THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT FAST[31]

Lent, as it exists today in the Orthodox Church, is the result of a long historical development, of which no more than a brief summary can be offered here.[32] The portion of the Church's Year covered by the Lenten Triodion falls into three periods:

31 The title 'Great Fast' serves to distinguish Lent from the three other seasons of fasting in the Orthodox calendar: the Christmas Fast, the Fast of the Apostles, and the Dormition Fast. For details on these, see *The Festal Menaion*, p. 42, n. 3.

32 The history of Lent is concisely discussed in A. Schmemann, *Great Lent* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1969), pp. 119–22. This book is the best introduction to the whole subject in English by an Orthodox author. The chief Patristic evidence and the older bibliography is given in two articles by E. Vacandard, 'Carême (Jeûne du)', *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, ii (Paris, 1905), cols. 1724–50, and 'Carême', *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, ii (Paris, 1910), cols. 2139–58. For more recent views, see R. Pierret, 'Carême (Spiritualité du). 1. Histoire', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, ii, 1 (Paris, 1937), cols. 136–40; P.-M. Gy and I. H. Dalmais, 'Carême', *Catholicisme*, ii (Paris, 1949), cols. 547–56; A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée*, 3rd ed. revised by B. Botte (Chevetogne, 1953), pp. 211–21 (Eng. ed., *Comparative Liturgy*, tr. F. L. Cross [London, 1958], pp. 190–9); A. A. McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London, 1953), pp. 77–139.

For the development of the Lenten Triodion, the fundamental study, not yet superseded, is in Russian: I. A. Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod* (St. Petersburg, 1910). Two works in Greek draw extensively on this: Archimandrite Kallistos (Miliaras), *Istoriki episkopisis tou Triodiou. To schedion kai o katartismos avtou*, in the periodical of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem *Nea Sion* xxix (1934), pp. 44–61, 153–61, 177–84, 330–46, 452–67, 502–16, 553–70, 609–15; and Evangelos D. Theodorou, *I morphotiki axia tou ischyontos Triodiou* (Athens, 1958).

The Biblical and Patristic attitude to fasting is ably summarized in P. Deseille and H.-J. Sieben, 'Jeûne', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, viii (Paris, 1974), cols. 1164–79. Fuller but less systematic is Chrysostom M. Enisleidis, *O thesmos tis nisteias* (Athens, 1958–9; 2nd ed., Thessalonica, 1972).

For Orthodox liturgical commentaries on Lent and Holy Week, see: (i) C. Andronnikof, 'La "Pré-Quarantaine" ou les semaines préparatoires au Carême', *Liturgie et Rémission des Péchés. Conférences Saint-Serge: xxe Semaine d'Etudes Liturgiques* (Rome, 1975), pp. 9–37; (ii) 'Un Moine de l'Eglise d'Orient' [Archimandrite Lev (Gillet)], *L'an de grâce du Seigneur*, vol. ii (Editions An-Nour, Beirut, 1972), pp. 7–76, 165–86; (iii) A. Schmemann, *Holy Week. A Liturgical Explanation for the Days of Holy Week* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, no date); (iv) A. Schmemann and O. Clément, *Le Mystère pascal. Commentaires liturgiques*, ed. P. Deseille (Collection 'Spiritualité Orientale', No. 16: Bellefontaine, 1975), the first part of which is a French translation of (iii).

(1) *The Pre-Lenten Period*: three preparatory Sundays (the Publican and the Pharisee; the Prodigal Son; the Last Judgement), followed by a preliminary week of partial fasting, ending with the Sunday of Forgiveness.

(2) *The Forty Days of the Great Fast*, beginning on Monday in the first week (or, more exactly, at Sunday Vespers on the evening before), and ending with the Ninth Hour on Friday in the sixth week.

(3) *Holy and Great Week*, preceded by the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday.

The third of these three periods, the Paschal fast of Holy Week, is the most ancient, for it was already in existence during the second and third centuries. The fast of forty days is mentioned in sources from the first half of the fourth century onwards. The pre-Lenten period developed latest of all: the earliest references to a preliminary week of partial fasting are in the sixth or seventh century, but the observance of the other three preparatory Sundays did not become universal in the Greek East until the tenth or eleventh century.

(1) *The Paschal Fast in the second and third centuries*. In the second century it was the custom for Christians in both East and West to observe, immediately before Easter Sunday, a short fast of one or two days, either on Saturday only or on Friday and Saturday together.[33] This was specifically a Paschal fast in preparation for the service of Easter night. It was a fast of sorrow at the absence of the Bridegroom, in fulfilment of Christ's own words: 'But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days' (Mark 2: 20). The fast, whether of one or two days, was in principle a total one, without any food or drink being taken at all.

By the middle of the third century, this Paschal fast had in many places been extended to embrace the entire week from Monday to Saturday. There was, however, no uniformity of practice, and some Christians fasted for less than the full six days. Only a few can have managed to keep a total fast throughout the whole period. In some places it was the practice to eat bread and salt, with water, at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) on the four days from Monday until Thursday, and then to keep, if possible, a total fast on Friday and Saturday; but

33 See Irenaeus, cited by Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, xxiv, 12; Tertullian, *On the Fasts*, 2, 13–14 (*P.L.* [*Patrologia Latina*] ii, 956A, 971B–974A); Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 20 (ed. Botte, p. 42).

not all the faithful were as strict as this.[34] In this six-day Paschal fast may be seen the distant origins of Holy Week; but the developed ritual to which we are accustomed, with special commemorations on each day of the week, is not found until the late fourth century.[35] During the pre-Nicene period, there seems to have been a unitary celebration of Christ's death and rising, considered as a single mystery, at the Paschal vigil lasting from Saturday evening until Easter Sunday morning. Friday was kept as a fast in preparation for this vigil, but it had not as yet become a distinct and specific commemoration of the Crucifixion; the Cross and the Resurrection were celebrated together during Easter night.

(2) *The Fast of Forty Days.* There is no evidence of a forty-day fast in the pre-Nicene period. The first explicit reference to such a fast is in Canon 5 of the Council of Nicaea (325), where it is treated as something familiar and established, not as an innovation on the part of the Council.[36] By the end of the fourth century the observance of a forty-day fast seems to have been the standard practice in most parts of Christendom, but in some places – possibly including Rome – a shorter fast may have been kept.

This forty-day fast, found in evidence from the fourth century onwards, differs somewhat in scope and character from the one-week fast of the pre-Nicene period, and the precise relationship between the two is not easy to determine. It has been suggested that the forty-day fast was originally connected with Epiphany rather than Easter; but the evidence for this seems inconclusive. It is, however, clear that whereas the pre-Nicene fast was specifically a Paschal observance in preparation for Easter, the forty-day fast was connected more particularly with the final preparation of the catechumens for the sacrament of Baptism or 'illumination'. In the weeks before their baptismal initiation, the candidates underwent a period of intensive training, with daily instruction, special services and fasting. The

[34] See Dionysius of Alexandria, Canon 1 (*Letter to Basilides*: *P.G.* x, 1277A); *Didascalia Apostolorum* 21 (ed. R. H. Connolly, p. 189).

[35] Nothing is said about these daily commemorations in the *Catechetical Homilies* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, delivered *c.* 350, but they are described in detail by the pilgrim Egeria, who was in Jerusalem for Lent and Holy Week *c.* 381–4: see her *Travels*, §§27–38, (tr. J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* [London 1971], pp. 128–39).

[36] For references to a forty-day fast in the period immediately following Nicaea, see Athanasius, *Festal Letters* for the years 330–41, and Eusebius of Caesarea, *On the Feast of Pascha*, 4–5 (*P.G.* xxiv, 697C–700C), dating from *c.* 329.

existing members of the church community were encouraged to share with the catechumens in this prayer and abstinence, thus renewing year by year their baptismal dedication to Christ. So the forty-day fast came to involve the whole body of the faithful, and not just those preparing for Baptism.

Lent, as we know it, is thus the result of a convergence between these two elements – between the six-day pre-Nicene fast, which was directly in preparation for Easter, and the forty-day post-Nicene fast, which originally formed part of the training of candidates for Baptism. It was natural that these two elements should become fused into a single observance, for they both have the same end-point – the night of Holy Saturday. The Paschal vigil on this night, in celebration of the death, burial and rising of Christ, was for obvious reasons chosen as the occasion for administering Baptism; for this sacrament is precisely an initiation into the Lord's Cross and His Resurrection (see Rom. 6: 3–4).

Today in most parts of the Church there is no organized catechumenate, and it is customary to administer Baptism on many other occasions besides the night of Holy Saturday; yet the baptismal significance of Lent has still a living importance. For every member of the Christian community, Lent is a time of spiritual training and renewed illumination. It is a time to realize afresh that, by virtue of our baptismal initiation, we are crucified, buried and risen with Christ; it is a time to reapply to ourselves the words of St. Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2: 20). It is a time for us to listen more closely to the voice of the Spirit in whom we were sealed at our Chrismation, immediately after our 'burial' in the baptismal waters.

The choice of the number forty for the days of Lent has obvious Biblical precedents. The people of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness (Exod. 16: 35); Moses remained fasting for forty days on Mount Sinai (Exod. 34: 28); Elijah abstained from all food for forty days as he journeyed to Mount Horeb (3 [1] Kgs. 19: 8). Most important of all, Christ fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, tempted by the devil (Matt. 4: 1).

But how are the forty days to be computed? In the fourth and fifth centuries, the manner of reckoning varied. Some kept a fast of six weeks, some of seven or even eight.[37] Three points arose:

[37] See Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 22 (*P.G.* lxvii, 632B–633B); Sozomen,

(a) Is Holy Week included in the forty days, or treated as a distinct and additional period?

(b) Is Saturday regarded as a day of fasting?

(c) Are the forty days reckoned continuously, including Saturdays and Sundays? Or is Sunday excluded from the calculation, and Saturday also, if this is considered not to be a day of fasting?

