

Pure Thursday

Father Donald R. Valasek

"O Word of God.... Purify us with the Fast, giving to us repentance and conversion so that we may glorify You, O Savior, Who alone is good."

Matins for Pure Thursday: Seasonal Hymn

All throughout Pure Week, this first week of the Great Forty-Days Fast, we are called upon to intensify that spiritual and corporeal cleansing that would readily permit us to make the greatfast pilgrimage to the Radiant Resurrection.

Prior to the beginning of the Great Fast, we have seen various examples of those who repented and were forgiven. This is, likewise, our task. Through selfishness like the prodigal son, we have abandoned our Father and have gone to a far-off land to squander the good things given to us by God. Now that we have come to our senses, it's time to make the spiritual journey back home to the Father—to God.

However far we have strayed, the loving Father willingly accepts us back and will never turn us away. We read in the *Book of Proverbs*: "Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil; this will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones." (3:7-8)

Oftentimes the most difficult thing for us to accept is the fact that God will forgive us, and He will take us back into His House. After all the examples of repentance and contrition given to us on the five consecutive Pre-Greatfast Sundays, we still find it difficult to accept the forgiveness of God as we struggle to purify ourselves of the defilement of sin.

Perhaps we have to learn to forgive others and to recognize the nature of our own sinfulness before we can approach the merciful Jesus for His forgiveness. The Great Fast is precisely our time to do just that!

The Holy Fast is a season for re-creation. It is a time for us to pull back and take a realistic evaluation of ourselves. God sees us as we are. We must admit our shortcomings and be willing to avail ourselves of the forgiveness of God in seeking reconciliation with Him.

"A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step." May I always be willing to take that first step, knowing that the Lord God will supply what is lacking and what is needed.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 2:11-21
Genesis 2:4-19
Proverbs 3:1-18