

## Forgiveness Sunday

### Matthew 6:14-21

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (KJV)

The Great Fast is beginning in God's Holy Church. The journey to Pascha is intended to be life-changing and life-renewing. Sin is to be cast from our lives. Believers are to increase in unity with Jesus Christ.

Great Lent is to be embraced as a period for growth in the Lord Jesus Christ. People are to complete the Lenten journey as more like the Lord Jesus Christ than they were at the beginning.

The present Gospel speaks about the treasures that are in the heart. Believers are to lay up treasures in heaven which are lasting in value. Great Lent is the time to carefully assess what or Who is most prized in the heart.

Fasting enables believers to remove from daily life all that is not of Jesus Christ. The Lenten journey involves Christ becoming a greater part of each person's life.

Joy increases in the heart, mind and soul as the believer increases in the life in Christ. The Church offers the nourishment and teachings of Christ to guide the believer in the journey to Pascha.

The investment a believer makes in Great Lent determines the degree of benefit that will be experienced. Great Lent is an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Fasting and prayer help the believer to sharpen the focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven. During Great Lent believers will have ample opportunity to think about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lenten services keep the believer focused on addressing personal sin and on repentance. Repentance is completely voluntary in the Church. The benefits of repentance are immeasurable.

Great Lent occurs every year. The Church has found continuing value in Great Lent. Attentive believers find enrichment in the content of the Divine services throughout the Lenten journey.

Forgiveness is a major theme in the present Gospel. Forgiveness is central to the Lord's Prayer recited throughout the Christian life. Forgiveness keeps relationships healthy and reduces animosity.

Sincere repentance comes from the heart and frees the person from burdensome thoughts. Husbands and wives have healthy marriages when forgiveness abounds

Parents need to be forgiving of their sons and daughters during the days of life. Sons and daughters improve their relationships with their parents with frequent forgiveness.

Healthy parishes know the value of practicing forgiveness. The Sunday of Forgiveness draws attention to the value of forgiveness at the beginning of Great Lent.

The practice of mutual forgiveness among parishioners and the parish priest enables the Lenten journey to begin well. God's goodness and mercy are necessary for forgiveness to dwell in the heart, mind and soul.

The journey from the Baptismal font to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life offers countless opportunities for forgiveness. Wise believers are quick to forgive others.

Believers attentive to the Lord's Prayer realize that forgiveness from God and forgiveness in personal relationships are interrelated. Life is difficult. Forgiveness makes some of the difficulty manageable.

May the Good and Merciful God make this Great Lent beneficial for each person entering the journey with good intent. May God's love abound in each heart laying up treasures in heaven.

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Forgiveness Sunday. Great Martyr Theodore the Tyre. February 17/March 2, 2025, Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic