

Living Lent 6

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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We have now come to the sixth week of Great Lent, and perhaps most of us wait with anticipation the moment on Friday when we sing to Christ: “Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our souls, we beseech Thee in Thy love for man: Grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion.”

But before we arrive to that final day of the Fast, we are taken on a day-by-day journey with Lazarus and his sisters.

On Monday, “while He is staying beyond Jordan, Christ is told today that Lazarus is ill; and knowing all things in advance, He says: ‘This sickness is not unto death.’”

On Tuesday, the hymns remind us that: “Yesterday and today, Lazarus is sick, and his sisters make it known to Christ. Prepare thyself with joy, O Bethany, to welcome as thy guest the Lord and King...”

On Tuesday at Vespers, which is liturgically the beginning of the next day already, we sing: “Today Lazarus has died and Bethany laments for him: but Thou, O Lord, shalt wake him from the dead.” The raising of Lazarus will, of course, also give us in advance an assurance of Christ’s own resurrection and of our restoration to life.

On Wednesday, “Lazarus is buried and his sister sing in lamentation.” But our Lord reminds them and us that, in fact, Lazarus is but sleeping, and He will raise the one whom He created.

On Thursday, “Lazarus has been dead now for two days, and his sisters Martha and Mary shed tears of grief for him, gazing at the stone before his tomb.” We very much feel this grief ourselves, but we are also comforted, as the sisters will be, when Christ despoils death and bestows life.

On Friday, Lazarus is dead for two days, the emphasis of the liturgical hymns begins to shift to more explicit emphasis on the resurrection: “Why, O women, do ye weep bitterly for your beloved brother, when ye have with you the Resurrection and the Life?”

I will not reveal what happens on Saturday or Sunday of this week, but I encourage all of you to attend the wonderful divine services and to pay close attention to the hymns as they unveil the mystery of the resurrection of Lazarus.

This will also be the final video in this Lenten series but you will have a more intimate and real experience of all that happens in Holy Week by prayerfully participating in the many services that will be offered in your parishes from this point until the great and holy day of the Lord's Resurrection.