

Cheese Fare Week

This week received its name because the holy Church, gradually leading believers into the ascetical deeds (podvig) of the holy Lent, with the approach of Cheese Fare Week puts them on the last step of the preparatory abstinence by prohibiting the partaking of meat and permitting the partaking of cheese and eggs, in order to accustom them to avoid pleasant foods and without grief to enter the fast. In popular speech it is called butter week or shrove tide (maslianitsi) week. The holy Church calls it "the light before the journey of abstinence" and "the beginning of tenderness and repentance". Such a meaning of Cheese Fare Week is detailed and explained in its Divine services. Especially the canons and the stichera of these Divine services contain the praise of Lent and the representation of its saving fruits. During this week the Divine services enter into a closer relation with the Divine services of the Holy Forty Day Fast as the time of the latter approaches. Thus, the holy Church, highly honoring the time of the Holy Forty Day Fast as a sacred time for cleansing and immensely important for the Christian, with truly wise foresight and by sequence directs everything to lead us to "the most precious days of the Holy Forty Day Fast", cleansing us beforehand to prepare us for the fast and repentance.

In the sacred hymns for this week the Holy Church as mother appeals to all: "Let us now approach this week of cleansing before the all honorable sacred fast now at hand, illumining bodies and souls"; "Therefore let us hasten to cut off our evil deeds"; "Having come to the bright threshold of the holy fast, let us all with fervent hearts bring hymns of thanksgiving to Christ"; "Behold, all who love God, the door of repentance is already opened: come, let us hasten to enter therein, before Christ closes it, as if we were not worthy of it"; "The threshold to divine repentance is opened: let us fervently enter, purified in our bodies and observing abstinence from food and passions, as obedient servants of Christ, who has called the world into the Kingdom of Heaven"; "As we observe abstinence from meat and other foods, so let us also abstain from hatred of our neighbor, from lust and lies, and from all evil." "As we all stand at the entrance and threshold of the Fast let us all not begin this time of cleansing in a sinful way with self indulgence and drunkenness; but let us enter fervently with purity of heart that we may receive the immortal crowns and the worthy fruits of our labor".

To our deepest regret Cheese Fare Week is changed into a week of excesses in food and revelry in amusements because of our warped human understanding and customs. These earthly customs of ours which have transformed "the bright journey to the fast " and "the beginning of tenderness and repentance" into days of over eating and incontinenes, into days of every possible sort of soul destroying

worldly amusements and recreation, are directly the opposite of the good intention of the Holy Church and shameful for its true children 1).

The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian (see below for Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare Week)

O Lord and Master of my life. Do not give me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk, but rather give to your servant the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed are you for ages of ages, amen.

As pointed out on page 492 the **Divine services** during Meat Fare Week also has a relation to those of **Cheese Fare Week**, except for Wednesday and Friday (the Typicon (Ustav), the Order for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.). From the evening of Meat Fare Sunday until the Saturday of the Sixth Sunday, "the Octoechos Vespers and Matins Aposticha is dropped and instead we sing the Triodion ideomelon (samoglasen) stichera of the day. If the **Meeting of the Lord** occurs on a day within Cheese Fare Week we sing the **Canon and the Three-ode Canon (tripenets)** for that day either on the day before or the day after at Compline, but we sing the **Ideomelon**, placed in the Matins Aposticha, on the very feast at the "Praises" after the "Glory".

On Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare Week the service is similar to Great Lent, with some necessary differences. At Vespers: _) After "Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant Depart in Peace" sing the Troparia: "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos", at the "Glory" "O Baptizer of Christ" and so forth, with prostrations. b) Instead of the Ektenia "Have mercy on us, O God", say, "Lord, have mercy" 40 times. c) After the exclamation of the priest: "Blessed is He That Is", instead of the Many Years, read "O Heavenly King". d) Then do the 16 prostrations with the Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian: "O Lord and Master of my Life". e) After the prostrations read the "Trisagion Prayers" "Our Father" "Lord, have mercy, 12 times before the Dismissal. After Vespers immediately do the **Grand Compline**. But in it after "It is Truly Meet" do the Troparion, usually done at the Little Compline, the Troparion of the day and of the temple, and then: "O God of our Fathers", "As With Fine Purple Linen", at the "Glory" the Kontakion: " With the Saints give Rest", at the "Both Now and Ever" say, "Through the Prayers of all the Saints, O Lord"; except that this Compline ends with the Little Dismissal (and not with the prayer, "O Greatly-merciful Master"). The **Midnight Office** is done with prostrations. **At Matins:** _) Instead of "God is the Lord" and its Troparia we sing in the tone of Octoechos "The Alleluia" 4 times and the Hymns to the Holy Trinity of

