

The Second Week of Great Lent

During this week the holy Church continues to exhort us to fasting, prayer, penance, charity and other efforts of virtue, opening also to the true self these ascetic efforts. In the hymns for this week the holy Church chants: “Prayer and fasting are a marvelous weapon: this Moses points out to us as the writer of the Law and Elijah shows us in zealous sacrifices”, “When the men of Nineveh repented, Thou has delivered them from the wrath”, “Fasting bore Samuel as fruit;” “through fasting Samson grew up brave”, “Elisha after fasting brought the dead child back to life”; “through fasting priests and prophets were made perfect”. “As Christ has taught us in the scriptures, a pure fast means the putting away of sin, the rejection of the passions, love for God, attentiveness in prayer, tears of compunction, and acts of mercy to the poor”. Thus the holy church also appeals to us: “let us keep a true fast before the Lord: let us abstain not only from food but from angry speech and lying, and from every other passion”, “Let us keep a spiritual fast: let us loose every bond; let us avoid the stumbling blocks of sin; let us absolve our brothers from their debts, that we too may be forgiven our transgressions.” “Come let us cleanse ourselves with mercies and compassions for the poor, not trumpeting them, nor revealing our good deeds, but let us not hang on the left hand the right hand business, let us not squander with vanity the fruit of mercies”; “In this season of repentance, let us stretch out our hands in works of mercy; and then the ascetic struggles of the Fast will bring us to eternal life. For nothing saves the soul so much as generosity to those in need, and almsgiving combined with fasting will deliver a man from death. Let us do all this with gladness, for there is no better way, and it will bring salvation to our souls.”

From Monday of the second week we sing in the Compline the canons of the saints from the Menaion, which belongs to the period between Lazarus Saturday and Thomas Sunday, with the Theotokions of the canon; first we sing the canon to the Theotokos, then from the Menaion; after the third ode sing the kontakion and sessional hymn from the Menaion: then after the sixth ode sing the sessional hymn of the Theotokos: we sing the stikhera from the Menaion after the canon.

The order of service for all the Fridays up to the Friday of the Fifth Week is in the Rubrics, for the order of Wednesday and Friday of the first week, and for the Friday of the second week. On all the Fridays of the Holy Forty-day Fast we do not make prostrations at Vespers and Compline, except for those fixed in the Presanctified Liturgy (see the Rubrics for the

Order of Friday of the First week and Monday of the Second week). On all the Fridays of Lent the Priest does the Little Dismissal at Compline.

On the Saturdays of the second, third, and fourth weeks of Great Lent the holy church prays for all the Saints, asking them, to intercede before God for us especially during Lent, and prays to the Lord for the departed.

Similar to the service for the departed done on the Saturday of the second week, there are like services on the following two Saturdays, except when a feast of the Forerunner, the 40 Holy Martyrs, or the Annunciation falls on them.

*S.V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 515-6.
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