testament. The wording to do this is as follows: “I give and bequeath to the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of St. Josaphat in Parma, located in Parma, Ohio, \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_].”Thank you!*

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT:**

Please, be advised that any instance of sexual abuse by a cleric, lay employee or lay volunteer within the boundaries of our parish should be immediately reported to the local police department, child protection services of the county, the pastor of the parish and the Chancery of St. Josaphat Eparchy. A sexual abuser report form is available in the church’s vestibule and/or the parish office in English and Ukrainian. The bishop can be reached at the Chancery at 440-888-1522 or by writing to: Most Rev. Bishop Bohdan J. Danylo, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, P.O. Box 347180, Parma OH 44134. You may also file a report with Ms. Marika Zaliszczuk, Victim Assistance Coordinator of St. Josaphat Eparchy (412-215-5372). For more information on St. Josaphat Eparchy’s safe environment policy and procedures and other pertinent info, please, log onto: <http://stjosaphateparchy.com>

**DIRECT TO YOUR EMAIL BOX:**

Don't miss the weekend bulletin because you are out of town, ill, or unable to come to Holy Ghost. Fr. Sal will be happy to deliver your bulletin via email. Just send your request to [info@hgucc.org](mailto:info@hgucc.org).

**SYNODAL PROCESS**

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has invited the Catholic Church across the world to begin a journey of listening attentively to the Lord and to each other. We want to deepen our understanding of what it means to live together, in union with Christ, as fellow disciples called to announce His Gospel. This experience of encounter is called a Synod and follows a Synodal process.

There are three key words for this Synodal process: communion, participation, and mission. Put simply: What does it mean for us to belong to Christ and be in relationship with His

Church? What does it mean for us to be engaged and involved with Christ in His Church? What does it mean for us to be sent out, in proclamation and service, by Christ and His Church?

We are being asked to rediscover together – laity, clergy, and religious – what it means to be a servant-Church, rooted in Christ. The Synod is an opportunity for everyone baptized into Christ to consider what it means to be a missionary disciple. It begins at the grassroots and leads, through a national and continental phase, to a gathering in Rome in 2023.

Between Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Feb. 13) and Sunday, March 20 please hold parish level meetings to reflect on what it means to be a Synodal Church.

**An Appeal of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the United States:**

**“Pray for peace and justice for Ukraine. Be informed. Support the suffering.”**

*“Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him” (Mt 2,13)*

In our Eastern Christian Christmas traditions, we rejoice and celebrate that “God is with us,” singing the praises of the Prince of Peace in hymns and carols. Yet as we reread the Nativity account, we encounter the homelessness of the Mother of God, the anguish of Joseph, and the refugee status of the newborn Jesus. Herod appears, a homicidal tyrant craving hegemony, who massacres innocent children in Bethlehem in order to kill the Messiah—a vivid image of the lust for power. Herod’s determination to dominate was so overpowering that he even murdered three of his own sons. The Holy Infant bringing salvation to all was a menace to a tyrant pathetically clinging to his self-importance.

During the Christmas season, some 100,000 Russian troops have been positioned on three sides of Ukraine: a nascent democracy, a country on a pilgrimage to freedom and dignity from the fear of a totalitarian past in which 15 million people were killed on Ukrainian territory.

Today, the world watches and wonders: Are religious liberty, a free press, a robust public debate, and accountable government in a sovereign state to be punished through the escalation of an invasion that began in 2014? Is the Ukrainian people’s exercise of their God-given dignity a threat to a modern Herod’s thirst for power and hegemony?

This is a question of life and death, as nostalgia for an empire lost has led to senseless slaughter and immense suffering throughout Ukraine.

God-given human dignity and freedom threaten rulers who seek to dominate others, build empires, enslave, and colonize. Those with the audacity to resist, who dare to move from the fear of totalitarianism to freedom and dignity are mercilessly punished.

“A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.” (Mt 2,18) After eight years of war initiated by Russia, Ukraine has lost a substantial part of its territory. 14,000 people, including children, have been killed, 1.5 million have been internally displaced, several hundred thousand agonize near the frontline, and millions suffer from post-traumatic stress. There are 400,000 traumatized Ukrainian veterans of the Russian war and thousands who have lost their loved-ones.