Divergent answers to these three questions account for present-day differences between the Western and the Orthodox Lent. At Rome Holy Week was included as part of the forty days, Saturday was regarded as a day of fasting,[38] but in calculating the number forty all Sundays were excluded from the reckoning. This produced a six-week fast of six days in each week, constituting a total of thirty-six days. To make up the full measure of forty days, four further days of fasting were then added at the beginning, with the result that Lent in the West commences on a Wednesday.[39]

At Constantinople, on the other hand, Holy Week – together with the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday – was not regarded as part of the forty-day fast in the strict sense. At Vespers on Friday evening in the sixth week, immediately preceding the Saturday of Lazarus, the distinction between the forty days and Holy Week is very clearly marked in the existing text of the Triodion:

Having completed the forty days that bring profit to our soul,
We beseech Thee in Thy love for man:
Grant us also to behold the Holy Week of Thy Passion. . .

At Constantinople and in the East generally, Saturdays, with the one exception of Holy Saturday, were not considered days of fasting. But in reckoning the number forty it was the custom to count continuously, including Saturdays and Sundays in the calculation. Thus the

Ecclesiastical History, VII, xix, 7 (ed. Bidez, p. 331); Egeria, *Travels*, §27 (tr. Wilkinson, p. 128).

[38] For the Latin custom of fasting on Saturday, see Pope Innocent I, *Letter to Decentius*, 4 (*P.L.* lvi, 516A); Augustine, *Letter* xxxvi, *To Casulanus*, §2 (*P.L.* xxxiii, 136); John Cassian, *Institutes*, iii, 9–10. The Latin practice is condemned by the Council *in Trullo* (A.D. 692), Canon 55, which forbids fasting on Saturdays with the sole exception of Holy Saturday (thus confirming the ruling of Apostolic Canon 66 [64]).

[39] The earliest clear testimony to the addition of these four days is the Gelasian Sacramentary (early eighth century), but there are hints of the addition in sources going back to the fifth century (see McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year*, p. 137).

forty days began on the first Monday in Lent and ended on Friday in the sixth week; then came Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, which, while distinct from the forty days, were treated as part of the Lenten Fast in the broader sense. In this way the forty days and Holy Week together constituted a fast of seven weeks. So it is that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday in Western Christendom, while commencing in the East two days earlier on Monday.

Christians in the Greek East, however, while as a rule counting the forty days continuously, have sometimes chosen to exclude Saturday and Sunday from the calculation. With Holy Week included in the reckoning, this resulted in a seven-week fast of five days in each week, adding up to thirty-five days. But since Holy Saturday is a day of fasting, this also was included, bringing the total number of days to thirty-six. As we have seen, the West before the addition of the four preliminary days likewise had a thirty-six day fast, although computed in a somewhat different manner. In both East and West this number of thirty-six has been given a symbolical meaning. Just as the Israelites dedicated to God a tithe or tenth of their produce, so Christians dedicate the season of Lent to God as a tithe or tenth of the year. The part is offered in token of the whole: by rendering back to God a tenth of what He has given to us, we call down His blessing upon the remainder and acknowledge that all material goods and all moments of time are a gift from His hand. This notion of Lent as a *tithe or first-fruits of the year* is not much emphasized in the existing text of the Triodion, but it is mentioned in the Synaxarion for the Sunday of Forgiveness.[40]

(3) *The Completion of the Pattern*. In Constantinople from the sixth or seventh century onwards, there arose the practice of adding, before the seven weeks of the fast, an eighth or preliminary week of modified fasting. In our translation of the Triodion, we have termed this the 'Week before Lent'; it is often styled 'Cheese Week' or the 'Week without Meat', because during these days meat is forbidden but cheese and other dairy products are permitted. This preliminary week was added, among other reasons, from the same motive as led

[40] *Triodion Katanyktikon* (ed. Apostoliki Diakonia, Athens, 1960), p. 69. For Lent as a tithe of the year, see John Cassian, *Conferences*, xxi, 24–5; Dorotheus, *Teachings*, 15 (*P.G.* lxxxviii, 1788BC); Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospel*, xvi, 5 (*P.L.* lxxvi, 1137C). But the tithe symbolism is rejected by John of Damascus, *On the Holy Fasts*, 3 (*P.G.* xcv, 68C). For the Israelite offering of tithes, see Lev. 27: 30–2; Deut. 14: 22–4.

to the addition of four extra days at the start of Western Lent: so as to make up the full number forty. In the West, a six-week fast of six days in each week left four days missing from the requisite total. At Constantinople on the other hand, the days of Lent were (as we have seen) reckoned continuously, and so there was no need of a further preliminary period to produce the total of forty days. But Christians in Palestine calculated in terms of eight weeks, with five days of fasting in each week (no special account being taken of Holy Saturday for the purposes of this reckoning); and so they needed an additional week at the beginning of Lent. The observance of 'Cheese Week' in the existing Triodion represents a compromise between the Constantinopolitan and the Palestinian practice: for 'Cheese Week' is to be considered part of the fast, and yet it is not fully within Lent.[41]

During the sixth–eleventh centuries, the season of pre-Lenten preparation was gradually expanded to include three other preliminary Sundays: the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, ten weeks before Easter; following it, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son; and then the Sunday of the Last Judgement immediately before the beginning of 'Cheese Week'. Together with the Sunday of Forgiveness at the end of 'Cheese Week', this makes four preliminary Sundays in all. In this way the full pattern of the Lenten season was completed. The Triodion, as we now have it, opens with the latest Sunday to be added, that of the Publican and the Pharisee.

41 Dorotheus, writing in Palestine *c.* 540–80, makes a clear reference to this eighth or preliminary week in *Teachings*, 15 (*P.G.* lxxxviii, 1788c). A cryptic passage in Theophanes, *Chronographia* for the year 6038, i.e. A.D. 546 (ed. de Boor, vol. i, p. 225), could be interpreted to mean that the preliminary week was observed at Constantinople as early as the reign of Justinian. But the Synaxarion for Saturday in the Week before Lent connects the introduction of 'Cheese Week' at Constantinople with the victories of the Emperor Heraclius over the Persian Chosroes in 629 or the years immediately following (*Triodion Katanyktikon* [ed. Apostoliki Diakonia], p. 61; cf. J. Goar, *Euchologion* [2nd ed., Venice, 1730], p. 175; V. Peri, 'La durata e la struttura della Quaresima nell' antico uso ecclesiastico gerosolimitano', *Aevum* xxxvii [1963], p. 61). In the time of John of Damascus (first half of the eighth century), the observance of this preliminary week was as yet by no means universal in the Christian East: see *On the Holy Fasts* (*P.G.* xcv, 64–77).

THE RULES OF FASTING

Within this developed pattern of Lent, what precisely do the rules of fasting demand? Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there ever been exact uniformity, but most Orthodox authorities agree on the following rules:

(1) During the week between the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and that of the Prodigal Son, there is a general dispensation from all fasting. Meat and animal products may be eaten even on Wednesday and Friday.

(2) In the following week, often termed the 'Week of Carnival', the usual fast is kept on Wednesday and Friday. Otherwise there is no special fasting.

(3) In the Week before Lent, meat is forbidden, but eggs, cheese and other dairy products may be eaten on all days, including Wednesday and Friday.

(4) On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) during the seven weeks of Lent, there are restrictions both on the *number* of meals taken daily and on the *types of food* permitted; but when a meal is allowed, there is no fixed limitation on the *quantity* of food to be eaten.

(a) On weekdays in the *first week*, fasting is particularly severe. According to the strict observance, in the course of the five initial days of Lent, only two meals are eaten, one on Wednesday and the other on Friday, in both cases after the Liturgy of the Presanctified. On the other three days, those who have the strength are encouraged to keep an absolute fast; those for whom this proves impracticable may eat on Tuesday and Thursday (but not, if possible, on Monday), in the evening after Vespers, when they may take bread and water, or perhaps tea or fruit-juice, but not a cooked meal. It should be added at once that in practice today these rules are commonly relaxed. At the meals on Wednesday and Friday *xerophagy* is prescribed. Literally this means 'dry eating'. Strictly interpreted, it signifies that we may eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread and honey. In practice, octopus and shell-fish are also allowed on days of xerophagy; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil, not made from olives. But the following categories of food are definitely excluded:

(i) meat;
(ii) animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, dripping);
(iii) fish (i.e. fish with backbones);
(iv) oil (i.e. olive oil) and wine (i.e. all alcoholic drinks).

(b) On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) in the *second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks*, one meal a day is permitted, to be taken in the afternoon following Vespers, and at this one meal xerophagy is to be observed.[42]

(c) *Holy Week*. On the *first three days* there is one meal each day, with xerophagy; but some try to keep a complete fast on these days, or else they eat only uncooked food, as on the opening days of the first week.

On *Holy Thursday* one meal is eaten, with wine and oil (i.e. olive oil).

On *Great Friday* those who have the strength follow the practice of the early Church and keep a total fast. Those unable to do this may eat bread, with a little water, tea or fruit-juice, but not until sunset, or at any rate not until after the veneration of the Epitaphion at Vespers.

On *Holy Saturday* there is in principle no meal, since according to the ancient practice after the end of the Liturgy of St. Basil the faithful remained in church for the reading of the Acts of the Apostles, and for their sustenance were given a little bread and dried fruit, with a cup of wine. If, as usually happens now, they return home for a meal, they may use wine but not oil; for on this one Saturday, alone among the Saturdays of the year, olive oil is not permitted.

The rule of xerophagy is relaxed on the following days:

(1) On *Saturdays and Sundays* in Lent, with the exception of Holy Saturday, two main meals may be taken in the usual way, around mid-day and in the evening, with wine and olive oil; but meat, animal products and fish are not allowed.

(2) On the *Feast of the Annunciation* (25 March) and *Palm Sunday*, fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but meat and animal products are not allowed. If the Feast of the Annunciation falls on the first four days of Holy Week, wine and oil are permitted but not fish. If it falls on Great Friday or Holy Saturday, wine is permitted, but not fish or oil.

