



*Expulsion of Adam and Eve
from Paradise*

St. Cyril Orthodox Church

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**+ March 1, 2020 +
Forgiveness Sunday**

Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise
Martyr Eudoxius of Heliopolis (+160)

Keep your mind and your heart away from false teaching. Do not even speak about Christianity with people who have been infected with false thoughts; do not read books on Christianity that were written by heretics.

- St. Ignatius
Brianchaninov

SERVICES FOR THIS WEEK:

Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday: Great Canon of St. Andrew, 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Presanctified Liturgy, 6:00 p.m.

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY – In the Church's traditional fasting rule, beginning tomorrow we fast from meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products until Holy Pascha. For those who are unable to keep this fast – children, nursing mothers, the elderly, the sick, etc. – the rules of the fast may be relaxed, following the counsel of your spiritual father. However, we should all make an effort to keep the fast in obedience to the Church, to the extent that we are able. *And let us remember to keep our eyes on our own plate.*

MEMORIAL SATURDAY – On Saturday, March 14, we will have a special Liturgy to commemorate the departed. If there are names of departed Orthodox Christians that you would like remembered, please submit them to Fr. Benedict by email or text by Friday, March 13.

TREASURER UPDATE – February offerings were \$10,507. Expenses were \$11,142.

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How God Reveals Himself

Even though He is incomprehensible, God has not left us without knowledge of Himself and His works. Through the Holy Spirit He has revealed His will to righteous particular human beings who were pure in heart. These are called prophets and apostles. According to St. John Chrysostom, it ought to be that every human being would willingly hear the Word of God, but since we have become mired in sins and pleasuring the flesh, God in His mercy has left us His Revelation, given to us by particular human beings, the prophets and apostles.

There is both natural and supernatural Revelation. When philosophers marveled at his wisdom, St. Anthony the Great would answer thus: “I read two books – Nature and Scripture – and through them I come to know God the Creator.”

The first of these books clearly teaches us to contemplate the might, the wisdom, and the mastery of the Lord and His care for the world, while Scripture, supernatural Revelation, also reveals His attributes and His intentions for the world and for men. Even the pagans, who do not know the Scriptures, are not left without the knowledge of God that is placed into their hearts, handed down to them through Tradition from their ancestors, and gathered from

contemplating nature. For this reason they will have no excuse on the day of Judgment: *For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse* (Rom. 1:20).

Without supernatural Revelation, however, God would remain for us a distant Power, mighty but obscure. God's direct intervention alone has revealed His own Self to us. How did this Revelation take place? St. Basil the Great gives this description of the state of prophecy: "In what manner did the pure and illumined souls prophecy? Having become, as it were, a mirror of Divine action, they revealed in themselves a clear, unmingled image undarkened by fleshly passions. For the Holy Spirit abides in everyone, but reveals His own power in those who are pure of passions, not in those in whom the masterful part of the soul [*the mind*] is darkened by sinful impurities . . . When the soul, having dedicated itself to every labor of virtue, through strong love for God constantly preserves in itself unsullied the remembrance of God, impressed upon it, and in this manner makes God as it were to live in itself, then, having become divinely inspired, through strong effort and unutterable love for God, it is made worthy of the gift of prophecy, because God bestows Divine power and opens one's spiritual eyes to the understanding of whatever visions it pleases Him to impart."

"Some say that the prophets prophesied in ecstasy, so that the human mind was blotted out by the Spirit. But it is contrary to the promise of God's overshadowing to make mad those who are divinely inspired, so that when they are filled with divine instructions they would take leave of their reason and, while bringing benefit to others, themselves obtain no benefit from their own words. And in general, is it in any way in accordance with reason that the Spirit of Wisdom would make a person like one robbed of his mind, and that the Spirit of Knowledge would destroy reason from within him? But light does not produce darkness; on the contrary, it arouses the power of sight given by nature. And the Spirit does not produce darkening in souls; on the contrary, it arouses the mind, cleansed of sinful stains, to the contemplation of the noetic."

– Fr. Daniel Sysoev (+2009)

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The Building Blocks of Orthodox Christian Worship

The liturgy is a sacred ACTION, that is, a series of *movements*, and not just readings and prayers. A community does not pray and worship God only with words, but with bodily actions and movements. Kneeling, lifting up the hands, bowing the head, prostrations, kissing, etc., are religious rites as old as humanity itself. They have been accepted into Christian worship because they are direct and natural religious expressions. In addition to these basic actions, there are several basic rites that we find in all liturgical services.

1. **Censing** – that is, burning incense. This rite existed in the Jewish Temple and in its predecessor, the Tent of Meeting, as well as being common in pagan worship. It is a natural symbol of religion: of its transformative power (the incense becomes a fragrance) and worship (as its smoke

goes upward). In Christian worship censing is prescribed either as an act of preparation and sanctification (for example, the Holy Table is censed before the bread and wine are set on it at the Divine Liturgy) or as an expression of sacred respect (for example, the censing of icons and of the people, recognizing each man and woman as an icon, or image, of God).