the tone. b) Besides the Three Ode Canon, assigned for each day of Cheese Fare Week, on Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare we sing full canons; in which the hymns are in Three Odes (on Wednesdays the 3rd, 8th, and 9th, and on Fridays the 5th, 8th, and 9th odes), we do not sing the canons of the Octoechos and the Menaion, but we sing only the canon of the Triodion with the Three Odes, thus we completely drop the hymns of the Octoechos, the hymns of the Menaion we sing with other hymns on this very day (for example on Wednesday the 3rd ode of the Menaion is combined with the 1st., the 8th ode is with 6th, etc.). c) After the 9th Ode of the canon we sing the Exapostilarion of the tone of the Hymn to the Trinity. d) After "It is Good", instead of the Ektenia "Have mercy on us, O God", we say "Lord, have mercy", 40 times. e) After the exclamation of the priest "Blessed is He that is", instead of singing "The Most Honorable, Most Autocratic" and so forth, we read: "O Heavenly King, strengthen", and we do the 16 prostrations with the Prayer of St. Ephraim. The **Hours** are done in the Lenten mode with full prostrations. But during them: a) do not ring the bells, that is, usually there is a ringing of church bells before the Hours, but do not strike the bells separately before each Hour; b) do not sing, but read the Troparion "Hear in the morning" (in 1st hour) and similar Troparia in the other Hours. After the 9th hour immediately we begin the Typika. But they do not begin singing the Beatitudes, as on the days of Great Lent, but with the Typika Psalms "Bless the Lord, O my soul" and "Praise the Lord, O my soul", and then follow with the Beatitudes, quickly (without singing). After the Typika, we do the usual daily Vespers. But in it we must do the a) the Paramoedas, b) after the Ektenia "Have mercy on us, O God", three full prostrations, if there is no feast the next day. We don't do **Liturgies** on Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare Week. But if the Feast of the Meeting or the feast of the temple falls on Wednesday or Friday of Cheese Fare, we perform that service, except that at the end of Vespers, Matins and each of the Hours we do the three full prostrations; therefore although at the end of Vespers we also do three full prostrations, but Vespers is both Little Vespers and Great Vespers. In Matins on Wednesday and Friday if there is no feast day celebration, we do not sing the **Great Doxology**. If the Meeting falls on Friday (see page 64) we sing the **Three Ode Canon** for Friday on Wednesday of Cheese Fare Week at Compline. If these days fall on January 30 or February 24, see pages 57 and 95.

Under the 1882 decree of the Holy Synod, the Memorial Liturgy and Panikhida is to be served annually in all parish churches for the Liberator Tsar, Emperor Alexander II who reposed in God on **February 19** (see page 88). If February 19 falls on Wednesday or Friday of Cheese Fare Week the following reasoning may govern the performance of the service in this case. The service that is required by the above-stated decree of the Holy Synod, although it is a requiem service, but in character ought to differ in solemnity because it commemorates a

great benefaction for the Russian nation, the freeing of the peasants from serfdom. In other words, the February 19 service ought to be equal to the services of major feast days. The service for these days, in the case of such difficulties, is performed, generally speaking, in accordance with the heads of the temples. And according to such instruction of these heads, the service for a Feast of the Temple, if it falls on Wednesday or Friday of Cheese Fare Week, is performed on these very days (Typikon (Ustav) Chapter 28, On Temples), then February 19 also, if it falls on Wednesday or Friday of Cheese Fare Week, it is necessary to perform a full service, that is, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom with all the preparatory services for it. Drawing such a conclusion also authorizes the following circumstance. February 18, 1870, the day of the repose in God of the Emperor Nicholas I, fell on Wednesday of Cheese Fare Week, and the decree ordered the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and a funeral service to be performed on this Wednesday (Nikolsky, *Ustav*, page 573, example, 1st ed., 1894). So, in view of all that was said, the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is performed on February 19 when it falls on Wednesday or Friday of Cheese Fare Week, only if it does not contravene a special order of the supreme spiritual authority. Other features of the service (after the three full prostrations at the end of Vespers, Matins and each Hour, Paramoeas in the Sixth Hour, etc.) on Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare Week if the liturgy is performed see the Typikon (Ustav), Chapter 28, On Temples. (See Podol'skiia Eparch. Ved. (*Podolsk Diocesan News*), 1897, 5).

On Wednesday evening of Cheese Fare Week we sing the Little Compline, and we sing the Canon of the Menaion in the order for Saturday for the assigned Saint. On Friday at Compline we sing the Canon for the Departed and the Octoechos, in the order of the tone.