[42] The early sources are not agreed concerning the application of the rule of xerophagy. The Council of Laodicea, Canon 50, and Theodore the Studite, *Doctrina Chronica*, 9 (*P.G.* xcix, 1700B), prescribe xerophagy on all weekdays in Lent; but John of Damascus, *On the Holy Fasts*, 5 (*P.G.* xcv, 69D), and Theodore Balsamon (Rallis–Potlis, *Syntagma*, vol. iii, p. 217) seem to envisage a less strict observance.

(3) Wine and oil are permitted on the following days, if they fall on a weekday in the second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth week:

First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (24 February)
Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (9 March)
Forefeast of the Annunciation (24 March)
Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (26 March)
Patronal festival of the Church or Monastery

(4) Wine and oil are also allowed on Wednesday and Thursday in the fifth week, because of the vigil for the Great Canon. Wine is allowed – and, according to some authorities, oil as well – on Friday in the same week, because of the vigil for the Akathistos Hymn.

It has always been held that these rules of fasting should be relaxed in the case of anyone elderly or in poor health. In present-day practice, even for those in good health, the full strictness of the fast is usually mitigated. Only a few Orthodox today attempt to keep a total fast on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in the first week, or on the first three days in Holy Week. On weekdays – except, perhaps, during the first week or Holy Week – it is now common to eat two cooked meals daily instead of one. From the second until the sixth week, many Orthodox use wine, and perhaps oil also, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and less commonly on Mondays as well. Permission is often given to eat fish in these weeks. Personal factors need to be taken into account, as for example the situation of an isolated Orthodox living in the same household as non-Orthodox, or obliged to take meals in a factory or school canteen. In cases of uncertainty each should seek the advice of his or her spiritual father. At all times it is essential to bear in mind that 'you are not under the law but under grace' (Rom. 6: 14), and that 'the letter kills, but the spirit gives life' (2 Cor. 3: 6). The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism; 'for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14: 17).

THE CONTENTS OF THE TRIODION

Within the book of the Great Fast, the Lenten Triodion, two constituent elements may be distinguished: first, the cycle of the Psalter and the other Scriptural readings; and secondly, the cycle of liturgical hymnography – of canons, stichera, sessional hymns and the like.

The Psalter and the Scriptural Readings. These are of inestimable importance, for Lent is an *annual return to our Biblical roots.*[43] It is, more specifically, a return to our roots in the *Old Testament*; for during Lent, to a far greater degree than at any other time of the year, the Scriptural readings are taken from the Old Testament rather than the New.

This emphasis upon the Old Testament is evident, first of all, in the more prominent place assigned to the Psalter during Lent. Instead of being read through once, as in other weeks of the year, during Lent it is read in its entirety twice each week.[44] Our Lenten aspirations are concentrated in the words of the Psalms that our Lord Himself learnt by heart as a child and used in His own morning and evening prayers. The centrality of the Psalter is particularly evident at Mattins on weekdays in Lent, when nearly half the service is taken up by readings from the Psalms, while the Canon is much shorter than at other seasons. During the Canon itself a particular prominence is likewise given to the Scriptures of the Old Covenant; for the Old Testament Canticles are sung in full on weekdays in Lent, instead of being greatly abbreviated or omitted altogether, as at other times of the year. This serves as a reminder of the original form of the Canon, which in the early period consisted of Scriptural Canticles with no more than a short refrain between the verses from the Bible.[45]

The increased use of the Old Testament is also evident at other Lenten Offices besides Mattins. On weekdays there are additional readings from the Psalter at the First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours. In place of the Epistle and Gospel appointed for the Liturgy

[43] Compare Schmemann, *Great Lent*, p. 44.

[44] For the reading of the Psalter in Lent, see *The Festal Menaion*, pp. 533–4. In Holy Week it is read once only.

[45] On the history of the Canon, see *The Festal Menaion*, p. 546.

on each day during the rest of the year, there are on Lenten weekdays three Old Testament lessons, one read at the Sixth Hour and the other two at Vespers. But on Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, since on these days the full Eucharist is celebrated, Epistle and Gospel readings are appointed in the usual way. The Epistle readings in Lent are mostly taken from Hebrews, and the Gospel readings from Mark; in both cases they are arranged in a carefully devised sequence.[46]

The scheme of Old Testament readings in the Triodion was perhaps worked out between the fifth and the seventh century. The three daily lessons are taken from the three main categories of Old Testament literature – from the historical books, the prophets, and the Wisdom literature – according to the following pattern:

(1) *Historical books* (i.e. the Pentateuch) at the first lesson in Vespers:

Genesis (in the six weeks of Lent)
Exodus (in Holy Week)

(2) The *prophets* at the Sixth Hour:

Isaiah (in the six weeks of Lent)
Ezekiel (in Holy Week)

(3) *Wisdom literature* at the second lesson in Vespers:

Proverbs (in the six weeks of Lent)
Job (in Holy Week)

As well as representing the various categories of Old Testament literature, these books have also been chosen because of their appropriateness to Lent:

(1) Genesis describes the fall of man and his expulsion from Paradise, which is a dominant *motif* throughout the Triodion.[47] The later chapters of Genesis tell the story of Joseph, who in his innocent sufferings serves as a 'type' of Christ.

(2) In the lessons from Exodus, Moses foreshadows Christ, the Old Passover anticipates the New, and the crossing of the Red Sea prefigures the redemptive death and the rising of the Saviour.

[46] For details, see Schmemann, *Great Lent*, pp. 78–85.

[47] The importance of the Paradise theme is rightly emphasized in a recent anthology of texts from the Triodion, translated into French: Archidiacre Denis [Guillaume], *Fleurs de Paradis* (Rome, 1976).

(3) The book of Isaiah begins with an appeal for repentance and fasting.

(4) The readings from Ezekiel speak of God's glory – the glory that is also manifested through the Cross and Resurrection: 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him' (John 13: 31).

(5) The ethical instruction in Proverbs reminds us that Lent is a time for moral effort: to repent is not merely to experience certain emotions but, on the level of practical conduct, to alter our way of life with the help of God's grace. If we find the readings from Proverbs dull and look for something more 'dramatic' and 'exciting', this shows that we want to run before we have learnt to walk.

(6) The patient sufferings of Job and his final vindication point forward to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

So it becomes apparent that the Old Testament lessons have not been chosen fortuitously, but each has its place in the all-embracing unity of the Triodion.

The Liturgical Hymnography. The non-Biblical material in the Triodion was composed over a period of nearly a thousand years, extending from the sixth to the fifteenth century. Three main strata can be distinguished:

(1) *The Beginnings* (sixth–eighth centuries). Probably the most ancient existing element is the daily cycle of the *troparia of the prophecy*, said before the lesson at the Sixth Hour. These are very simple in form, being little more than a rhythmical paraphrase of some text from the Bible. Almost equally ancient is the *Akathistos Hymn*, probably the work of St. Romanos the Melodist († *c.* 560).[48]

[48] The ancient sources disagree about the date and authorship of the Akathistos Hymn. The question has been much debated in the last eighty years; most scholars favour a date in the early sixth century and regard authorship by Romanos as probable, although not finally proved. For a full discussion of the problem, with bibliography, see K. Mitsakis, *Vyzantini Ymnographia*, vol. i (Thessalonica, 1971), pp. 483–509. In English, see E. Wellesz, *The Akathistos Hymn* (Copenhagen, 1957), and *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1961), pp. 191–7. The Hymn has also been ascribed to Sergios, Patriarch of Constantinople (610–38), who may indeed be the author of the preliminary Kontakion, 'To thee, our leader in battle and defender. . . ' (see below, p. 55); but he seems too late to be the author of the Hymn itself. Others to whom the Hymn has been ascribed in ancient or modern times, include George of Pisidia (first half of the sixth century), St. Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople († 740), George of Nicomedia (second half of the ninth century) and St. Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople († 891); but there is little to favour any of these suggestions.

Somewhat later in date is the most ancient of the Canons, the *Great Canon* by St. Andrew of Crete (*c.* 660–*c.* 740), apparently composed towards the end of his life – he refers many times to his old age – and intended by its author as an expression of personal devotion rather than for public liturgical use. At the end of the eighth century Andrew, known as 'Piros' or 'the Blind', monk of the Lavra of St. Sabas, composed a *cycle of idiomela*, two for each weekday in Lent, one sung at the aposticha in Mattins and the other at those in Vespers; the cycle was expanded and completed by Andrew's contemporary and fellow-monk, Stephen the Sabaite (725–807), the nephew of St. John of Damascus. These idiomela, which are usually appointed to be sung twice, are exceptionally rich in doctrinal content, summing up the whole theology of the Great Fast, and they deserve to be studied with particular attention.

Among other authors, dating from the sixth to the eighth century and represented in the Triodion, are St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem († 638), St. John of Damascus (*c.* 680–*c.* 749), and St. Kosmas of Maiuma (*c.* 685–*c.* 750). Almost all the hymnographers belonging to this first stratum are linked with Syria or Palestine, and most of them are associated more especially with the Lavra of St. Sabas outside Jerusalem.

(2) *The Formative Period* (ninth century). During this century, the chief centre of activity shifts from Palestine to Constantinople, and within Constantinople to the Monastery of Studios, then at the height of its influence. It was ninth-century Studite monks who not only gave to the Lenten Triodion its present structure, but also themselves composed the greater part of its contents. This book, and likewise the Pentekostarion, are substantially the product of Studite editorial work. They bear the mark in particular of the two brothers St. Theodore the Studite (759–826) and St. Joseph the Studite, Archbishop of Thessalonica (762–832). St. Theodore composed the second canon for weekdays in Lent, and his brother Joseph the first.[49] These canons vary in content according to the day of the week: on Monday and Tuesday they are devoted to repentance; on

[49] Possibly the author is not Joseph the Studite but Joseph the Hymnographer. But see E. I. Tomadakis, *Iosiph o Ymnographos* (Athens, 1971), pp. 200–1.

