



**Cheese-Fare Sunday: The Sunday of Forgiveness,
And the Commemoration of Adam's Exile from Paradise**

The holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we had fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

The Resurrection Dismissal Hymn and Kontakion of the Tone of the Week

Dismissal Hymn of the Resurrection

FROM on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One, to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of the Resurrection

HAVING risen from the tomb, Thou didst raise up the dead and didst resurrect Adam. Eve also doth dance for joy because of Thy Resurrection, and the ends of the world celebrate Thine arising from the dead, O Greatly merciful One.

Kontakion. Plagal of Second Tone

O THOU Guide unto wisdom, Bestower of prudence, Instructor of the foolish, and Defender of the poor: establish and grant understanding to my heart, O Master. Grant me speech, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not keep my lips from crying unto Thee: Have mercy, O Merciful One, on me who have fallen.



† THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

ADAM'S MERCIFUL EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN

The Orthodox Fathers of the Church always convey to us consolation, even in the toughest of times, especially when Adam was expelled from the Garden. We hear from the Fathers, who speak with one voice, that Our Lord Jesus Christ personally kept in touch with the fallen sons of Adam until the Annunciation of His Incarnation to Our Lady the Theotokos. He stayed with us. He never turned His back to us. Every step that He took after Adam and Eve's Ancestral Sin was a deliberate effort to bring us back to Him as soon as possible.

As St. Irenaeus writes in *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* § 12 "But man was a child without perfect understanding and for that reason was easily deceived by the Deceiver." In the Garden, Christ went looking for His lost child, Adam. He kept calling, "Adam, where art thou?" "And they heard the voice of the Lord God (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ before He became man for our sakes) walking in the afternoon; and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the garden" (Gen. 3:9 LXX). The Lord Jesus was calling out to Adam in the hope that Adam would say, "Lord, I did what You told me not to do. Forgive me." But the Lord did not hear the words of repentance that He had wished to hear from Adam. Adam, having lost the garments of uncreated light and power with which he and his helpmeet had been clothed when they were created, now aware of their nakedness, said nothing. He hid himself, as did his wife "from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the garden." Had Adam repented, he would have died in the garden. As unrepentant, it was the Lord's mercy that cast him and his wife out of the garden. What mercy of the Lord was that? Had they, having chosen not to repent, been allowed to stay in the garden, they could have eaten from the Tree of Life. Then their unrepentance would have become immortal; their immortal unrepentance would have shut the door of salvation. They never could have cried, "Lord have mercy!"

Outside the garden, Adam, seeing now what he had lost through his stubborn failure to repent, finally, in bitter tears, did repent. This merciful expulsion from the garden kept the opportunity for repentance alive for Adam and his descendants. The Lord also spoke with Cain before and after he had slain Abel. He even "Set a mark on Cain so that no one that found him might slay him" (Gen. 4:13 LXX). As He spoke with Cain, so He continues to address us in many ways. The Lord has never, ever, stopped asking us to repent and run to Him. He says, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel" (Mk. 1:15) and, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee;

Cheese-fare Sunday: The Sunday of Forgiveness.

how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen [doth gather] her brood under [her] wings, and ye would not! (Luke 13:34). Blessed is the man who finds and enters the door of repentance.



OUR ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ OF BELARUS