

GREAT LENT

Great Lent is the strictest and longest fast. It starts seven weeks before Easter, lasts 40 days and is also associated with the week of Christ's suffering, which reminds us of the last events of the Lord's earthly life, especially His suffering, death and burial.

During the Great Lent, each week is dedicated to an event or a Saint, whose deeds call for humility and repentance.

March 14, 2021 – Cheesefare Sunday (Forgiveness Sunday) – this is the day before the beginning of Lent, which discusses the topic of forgiveness.

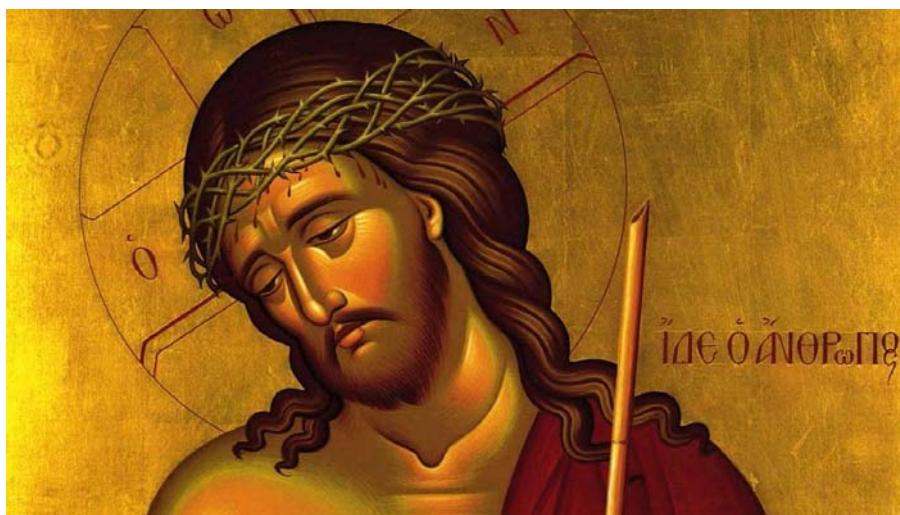
Forgiveness is a sign of Christian virtue and a condition for a good Christian life.

Cheesefare Sunday is a day of mutual forgiveness.



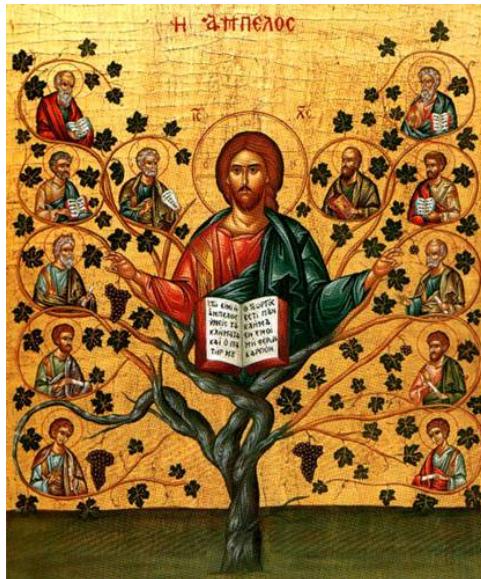
"If you forgive men their trespasses, and your heavenly Father will forgive you, if you do not forgive men their trespasses, and your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matt. 6: 14-15).

Monday, March 15, 2021 - Beginning of Great Lent



Lord, thank You that I am alive to see another season of Lent. Help me take some time to appreciate my Christian journey and find ways I can improve my relationship with You and others through this fast. Give me the wisdom and focus to find the things I need to change and the discipline to change them. Amen.

Saturday, March 20, 2021 – First Saturday of Great Lent - Commemoration of the Miracle of Kollyva wrought by Saint Theodore the Tyro. Holy Communion.

