

## Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)

Adam sat before paradise lamenting  
and weeping over his nakedness: “Woe is me!  
By evil deceit was I led astray and now I am in exile from glory. Woe is me! . . .  
no more shall I look upon the face of the Lord my God and Maker,  
for I shall return to the earth from which I was taken.”

Vesper Hymn  
Cheesefare Sunday

Adam was driven out of paradise because in disobedience he partook of food;  
but Moses was granted a vision of God because he had cleansed the  
eyes of his soul by fasting.

If, then, we long to dwell again in paradise,  
let us abstain from all needless food.  
If we desire to see God, let us like Moses fast forty days.  
With sincerity let us persevere in prayer and intercession;  
let us still the sinful passions of our soul;  
let us subdue the rebellious instincts of the flesh...  
O Son of God, Lifegiver, in You we set our hope:  
count us worthy of a place with the angels,  
by the intercessions of the Mother who bore You, O Christ,  
of the Apostles and the Martyrs and of all the Saints.

Matin Hymn  
Cheesefare Sunday

In the above hymn who is “exiled” from paradise?

Who represents the return to God?

Why was Adam driven out of paradise?

Why was Moses granted a vision of God?

What two motivations should lead us on our Lenten journey?

1. a longing to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. a desire to \_\_\_\_\_.

What will help us reach our goals?

Let us abstain from

Let us, like Moses, fast for

Let us persevere in

Let us still

Let us subdue

In whom do we set our hope?

How is our hope of personal communion with God expressed? It is expressed by the prayer that our Lord might count us worthy of..

Who intercedes for us in our spiritual striving during Lent?

1. What are your feelings and thoughts when you feel separate from God?
2. What are your feelings and thoughts when you feel close to God?
3. What steps will you take to renew your personal communion with God during Lent?

### **God's Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a central theme of Cheesefare Sunday. "Turn to God, so that He will forgive your sins!", the Apostle Peter cried out to the people at the Temple (Acts 3:19). The Apostle John taught Christians: "If we confess our sins to God, He will keep His promise and do what is right: He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing" (1 John 1:9)

**Read 1 John 3:19-24, a passage entitled "Courage before God."**

How do we know that God is greater than our conscience and that He knows everything (v. 20)?

When do we have courage in God's presence (v. 21)?

What does God command us (vs. 23)?

What is the status of one who obeys God's commands (vs.24)?

**Read Matthew 6:14-21, which is the Gospel reading for Cheesefare Sunday.**

What is necessary if God is to forgive us (vs. 14)?

What about fasting?

What about riches (vs. 19-20)?

What is a good indication of where our riches are (vs. 21)?

1. Jesus speaks about God's forgiveness of us and about our forgiveness of one another. What has forgiveness meant in your life?
2. Why does Jesus instruct us to fast in private? What possible temptations or dangers of fasting do His words warn against?
3. What do Jesus' words about riches have to do with Lent? What kind of riches can we store up in heaven during Lent?

## **About Fasting The Time Has Come!**

Cheesefare Sunday is the last day on which the eating of dairy and egg products is allowed. The next day, Pure or Clean Monday, Great Lent begins a period of fasting from meat, fish, dairy, and egg products. Great Lent has come!

### **Origins of the Lenten Fast**

In the earliest days of Christianity, only two days of fasting were designated prior to Easter (Friday and Saturday). Later the entire week of the Lord's coming to Jerusalem, His arrest, trial, and passion was set aside for fasting. By the fourth century the period of fasting had been extended an additional forty days in imitation of Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness before His temptation (Mt. 4:1-2)

Strict fasting in the ancient Christian tradition meant eating no food at all during the day, or it meant eating sparingly of either dry foods or boiled vegetables and grains. Strict fasting is possible today in monasteries, in agricultural settings, and for some individuals living in modern society. Of course fasting regulations do not apply to people who are ill, in hospitals, to expectant or nursing mothers, to small children or to others following special diets under a doctor's care.

### **Choosing a Fasting Discipline**

All Orthodox Christians should fast, but each person and each family must prayerfully choose and commit themselves to a fasting discipline that is suitable to their circumstances *and that they can keep*. Some choose to fast strictly (no meat or dairy products) throughout Lent. Many choose to fast strictly only during the first week of Lent and during Holy Week. Others choose to fast from meat throughout Lent but from meat, fish, and dairy products only on Wednesdays and Fridays. Still others follow other forms of fasting disciplines. Children usually fast with moderation and care in order to receive the necessary nutrients for their growing bodies. Fasting entails not only the quality of foods but also the quantity of consumption. The key words should be moderation and simplicity of meals.

**Read Romans 13:11-14:4 which is the Epistle reading for Cheesefare Sunday**

What should we stop doing?

What should we do?

How should those who fast treat those who don't?

1. What are your plans for fasting during Lent this year?

2. Outline here your plans for other aspects of Lenten discipline:

Prayer:

Reading the Bible:

Worship and Holy Communion:

Almsgiving (philanthropy and serving others):

3. Why should Lent be seen as a time of joy rather than gloom? How can we maintain joyful spirits during Lent?