





We Say “I Forgive You”

1st Sunday
before Lent

For Children

Did you know it is almost time for Lent to begin? Lent is a special time of the year because we can spend extra time thinking about our wonderful Savior Jesus Christ and praying to Him! Lent is the time we can try to be better Christians. We can try harder to obey our parents.

We can do kind things for other people. We can go to Church more and pray to Jesus. We get ready for Lent on a special Sunday. This Sunday is called “Forgiveness Sunday.” It is the Sunday just before Lent begins. We go to a special service and ask God to forgive us for all that we have done wrong. We will be like the Publican whom we read about! We are truly sorry for our sins and want to be better Christians. After the “Forgiveness Sunday” service we can go to our friends and family and ask them to forgive us if we have done anything wrong to them. Then we feel better. We feel clean inside. We can feel that Jesus has filled us with love and goodness! What a nice way to begin Lent!

For Adults

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: “Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit....”