The Sunday of Forgiveness, the last of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent, has two themes: it commemorates Adam’s expulsion from Paradise, and it accentuates our need for forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of Great Lent. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ’s death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from others, but should link us to them with ever-stronger bonds.

The Sunday of Forgiveness also directs us to see that Great Lent is a journey of liberation from our enslavement to sin. The Gospel lesson sets the conditions for this 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 the 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” (vv. 16-18).

The second condition is forgiveness—“If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you” (vv. 14-15). 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.

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Sunday of Forgiveness
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Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese :: www.antiochian.org
Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest :: www.antiochian.org/midwest
Fr. Pat’s Daily Reflections :: touchstonemag.com/daily_reflections
“Homilies from All Saints” podcast :: ancientfaith.com/podcasts/allsaints
Please send bulletin submissions to Kim A. at Keggers854 [at] aol [dot] com by Wednesday of the week

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March 1, 2020 – Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheese Fare)
Venerable-martyr Eudokia of Heliopolis; Venerable Domnina of Syria; Martyrs Markellos and Anthony of Pamphilia; Venerable Agapios of Vatopedi monastery on Athos;
Venerable David of Wales, bishop of Menevia

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4)
Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: “Death hath been spoiled! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!”

Kontakion of Cheese Fare 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 Master. For behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.

Note to Visitors and Guests: Welcome! We are glad you have joined us today for worship! If this is your first visit to All Saints, please take a moment to fill out a visitor’s card at the greeter’s stand before you leave. The greeter also has Liturgy Books for use during the service, if you desire one. We hope you will join us for brunch following this morning’s service.
Troparion of All Saints (Tone 4):
Adorned in the blood of Thy martyrs, throughout all the world as in purple and fine linen, Thy Church through them doth cry unto Thee, O Christ God: Send down Thy compassion upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls.

Prokeimenon Psalm:
Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Sing praises to our King, sing praises. O clap your hands, all ye nations.

Epistle Reading: The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans 13:11-14:4

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:14-21

This Week at All Saints

Monday & Tuesday, March 2 & 3: Canon of St. Andrew, 7:00 PM
Wednesday, March 4: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, 7:00 PM
Thursday & Friday, March 5 & 6: Canon of St. Andrew, 7:00 PM
Saturday, March 7: Vespers, 7:30 PM

Volunteers

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<td>Domitille N.</td>
<td>Azizh C.</td>
<td>Kathleen W.</td>
<td>Chris &amp; Nancy L.</td>
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News and Announcements

Today is Cheesefare Sunday, the last day for dairy products and eggs. As always, pregnant and nursing mothers, and anyone else with serious health conditions should not try to keep the fast. If in doubt, feel free to talk to Fr. Pat for advice on fasting.

Pre-Sanctified Liturgies: Lenten meals will be held after services on Wednesday night. Please see the sign-up sheet posted on the door to sign-up to bring something.

Lenten Coin Boxes: Once again please remember to fill the coin boxes that are supplied by the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, in accordance with our archdiocese, to feed the hungry around the world. Please use these boxes all during Lent and turn them in at Pascha to be blessed. Please replace the coins with a check marked “For the Poor” in the memo line, both for the sake of our priest, who has to lift the boxes for a blessing, and for our treasurer, who has to carry them to the bank. Thank you and God bless you for remembering the poor during our fasting season! If you have any questions, contact Pat K.

Please mark your calendars! Sunday, March 8th, following church school SOYO will be meeting at the Wagner house from 1-4 PM. The teens will be learning more about the persecution that our Christian brothers and sisters face around the world.

“Whatever you may do for your brother, being hungry, and a stranger, and naked, not even the devil will be able to despoil, but it will be laid up in an inviolable treasure.”
~ Saint John Chrysostom