On Wednesday and Friday of Cheese Fare Week fasting is authorized and it is permitted to partake cheese, eggs and fish as well during all of Cheese Fare Week in contrast to the Jacobites (Copts), holding to the Monophysite heresy and fasting during Cheese Fare Week in memory of the fast of the Ninevites and the Tetradites, who received this name because they did not observe the fast on Wednesdays (Tetrada, the fourth day of the week) during the whole year, but fasted during Cheese Fare Week.

Note 1)

Really, by that measure as the Holy Church strengthens and ennobles its summoning voice for fasting and repentance, the world, as is known, today multiplies its amusements and entertainments, trying to take hold of the souls and hearts of the worshippers. How many seductions, temptations and dangers to the pure and undefiled heart are hidden under a seductive cover, even the so-called, innocent amusements and entertainments in these prelenten days! How many

Christian souls are turned, so to say, in their whirlwind up to self-oblivion! What darkness and gloom covers souls, betrayed by passionate, seduced hearts or to unrestrained inclinations of the flesh! How many people for whom it will be necessary to wail many and bitter tears over a few hours of immediate fun and ecstasy of feelings! Can the most cautious be praised if they regret nothing and repent nothing, if they lost none of the beneficial gifts of a pure and undefiled heart, if none have suffered in the calmness of his conscience? "Cheese Fare Week", teaches St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, "is the threshold and the beginning of the fast. That is why for the true children of the Church it is necessary to act all the more temperate in Cheese Fare Week than in the previous days, although they should always do so. However, will the Christian listen to the sweet odes of his loving mother?" "She ordains to revere these days more, but they commit more excesses; she commands to abstain, and they betray less control; she makes rules to cleanse body and soul, and they defile them more; she orders to lament committed sins, and they add more iniquities; she inspires God to be merciful, and they all the more anger the Most High God; she appoints a fast, and they overeat and revel more; she offers repentance, and they become more violent. A worthy voice of pity and weeping: "Sons are born and raised up, for you reject me! Listen, O heaven and inspire, O earth"! Children have turned away from their mother, Christians do not listen to the holy Church, those who renounced Satan and all his works are again converted to the works of an evil spirit, a lamentable and altogether terrible work! And whoever does not listen to the Church, is not the son of Church; whoever is not the son of the Church, Christ is not his shepherd; whoever Christ is not the shepherd, is not the sheep of Christ; whoever is not the sheep of Christ, vainly expects eternal life. Such are the results of a licentious celebration of Cheese Fare Week. The very celebration of butter week (maslianitsi) in the aforesaid manner is pagan work. The Pagan false god (the inventor of intoxicated drink) to whom they have established a special annual feast (so called Bacchanalia) was and spent these festivals in every dissolute abomination. Look, do not Christians also do the same in observing butter week (maslianitsi), and is the same for many of these festivals? I do not have to show it to you: see it in the light of the midday. And once again I will say, that whoever spends butter week (maslianitsi) in excesses, it becomes obvious that he is disobedient to the Church and shows himself unworthy of the name of Christian". "In order to spend Cheese Fare Week according to the Christian obligation, it is needful to act according to how the Holy Church commands during this time, namely: to drop every indecent care and to drop evil customs, remembering the Last Judgment and our ancestral Fall".

Saturday of Cheese Fare Week

On Saturday of Cheese Fare Week we commemorate "all the venerable Fathers and dedicated Mothers of the Lord, with the Hieromartyrs and Holy Women 1), known by name and unknown 2), "who brightly shone forth living ascetically". Just as leaders before fully armed warriors and already standing in the front lines speak about the exploits of old heroes and that encourages the warriors, so precisely the holy Fathers entering into the fast direct the holy men, who have shone in fasting, and teach that fasting is not only abstaining from food, but also in controlling one's tongue, heart and eyes (Synaxarion). In the hymns for this day the Holy Church appeals to her children: "Come, all ye faithful, let us praise the choir of the venerable fathers; "Looking with awe at their valor, let us strive to equal them in virtue"; "Their radiance appearing in our souls, and through the brightness of their signs they have shed their light spiritually upon all the ends of the earth" "They pray to the Lord for all the world to deliver us from the ancient curse, freeing us from torments". Praising those who are well-pleasing to God, the Holy Church, turning from the face of their children exclaims in a melodious voice to them: " O Fathers of all the world, who among those born on earth can recount the wonder of your way of life? What tongue can express your holy efforts in the Spirit and your sweat? Was it your feats of virtue, the exhaustion of your flesh, your struggles against passions, in vigils, in prayers and tears? Truly you are shown to be like angels in the world, completely destroying the demonic powers, performing strange and wondrous signs. Therefore pray, most blessed Ones, that we may receive the never ending joy". Together with these hymns the Holy Church, in view that this Saturday follows the commemoration of the Sunday of the Last Judgment, turning to us exclaims: "Let us cleanse ourselves, brethren, from all defilement of flesh and spirit, let us light the lamps of our souls by our love for the poor, not devouring one another by curses. For the time is nigh when the Bridegroom shall come to reward all according to their works. In the coming of the wise virgins, may we enter with Christ, crying to Him with the voice of the thief: Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom".