How long will this continue? How many more shattered families, destitute widows and orphans, grieving parents and grandparents? How many more destroyed churches, mosques, and synagogues, schools and hospitals, roads and bridges, homes and apartment buildings, factories and airports? How many more homeless, jobless, and impoverished millions forced to flee their country? How much more mindless, devastating pillaging by foreign-controlled organized crime? How many more devious, paralyzing international cyberattacks? How much more torment of freedom loving citizens and torture of prisoners seized by terrorists? When will this stop?!

Since February 2014, when more than 100 peaceful protestors were killed in cold blood in the heart of Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, to quash demands for dignity, Ukrainian society has lived under a cloud of mourning and grief. Every city and town, and hundreds of villages, have fresh graves—sons and sisters, husbands and daughters, fathers, and grandfathers who gave their lives for what God promises to every human being: freedom and dignity.

The war in Ukraine is real. It kills, maims, and destroys daily. An escalated Russian invasion will generate additional millions of refugees, more dead and injured, more tears and pain. Still, the people of Ukraine courageously endure. As they stand with a gun to their head, they ask for our solidarity.

What can *we* do?

**Pray.** Pray for peace and justice in Ukraine. God is the Lord of history and the Lover of Humankind. His grace changes the most hardened hearts. Ukraine was brutally invaded, its territory annexed, the society traumatized. May God convert the promoters of violence. May God protect Ukraine and its people from further harm.

**Be informed.** Know the facts and fight falsehood in a post-truth public debate being warped by Russian disinformation. Inform others. The world cannot look away; you should not look away. Seek and share the truth, which gives authentic freedom and wisdom.

**Support.** There is a huge humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. People near the frontline often lack the basics—clean water, food, clothes, medicine. Heal the wounds. Help the victims of this senseless invasion. Donations can be sent to: <https://ukrarcheparchy.us/donate>.

**May God’s gift of human dignity and freedom be honoured and protected in Ukraine and throughout the world!**

*Give ear to my prayer, O God;  
And hide not thyself from my supplication...  
I am distraught by the noise of the enemy,  
Because of the oppression of the wicked...  
But I will trust in thee. (Ps. 55, 1,2-3; 23)*

**+Borys Gudziak**

Archbishop of Philadelphia, Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

Head of the Department of External Church Relations, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

**+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM**

Eparch of Stamford

**+Benedict Aleksiychuk**

Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

**+ Bohdan J. Danylo**

Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

**+Andriy Rabiy**

Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia

# Звернення Українських католицьких єпископів у Сполучених Штатах Америки

**Моліться за мир і справедливість в Україні Відстоюйте правду. Підтримайте тих, хто страждає”**

*“бо Ірод розшукуватиме дитя, щоб його вбити” (Мт 2,13)*

У нашій східно-християнській традиції Різдва ми радіємо і святкуємо, що “з нами Бог”, прославляючи Христа, Князя миру, у піснеспівах і колядках. Однак, коли перечитуємо різдвяну оповідь, то дізнаємося про Богородицю, якій не знайшлося місця в заїзді, страждання і сумніви Йосифа та про Ісуса, що у немовлячому віці стає біженцем в Єгипті. У цій історії з’являється Ірод, кровожерливий тиран, який наказує вбити невинних дітей у Вифлеємі, щоб серед них знищити Месію. Який яскравий образ жадоби всевладдя! Бажання панувати для Ірода було настільки великим, що він навіть убив трьох рідних синів. Святе Дитя, що дарує спасіння всьому світові, виглядало загрозливим для цього сатрапа, який жалюгідно чіплявся за власну важливість.

Протягом різдвяного часу Росія розмістила більше 100,000 своїх військових на кордонах з Україною — молодією демократичною державою, що саме здійснює непросте паломництво до свободи і гідності після років тоталітаризму, що жорстоко знищив 15 мільйонів людей на українських землях.

Сьогодні весь світ спостерігає і запитує: як можна карати війною незалежну державу за її бажання свободи слова, совісті, розвитку громадянського суспільства, відповідального урядування та інших свобод? Невже той факт, що український народ прагне жити згідно зі своєю Богом даною гідністю, може бути загрозою для сучасних іродів, що жадають влади і панування?

Це питання життя і смерті, адже ностальгія за втраченою імперією призводить до масових вбивств і безмірних страждань в Україні.

Богом дана гідність і свобода є загрозливими для правителів, що бажають панувати над іншими, будувати імперії, підкоряти і поневолювати. Тих, хто відчайдушно опирається і

насмілюється відходити від страху тоталітаризму до свободи і гідності безжально карають.