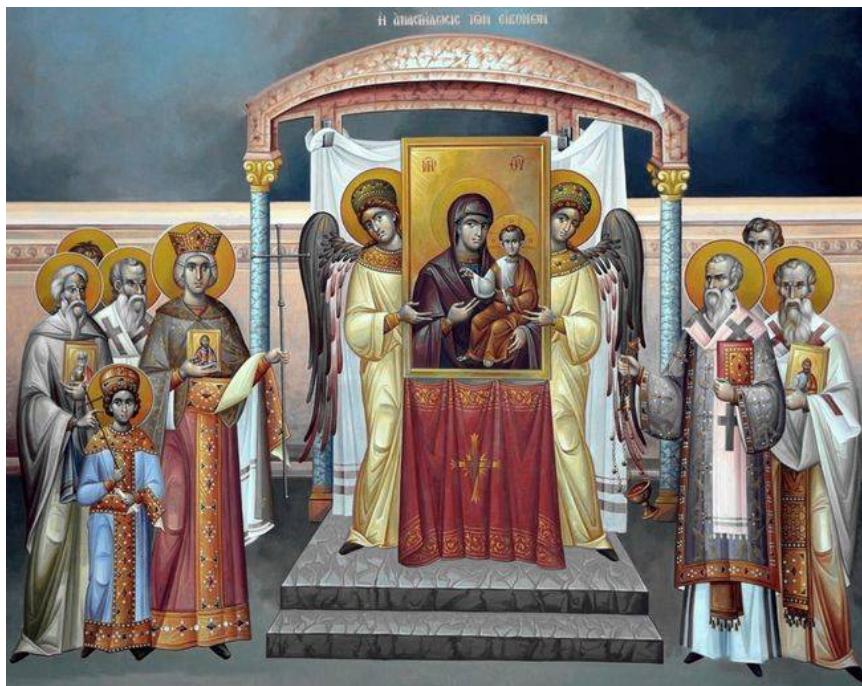


I am the vine, you the branches that abide in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If any man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as the rod, and is withered" / John. 15: 5, 6.

Holy Communion is the main artery through which the miraculous, all-sanctifying graceful grace of God enters us and makes us, the sticks, the living branches of the living, eternal vine.

March 21, 2021 - First Sunday of Great Lent (Orthodox Sunday or Celebration of Orthodoxy)

This Sunday is associated with the memory of the victory of Ecumenical Church over the iconoclast heresy and the restoration of icon-worship.



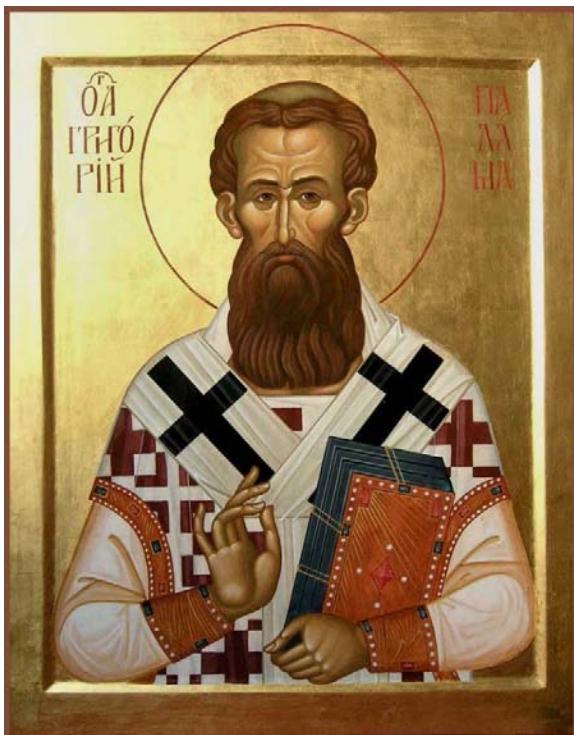
March 25, 2021 (Thursday) – Holly Annunciation



On this day the Christians remember the joyous event for all: an angel of God brought the Virgin Mary the news of the soon-to-be-seen Savior and that she would become the mother of the Son of God.
"Rejoice, gracious one! Blessed are you among women!"

The Blessed Virgin Mary accepted the good news with humility and indescribable joy.

