

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)

God's Holy Church has arrived at Forgiveness Sunday. The journey of Great Lent and towards Pascha is about to begin. Believers are to begin the journey by being at peace with each other and with the Lord God.

The Lenten journey starts with forgiveness as believers seek forgiveness from each other and from the Lord. Forgiveness from the Lord is related with granting forgiveness of others in our daily lives

Being forgiving of others and being forgiven by the Lord God results in personal peace. The Lenten journey is intended to result in growth in Jesus Christ. Believers are to increase unity with Christ throughout the journey.

Today the Church focuses on forgiveness. Today believers are to assess their personal goals. Believers are to seek security through laying up treasures in heaven.

Earthly treasures are subject to being stolen or corrupted. Treasures in heaven are secure. Maintaining healthy relationships strengthened by forgiveness is treasured in heaven.

Believers are called to fast during the Lenten journey. The fast is a voluntary undertaking to grow in Jesus Christ. The fast involves attention to what is eaten and attention to personal thoughts and actions.

The goal of Great Lent is to lead a God-pleasing life. That which is not of God is to be removed from life. Sins are to be rejected and repelled. Believers are to repent, seek God's forgiveness and unite with the Lord.

Confession and Communion unite the believer with the Lord. Confession and Communion restore the believer's life to a state of health in Jesus Christ. Joy is experienced when health in Jesus Christ occurs.

Jesus Christ brings joy to the heart, mind and soul. The journey through Great Lent to Pascha leads to immeasurable joy. The Cross is integral to the journey as believers die to sin and rise with Christ.

Jesus Christ is present with believers throughout Great Lent to help deal with personal crosses. Jesus established the lasting example in the way He went to the Cross. Believers draw strength from Jesus Christ's example.

Jesus Christ is within reach of each person through prayer. Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Mysteries. Divine services held during Great Lent make Jesus Christ fully accessible to believers.

Pascha may seem a great distance away. The Church provides nourishment for believers on each day of the Lenten journey. Attention to the soul is to increase during Great Lent.

Great Lent is the time to purify the soul. Cleansing the soul through repentance, Confession and Communion restores health to the soul. The Church provides Divine services for the cleansing of sins.

Each person decides the degree of personal participation in Great Lent. The greater the participation, the greater the benefit to the believer. Families are strengthened when members take Great Lent seriously.

Parishes are stronger when members treat Great Lent with seriousness. The Lenten journey is completely voluntary. The world changes for the better with each Great Lent.

Communities having churches honoring the Great Fast improve each day. When the fast is honored, less sins are committed. Less crimes are committed. Relationships are improved.

The world has much darkness. The Church offers the Light of Christ to counter the darkness. Jesus Christ's Light burns brightly during Great Lent. Jesus Christ's Light eradicates the darkness in personal lives.

Christ's Light cuts through the barriers to growth in Christ. Barriers to growth in Christ collapse when a believer fasts, prays and chooses to repent. The Church is present with the serious believer every step of the journey.

Resolve today to follow Jesus Christ. Embrace the Lenten journey. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. (Mt.6:33) Welcome with joy the arrival of Great Lent.

Forgiveness Sunday. Holy Martyr Nicephorus of Antioch.

February 9/22, 2026. Father Rodney Torbic