Kontakion, tone 8

**As preachers of piety repressing impiety,
You explained the assembly of the God-bearing Fathers
Making them shine to all under the sun.
By their prayers, keep all who glorify and magnify Thee in perfect peace,
Singing to Thee, O Lord, Alleluia.**

Epistle: (of the day) Rom. 14:19-26; sel. 115 (for the Fathers) Gal. 5:22-26, 6:1; sel. 213. **Gospel:** (of the day) Mt. 6:1-13; sel. 16 (for the Fathers) Mt. 11:27-30; sel. 43.

Matins is performed with the Great Doxology.

1) The commemoration of some of them is celebrated at another time, and others are commemorated only on the present day.

2) In the service for this day we commemorate following holy men and women: - *Abbakyles* (Egyptian, 6th century), *Abramius* (Oct. 29), *Auxentius* (Feb. 14), *Agatho* (Mar. 2), *Acacius* (July 7), *Alonius* (June 4), *Anthony* (Jan. 17) and his disciples: *Nisthenor, the Sarmatian* (killed in 357 by robbers in Thebaid, Aug. 30), *Ammon* (Oct. 4), *Amonathas* (Egyptian desert dweller, Dec. 12), *Anubius* (June 5), *Aninas* (Mar. 18), *Antiochus* (Dec. 24), *Aris* (Dec. 19), *Arsenius* (May 8) and his disciple *Ammonius*, *Aphrodisius* (Dec. 24), *Athenodorus* (Dec. 29), *Apollos* (or Apolonius, March 31), *Achilles* (Jan. 17), *Athanasius* (Jan. 18 and July 5), *Athry* (June 8), *Ambrose* (Dec. 7), *Alexander* (Aug. 30 and Dec. 12), *Antipater* (June 13), *Amphilochius* (Nov. 2_), *Atticus* (Jan. 8), *Anatolius* (July 3), *Babylus* (Dec. 28), *Bassian* (Oct. 10), *Benedict* (Mar. 14). *Benjamin* (Dec. 29), *Bessarion* (June 6), *Basil* (Jan. 1), *Vitalis* (Apr. 22), *Vitymius* (or Vitimion, venerable one of Egypt, 5th Century, Dec. 24), *Gaius* (Dec. 31), *Gelasius* (Dec. 31), *Germanus* (May 12), *Gerasimus* (Mar. 4), *Gregory* (Jan. 10 and 25 and Nov. 17), *Gennadius* (Aug. 31), *David* (June 26), *Dalmatus* (Aug. 3), *Daniel* (Dec. 11 and see Oct. 9), *Dius* (July 19), *Dometius* (Mar. 8), *Dalmatou* (or Matou, Cilicia, 5th century), *Dionysius* (Oct. 5), *Diodochus* (Bishop of Photicus in Epirus, teacher of the church in the 5th century), *Eulabius* (Bishop of Caesarea, 4th century, Aug. 30), *Eulogius* (the Egyptian, 4th century), *Eusebius* (June 22), *Eustathius* (Feb. 21), *Euthymius* (Jan. 20), *Helladius* (the hermit of the cells in Egypt, Nov. 9), *Jerid* (divine), *Ephraim* (Jan. 28), *Epiphanius* (May 12), *Ennat* (all-hymned), *Zechariah* (Dec. 5), *Zoilus* (of the Skete, 5th century), *Zosimus* (Apr. 4), *Isaiah* (an Egyptian hermit, 5th century), *Elijah* (the ascetic of the Jordan, 4th century), *Hilarion* (Oct. 21), *Ischyron* (bishop, who died in peace, Nov. 23), *Ivestion* (Aug. 28), *Hyperechius* (Aug. 7), *Hesychius* (Jerusalem presbyter, 5th century), *Ignatius* (Dec. 20), *Hierotheus* (Oct. 4), *Hierax* (Nitrian hermit who died in 408), *John* (Mar. 30, Nov. 9 and 13), *Ireneus* (June 1), *Joseph* (June 17), *Juvenal* (or Juvenaly, June 2), *Jerome* (June 15), *Karion* (Dec. 5), *Coprius* (July 9), *Castor* (Aug. 12), *Cassian* (Feb. 29), his companion in Egypt. *German* (Bethlehem) and his contemporary *Cassiana*. *Theonas* (of the Skete), *Callistus* (June 20), *Xenophon* (Jan. 29), *Cyprian* (Aug. 31), *Clem* (or Clement, Nov. 25), *Cyril* (Mar. 18 and June 9), *Laurence* (May 10), *Longinus* (Nov. 17), *Lot* (Oct. 22), *Leontius* (Oct. 19). *Maximus* (Jan. 21), *Marcian* (Jan. 10), *Mark* (Mar. 5), *Macarius* (Jan. 19), *Martinian* (Feb. 13),