2. Processions and entrances. All liturgical services are virtually built after the pattern of a procession, that is, forward movement. Procession symbolizes and manifests the movements of man toward God, and the movement of God toward man; and the movement of the whole history of salvation towards its ultimate consummation in the Kingdom of God. For example, in the Divine Liturgy we see the entrance of the clergy into the Holy Altar (showing man's movement); and we see the bringing in of the bread and wine (a movement of sacrifice); and then the holy chalice being brought out for Communion (showing God approaching men, coming to be with us).

3. Light and darkness. Besides lighting candles before icons, there are also liturgical rites of light. The newly baptized person is given a lit candle to hold, as also are the newly-wed. The celebrants have candles in their hands during certain parts of the service, and the whole congregation at the funeral and memorial services. The liturgical rubrics prescribe that the church be illuminated at certain moments and darkened at others. All this manifests ritually the fundamental Christian opposition of light and darkness, holiness and sinfulness, joy and sorrow, death and resurrection. The light always stands for Christ who is the Light of the world, and for the enlightenment that He has brought to us: the knowledge of the True God, the possibility to reach Him, the gift of communion with Him.

4. The Sign of the Cross. This simple act is the essential rite of Christian blessing, expressing the Church's faith in the saving power of Christ's Cross.

5. Standing, sitting, kneeling, prostrating. The whole human being – body and soul – take part in worship, because the whole man has been assumed by the Son of God in His incarnation, and must be redeemed for God and His Kingdom. Therefore the various positions of the body in worship have a great significance. **Standing** is the basic position (“Let us stand aright!”) because in Christ we have been redeemed, given back our true human stature, risen from the death of sin and from the submission to the animal and sinful part of our nature. We were bent over with sin – but Christ has come to lift us up so that we can stand upright before Him. Thus the Church forbids any other position (kneeling, prostration) on Sunday, the Lord's Day, when we commemorate the Lord's Resurrection and contemplate the glory of the new creation. (*An exception to that rule is that we prostrate or bow down on Sundays when we sing the hymn to the Cross, “Before Thy Cross we bow down.”*)

Kneeling and prostrations, being rites of repentance, are reserved for the penitential seasons of the year, but are also prescribed as rites of adoration (before the Cross, the Holy Table, etc.).

Sitting is limited to the teaching parts of the services, such as the Old Testament readings at Vespers, and the longer readings from the psalms at Matins and Vespers. We always stand, however, for the reading of the Holy Gospel, and in the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ when the priest is standing in the church with the holy chalice.

– based on the writings of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in *Liturgy and Life* (1993)

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Remembered today:

Saint David, Bishop of Wales

St. David is said to have been the son of a Welsh chieftain. He lived in the latter half of the sixth century. After being ordained to the priesthood, he studied under a disciple of Saint Germanus of Paris and began missionary work in the surrounding area. Eventually, he settled in the southwest corner of Wales, at a place then called Menevia. There he founded and became the abbot of a monastery.

The monks and disciples of St. David read the lives of the desert fathers of Egypt and tried to follow them in their ascetic practices and everyday monastic life as much as they could. Manual labor and education were always encouraged. The food of the brethren was very simple and consisted of bread, vegetables, and water. Alcohol was absolutely excluded, and fish was given only in extreme cases and special occasions.

The abbot led the same simple life as his monks and worked as hard as any of them. All the community members wore simple clothes and all their belongings were held in common. The brethren attended very long church services every day. St. David himself, like many other Celtic saints, used to go to the river to read the whole Psalter, standing in cold river water even in winter. Any conversations, except for very necessary ones, were forbidden. The community had the custom of distributing food to those in need, to widows, the sick, the disabled, guests and pilgrims.

Eventually he was consecrated bishop of Menevia, afterwards known as Saint David's in his honor. He reposed in the Lord about the year 601 AD and, through the years, has been venerated as one of the greatest and most beloved saints of the British Isles.



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The man who is wrathful with us is a sick man; we must apply a plaster to his heart - love; we must treat him kindly, speak to him gently, lovingly. And if there is not deeply-rooted malice against us within him, but only a temporary fit of anger, you will see how his heart, or his malice, will melt away through your kindness and love - how good will conquer evil. A Christian must always be kind, gracious, and wise in order to conquer evil by good. - *St. John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt*

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Every Holy Church is a piece of Heaven upon the earth. And when you are in Church, you are truly in Heaven. Thus, when the earth crushes you with its hell, run to Church, enter within, and behold, you are within Paradise! If people bother you with their evil, take refuge in Church, and kneel before God, and He will take you under His sweet and all-powerful protection."

-*St. Justin Popovich (+1979)*