March 28, 2021 - Second Sunday of Great Lent - dedicated to St. Gregory Palamas

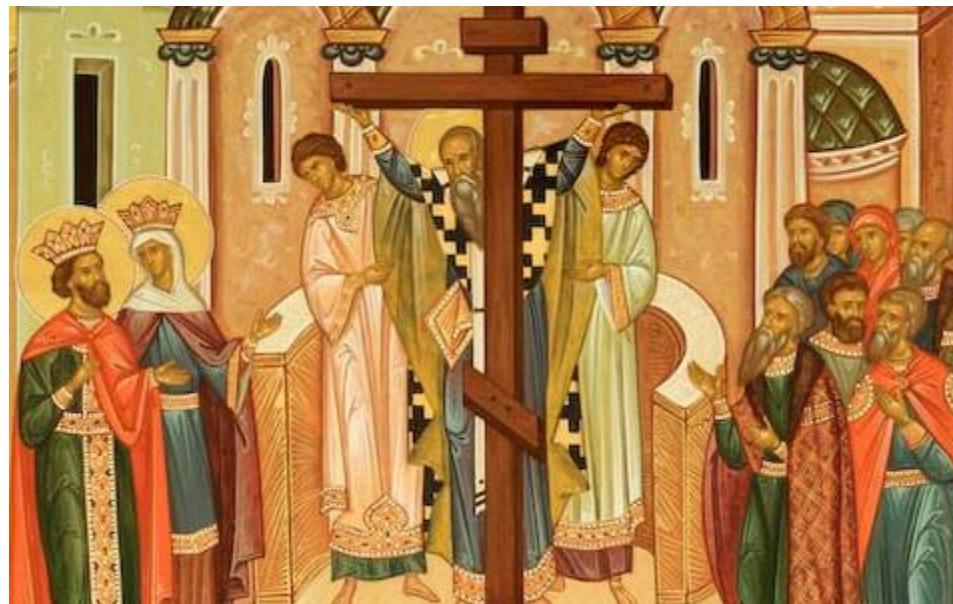


God is light and absolute holiness. Communion with Him leads to spiritual enlightenment and gives the soul unspeakable blissful joy. Communion with God is achieved through prayer, moral cultivation, spiritual deeds and holy silence.

In this way, the great mystic fathers of the Eastern Orthodox reached communion with God and holiness. One of them is the celebrated St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki - theologian and a great supporter of the Orthodox faith, who developed the doctrine of fasting and prayer.

April 4, 2021 - Third Sunday of Great Lent - dedicated to the Holy Cross

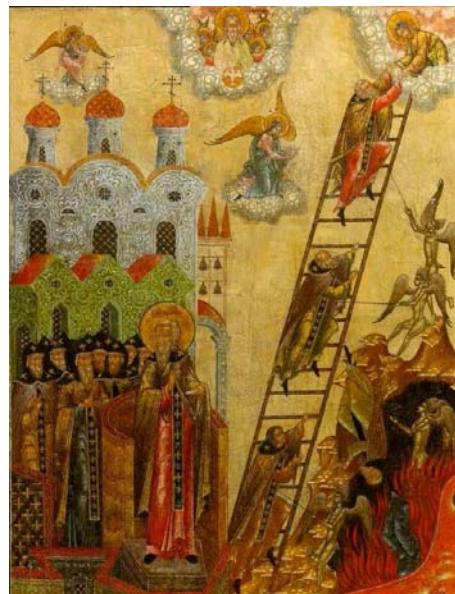
On this Sunday, the church reminds believers of the suffering and death of the Savior.



This is one of the days when we bow before one of the brightest symbols of our faith - the Holy and Life-giving Cross. It is taken out of the altar and placed in the center of the temple.

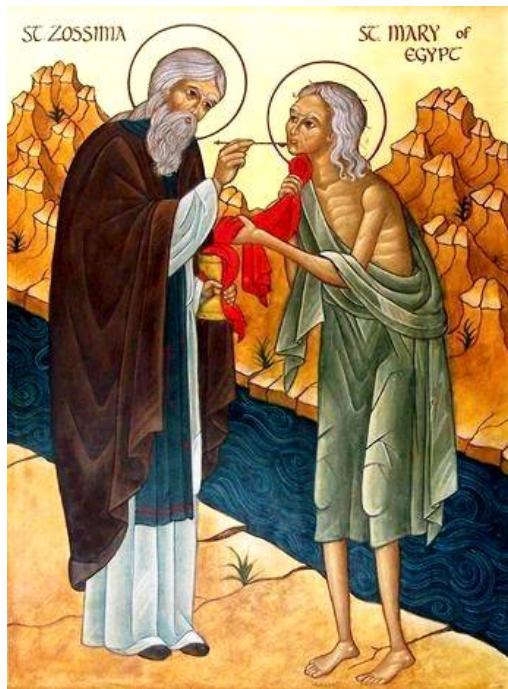
It is believed that in the middle of fasting, this ritual gives Christians the spiritual strength to walk to the end of the path of purification until the day of Resurrection.

