The Fifth Wednesday of the Great Fast

Mother Christopher Malcovsky

"Adam, having tasted the forbidden tree learned the bitter fruits of intemperance; and You, O God of tenderness, raised on the tree of the Cross have redeemed us from the bitter condemnation. And now we pray you, O Lord, grant that we may abstain from the fruit which leads to death, and that we may do Your will and gain Your Love.

Matins for the Fifth Greatfast Wednesday: Sessional Hymn

My life appears to me as a part of the great and all-embracing battle between God and the powers that rebel against Him. The events of history are revealed as events of my life.

Adam and Eve had to make a choice, and the choice had its consequences. I also must choose whether to keep my relationship with the Lord or to turn away from Him. The word sin is a word I do not want to hear, and I often exclude it from my own vocabulary. But even when I do acknowledge that I have sinned, I often forget that I also need to repent.

Now is the time for my repentance, a time for me to return to the Lord—a time to surrender myself to his love and mercy. The Church gives me this time during the liturgical year to look at myself, at my sinfulness, and with the Lord's help to have a change of heart.

Scripture is filled with the story of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Whether in the account of Adam and Eve, or in the story of David, I find these three elements present. Each story tells of their repentance, their change of heart, and a return to their relationship with the Lord.

I can also read about Peter, one of the Apostles chosen by Jesus. Peter denied Jesus three times shortly after he left Jesus' holy presence. But realizing what he had done, Peter went out and wept bitterly. Jesus gave him the opportunity to renew his faith by asking Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" Jesus is ever ready to give us the chance to renew our faith as He did for Peter.

Remembering how the Lord loved Adam and Eve, David and Peter—even in their sinfulness—I too humbly go before Him and ask for forgiveness. I take this time during the Holy Great Fast to repent of my sins and to know that the Lord will forgive me, for He is the Lover of Mankind.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 41:4-14
Genesis 17:1-9
Proverbs 15:20 - 16:9