Wednesday and Friday, to the Cross; on Thursday to the apostles; on Saturday, to the martyrs and the dead.

Other ninth-century writers whose work is found in the Triodion are St. Theophanes Graptos (778–845), St. Joseph the Hymnographer (*c.* 816–*c.* 886), the Emperor Leo VI the Wise (reigned 886–912), and the poetess Kassia or Kassiani, who spoilt her chances of marrying the Emperor Theophilos (829–42) through the pertness of her repartee, and subsequently became a nun.[50] She is the authoress of a celebrated hymn at Mattins on Great Wednesday, 'The woman who had fallen into many sins.

(3) *Further additions* (tenth–fifteenth centuries). Although the basic structure of the Triodion was completed in the ninth century, many further additions were made during the five subsequent centuries, yet without altering the general pattern articulated by the Studite redactors. Manuscript Triodia surviving from the eleventh century show that there was at that time a wide variety of local usages, but from the twelfth century onwards there is growing uniformity. Among the more notable writers from this third stratum are Simeon the Logothete, known as 'the Translator' (tenth century), author of the Lamentation of the Theotokos used at Compline on Good Friday; John Mavropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita (eleventh century), author of the two Canons to St. Theodore on Saturday in the first week; and Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople (fourteenth century), author of the office in honour of St. Gregory Palamas on the second Sunday.

Surprisingly, some of the best loved elements in the Triodion are also the most recent in date. The three troparia sung at Sunday Mattins after the Gospel reading, 'Open unto me, O Giver of Life, the gates of repentance. . .', 'Guide me in the paths of salvation. . .', and 'As I ponder in my wretchedness. . .', do not appear in this position before the fourteenth century, although the texts themselves are probably more ancient. The *Enkomia* or 'Praises', sung at Mattins on Holy Saturday, are found for the first time in manuscripts of the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The manuscript Triodia contain much additional material – canons, idiomela and stichera – not included in the printed Triodion

[50] See Simeon Magister, *Annals* (*P.G.* cix, 685C); George the Monk, *Chronicle*, iv, 264 (*P.G.* cx, 1008B).

that is now in use; and many of these unpublished texts are of a high standard artistically and spiritually. Thus the existing Triodion, rich and complex though it is, represents no more than a selection from a greater whole.

In its origins a monastic service book, reflecting more particularly the observances of the Studite brotherhood, the Triodion came in time to be adopted also by the parish churches. This process, whereby the ancient 'cathedral' rite was gradually replaced by the 'monastic' rite, had already begun in the twelfth century and was more or less complete by the fourteenth. Whatever the merits of the 'cathedral' rite – and there are many today who favour its revival in a modified form – there was nothing absurd or spiritually inappropriate in the adoption of the monastic Triodion by the parish churches. For the texts in the Triodion are addressed, not to monks only, but to every Christian; and the path of contrition and fasting along which it guides us has universal validity.

THE INNER UNITY OF THE TRIODION

The Triodion possesses an inner coherence and unity that are not at once apparent. Why, for example, should St. Theodore the Recruit be commemorated on Saturday in the first week, the holy ikons on the first Sunday, and St. Gregory Palamas on the second? What special connection have these three observances with the ascetic fast of Lent? Let us consider briefly the pattern which links into a single whole the different commemorations during the ten weeks of the Triodion. We shall not enter into details, but shall simply seek to indicate the place of each observance in the general structure of Lent.

(1) *The Pre-Lenten Period*. (a) *The Sunday of Zacchaeus*. One week before the Triodion enters into use, there is a Sunday Gospel reading which looks forward directly to the coming fast – Luke 19: 1–10, describing how Zacchaeus climbed a tree beside the road where Christ was to pass. In this reading we note Zacchaeus' *sense of eager expectation*, *the intensity of his desire* to see our Lord, and we apply this to ourselves. If, as we prepare for Lent, there is real eagerness in our hearts, if we have an intense desire for a clearer vision of Christ, then our hopes will be fulfilled during the fast; indeed, we shall, like

Zacchaeus, receive far more than we expect. But if there is within us no eager expectation and no sincere desire, we shall see and receive nothing. And so we ask ourselves: What is my state of mind and will as I prepare to embark on the Lenten journey?[51]

(b) *The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee* (Gospel reading: Luke 18: 10–14). On this and the following two Sundays, the theme is *repentance*. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting-point of our journey to Pascha. And to repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means 'change of mind': to repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship to God and to others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a 'change of mind': he is self-dissatisfied, 'poor in spirit', and where there is this saving self-dissatisfaction there is room for God to act. Unless we learn the secret of the Publican's inward poverty, we shall not share in the Lenten springtime. The theme of the day can be summed up in a saying of the Desert Fathers: 'Better a man who has sinned, if he knows that he has sinned and repents, than a man who has not sinned and thinks of himself as righteous.'[52]

(c) *The Sunday of the Prodigal Son* (Gospel reading: Luke 15: 11–32). The parable of the Prodigal forms an exact ikon of repentance in its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the Father's house. But repentance implies action: 'I will rise up and go. . .' (verse 18). To repent is not just to *feel* dissatisfied, but to take a decision and to *act* upon it.

On this and the next two Sundays, after the solemn and joyful words of the Polyeleos at Mattins, we add the sorrowful verses of

[51] On the Sunday before that of Zacchaeus, the Gospel reading is sometimes Christ's meeting with the Canaanite woman (Matt. 15: 21–8). Here the spiritual meaning is the same as for the Sunday of Zacchaeus. The woman's daughter was healed because of her mother's *faith and persistence*. Similarly in Lent we need living faith that Christ can heal us, and to this we must join persistent prayer. Then all things are possible.

[52] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, alphabetical collection, Sarmatas 1.

Psalm 136, 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept. . . . This Psalm of exile, sung by the children of Israel in their Babylonian captivity, has a special appropriateness on the Sunday of the Prodigal, when we call to mind our present exile in sin and make the resolve to return home.

(d) *The Saturday of the Dead*. On the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgement, and in close connection with the theme of this Sunday, there is a universal commemoration of the dead 'from all the ages'. (There are further commemorations of the dead on the second, third and fourth Saturdays in Lent.) Before we call to mind the Second Coming of Christ in the services on Sunday, we commend to God all those departed before us, who are now awaiting the Last Judgement. In the texts for this Saturday there is a strong sense of the continuing bond of mutual love that links together all the members of the Church, whether alive or dead. For those who believe in the risen Christ, death does not constitute an impassable barrier, since all are alive in Him; the departed are still our brethren, members of the same family with us, and so we are conscious of the need to pray insistently on their behalf.

(e) *The Sunday of the Last Judgement* (Gospel reading: Matthew 25: 31–46). The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come *as our judge*. 'Behold the goodness *and severity* of God' (Rom. 11: 22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes. In the words of the Great Canon:

The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near;
Yet thou dost not care or make ready.
The time grows short, rise up: the Judge is at the door.
The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower.[53]

This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour,

[53] Canticle Four, troparion 2.

for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgement merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgement on ourselves.

(f) On *Saturday in the week before Lent* ('Cheese Week'), there is a *general commemoration of all the ascetic saints* of the Church, both men and women. As we set out on the journey of the Lenten fast, we are reminded that we do not travel alone but as members of a family, supported by the intercessions of many invisible helpers.

(g) *The Sunday before Lent*. The last of the preparatory Sundays has two themes: it commemorates *Adam's expulsion from Paradise*, and it is also the *Sunday of Forgiveness*. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of the Great Fast. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23: 43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise:

O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty,
Tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight,
Glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints,
With the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all:
May He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression,
And may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life
And of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before.[54]

Note how the Triodion speaks here not of 'Adam' but of 'me': 'May He open unto *me* the gates which *I* closed'. Here, as throughout the Triodion, the events of sacred history are not treated as happenings in the distant past or future, but as experiences undergone *by me* here and now within the dimension of sacred time.

[54] Vespers for Saturday evening (Sunday of Forgiveness).

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6: 14–21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. As the commemoration of the ascetic saints on the previous Saturday has just made clear to us, we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from our fellow men but link us to them with ever stronger bonds. The Lenten ascetic is called to be a *man for others*.

(2) *The Forty Days*. The two preceding Sundays, of the Last Judgement and of Forgiveness, together constitute – albeit in reverse order – a recapitulation of the whole range of sacred history, from its beginning-point, Adam in Paradise, to its end-point, the Second Coming of Christ, when all time and history are taken up into eternity. During the forty days that now follow, although this wider perspective is never forgotten, there is an increasing concentration upon the central moment in sacred history, upon the saving event of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, which makes possible man's return to Paradise and inaugurates the End. Lent is, from this point of view, a journey with a precise direction; it is the *journey to Pascha*.[55] The goal of our journey is concisely expressed in the closing prayer at the Liturgy of the Presanctified: '. . . may we come uncondemned to worship at the Holy Resurrection'. Throughout the forty days we are reminded that we are *on the move*, travelling on a path that leads straight to Golgotha and the Empty Tomb. So we say at the start of the first week:

Let us set out with joy. . . .

Having sailed across the great sea of the Fast,
May we reach the third-day Resurrection of our Lord.

Let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day.

While our journey proceeds, as travellers we regularly call to mind how far we have progressed:

[55] The phrase is taken from Schmemann, *Great Lent*, p. 11.

As we begin the second day.

Let us now set out with joy upon the second week of the Fast.

As we start upon the third week of the Fast, O ye faithful,
Let us glorify the Holy Trinity,
And joyfully pass through the time that still remains. . .
Weaving garlands for the queen of days

– the day, that is, of the Lord's Resurrection. So we continue:

Now that we have passed beyond the middle point in the time of the Fast,
Let us hasten eagerly towards our journey's end.
So may we be counted worthy to venerate the divine Passion of Christ our God,
And to attain His dread and holy Resurrection.