April 11, 2021 - Fourth Sunday of Great Lent - dedicated to St. John Climacus, who wrote a book The Ladder of Divine Ascent, which tells us about the good works that lead to the throne of God.



The Ladder of Divine Ascent is an established ladder from the earthly to the heavenly life and shows at its top the establishing God...

April 18, 2021 - Fifth Sunday of Great Lent – dedicated to the Venerable Mary of Egypt

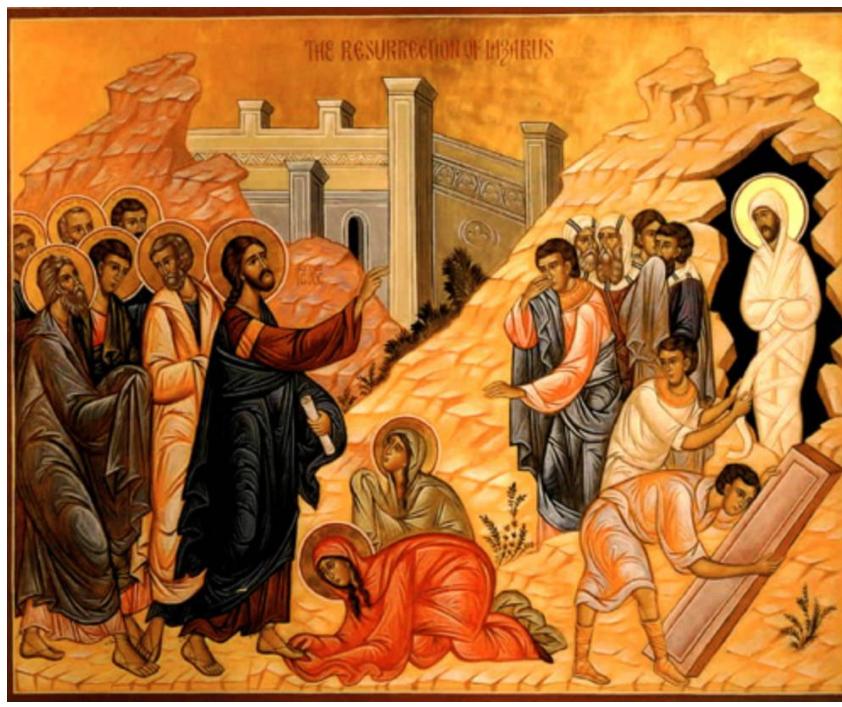


The sermon on the Fifth Sunday of Lent speaks of the example of repentance of the harlot and the holiness of the hermit, who accepted to languish in the wilderness in order to receive forgiveness.

With the Body and Blood of Christ, the reverend monk Zosimus partakes of her only once in her life, who meets her among the sands of the Egyptian desert. What she confessed to him, what he instructed her, remains hidden.

However, the example of the greatest harlot in the life of the Church, as some call her, remains open. And the hope that even for the greatest sin there is repentance and forgiveness, which God gives to everyone, who has repented from the heart.

April 24, 2021 - Lazarus Saturday - dedicated to the Resurrection of Lazarus.



St. Lazarus is one of the Disciples of Christ and brother of Martha and Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus brings out of the tomb and brings back to life.

After the Resurrection, Lazarus lived another 30 years and died as Bishop of Keaton (Cyprus). The beginning of the Easter celebration is set on Lazarus Saturday. The Church glorifies Christ as a Resurrection and Life, Who even before His sufferings and death, with the Resurrection of Lazarus, established the foreshadowing of the Universal Resurrection of mankind.

