

PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER VIRGIN MARY
(Pokrov)

February 13th

The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is itself preceded by its own liturgical preparation. "Because of the deep psychological insight by the Church into human nature. Knowing our lack of concentration and the frightening 'worldliness' of our life, the Church knows our inability to change rapidly, to go abruptly from one spiritual or mental state into another. Thus, long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to meditate on its significance. Before we can practice Lent we are given its meaning. This preparation includes five consecutive Sundays preceding Lent. On this first Sunday the Gospel reading is about Zacchaeus the taxcollector. It tells how Christ brought salvation to the sinful man and how his life was greatly changed simply because he "sought to see who Jesus was" (Lk 19:3). The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through lent towards Easter. It is the first movement of salvation.

If repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican; this is enough to ensure your salvation.

Saint Peter of Damascus

We ask you to pray for peace throughout the world, and for the victims of war. Please pray for those suffering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and other diseases, as well as the health care professionals, family members, and others who are caring for them. Please remember also in your prayers all those in the military who are serving our country throughout the world.

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Tone 5
St. Martinian Venerable

Our venerable father, Martinian, Hugemen, died in the year A.D. 415 in the reign of Theodosius the Younger. - St. Zoe and St. Photina, Venerable Women

February

13 Sunday of the Prodigal Son
19 First All-Souls Saturday
20 Sunday of the Second Coming of Christ (Meat-Fare)
27 Forgiveness Sunday (Cheese-Fare)
28 Beginning of the Holy Forty Days Fast

This is some supplemental material that I found this past week.

Joe

ASK A PRIEST ANYTHING

Can a priest administer the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders?

Can a deacon do weddings?

Only a bishop can administer Holy Orders. This was a problem in communist countries, where priests were named by the Holy See to do many things as a bishop to keep the local diocese going, but could not get state approval for those priests for consecration as a bishop. Eastern priests routinely administer Confirmation/ Chrismation at baptism, reception of a convert, or giving this Mystery to a baptized Catholic who never received the sacrament.

Latin priests can administer Confirmation to converts at Easter, and can do it the rest of the year but only with permission from the bishop. Chrism can only be consecrated by the bishop and must be used for this sacrament. A Latin deacon can witness a wedding in the Latin Rite and can celebrate a Baptism. Eastern deacons may not celebrate any sacramental Mysteries whatsoever. The only exception is Baptism, and that can only be done in an emergency when a priest is not available. Priests are the ordinary ministers for all sacraments in all of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

The current Byzantine Liturgy and the Roman usus antiquior have a point of unity in their respective observances of Pre-Lent.

In Constantinople, in either the sixth or seventh century, a week of Pre-Lent developed gradually, and was commonly called “The Week without Meat”. It is likely that this is in imitation of the Church in Palestine, which calculated Lent in forty days, Monday through Friday, over eight weeks. Byzantines did not need the extra days, since they counted the forty days continuously. So the compromise to the eight weeks of Palestine was to add a week of gradual fasting prior to the Great

Fast. Now commonly known as “Cheese-Fare Week”, during this week Byzantines begin fasting from meat but continue to eat cheese and other dairy products right up until “Pure Monday”, the first day of the Fast (two days before the Roman “Ash Wednesday”). There are four Sundays within Byzantine Pre-Lent. The “Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee” calls us to consider our life, and to repent of our sins for repentance is the door through which we enter the Holy Forty Days Fast. The “Sunday of the Prodigal Son” calls us to “come to ourselves” and return to the Father, who eagerly awaits our return. The “Sunday of the Last Judgment” reminds us that while the Lord’s mercy is immeasurable even He does not forgive those who do not repent. And, finally, on “Forgiveness Sunday” we remember Adam’s expulsion from Paradise and the proper method of fasting (don’t put on a gloomy face).

This time of Pre-Lent is also used to ease us into fasting. The week before the “Prodigal Son” is totally fast free (we eat meat, even on Friday). The following week we fast from meat on Wednesday and Friday (the “Sunday of the Last Judgment” is also known as “Meat-Fare”). During the week just prior to the Fast (“Cheese-Fare Week”) we start our abstinence from meat, but we continue to eat cheese and other dairy products. The full fast from both meat and dairy begins with the first day of Lent.

Terror seizes me when I think of the unquenchable fire, Of the bitter worm, the gnashing of teeth, and soul-destroying hell; yet I do not turn to You with true compunction. O Lord! Lord! Before the end strengthen Your fear within me! --