*“В Рамі чути голос, плач і тяжке ридання: то Рахиль плаче за дітьми своїми й не хоче, щоб її втішити, бо їх немає” (Мт 2,18).* За вісім років війни, яку розпочала Росія, Україна втратила значну частину територій, загинуло більше 14 тисяч людей, серед яких — діти, 1,5 мільйони осіб були змушені покинути свої домівки і переселитися у інші частини України, сотні тисяч живуть безпосередньо біля лінії зіткнення під постійними обстрілами, мільйони страждають від посттравматичного шоку. Вже тепер в Україні нараховується близько 400 тисяч ветеранів російської війни, і є тисячі тих, хто втратив рідних і близьких.

Скільки це ще триватиме? Скільки ще буде розбитих сімей, знедолених вдів і сиріт, згорьованих батьків і матерів, бабусь і дідусів? Скільки ще буде зруйнованих церков, мечетей і синагог, шкіл і лікарень, мостів і доріг, будинків і квартир, заводів і летовищ? Ще скільки мільйонів людей в Україні збідніють, втратять роботу і домівки і будуть змушені тікати зі своєї країни? Як довго кримінальні угруповання, керовані агресором, бездумно спустошуватимуть і плюндруватимуть? Скільки ще підступних кібератак, що паралізують цілу країну? Ще скільки триватиме знущання над волелюбним народом та як довго терористи катуватимуть захоплених заручників? Коли це припиниться?!

Починаючи з лютого 2014 року, коли у центрі Києва при спробі придушити прагнення народу до гідності були жорстоко розстріляні більше 100 мирних протестувальників, українське суспільство живе під пеленою болю і скорботи. У кожному місті і містечку, у сотнях сіл є свіжі могили загиблих — синів і дочок, сестер і чоловіків, батьків, дідусів. Вони віддали своє життя за те, що Господь дарував кожній людині — свободу і гідність.

Війна в Україні реальна. Вона вбиває, калічить і знищує щодня. Якщо російське вторгнення посиляться, воно принесе мільйони біженців, ще більше вбитих і поранених, ще більше сліз і болю. Проте, народ України сміливо переносить терпіння. Їхнє життя під загрозою, і вони потребують нашої підтримки і солідарності.

Що *ми* можемо зробити?

**Молитися.** Моліться за мир і справедливість в Україні. Бог є Господом історії і Чоловіколюбцем. Його благодать перемінює найчерствіші серця. На Україну жорстоко напали, захопили її територію, травмували її суспільство. Нехай Бог наверне серця тих, хто чинить насильство. Господь дивом визволив народи Радянського Союзу, який розпався без кровопролитних воєн. Нехай Бог оберігає Україну та її людей від лиха.

**Відстоювати правду.** Дізнавайтеся факти та боріться з брехнею та російською дезінформацією у світі постправди. Діліться правдою з іншими. Світ не повинен відвертатися, ви не повинні відводити погляд. Шукайте і діліться правдою, яка визволяє та дає мудрість.

**Підтримувати.** Україна переживає глибоку гуманітарну кризу. Людям на лінії розмежування бракує найнеобхіднішого — питної води, пального, продуктів харчування, одягу, ліків. Загоюйте рани. Допмагайте жертвам цього жорстокого вторгнення. Пожертви можна скласти за посиланням — <https://ukrarcheparchy.us/donate>.

**Нехай Божий дар людської гідності і свободи захищають та шанують в Україні і по всьому світі!**

*Вислухай, Боже, мою молитву,*

*і не ховайся від благання мого...*

*Я мучуся у моїм болі*

*й хвилююся ворожим гуком,*

*Залиши на Господа твою турботу,*

*і він тебе підтримає*

(Пс. 55, 1,2-3, 23)

**+Борис Гудзяк**

Митрополит Української Католицької Церкви у США, Архиепископ Філадельфійський

Голова Відділу зовнішніх зв'язків Української Греко-Католицької Церкви

**+ Павло Хомницький, ЧСВВ**

Єпископ Стемфордської єпархії

**+ Венедикт Алексійчук**

Єпископ Чиказької єпархії святого Миколая

**+ Богдан Данило**

Єпископ Пармської єпархії святого Йосафата

**+ Андрій Рабій**

Єпископ-Помічник Філадельфійський

**A READING FROM THE SYNAXARION  
FOR THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS  
Cheesefare Sunday<sup>34</sup>**

On this day, Cheesefare Sunday,<sup>16</sup> we commemorate the banishment of Adam, the First Creature, from the Paradise of Delight.