Malchus (Mar. 26), *Marcellus* (Dec. 29), *Milles* (who raised the dead), *Meletius* (Feb. 12), *Metrophanes* (June 4), *Michael* (May 23), *Moses* (Aug. 28), *Nilus* (Nov. 12), *Naucratius* (June 8), *Nikon* (of Mount Sinai, 5th century), *Nathaniel* (Nov. 27), *Nonus* (Nov. 10), *Nicephorus* (June 2), *Nectarius* (Oct. 11), *Nicholas* (Dec. 6), *Onuphrius* (June 12), *Horus* (Aug. 7), *Pambo* (July 18) and his disciple *Ammonium* (Jan. 10), *Paul* (Jan., Oct. 4 and Nov. 6), *Pachomius* (May 15) and his disciple *Silvanus*, *Palamon* (Aug. 12), *Proclus* (Nov. 20), *Palladius* (Bishop of Helionopolis, author of Lausiac History, 5th century), *Paphnutius* (an Egyptian Bishop and confessor), *Paternuthius* (July 9), *Passarion* (Aug. 11), *Petronius* (Sept. 4), *Peter* (Nov. 25), *Pinnuphrius* (Nov. 27), *Pitiron* (Nov. 29), *Poemen* (Aug. 27), *Pior* (June 17), *Porsyrius* (the Great), *Publius* (Apr. 5), *Psoes* (Aug. 9), *Rabulas* (Feb. 19), *Rufus* (Oct. 22), *Sisoes* (July 6), *Silvanus* (Palestinian, 4th century) and his disciples: *Mark* and *Zeno* (June 19), *Sabbas* (Dec. 5) and his disciples: *Agapetus*, *Anthimus* and *Dometian*, *Simeon* (May, 24, Sept. 1, Stylite of Cilicia, 6th century, and July 21). *Serapion* (Nitrian, 4th century), *Sophronius* (Mar. 11), *Spiridon* (Dec. 12), *Timothy* (Feb. 21), *Tithoes* (Aug. 26), *Tarasius* (Feb. 25), *Pharmuthius* (Apr. 11), *Flavian* (Feb. 18), *Phocas* (hermit of the Skete, then of Palestine, 5th century), *Phaidimus* (the divine, Bishop of Amisus, 3rd century), *Chariton* (Sept. 28), *Cherimon* (Aug. 16), *Theodore* (Apr. 22, Dec. 27 and of the Thurman, 4th century), *Theophanes* (Oct. 11). *Theodulus* (Jan. 14), *Theodosius* (Jan. 11) and his contemporary (from obedience to him settled in a tomb) the priest *Basil*, *Theoctistus* (Sept. 3), *Thalelaeus* (May 20), *Anastasia* (Mar. 10 and Oct. 29), *Vryaine* (of Nisibis, Aug. 30, see June 25) and her disciple *Thomaida* (of Nisibis), *Eupraxia* (Jan. 12 and July 25), *Euphrosyne* (Sept. 25), *Isidora* (May 10), *Julitta* (Tabenna, June 14), *Hiereia* (June 3), *Justina* (the wise), *Maria* (Feb. 12 and Apr. 1), *Marina* (heavenly wise), *Matrona* (Nov. 9), *Melania* (Dec. 31), *Platonida* (Apr. 6), *Pelagia* (Oct. 8), *Syncretica* (Jan. 5), *Sara* (the Libyan, 4th century, July 13), *Thais* (Oct. 8), *Febronia* (June 25), *Theodota* (Nov. 1), *Theodora* (Sept. 11 and Dec. 30), *Theodula* (of Tabenna, a flame of fire in her way of life, died in 410).

S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0494-8
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