



# **Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**

**March 6th , Tone 5, Matt. 6:14-21**

## **Forgiveness Sunday**

### **Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 4**

When the women disciples learned from the angel, the joyous message of Thy Resurrection. They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overturned, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

### **Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4**

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

### **Kontakion for Forgiveness Sunday, Tone 6**

O Master, Teacher of Wisdom, Bestower of virtue, who teaches the thoughtless and protects the poor: strengthen and enlighten my heart. O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to Thee: have mercy on me, a transgressor, O Merciful Lord.

On this Sunday the Holy Church focuses on the memory of the exile of our ancestral parents from paradise for disobedience and intemperance in order that through misfortune it more evidently emphasizes the importance of the presented ascetical effort for all, and in the loss of the blessedness of paradise it specifies a subject, worthy of repentance and tears.

The example of the ancestral parents shows us the whole weight of sin and its fatal consequences and teaches us to avoid intemperance as the beginning and the source of sin, and to turn to repentance, as to the unique means of deliverance from the anger and judgment of God.

"Adam was cast out", sings the Holy Church on this day, "from the sweetness of paradise, when with bitter desire he broke the commandment of the Master, and he was condemned to work the earth from which he himself had been taken, and then to eat his bread with much toil; therefore let us love abstinence, that we may not weep outside of paradise as he did, but enter into it"

"Let us keep the fast offering tears, contrition and alms",

"Let us still the passions of our soul, let us subdue the rebelliousness of the flesh";

"Girding ourselves for the good spiritual struggle of the fast" and "Taking up the armor of the cross, let us fight the enemy, having faith as an invincible wall, and prayer as a breastplate, and alms as a helmet, and fasting as a sword, which cuts away all evil from our heart";

With this tender, touching voice the Holy Church calls us as her children from the present day to forget everything that up to now occupied our thoughts and feelings and distracted them from "the one thing needful"; to reject everything from itself that serviced temptation and occasion for sin, that raised in us impure thoughts and feelings, that originated in us sinful desires and currents; to postpone for a while even our ordinary affairs and occupations, in so far as they soon distract our thoughts from a reverent deepening in our very selves, they irritate our heart with feelings of anger and envy, dreams of ambition and covetousness; to make itself thirsty for long prayerful vigils, fervent prayers and prostrations; to ignite in oneself an unshakable desire, voluntarily and vigilantly, thanking and glorifying the Lord to now enter the opening door of the saving fast, repentance and spiritual renewal; to kindle in itself a firm determination to pass the holy days of the fast fervently, reverently and joyfully. In the gospel and epistle readings, the Holy Church presents its final teachings about the spiritual efforts of the actual fast.

The Fast should begin with the forgiveness by the people of their trespasses and their rejection of the deeds of darkness consisting of an unfeigned fulfillment of the rules of keeping the fast and not to judge their neighbor. Reconciliation with all, the pardon and remission of all our transgressions, is the first, main and necessary condition of our reconciliation with God, cleansing and correcting our sins. Without this reconciliation with all, without this putting an end to mutual conflicts and enmity among us, it is impossible to draw near to the Lord. It is impossible even to begin the holy journey

## **Announcements and Activities**

**Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew**— Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, at 7PM.

**Presanctified Liturgy**— Wednesday, at 6PM. Those desiring to receive Holy Communion should not eat or drink after their lunchtime meal. A light lenten supper will be served after the Liturgy. Luci has a signup sheet out so we can contribute. Thank you.

**Liturgy for St. Theodore w/ blessed wheat**— Saturday, at 9AM.

**Saturday Great Vespers**— on Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

**Sunday Divine Liturgy**— 10AM.

**Church School/Adult Ed.**— will next meet on Sunday, March 13th.

**Coffee Hours**— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Kyle, Erika and Luci. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our bagles and coffee week.. Today is the last day on which fish, eggs and dairy may be served at Coffee Hour until Pascha (fish is allowed on March 25, Annunciation and April 17th, Palm Sunday. Of course we are also foregoing Meat throughout Great Lent. In addition, as of tomorrow, we must avoid serving anything with dairy products in it: MILK chocolate, Sour CREAM, Muffins with EGGS, etc. A blessed lent to all.

**Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)**— battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic**. **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Our Vladyka Benjamin**— battling on-set parkinsons. **Tsige Roman and Abraham**— I know we are always mindful of Tsige, but please continue to pray for the work and for Ethiopia, torn by civil war, with all the problems that go with a regional terror. **Reposed Jonathan T. George and Alesis**, Brother and Daughter of Peter and Irene S. **Matushka Ioanna R. reposed. Matushka Priscilla, ill. Anya J**— a longtime friend of the parish who is ill. **Stephen F.**— battling back pain. **John F.**— battling cancer. **Archpriest Anthony**— battling cancer. **Julie**— sister of Kathy M., battling health problems. **Rhoda's requests for Douglas and Kayana. Reposed Constance**— the mother of Andrew F. **Will**— reposed, Michael T.'s brother-in-law. **Reposed Vadim. Christian**— undergoing some medical testing. **Daniel**— a friend of our parish's florist, battling end of life illness. **Stacy**— hand surgery. The reposed— **Novice Nonna, Robbie**— cancer.

to Lent and repentance.

From here came a custom of Orthodox Christians to ask each other forgiveness, and is the same as when they go to the graves of the dead for this purpose and is why the day is called in popular speech forgiveness and farewell 1). It is self understood, that not only with our mouth, but also mainly with our heart we should utter a full, complete forgiveness not only for something which insults us, but also for all that is hateful and offends us, all that condemns and curses us, all that makes every evil for us. We should try to bow with true - Christian humility for reconciliation and for which the devil, according to his evil and slander, had the misfortune to offend us in word and deed. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: "We should not forgive one another only by words, but with a pure heart so that our memory of the evil will not turn the sword against us. Our having been offended will not cause us evil as much as we cause ourselves, feeding the anger in ourselves and exposing ourselves to condemnation by God for that. If we love those who offend us, then evil will be turned on its very head, and it will continue to suffer severely; but if we will be indignant, then we shall continue to suffer all the same even in spite of ourselves".

(taken from The Year of Grace of the Lord, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

### **From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY FORTY-TWO MARTYRS FROM AMMORIA**

They were all commanders of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus. When the Emperor Theophilus lost the battle against the Saracens at the city of Ammoria, the Saracens captured the city and enslaved many Christians. Among them were these commanders. The remaining Christians were either killed or sold into slavery. The commanders were thrown into prison, where they remained for seven years. Many times the Moslem leaders came to them. They counseled and advised the commanders to embrace the Islamic Faith, but the commanders refused to listen. When the Saracens spoke to the commanders, saying, "Mohammed is the true prophet and not Christ," the commanders asked them: "If there were two men debating about a field and the one said, 'This field is mine,' and the other, 'It is not, it is mine,' and one of them had many witnesses nearby saying it is his field, and the other had no witnesses, but only himself--whose field would you say was?" The Saracens answered: "Indeed it is his who had many witnesses!" "You have judged correctly," the commanders answered. "That is the way it is with Christ and Mohammed. Christ has many witnesses: the Prophets of old, from Moses to John the Forerunner, whom you also recognize and who witness to and about Him, whereas Mohammed witnesses to himself that he is a prophet and hasn't a single witness." The Saracens were ashamed and again they tried to defend their faith in this manner: "Our faith is better than the Christian Faith, as is proved by this: God gave us the victory over you and gave us the best land in the world and a kingdom much greater than Christianity." To this the commanders replied: "If that were so, then the idolatry of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hellenes, Romans, and the fire-worship of the Persians would be the true faith, for at one time all of these people conquered the others and ruled over them. It is evident that your victory, power and wealth do not prove the truth of your faith. We know that God, at times, gives victory to Christians and, at other times, allows torture and suffering so as to correct them and to bring them to repentance and purification of their sins." After seven years they were beheaded, in the year 845 A.D. Their bodies were then thrown into the Euphrates River, but they floated to the other shore, where they were gathered and honorably buried by Christians.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, Compiled and edited by St. Nikolai Velimirovic)

*"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)*