During each week of Lent, our faces are set towards the objective of our journeying: the Saviour's suffering and triumphant Passover.

The forty days' journey of Lent recalls in particular the forty years in which the Chosen People journeyed through the wilderness. For us, as for the children of Israel, Lent is a time of pilgrimage. It is a time for our liberation from the bondage of Egypt, from domination by sinful passions; a time for progress by faith through a barren and waterless desert; a time for unexpected reassurance, when in our hunger we are fed with manna from heaven; a time when God speaks to us out of the darkness of Sinai; a time in which we draw near to the Promised Land, to our true home in Paradise whose door the crucified and risen Christ has reopened for us.

The Weekdays of Lent. A characteristic ethos is given to the weekdays of Lent by the frequently repeated *prostrations*, used especially in conjunction with the *Prayer of St. Ephraim*, 'O Lord and Master of my life. . . '.[56] Brief, sober, yet remarkably complete, this prayer takes us to the very heart of what Lent means.

Another distinctive feature of Lenten weekdays is the *Liturgy of the Presanctified*, celebrated according to present practice on each Wednesday and Friday, but at one time on every weekday of Lent.[57]

[56] See below, p. 69. On Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, when the strictness of fasting is relaxed, the Prayer of St. Ephraim is not said, nor do we make prostrations, but only low bows.

[57] See the Council *in Trullo*, Canon 52. On the Presanctified Liturgy, see D. N. Moraitis, *I Leitourgia ton Proigiasmenon* (Thessalonica, 1955).

Strictly speaking, the term 'Liturgy' is a misnomer, for there is no eucharistic consecration at this service; it is simply the office of Vespers, followed by the distribution of Holy Communion from elements consecrated on the previous Sunday. The full celebration of the Eucharist, being always a festive and triumphant event, is felt to be inconsistent with the austerity of the weekday Lenten Fast; and so already in the fourth century it was laid down that there should be no complete celebration of the Liturgy during Lent except on Saturday and Sunday.[58] But so as to enable the faithful to receive communion on weekdays in Lent – for in the ancient Church it was normal to communicate frequently, and in some places even daily – the order of the Presanctified Liturgy was devised.

Many moments in the Presanctified Liturgy recall the period when Lent was a time of final training before the reception of Baptism, the sacrament of light or 'illumination'. Thus between the two Old Testament lessons, the priest, holding the censer and a lighted candle, blesses the congregation, saying: 'The light of Christ shines upon all'; and, following the Litany for the Catechumens and their dismissal, there is during the second half of Lent an additional Litany 'for those who are ready for illumination'. Each time we take part in the Liturgy of the Presanctified, we should ask ourselves: In a world that is increasingly alienated from Christ, what have I done since last Lent to spread the light of the Gospel? And where are the catechumens in our Orthodox churches today?

On Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, as indeed throughout the year, the normal hymns to the Mother of God known as 'Theotokia' are replaced by 'Stavrotheotokia', that is, hymns referring both to the Cross and to the Theotokos, and describing the Mother's grief as she stands beside the Cross of her Son. Through these hymns, we are made conscious of the Blessed Virgin's participation in our observance of Lent.

Let us now consider the sequence of the forty days in greater detail.

(a) *The First Week of Lent: Monday to Friday.* At Compline on the first four days of Lent, the *Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* is read, divided into four sections; on Thursday in the fifth week it will be

[58] Council of Laodicea, Canon 49. When the Feast of the Annunciation became fixed on 25 March, it was decided that the full Liturgy should also be celebrated on this day (Council *in Trullo*, Canon 52).

read again, this time in continuous form. With its constant refrain, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me', the Great Canon forms a prolonged confession of sin, an unremitting call to repentance. At the same time, it is a meditation on the whole body of Scripture, embracing all the sinners and all the righteous from the creation of the world to the coming of Christ. Here, more than anywhere else in the Triodion, we experience Lent as a reaffirmation of our 'Biblical roots'. Throughout the Great Canon the two levels, the historical and the personal, are skilfully interwoven. 'The events of the sacred history are revealed as events of *my* life; God's acts in the past as acts aimed at *me* and *my* salvation, the tragedy of sin and betrayal as *my* personal tragedy.'[59] The appeal of the Great Canon is very wide: the Scots Presbyterian Alexander Whyte found it 'the very finest thing; the thing, at any rate, that I most enjoy in all the Office-books of the Greek Church'.[60]

(b) *Saturday in the First Week.* After the penitential fasting of the first five days of Lent, Saturday and Sunday are kept as feasts of joyful thanksgiving. On Saturday we commemorate the Great Martyr Theodore *Tyron* or *Tiro*, 'the Recruit', a Roman soldier in Asia Minor, martyred in the early fourth century under the Emperor Maximian (286–305). Here may be seen at work a rule applied by the Church since the fourth century: as the full Liturgy cannot be offered on weekdays in Lent, saints' memorials which in the fixed calendar occur during the week are transferred to Saturday or Sunday.[61] So the memorial of St. Theodore, whose feast falls on 17 February, has been transferred to the first Saturday. The texts for the day in the Triodion make frequent reference to the literal meaning of the name Theodore, 'Gift from God'.

There is a specific reason why St. Theodore has come to be associated with the first week of Lent. According to the tradition recorded in the Synaxarion,[62] the Emperor Julian the Apostate

[59] Schmemann, *Great Lent*, p. 71.

[60] *Father John of the Greek Church: an Appreciation* (Edinburgh, 1898), p. 23.

[61] See the Council of Laodicea, Canon 51. Actually this rule is not now applied rigorously, for texts from the Menaia commemorating the saint of the day are often included on weekdays in Lent.

[62] Synaxarion for Saturday in the first week, in *Triodion Katanyktikon* (ed. Apostoliki Diakonia), p. 128; see also the *Narrative* attributed to St. Nektarios, Patriarch of Constantinople (381–97), especially §§4-13 (*P.G.* xxxix, 1825A–1832D).

(reigned 361–3), as part of his campaign against the Christians, attempted to defile their observance of the first week of Lent by ordering all the food for sale in the market of Constantinople to be sprinkled with blood from pagan sacrifices. St. Theodore then appeared in a dream to Eudoxios, Archbishop of the city, ordering him to warn his flock against buying anything from the market; instead, so the Saint told him, they should boil wheat (*kolyva*) and eat this alone. In memory of this event, after the Presanctified Liturgy on the first Friday, a Canon of intercession is sung to St. Theodore and a dish of *kolyva* is blessed in his honour.[63]

But, quite apart from this historical association of the Great Martyr Theodore with the first week of the fast, it is also spiritually appropriate that he should be commemorated during these days. The Great Fast is a season of unseen warfare, of invisible martyrdom, when by our ascetic dying to sin we seek to emulate the self-offering of the martyrs. That is why, in addition to such commemorations as that of St. Theodore on the first Saturday, there are also regular hymns to the martyrs on all the weekdays of Lent. Their example has a special significance for us in our ascetic efforts during the Great Forty Days.

(c) *The Sunday of Orthodoxy.* The sense of joy and thanksgiving, already evident on the Saturday of St. Theodore, is still more apparent on the first Sunday in Lent, when we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy ikons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843.[64] There is, however, not only a historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the ikons but also, as in the case of St. Theodore, a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast

[63] See below, pp. 275–82.

[64] Probably the annual celebration of this event was not established at once. See J. Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise. Ms. Saint-Croix no 40, Xe siècle* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 165–6: Rome, 1962–3), vol. i, pp. x–xiv; J. Gouillard, *Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie. Edition et commentaire* (Travaux et Mémoires 2: Paris, 1967), pp. 129–38.

of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The Triodion gives the text of a special 'Office of Orthodoxy' (not translated in this volume), which is held at the end of Mattins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy ikons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy ikons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; 'Eternal Memory' is sung in honour of the emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and 'Many Years' is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops.[65] Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form.

Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11: 24–6, 32–40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: 'Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name'.

(d) *The Second Sunday*. Since 1368 this Sunday has been dedicated to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1296–1359). This commemoration forms a continuation of the feast celebrated on the previous Sunday: St. Gregory's victory over Barlaam, Akindynos and the other heretics of his time is seen as a renewed Triumph of Orthodoxy. In the earlier period there was on this day a commemoration of the Great Martyr Polycarp of Smyrna

[65] For an English translation of this service, as celebrated by the Russian Church in the eighteenth century, see J. G. King, *The Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church, in Russia* (London, 1772), pp. 399–407. The Greek form of the service is considerably longer.

(+ *c.* 155), whose feast was transferred from the fixed calendar (23 February). This commemoration, like that of St. Theodore, underlined the connection between Lenten asceticism and the martyr's vocation. The second Sunday also takes up the theme of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance, with the first of the two Canons at Mattins being devoted to this parable.

(e) *The Third Sunday* (the Sunday of the Cross). On this day the service of Mattins concludes with the solemn veneration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross; the ceremonies are closely parallel to those at the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September)[66] and the Procession of the Cross (1 August). The veneration of the Cross on this third Sunday in Lent prepares us for the commemoration of the Crucifixion which is soon to follow in Holy Week, and at the same time it reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ: as the Synaxarion at Mattins says, 'Through the forty-day Fast, we too are in a way crucified, dying to the passions'.[67] The dominant note on this Sunday, as on the two Sundays preceding, is one of joy and triumph. In the Canon at Mattins, the irmoi are the same as at Easter midnight, 'This is the day of Resurrection. . . ', and the troparia are in part a paraphrase of the Paschal Canon by St. John of Damascus. No separation is made between Christ's death and His Resurrection, but the Cross is regarded as an emblem of victory and Calvary is seen in the light of the Empty Tomb.

(f) *The Fourth Sunday*. On this day is commemorated *St. John Climacus*, abbot of Sinai (sixth–seventh century), who is assigned a special Sunday in Lent because, by virtue of his writings and his own life, he forms a pattern of the true Christian ascetic. St. John is the author of *The Ladder of Paradise*, one of the spiritual texts appointed to be read in church during Lent. His memorial, like that of St. Theodore, has been transferred to the movable from the fixed calendar, where he is remembered on 30 March. The first Canon at Mattins on this Sunday is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30–5): the repentant Christian is likened to the man who fell among thieves.

