

# SYNAXARIA OF THE TRIODION

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## SUNDAY of CHEESEFARE

On the same day, we commemorate the banishment of Adam, the First-formed man, from the Paradise of delight.

### Verses

Let the world lament bitterly with our first ancestors,  
For it fell together with those who fell by a sweet repast.

### Synaxarion

Our Holy Fathers appointed this commemoration before the Holy Fast, as if to show in actual fact how beneficial the medicine of fasting is to human nature, and also how great is the shame of gluttony and disobedience. Passing over all the individual sins committed in the world on account of him, as being without number, the Fathers set forth how much evil Adam, the first-formed man, suffered from not fasting even for a brief time, and how much evil he thereby brought upon our race, clearly pointing out also that the virtue of fasting was the first commandment that God gave to mankind. Not keeping this commandment, but yielding to his belly, or rather, through Eve, to the deceitful serpent, Adam not only did not become God, but also incurred death and transmitted corruption to the whole human race.

Because of the self-indulgence of the first Adam, the Lord fasted for forty days and was obedient. For this reason, the present Holy Fast was designed by the Holy Apostles, in order that we might enjoy incorruption, through fasting, by keeping the commandment which he did not keep, thereby suffering the loss of incorruption. Furthermore, as we said previously, the aim of the Saints is to encompass in brief the works wrought by God from the beginning to the end. Since Adam's transgression and his expulsion from the Paradise of delight were the cause of all our woes, for this reason they now set this transgression before us, so that, remembering it, we might avoid it and not in any way emulate his incontinence.

Adam was fashioned by the hand of God on the sixth day, being honored with His image through the Divine breath and at once receiving the commandment, concerning which fruits he should eat and which he should not, and he spent up to six days in Paradise; then, when he transgressed this commandment, he was driven out thence. Philo the Hebrew says that Adam

spent a hundred years in Paradise; others say that he was there for seven days or seven years, because the number seven is accorded special honor. But that Adam stretched out his hands and touched the fruit at the sixth hour is shown by Christ, the New Adam, Who stretched out His hands on the Cross at the sixth hour and on the sixth day, remedying Adam's destructive action.

Adam was created in between corruption and incorruption in order that, in whichever direction he should incline by his choice, he might gain the object of his desire. Now, it was possible for God to make him sinless; but in order that he might achieve this by his own choice, God gave him a law that he could touch all of the plants except one. By this we may perhaps understand the knowledge of Divine power that derives from all created things, but in no way knowledge of God's nature, as does Saint Gregory the Theologian, who reasons that the former are the Divine conceptions, while the latter is the vision of God. That is, God allowed Adam to meditate on all the other elements and the other qualities, to recall them to mind, and to glorify God thereby—for this is what constitutes delight—and perhaps also to meditate on his own nature, but in no way to inquire into God, Who He is by nature, where He is, and how He brought the universe into existence from non-being. But Adam, leaving all the rest aside, inquired rather into God and scrutinized precisely the Divine nature, though he was still imperfect and very simple, and an infant in such matters; he fell after Satan suggested to him, through Eve, fantasies of deification. The great and Divine Chrysostomos says that that tree had a twofold power and that Paradise was on earth; he reasons that it was both noetic and sensible, just as Adam was, midway between corruption and incorruption, at the same time preserving the meaning of Scripture and not adhering to the letter.

Some say that that tree of disobedience was a fig-tree, and that, immediately becoming aware of their nakedness, Adam and Eve used its leaves to cover themselves. For this reason, Christ cursed the fig-tree as being the cause of their transgression. For the fig bears some resemblance to sin: first, it is sweet; secondly, its leaves feel rough; and thirdly, it is viscous on account of its juice. There are others who have understood—though incorrectly—that that tree represents Adam's intercourse with Eve. After transgressing, then, Adam clothed himself in mortal flesh and received the curse, and was cast out of Paradise, and the Cherubim were assigned to guard its gate with a fiery sword. Adam sat before Paradise and bewailed how many good things he had been deprived of because he had not fasted for a time, and the entire race that sprang from him was subject to the same misery, until He Who created us, taking pity on our nature which Satan had corrupted and being born of the Holy Virgin, by His excellent way of life showed us the true way, through virtues that are contrary to Satan, namely, fasting and humility, and, having artfully overcome the one who had deceived us, led us back to our ancient dignity.

Wishing to present all these things to us, therefore, the God-bearing Fathers, through the entire *Triodion*, set forth the events of the Old Testament. First of these is the creation, and Adam's fall from Paradise, which we are now commemorating, and then they set forth the rest, through the books of Moses and the Prophets and the words of David, and then, in order, the events of the New Testament, that of Grace. First of these is the Annunciation, which took place by God's ineffable Economy, and which almost always falls within the Holy Fast. They continue with Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, and Holy and Great Week, when the Holy Gospels are read, and the Holy and saving Passion of Christ, which is the subject of exquisite hymns; and then, with the Resurrection and the other Feasts, until the descent of the Holy Spirit, concerning which the Book of Acts relates how the Gospel was proclaimed and how the Spirit gathered all the Saints together; for the Acts of the Apostles confirms the Resurrection through the miracles worked by the Apostles. Since we have suffered such misery on account of Adam's failure to fast just once, his commemoration is assigned to the beginning of the Holy Fast, in order that, remembering how much evil was brought about by not fasting, we might be eager to welcome the Fast with exceeding joy and to keep it, so that we might thereby gain what Adam missed, that is, deification, by lamenting, fasting, and humbling ourselves until God visits us; for without these things, it is not easy for us to gain what we lost.

It should be known that this Holy and Great Fast constitutes a tenth of the entire year; for since, out of slothfulness, we do not choose always to fast and to refrain from evildoing, the Apostles and the Divine Fathers handed down this Fast as a time of spiritual harvest, in order that, humbling ourselves now through contrition and fasting, we may blot out whatever wicked deeds we have committed during the course of the year, and we ought to keep this Fast more strictly than the others. But we should also keep the three other Fasts, those of the Apostles, the *Theotokos*, and the Nativity, which the Divine Fathers have bequeathed to us. We accord greater honor to this Fast on account of the Holy Passion, and because Christ fasted for forty days and, overcoming the Tempter, was glorified, and Moses, after fasting for forty days, received the Law, as did Elias and Daniel and all of the others who found favor with God. That fasting is a good practice is shown by the contrary example of Adam. For this reason, therefore, Adam's banishment from Paradise was placed here by the Holy Fathers.

In Thine ineffable compassion, O Christ our God, vouchsafe us the delight of Paradise, and have mercy on us, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind. Amen.