Our Holy Fathers appointed this commemoration before the beginning of Great Lent to demonstrate how beneficial the medicine of fasting is to human nature and how shameful are gluttony and disobedience by an example of the results of each. They set before us the example of Adam, the first formed man. Skipping over the detailed account of the innumerable things made for him in the world, they give a clear, case-in-point demonstration of how many evils he suffered — and hence introduced into our nature — from neglecting to fast for only a short time. Furthermore, they show that the first precept of God given to mankind was the ideal of fasting. By not keeping this precept but yielding instead to his stomach, or rather to the serpent-deceiver by the agency of Eve, Adam not only failed to become God, but he also brought death upon himself and communicated this sickness to the entire human race. In order to remove the first Adam's indulgence, the Lord fasted forty days, thus obeying the commandment of fasting. This was the origin of the forty-day Fast of Great Lent. It was instituted by the Holy Apostles so that, if by means of Great Lent we keep the Fast, unlike Adam who did not, we might again enjoy the incorruptibility that he lost.

The purpose of the Holy Fathers was to include in the *Triodion* a concise account of the deeds wrought by God from the beginning of time to the end. Adam's disobedience and subsequent fall from the delight of Paradise are the cause of everything relating to us. In today's commemoration of the fall, the Holy Fathers develop the theme of disobedience so that we might avoid it and strive not to be immoderate in anything.

Adam was fashioned by the hand of God on the sixth day. He was honored with the Divine Image through God's breathing life in him. He at once received the commandment not to eat the forbidden fruit but transgressed it after living in Paradise for all of six hours and was consequently banished. The Jewish historian Philo says that Adam spent a hundred years in Paradise. Others say seven days or years, because of the dignity of the number seven. It is believed that it was the sixth hour of the day when Adam stretched out his hand and touched the fruit. It was also at the sixth hour on the sixth day that the new Adam, Christ, stretched out His hands on the Cross, in order to remedy the first Adam's ruin.

Theologically, Adam had been created in a state midway between corruption and incorruption so that he could obtain whichever of the two he would freely choose. God could have made him sinless, but He wanted the accomplishment to belong to Adam's free choice. Hence, He gave the law that he might eat of all plants except one, meaning, perhaps, that he could comprehend intellectually the knowledge of God's power which comes from the contemplation of all things created, but not the knowledge relating to God's essence. In other words, God permitted Adam to ponder and examine attentively with his *nous* [intuitive intellect or receptive mind] the various elements and different properties of Paradise and hence to glorify God, for this is true delight, perhaps even to scrutinize his own nature. On the other hand, he was not to seek [by way of *dianoia*: deductive intellect or reasoning-cogitating mind] knowledge concerning God and what He is in essence, or where and how He produced the universe from non-existence. But Adam, leaving the rest aside, sought instead to examine and understand God. And as he was overly curious about the exact essence of God, and being yet imperfect — very simple and a mere babe in such matters — he fell, Satan, through Eve, having put into his mind fantasies of becoming God.

The great and divine [John] Chrysostom says that the tree of disobedience held something of a double meaning: Paradise was on earth, a material environment, and was also both intelligible and perceptible, just as Adam was midway between corruption and incorruption. In other words, Paradise was both a geographical place as well as a state of being. In saying this, the saint remains faithful to the scriptural passage without insisting on a literal interpretation.

Some say that the tree of disobedience was a fig tree, surmising this from the fact that Adam and Eve used its leaves to cover themselves immediately upon realizing their nakedness. This is why Christ cursed a fig tree, for having been the cause of the transgression. Actually, it does have a kind of resemblance to sin: first it has the sweetness of the fruit, then the coarse texture of its leaves, and finally the stickiness of its milk. Some

thinkers imagined that tree to be Adam's marital relations with and "knowledge" of Eve, but this is not a correct interpretation.

In any event, after Adam transgressed, he put on mortal flesh, received the curse, and was banished from Paradise. The order was given to guard its gate with a flaming sword. Adam sat opposite Paradise and wept over his loss of so many blessings for neglecting to fast for just a short time, and the entire human race descending from him has shared the same fate.