[66] See *The Festal Menaion*, pp. 153–9.
[67] *Triodion Katanyktikon* (ed. Apostoliki Diakonia), p. 214.

(g) *The Fifth Week*. During this week, there are two special observances:

(i) At Mattins on Thursday, the *Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* is read in its entirety, together with a Canon to St. Mary of Egypt; and St. Mary's Life is also read during the service.[68]

(ii) At Mattins on Saturday, there is sung the *Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God*. One of the greatest marvels of Greek religious poetry, with a richness of imagery that is the despair of any translator, the Akathistos Hymn has twenty-four main stanzas, alternatively long and short: each long stanza bears the title 'ikos' and ends with the refrain 'Hail, Bride without bridegroom', while each short stanza is termed 'kontakion' and ends with the refrain 'Alleluia'. The title 'Akathistos' means literally 'not sitting', the Hymn being so called because all remain standing while it is sung. The greater part of the Hymn is made up of praises addressed to the Holy Virgin, each beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel, 'Hail' or 'Rejoice' (Luke 1: 28). The Hymn passes in review the main events connected with Christ's Incarnation, starting with the Annunciation (first ikos) and ending with the Flight into Egypt (sixth ikos) and the Presentation in the Temple (seventh kontakion).

The Akathistos Hymn, so it seems, was originally composed at an epoch when the Annunciation was still celebrated together with Christmas and had not yet become a separate festival.[69] Perhaps at one time it was sung on 26 December, the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos. It was probably during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (527–65) that the Annunciation first began to be celebrated on 25 March; and either when this happened or else soon after – and in any case not later than 718 – the Akathistos Hymn was also appointed to be sung on 25 March. More recently, perhaps during the period of the *Turcocratia* after the fall of Constantinople (1453), the Hymn was transferred from the fixed to the movable calendar, and instead of being sung on 25 March it was appointed for Saturday in the fifth week. The custom of singing a portion of the

[68] The Life of St. Mary of Egypt (not included in this volume) may be found in the translations of the Great Canon by Archimandrite Lazarus and by Sisters Katherine and Thekla (see below, p. 66).

[69] See R. A. Fletcher, 'Three Early Byzantine Hymns and their Place in the Liturgy of the Church of Constantinople', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* li (1958), pp. 53–65; J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*, vol. ii (Sources chrétiennes 110: Paris, 1965), pp. 15–16.

Hymn at Compline on the first four Fridays of Lent is more recent still: while found among the Greeks, such a practice is not part of the Slav use.

The link between the Akathistos Hymn and the Feast of the Annunciation still continues to be much in evidence: for example, most of the texts at Friday Vespers before the Vigil of the Akathistos are taken directly from the office for 25 March.[70] The Annunciation almost always falls within the period of the Great Fast,[71] and that is why this special office of praise to the Mother of God has found a place in the Lenten Triodion.

At the beginning of the Akathistos Hymn, there is sung a Kontakion greatly loved by the Orthodox people, 'To thee, our leader in battle and defender. . . ', celebrating the deliverance of the city of Constantinople from its enemies through the aid of the Mother of God. It seems that this Kontakion was not originally part of the Akathistos Hymn, for in the Hymn itself there is nowhere any allusion to such a deliverance. Most probably the Kontakion was written by Patriarch Sergios to celebrate the escape of the Byzantine capital from the attack of the Persians and Avars in 626;[72] in that case, the Akathistos Hymn is almost certainly more ancient than the Kontakion. Perhaps this Kontakion, and the Akathistos Hymn itself, were also sung at the thanksgiving celebrations after other deliverances of Constantinople: from the Arabs in the mid-670s, from the Arabs again in 717–18, and from the Russians (not yet converted to Orthodoxy) in 860. Understood in a broader sense, the Kontakion expresses, in the conscience of the Orthodox faithful, their sense of continuing dependence on the protecting intercession of the Holy Virgin at all moments of crisis and peril.

[70] See below, pp. 420–1, and compare *The Festal Menaion*, pp. 439–40, 460.

[71] According to the Typikon of St. Sabas, the earliest point in the movable calendar at which the Feast of the Annunciation can occur is Thursday in the third week of Lent; the latest point, Wednesday in Bright Week (Wednesday after Easter). The Typikon of St. Sabas also specifies that the Feast of the Annunciation shall never be transferred, even if it falls on Great Friday. These regulations are modified in the present-day Greek practice (see *The Festal Menaion*, p. 435, n. 1).

[72] See the Synaxarion in *Triodion Katanyktikon* (ed. Apostoliki Diakonia), pp. 302–3. It has also been suggested that the Kontakion 'To thee, our leader in battle and defender. . . ' was written in 532, to celebrate the safe escape of the city from the Nika riots. On such a hypothesis the Kontakion could be contemporary with the rest of the Akathistos Hymn, and might even be the work of Romanos. But the Synaxarion says nothing of the Nika riots.

(h) *The Fifth Sunday*. This corresponds closely to the preceding Sunday: just as the fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus, the model of ascetics, so the fifth celebrates *St. Mary of Egypt*, the model of penitents. Like that of St. John Climacus, her feast has been transferred from the fixed calendar, where she is commemorated on 1 April. Her life, recounted by St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem – it is read, as we have mentioned, on Thursday in the fifth week – sets before us a true verbal ikon of the essence of repentance. In her youth St. Mary lived in a dissolute and sinful way at Alexandria. Drawn by curiosity, she journeyed with some pilgrims to Jerusalem, arriving in time for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. But when she tried to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the others, an invisible force thrust her back at the threshold. This happened three or four times. Brought to sudden contrition by this strange experience, she prayed all night with tears to the Mother of God, and next morning she found to her joy that she could enter the church without difficulty. After venerating the Cross, she left Jerusalem on that same day, made her way over the Jordan, and settled as a solitary in a remote region of the desert. Here for forty-seven years she remained, hidden from the world, until she was eventually found by the ascetic St. Zosimas, who was able to give her Holy Communion shortly before her death. Some modern writers have questioned the historical accuracy of St. Sophronios' narrative, but there is in itself nothing impossible about such a story. In the year 1890 the Greek priest Joachim Spetsieris found a woman hermit in the desert beyond the Jordan, living almost exactly as St. Mary must have done.[73]

On this Sunday the first Canon at Mattins is based on the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19–31): like the parable of the Good Samaritan on the previous Sunday, this is applied symbolically to the repentant Christian.

(i) *The Sixth Week*. During the services of this week, and to a still greater extent during Holy Week, the Triodion assumes the character of a *historical narrative*. Day by day we accompany Christ: we are with Him as He draws near to Jerusalem, as He reaches Bethany to raise Lazarus, as He enters the Holy City on Palm Sunday, as He

[73] See his vividly written account: *I erimitis Photeini eis tin erimon tou lordanou* (6th ed., Volos, 1971).

approaches His Passion. The daily offices are marked by a sense of advancing movement and dramatic realism. Each day we call to mind, as exactly as possible, the things that must have occurred on the corresponding day during the last year of Christ's earthly ministry.

All this is not to be seen merely as the bare commemoration of occurrences in the distant past. On the contrary, through the liturgical celebration we *relive* these events, participating in them *as contemporaries*. We are raised from the level of secular time, as measured by the clock or calendar, to the level of 'liturgical' or 'sacred' time; we are transferred to the point where the vertical dimension of eternity breaks into linear time. This transposition of past into present, of remembrance into reality, is expressed in the liturgical texts above all through the word *Today*. So we sing on the Saturday of Lazarus, 'Today Bethany proclaims beforehand the Resurrection of Christ.' 'Today Christ enters the Holy City', we affirm on Palm Sunday. 'Today Christ comes to the house of the Pharisee', we state on Holy Wednesday, 'and the sinful woman draws near and falls down at His feet. . . . Today Judas makes a covenant with the chief priests.' 'Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate', we say on Great Friday: '. . . Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross.' So also at Easter Midnight we affirm: 'Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ, and today I rise with Thine arising. Yesterday I was crucified with Thee. . . .' We shall not understand the meaning of these last two weeks in the Triodion unless we listen to this word *Today* that resounds at each service. It is not a mere metaphor or an instance of poetic licence, but embodies a specific spiritual experience. All that was witnessed by the crowds in Holy Week, all the words addressed to the disciples, all the sufferings undergone by Christ – these are all to be experienced here and now *by me*.

(3) *Holy Week*. (a) *The Saturday of Lazarus*. This day, along with Palm Sunday, occupies a special position between Lent and Holy Week. Following the forty days of penitence which have just ended, and immediately before the days of darkness and mourning which are to follow in the week of the Passion, there come two days of joy and triumph on which the Church keeps festival. The Saturday before Palm Sunday celebrates the raising of Lazarus at Bethany (John

11 : 1–46). This miracle is performed by Christ as a reassurance to His disciples before the coming Passion : they are to understand that, though He suffers and dies, yet He is Lord and Victor over death. The resurrection of Lazarus is a prophecy in the form of an action. It foreshadows Christ's own Resurrection eight days later, and at the same time it anticipates the resurrection of all the righteous on the Last Day : Lazarus is 'the saving first-fruits of the regeneration of the world'.

As the liturgical texts emphasize, the miracle at Bethany reveals the *two natures* of Christ the God-man. Christ asks where Lazarus is laid and weeps for him, and so He shows the fullness of His manhood, involving as it does human ignorance and genuine grief for a beloved friend. Then, disclosing the fullness of His divine power, Christ raises Lazarus from the dead, even though his corpse has already begun to decompose and stink. This double fullness of the Lord's divinity and His humanity is to be kept in view throughout Holy Week, and above all on Great Friday. On the Cross we see a genuinely human agony, both physical and mental, but we see more than this : we see not only suffering man but *suffering God*.

