



## CHEESEFARE WEEK

March 11



Did you know that Cheesefare Week is the third week of the Triodion and the final week of preparation before Great Lent?

Cheesefare Week (the week after Judgment Sunday/Meatfare Sunday) is the last week before Pascha we are permitted to consume cheese and dairy products. The Church guides us to give up the most substantial foods first and the least essential foods last.

It is the week leading up to Cheesefare Sunday (also colloquially referred to as Forgiveness Sunday), when Forgiveness Vespers are celebrated to begin the season of Great Lent on Clean Monday.

We recall how Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise because they broke the commandment to fast (Genesis 2:16) and avoided the opportunity God granted them to repent. As descendants of Adam and Eve, we remain exiled from Paradise.

The Gospel (Matthew 6:14-15) reminds us that the way back to Paradise is forgiveness. If we forgive others, God will forgive us. Because, in the very act of forgiving others, we demonstrate that God's forgiveness of our sins is not earned but received as a gift.

Lastly, we are given another chance to obey the commandment to fast. The Gospel teaches us to fast joyfully and in such a way that no one knows we are fasting. Our attachment to temporal success and the praise of men keeps us enslaved to this world. We are called to break the chains of this attachment and become exiles from the world if we wish to return to Paradise.

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