April 25, 2021 - Sixth Sunday of Great Lent - Palm Sunday



The sixth Sunday (Palm Sunday) is dedicated to the solemn entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover.

He sows to all of Jerusalem with His inherent simplicity, humility, and even poverty.

They call Him "King of Israel", sing to Him "Hosanna", wave twigs and spread their clothes before Him, thus expressing their sincere respect and love.

Let us try to live in such a way, as to keep in ourselves the joy and delight of welcoming the Savior, who comes for us and for the world. Let us not allow this adoration and amazement at His divine sacrifice to leave our hearts. Let us banish doubt, hesitation and despondency and remember that once He has come and is received with sincere joy in our souls, He will be with us "all the days until the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Holy Week (April 26 - May 2, 2021)

The Holy Week begins after Palm Sunday. During this time the Christians honor the sufferings of Jesus Christ in the last days of His earthly life, when the Savior atones for human sins through sacrifice.

The Church defines each day of this week as great and holy and with special services celebrates the way of Christ to Golgotha, His sufferings and His death on the Cross and His burial.

The Holy Week is the last of the Great Lent and ends with the feast of Easter.

Holy Monday (April 26, 2021) - Jesus Christ entered the Jerusalem temple and saw it full of merchants. The turning of the temple into a market place angered the Son of God and He overthrew the tables of the merchants and drove them out.

Holy Tuesday (April 27, 2021) - Jesus spent in moral guidance. Then He told the parables of the ten virgins awaiting the coming of the Lord and of the talents. According to the church canon, the day is set aside for humility.

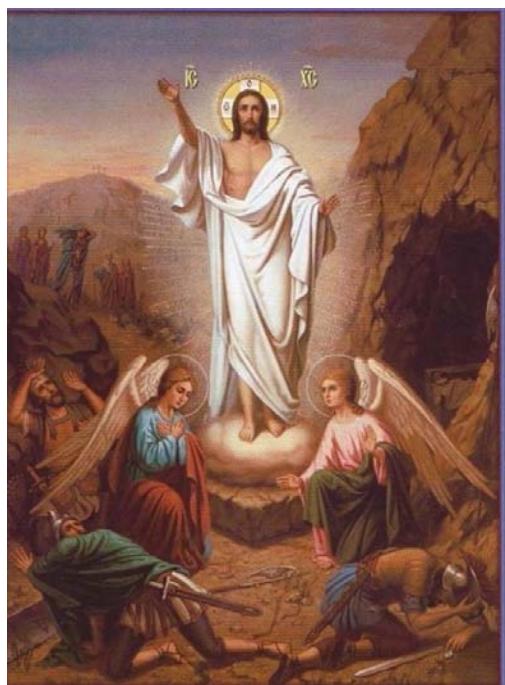
Holy Wednesday (April 28, 2021) – This day is considered a day of betrayal, because Judas negotiated with Jewish leaders the betrayal of Christ against 30 pieces of silver.

Holy Thursday (April 29, 2021) – This day is associated with the Last Supper, when the sacrament of Holy Communion was instituted. After supper, Christ took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to His Disciples, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body!" Then He raised His cup and said, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my New Testament blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." After the sacrament, Christ told His Disciples that He would be betrayed. Shortly afterwards, He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He remained until His capture.

Good Friday (April 30, 2021) – Jesus Christ was crucified and it is dedicated to His suffering. On this day the church suggests an extremely strict fast - no food is allowed, only water is drunk.

Holy Saturday (May 1, 2021) - Associated with the mourning of Jesus Christ by His mother and the myrrh-bearing women. At midnight, the Resurrection of Christ is proclaimed with a festive service and a bell ringing.

The Resurrection of Christ (Sunday, May 2, 2021)



It is no coincidence that the Resurrection of Christ is called "Easter". It is a Celebration of Victory over Death and decay.

With the greeting "Christ is Risen" and the answer "Truly He is Risen", Orthodox Christians greet each other for 40 days after Easter.

May the light of Christ's Resurrection banish the darkness of sin from our lives and fill it with works of God's righteousness, love, and mercy.

Let us pray to God to give us health, peace, prosperity and salvation!

**Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!
Happy Easter!**