Such was the case until He who fashioned us had mercy on our nature. Thus, to Satan's ruin, He was born of the holy Virgin and led an exceptionally virtuous life, since He was God. He indicated the Way by fasting and humility, which were the opposite attributes of those of Adam. Thus, artfully outdoing the devil, who had deceived us, He brought our nature back to its former dignity.

The purpose of the God-bearing Fathers is, by means of the *Triodion*, to present the themes of all these events. They begin by recounting the events of the Old Testament, using the words of the Holy Prophet Moses and other prophets, and most of all the Holy Prophet David, the lessons from the books of Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Psalms appointed to be read throughout the *Triodion*. The first of these events is the Creation and Adam's fall from the delight of Eden, the subject of today's commemoration. Then they continue with the rest, interspersing some themes from the period of Grace — Church history and the lives of the saints, namely the miracle of St. Theodore and the *koliva*, the restoration of the holy icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and the memories of Saints Gregory Palamas, John Climacus, and Mary of Egypt.

Then they recount in order the events of the New Testament. The first of these is the Annunciation, which, by God's ineffable providence, almost always falls during Great Lent. They continue with the events of the raising of St. Lazarus, of Palm Sunday, and of Great and Holy Week. During Holy Week, the Holy Gospels are read aloud in Church in their entirety, and the events of the Holy and Saving Passion of Christ are extolled in detail through the Church's hymnology. Then, with the book of the *Pentecostarion*, they relate the events of the Resurrection up to the Descent of the Holy Spirit. During this period, the book of Acts is read in Church daily, recounting as it does how the Gospels' preaching was accomplished and how it led to the assemblage of all the saints. The Acts are read in the period after Pascha because the miracles recounted serve to confirm the Resurrection.

Therefore, it is because Adam neglected to fast just once that we have had to endure such woes. The commemoration of this is appointed now at the beginning of Holy Lent so that by remembering how many evils the failure to fast has brought upon us, we might welcome Great Lent eagerly and gladly keep the Fast. For by means of it, we can attain the

*theosis* — deification — of which Adam fell short. We shall attain this only by lamenting and fasting until the appointed time that God shall visit us. For it is not easy or feasible to regain what we have lost in any other way.

We should know that today we ask forgiveness from our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we may begin the race in the stadium of Great Lent unhindered by any animosity. As long as we live self-centered lives, we cannot forgive our neighbor — our ego will not allow it. Once our lives are God-centered, however, we are able to forgive others as God forgives us. Let us remember that God’s mercy and forgiveness to us is often hidden in our mercy and forgiveness to others. Our Lenten journey is not an isolated or individual affair but a “family” event. Therefore, we are reminded in today’s reading from the Holy Gospel that unless there is mutual forgiveness between one another, there can be no true reconciliation with God.

We should also know that this Holy and Great Lent is like a tithe of the entire year. Due to our laziness, we do not choose to fast and abstain from evil all the time. Knowing this, the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers gave us this Lenten tradition as a kind of harvest-time for our souls. It provides us with the opportunity to remove whatever unseemly deeds we have committed throughout the year by now becoming contrite and humble through fasting. For this reason, we ought to keep it all the more strictly. We should keep the other three fasts as well, the Holy Apostles’ Fast, the Holy Dormition Fast, and the forty-day Holy Nativity Fast. The Holy Fathers instituted four periods of fasting corresponding to the four seasons of the year.

However, they ascribed greater prestige to this forty-day fast of Great Lent because of the Lord’s Passion, and because Christ likewise fasted forty days and was glorified. The Holy Prophet Moses received the Law after fasting forty days, and the Holy Prophet Elijah and the Holy Prophet Daniel likewise fasted, as did all those who were approved by God.

Therefore, fasting is something beneficial. Adam proved this by doing the opposite. It was for this reason the Holy Fathers placed here today’s commemoration of Adam’s exile from Paradise.

**O Christ our God, through Your ineffable compassion, make us worthy of the Paradise of Delight, and have mercy on and save us, for You alone are the Lover of Mankind. Amen.**

<sup>34</sup> Translated from Greek in *Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion*, edited by Fr. David (Kidd) and Mother Gabriella (Ursache), First Edition, (Rives Junction, MI: Holy Dormition Monastery Press, 1999), pp. 33-37.

<sup>16</sup> According to the practice of the ... Church, today is the last day to consume dairy products, eggs, and fish. If questions or problems arise concerning fasting, one should always consult his spiritual father for guidance.