

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY BEGINS!

The Feast Day of the Resurrection of Our Lord is annually preceded by a lengthy period known as Great Lent. Many Christians, however, may not be aware that the church also prescribes a PRE-LENTEN period to further emphasize the theme of REPENTANCE for us. In essence, then, our “journey to Pascha” begins today!

During Matins on this, the first of our four pre-lenten Sundays we hear the folowing words sung: “OPEN UNTO ME THE GATES OF REPENTANCE, O GIVER OF LIVE”. We are reminded that a “change of spirit” is necessary for us to fully understand and appreciate the joyful message of the Resurrection of Christ. The parable of the PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE is placed before us today, pointing out to us that our Lord can dwell only in a contrite and humble heart. The proud and haughty attitude of the Pharisee will not be be tolerated by our loving Savior.

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee plays a significant role in the liturgical life of our Holy Church, for it is on this day that use of a special service book called the TRIODION begins. The Triodion is followed until Holy Saturday. Literally defined as “a song of three odes”, the Triodion is structured in this manner to symbolize the Holy Trinity. The various hymns in these services remind us of how mankind sinned and fell out of God’s grace. Ultimately we were redeemed by our Lord’s death and His ensuing Resurrection.

The icon of the Mystical Supper on today’s Bulletin serves to remind us that, as we progress through the pre-lenten and lenten seasons, we must fondly look forward to the day when we will partake at the Lord’s table in His Heavenly Kingdom.