(b) *Palm Sunday*. 'Blessed is He that comes. . .' : this is the feast of Christ the King – welcomed by the children at His entry into Jerusalem, and to be welcomed likewise by each one of us into our own heart. 'Blessed is He that comes. . .' – that comes not so much out of the past as *out of the future* : for on Palm Sunday we welcome not only the Lord who entered Jerusalem long ago, riding on a donkey, but the Lord who comes again in power and great glory, as King of the Future Age. Palms and branches are blessed after the Gospel at Mattins, and held with lighted candles during the rest of the service. Although at one time the Eastern Church – like Western Christendom up to the present – used to hold a procession on Palm Sunday, this has now fallen into disuse and there is no mention of it in the existing Triodion.[74]

Very frequently repeated at this feast is the sticheron beginning, 'Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together. . . .' It is possible to see reflected here the practice of St. Euthymios, St. Sabas and other Palestinian monks in the fifth and sixth centuries.

[74] Such a procession existed at Constantinople in the eleventh century : see Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise*, vol. ii, pp. 66–7.

Shortly after the Feast of Epiphany they left their monasteries to make a Lenten retreat in the wilderness, either singly or with a companion, spending the following weeks in silence and continual prayer, eating nothing but wild roots. Then, on Saturday afternoon in the sixth week of Lent, they all returned to their monasteries for the vigil service of Palm Sunday, in order to celebrate Holy Week together with their brethren. In isolated Orthodox parishes throughout the western world, something similar occurs each year. Scattered members of the parish community, living far from the church and scarcely ever able to attend the services at other times, start to appear in church at the vigil service before Palm Sunday, and as Holy Week continues their numbers steadily increase. Like the monks of ancient Palestine, we in the twentieth century can also say with truth on Palm Sunday, 'Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together. . . .'

(c) *Holy Week: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday*. On the days following His entry to Jerusalem, Christ spoke to His disciples in particular about the signs that will precede the Last Day (Matt. 24 and 25) ; and so this forms the theme of the first part of Holy Week. In Western worship, on the other hand, the 'last things' are commemorated mainly during the pre-Christmas season of Advent. The eschatological challenge of the first three days of Holy Week is summed up in the troparion and exapostilarion at Mattins,[75] both of which are repeated three times to a slow and solemn melody. The troparion, 'Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night. . .', is based on the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25 : 1–13) ; the exapostilarion, 'I see Thy bridal chamber. . .', on the parable of the man cast out from the feast because he had no wedding garment (Matt. 22 : 11–13). Here, presented in especially urgent terms, is the call that we have heard on many occasions during Lent : the End is near at hand ; be watchful ; repent while there is still time.

Each of the three days has its own particular theme :

(i) On Monday we commemorate the *Patriarch Joseph*, whose innocent sufferings (Genesis, chapters 37 and 39–40) prefigure the Passion of Christ. Also we commemorate the *barren fig tree* cursed by our Lord (Matt. 21 : 18–20) – a symbol of the judgement that will

[75] In modern practice Mattins are usually moved forward or 'anticipated', being held on the previous evening.

befall those who show no fruits of repentance; a symbol, more specifically, of the unbelieving Jewish synagogue.

(ii) On Tuesday the liturgical texts refer chiefly to the parable of the *Ten Virgins*, which forms the general theme of these three days. They refer also to the parable of the *Talents* that comes immediately after it (Matt. 25: 14–30). Both these are interpreted as parables of judgement.

(iii) On Wednesday we commemorate the *woman that was a sinner*, who anointed Christ's feet as He sat in the house of Simon. In the hymnography of the day, the account in Matthew 26: 6–13 is combined with that in Luke 7: 36–50 (cf. also John 12: 1–8). A second theme is the *agreement made by Judas* with the Jewish authorities: the repentance of the sinful harlot is contrasted with the tragic fall of the chosen disciple. The Triodion makes it clear that Judas perished, not simply because he betrayed his Master, but because, having fallen into the sin of betrayal, he then refused to believe in the possibility of forgiveness: 'In misery he lost his life, *preferring a noose rather than repentance*.'[76] If we deplore the actions of Judas, we do so not with vindictive self-righteousness but conscious always of our own guilt: 'Deliver our souls, O Lord, from the condemnation that was his.'[77] In general, all the passages in the Triodion that seem to be directed against the Jews should be understood in this same way. When the Triodion denounces those who rejected Christ and delivered Him to death, we recognize that these words apply not only to others, but to ourselves: for have we not betrayed the Saviour many times in our hearts and crucified Him afresh?

On the evening of Holy Wednesday the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is usually celebrated in church and all are anointed, whether physically ill or not; for there is no sharp line of demarcation between bodily and spiritual sicknesses, and this sacrament confers not only bodily healing but forgiveness of sins, thus serving as a preparation for the reception of Holy Communion on the next day.

(d) *Holy Thursday*. On this day four events are celebrated: the washing of the disciples' feet, the institution of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane (but the liturgical texts do not dwell much on this),

[76] Compline for Holy Wednesday.
[77] Mattins for Holy Tuesday.

and the betrayal of Christ by Judas. In certain cathedrals and monasteries, there is a special ceremony of feet-washing at the conclusion of the Liturgy, with the bishop or abbot taking the part of Christ and twelve priests representing the apostles. At the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, and at the centres of other Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches, the Holy Chrism is blessed during the Liturgy on this day; but the rite does not take place in every year. The meaning of Holy Thursday is summed up in a text of singular beauty, repeated many times at the Liturgy, which combines the themes of eucharistic Communion, Judas' treachery, and the confession of the Good Thief:

At Thy mystical Supper, Son of God,
Today receive me as a communicant:
For I will not speak of the mystery to Thine enemies;
I will not give Thee a kiss like Judas;
But as the thief I confess Thee:
Remember me, Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.

(e) *Great Friday*. On this day we celebrate the sufferings of Christ: the mockery, the crown of thorns, the scourging, the nails, the thirst, the vinegar and gall, the cry of desolation, and all that the Saviour endured on the Cross; also the confession of the Good Thief. At the same time, the Passion is not separated from the Resurrection; even on this day of our Lord's deepest self-abasement, we look forward also to the revelation of His eternal glory:

We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ:
Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection.

The Cross and the Resurrection, as we have seen, are aspects of a single, undivided act of salvation:

Thy Cross, O Lord, is life and resurrection.

Friday Mattins are usually 'anticipated' and held on Thursday evening. They take a special form, with a series of twelve Gospel readings that begins with Christ's discourse at the Last Supper and ends with the account of His burial. In the Greek use there comes a 'high point' shortly before the sixth Gospel, when the priest carries a large Cross from the sanctuary and sets it up in the centre of the church. This ceremony, which originated in the Church of Antioch,

was only adopted at Constantinople as recently as 1824;[78] it is not found in the practice of the Slav Churches. Here we find the principle of dramatic representation carried a stage further than hitherto, through the use not only of words but of visible actions.

On Friday morning, the Hours take a solemn form, as on the eves of Christmas and Theophany,[79] with an Old Testament reading, an Epistle and a Gospel at each Hour. Vespers follow, either immediately after the Hours (normal Greek use) or in the afternoon (Slav use). At the end of Vespers, as was done earlier at Mattins in the Greek use, the events of Great Friday are represented not only through words but through dramatic actions.[80] The Epitaphion – an oblong piece of stiffened cloth on which is painted or embroidered the figure of the dead Christ laid out for burial – is carried in procession from the sanctuary to the centre of the church, and is then venerated by the faithful. There are few more moving moments in the whole of the Church's Year. The Greek and Slav Triodia say nothing about this procession with the Epitaphion at the end of Vespers, nor about the corresponding procession at the end of Mattins on Holy Saturday. It seems that the practice of carrying the Epitaphion processionally on these two occasions originated at a relatively recent period, in the fifteenth or the sixteenth century.

In present practice no Liturgy is celebrated on Great Friday – neither the complete Liturgy (except when it is the Feast of the Annunciation) nor the Liturgy of the Presanctified. But in earlier times there was a Presanctified Liturgy on this day.[81]

(f) *Holy Saturday*. On this day we celebrate the burial of Christ and His descent into Hell. At Mattins, usually held on Friday evening, the service begins with the 'Praises' (in Greek, *Enkomia*) sung before the Epitaphion in the centre of the church. The pre-

[78] See A. Couturier, *Cours de Liturgie grecque-melkite*, vol. ii (Jerusalem, 1914), p. 270.

[79] See *The Festal Menaion*, pp. 221–51, 314–36.

[80] In the modern Greek use there is another piece of dramatic representation earlier in Vespers. At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, as Christ's deposition is being described, the priest takes down the figure from the Cross that has been set up in the centre of the church (see below, p. 614, n. 67). Because of this ceremony the service is often called in Greek the 'Un-nailing' (*Apokathilosis*).

[81] Such was the practice at Constantinople in the mid-eleventh century; but by 1200 there was no Presanctified Liturgy (Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise*, vol. ii, pp. 82–3).

dominant note at this service is not so much one of mourning as of watchful expectation. For the time being God observes a Sabbath rest in the tomb, but we look forward to the moment when He will rise again, bringing new life and recreating the world:

Today Thou dost keep holy the seventh day,
Which Thou hast blessed of old by resting from Thy works.
Thou bringest all things into being and Thou makest all things new,
Observing the sabbath rest, my Saviour, and restoring Thy strength.

At the end of the service, all go with the Epitaphion around the outside of the church, singing 'Holy God. . .', exactly as they would at a funeral. And yet this is not in fact a funeral procession at all. God had died on the Cross, and yet He is not dead. He who died, the Word of God, is the Life Himself, holy and immortal; and our procession through the night signifies that He is now proceeding through the darkness of Hell, announcing to Adam and to all the dead His coming Resurrection, in which they are also called to share.

