

Living Lent 3

Weekly Reflections by Metropolitan Tikhon

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon offers a series of reflections on the themes contained in the Triodion hymns sung on Monday of each week during Great Lent.



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Our liturgical hymns guide us through Great Lent by making use of many elements. One of these elements is time and this is reflected in the texts from the Lenten Triodion.

From our human perspective, time passes by either very quickly or very slowly. We often attribute this to external factors, such as our age or how busy our day or week has been. But the effect of the passage of time is more often than not dependent on our spiritual state. Hymns such as these keep us anchored in the meaning of the passage of time:

“O holy and honoured Trinity, as we now enter upon the third week of the Fast, keep us safe from harm and condemnation. Enable us rightly to pass through the time that still remains, and to fulfill all Thy commandments, that so, offering up our hymns of praise, with a pure conscience, we may attain the glorious resurrection.”

In this one text, we are reminded that, although the third week is already upon us, our focus should remain on our worship of the Holy Trinity and on the fulfilling the commandments with prayer and pure hearts, all of which prepare us to greet the resurrection of Christ.

During this third week, we are also taken back in liturgical time to the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. In that pre-lenten period, the parable of the Prodigal Son was presented as an image of the merciful kindness of God the Father.

This time around, the hymns encourage us to look more closely at our own departure and voluntary return to God: “I have sinned, and have no need of others to accuse me; for I myself bring before Thee all my shameful acts.”

It is through this self-examination, and with the knowledge that the Fast “gives strength to the body and light to the mind and heart,” that we are able now to look forward in time and to entreat of our Savior:

“Grant us ... without condemnation, to look upon the precious Cross and to venerate it, keeping joyful feast with psalms and hymns.”