

:: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann on the Sunday of Forgiveness ::

*An excerpt from **Great Lent**, chapter 2: Preparation for Lent*

Finally comes the last day [of preparation for Lent], usually called "*Forgiveness Sunday*," but whose other liturgical name must also be remembered: the "*Expulsion of Adam from the Paradise of Bliss*." This name summarizes indeed the entire preparation for Lent. By now we know that man was created for paradise, for knowledge of God and communion with Him. Man's sin has deprived him of that blessed life and his existence on earth is exile. Christ, the Savior of the world, opens the door of paradise to everyone who follows Him, and the Church, by revealing to us the beauty of the Kingdom, makes our life a pilgrimage toward our heavenly fatherland. Thus, at the beginning of Lent, we are like Adam:

Adam was expelled from paradise through food;

Sitting, therefore, in front of it he cried:

"Woe to me.... One commandment of God have I transgressed, depriving myself of all that is good...."

Then answered the Savior to him:

"I wish not my creation to perish;

I desire it to be saved and to know the truth;

For I will not turn away from him who comes to Me....

Lent is the liberation of our enslavement to sin, from the prison of "this world." And the Gospel lesson of this last Sunday (Matt. 6:14-21) sets the conditions for that *liberation*. The first one is *fasting*-- the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal, the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of flesh and matter over the spirit. To be effective, however, our fast must not be hypocritical, a "showing off." We must "appear not unto men to fast but to our Father who is in secret." The second condition is *forgiveness*-- "If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness: the return to unity, solidarity, love. To forgive is to put between me and my "enemy" the radiant forgiveness of God Himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless "dead-ends" of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a "breakthrough" of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

Do you have an announcement for our bulletin? Please call or email Fr. Andrew no later than Friday each week for anything to be included in Sunday's bulletin.



**St. George Orthodox Church
of Spring Valley**

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Sunday, March 13, 2016

Sunday of Forgiveness and Cheese-Fare

Matins: 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy: 10:00 AM

Epistle Reader: Nicole Wiltse

Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: Ron and Dottie Malooley

Next Sunday's Coffee Hour: OPEN

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8): O Compassionate One, Thou didst descend from the heights. Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion. Thou art our life and our resurrection, O Lord; glory to Thee!

Troparion of St. George the Great Martyr (Tone 4): Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion for Forgiveness Sunday (Tone 6): O Thou who guidest to wisdom, and givest understanding and intelligence, the Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor, strengthen my heart and grant it understanding, O Master. Give me word, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

THE EPISTLE

For the Sunday of Forgiveness

O chant unto our God, chant ye! Clap your hands, all ye nations

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans (13:11-14:4)

Brethren, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day, not reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. But as for the one who is weak in faith, receive him, but not for disputes over opinions. For one believes he may eat anything; but the weak person eats herbs. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to be the judge over the servant of a stranger? To his own master he either stands or falls; but he will be made to stand; for God is able to make him stand.

THE GOSPEL

For the Sunday of Forgiveness

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (6:14-21)

The Lord said to His Disciples: If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

"FASTING IS AN ADMIRABLE THING, BUT IT IS MORE ADMIRABLE TO FORGIVE INSULTS. THROUGH FASTING A MAN IS PREPARING FOR CHARITY, BUT BY FORGIVING INSULTS, A MAN SHOWS CHARITY. FASTING PRECEDES FORGIVENESS, BUT FASTING ALONE DOESN'T NOT SAVE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS."

ST. NICHOLAI OF ZICA

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

This week's events and services:

- **Today:** Children's Sunday school downstairs, immediately after Holy Communion.
- **Monday, March 14: The First Day of Great Lent.** Compline with the Canon of Repentance, 6pm. *On the first day of Lent, it is traditional to sing part of St. Andrew of Crete's beautiful Canon of Repentance. This service is a prayerful meditation on some of the great and not-so-great figures of the Old and New Testaments, and how they compare with our own souls.*
- **Wednesday, March 16:** Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm.
- **Friday, March 18:** First Akathist Service to the Theotokos, 6pm. *Our good friends from Nativity of our Lord Catholic Church will be joining us in attendance this evening, to observe and pray with us one of our most beautiful services of the year.*
- **Saturday, March 19:** Vespers, 6pm.
- **Next Sunday, March 20: Sunday of Orthodoxy.** Matins, 9am and Divine Liturgy, 10am. Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: OPEN. *All of the kids and teens of our church are welcome to participate in our annual procession of icons at the end of the Liturgy. Bring an icon from home if you would like!*
- **Also next Sunday:** Parish Council meeting after Liturgy and coffee hour.

Lenten Fasting: TODAY is Cheese-Fare Sunday, which means the traditional Lenten fast begins tomorrow: no meat, dairy products, or eggs until Easter Sunday. Of course, do your best for the Lord but use your own judgment. Pregnant or nursing mothers, along with anyone who is particularly ill or weak need not keep the entire fast. Please see Father if you have any questions.

Lenten Confessions: Now that the season of Lent has begun, this would be a good time to meet with Father for the sacrament of Confession. I will be available before and after evening services, and after Sunday Liturgy. I recommend Confession at least four times a year, and as a bare minimum, once during Lent. (And of course if you'd prefer to go to another priest, that is perfectly fine. Just let me know!)

February Financial Report

Operating Income: \$ 2071.00
Operating Expense: \$ 5323.36
Bank Balance: \$ 7016.03

Please continue your faithful tithes and offerings to our church!

Any questions, please see our treasurer, Anyisia Medamar.