In the morning and early afternoon of Holy Saturday there follow Vespers and the Liturgy of St. Basil.[82] Originally this service began later, in the evening, and continued into the early hours of Easter Sunday morning; but now it has been moved back, and its place taken by the existing midnight service of Easter Mattins, with the Canon by St. John of Damascus, 'This is the day of Resurrection. . .', followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The more ancient vigil service, now celebrated on Saturday morning, has a strongly baptismal character, reflecting the period when this sacrament was administered on Easter night. The texts at Vespers are dominated by the three connected themes of *Passover*, *Resurrection* and *baptismal initiation*. Of the fifteen Old Testament readings – constituting the final stage in the teaching imparted to the catechumens before they were baptized – readings 3, 5, 6 and 10 refer directly or symbolically to the Passover; readings 4, 7, 8, 12 and 15 refer to the Resurrection; and readings 4, 6, 14 and 15 refer symbolically to Baptism. The baptismal character of the Holy Saturday office is likewise

[82] See G. Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 193: Rome, 1972).

apparent in the chant sung in place of the Trisagion, 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ. . .', and in the choice of Epistle reading (Rom. 6: 3–11). With the verse following the Epistle, 'Arise, O God. . .', the celebration of the Resurrection has already begun.

On Holy Saturday evening the people gradually reassemble in the darkened church while the Acts of the Apostles are read and then the Midnight Office is sung. As twelve o'clock approaches, the lights in the body of the church are extinguished. All wait in silence for the moment when the priest will come out from the sanctuary with the burning candle that symbolizes the light of the risen Christ. So the period of the Lenten Triodion closes in a spirit of intense and eager expectation. 'Surely I am coming quickly', the Saviour says to us (Rev. 22: 20), and in our hearts we make ready to reply to the risen Christ: 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!'

THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

This volume is the second in the series *The Service Books of the Orthodox Church*, and forms a sequel to *The Festal Menaion* (Faber and Faber, 1969). Practical considerations render it impossible at this juncture to issue a printed translation of the Lenten Triodion in its entirety. The present book contains the selection of material adopted by the monks of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., in their Slavonic edition of the *Velikii Sbornik*, vol. iii, part 1 (1956). That is to say, we have included the full text for the following days:

All Sundays in the period of the Triodion (omitting Small Vespers);
The Saturday of the Dead;
The first week of Lent (in its entirety);
Thursday in the fifth week (the service of the Great Canon);
Saturday in the fifth week (the service of the Akathistos Hymn);
Saturday in the sixth week (the Saturday of Lazarus);
Holy Week (in its entirety).

Altogether this represents about two-thirds of the total contents of the Triodion. At one point only have we departed from the Jordanville selection: whereas the *Velikii Sbornik* omits the Canon at Compline for the Saturday of Lazarus, we have included this because of its great importance both doctrinally and liturgically.

Omitted from our translation are the offices for the following days:

Monday to Saturday (inclusive) in the week before Lent;
Monday to Saturday (inclusive) in the second, third and fourth weeks of Lent;
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday in the fifth week;
Monday to Friday in the sixth week;
Small Vespers on Saturday evening (first, third and sixth Sundays in Lent).

An English version of these omitted texts, prepared by the present translators, is available in roneotyped form from the Monastery of the Veil of the Mother of God, Bussy-en-Othe, 89400 Migennes, France.

Also omitted from the present volume are: (i) the readings from the Synaxarion provided in the Triodion for Sundays, for the days of Holy Week, and for certain other days; (ii) the Synodikon or Office of Orthodoxy appointed for the first Sunday in Lent. We hope to prepare an English translation of this material in the future. The rubrics referring to the Patristic readings at the Lenten offices are likewise omitted. As given in the Greek or Slavonic Triodia, the directions are too general to be of use to the Western reader, and in any case the actual practice in contemporary Orthodox monasteries varies widely.

The principles of our translation are the same here as in our previous volume, *The Festal Menaion*. To save space, however, we have given only the chapter and verse references for Scriptural readings and not the full text, except in the Service of the Twelve Gospels (Mattins for Great Friday).

All Psalm references are according to the numbering of the Septuagint.[83] Verses of the Psalms are numbered as in the edition of the Old Testament published by the *Zoi* Brotherhood (issued with the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece: 7th ed., Athens, 1973). Where the text of the Septuagint differs significantly from the Hebrew, 'Sept.' is added in brackets after the reference.

[83] For differences between this and the Hebrew numbering, see *The Festal Menaion*, p. 530. In the same volume we explain the division of the Psalter into Kathismata and the rules for the recitation of the Psalms (pp. 530–4), and we provide a glossary of technical terms (pp. 544–62). We have not repeated this material here.

For our translation we have used the Greek *Triodion Katanyktikon* issued by the official publishing-house of the Church of Greece, *Apostoliki Diakonia* (Athens, 1960). We have also consulted other Greek editions printed at Venice, Bologna and Rome, as well as the Slavonic text.

No full translation of the Triodion, so far as we know, has hitherto been published in English. The French language is better served. There exist two translations of the complete Triodion, both published in roneotyped form, the first made by an Orthodox and the second by a Roman Catholic:

(1) Jacques Touraille, *Textes liturgiques orthodoxes, Série I. Le Triode du Grand Carême* (9 fascicules, Paris, 1973–4);

(2) Denis Guillaume, *Triode de Carême: version à l'usage des chantres* (3 vols., Chevetogne, 1973).[84]

Substantial parts of the Triodion are also to be found in E. Mercenier, *La Prière des Eglises de rite byzantin*, vol. ii, part 2 (Chevetogne, no date [?1949]).

In English, the following translations of material from the Triodion are known to us:

(a) *The Great Canon.*

(1) Lady Lechmere, *The Great Canon of S. Andrew of Crete, surnamed the Jerusalemite* (London, 1875).

(2) Derwas J. Chitty, *The Great Canon: A Poem of Saint Andrew of Crete* (published by the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, London, 1957; 2nd ed., London, 1966).

(3) Anon. [Archimandrite Lazarus Moore], *The Great Canon: The Work of Saint Andrew of Crete* (Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 1967).

(4) Sister Katherine and Sister Thekla, *St. Andrew of Crete: The Great Canon. The Life of St. Mary of Egypt* (The Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Assumption, Newport Pagnell, 1974).

(b) *The Akathistos Hymn.*

(1) Katharine Lady Lechmere, *Synopsis* (London, no date [?1891]), pp. 66–93.

[84] Strictly speaking, Guillaume's version should not be termed complete, for there are certain deliberate but unexplained omissions.

(2) G. R. Woodward, *The Acathist Hymn of the Holy Orthodox Eastern Church. . . done into English Verse* (London, 1917).[85]

(3) Anon., *The Akathist Hymn and Little Compline* (London, 1919).

(4) J. Christopher and A. Bartle, *The Akathistos Hymn* (London, no date [1922]; revised ed., London, no date [1923]).[86]

(5) Vincent McNabb, O.P., *Ode in Honour of the Holy Immaculate Most Blessed Glorious Lady Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary. Written on the occasion of the deliverance of Constantinople from the Barbarians, A.D. 626* (Ditchling, 1934; revised ed., Oxford, 1947).

(6) Father Seraphim Nassar, *Divine Prayers and Services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ* (Brooklyn, 1938), pp. 702–18.

(7) Athenagoras Kokkinakis, Bishop of Elaia [now Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain], *The Akathist* (Los Angeles, 1954).

(8) G. G. Meersseman, O.P., *The Acathistos Hymn* (Fribourg, 1958).

(9) Anon., *The Orthodox Prayer Book* ('Russian Day' Committee, Wilkes-Barre, 1959), pp. 460–98.

(10) Anon. [Archimandrite Lazarus Moore], *Prayer Book* (Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 1960), pp. 270–90.

(11) Archbishop Joseph Raya and Baron José de Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship* (Allendale, N.J., 1969), pp. 967–79.

(12) Protopresbyter George L. Papadeas, *The Akathist Hymn Preceded by the Brief Compline* (Athens, 1972).

(13) M. Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*, II. *On Christian Life* (Columbia, 1973), pp. 297–309.

(14) Paul M. Addison, O.S.M., *Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God* (London, 1975).

(c) *Holy Week* (the main services only).

(1) Anon., *The Services for Holy Week and Easter Sunday* (London, 1915).

(2) Protopresbyter George L. Papadeas, *Greek Orthodox Holy Week and Easter Services* (New York, 1971).[87]

[85] Woodward apparently is ignorant of Lady Lechmere's work, for he claims of his own version, '. . . now seen in English for the first time' (p. iv).

[86] Of all the many versions of the Akathistos Hymn listed here, this is undoubtedly the most extraordinary.

[87] Not a new translation, but for the most part a revision of the anonymous translation of 1915.

Translated material from the Lenten Triodion can also be found in Katharine Lady Lechmere, *Synopsis*, pp. 210–26, 281–442; G. V. Shann, *Euchology* (Kidderminster, 1891), pp. 260–377; I. F. Happood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic (Greco-Russian) Church* (Boston/New York, 1906), pp. 204–25; Anon., *The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified of St Gregory the Dialogist* (London, 1918), pp. 80–188; Father Seraphim Nassar, *Divine Prayers and Services*, pp. 604–919; Archbishop Joseph Raya and Baron José de Vinck, *Byzantine Missal* (Birmingham, Alabama, 1958), pp. 371–455; and by the same translators, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, pp. 773–842. But the greater part of the Triodion – including the Canons for all ten Sundays and virtually all the weekday texts, with the exception of Holy Week – seems never to have appeared previously in English.

The translators have had the opportunity to consult unpublished translations made by the late Revd. Derwas J. Chitty and by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, as well as some renderings in use at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y. We are most grateful to those who have kindly allowed us access to these manuscript versions.

We wish to express our gratitude also to all our spiritual helpers, without whom this work could not have been brought to completion. May the Lord remember them and us when He comes in His Kingdom.

26 January/8 February 1977 ARCHIMANDRITE KALLISTOS

Translation of the Relics of St. Theodore, Abbot of the Studios Monastery.
Commemoration of St. Joseph the Studite, Archbishop of Thessalonica.