

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

Ἡ ἀναγνώσις τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων



*Icon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy*



## ABOUT SAINT EPHREM'S PRAYER

The famous lenten prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian summarizes our entire struggle during the forty day fast – that of turning from vice to virtue, sin to holiness, and self-love to love of God and neighbor.

This powerful prayer is said every day of Great Lent, except on Saturdays and Sundays. It should be part of our morning and evening prayers, but may also be said at any other time throughout the day – especially in time of temptation.

### МОЛИТВА СВ. ЄФРЕМА СИРІЙЦЯ

Господи і Владико життя Мого! Духа лінивства, недбайливости, властолюб'я і пустомовства в іджени від мене.  
*(доземний поклін)*

Духа чистоти, покори, терпеливості й любови даруй мені, рабу твоему [рабі Твоїй]. *(доземний поклін)*

Так, Господи, Царю! Дай мені бачити гріхи мої і неосуджувати брата чи сестру мою, бо Ти благословен єси на віки віків. Амінь. *(доземний поклін)*

Боже, милостивий будь мені грішному!  
*(поклон)*

Боже, очисти гріхи мої і помилуй мене!  
*(поклон)*

Без числа нагрішив я, Господи, прости Мені! *(поклон)*

*(4 р.)*

*(повторіть цілу молитву, а тоді доземний поклін, а якщо це не можливо, малий поклін або перехреститися.)*

### PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust of power, and idle chatter. *(prostration)*

But give rather the spirit of wholeness of being, humble-mindedness, patience, and love to Your servant. *(prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother or sister; For You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. *(prostration)*

God, be merciful to me a sinner! *(bow)*

God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me! *(bow)*

I have sinned without measure, forgive me

O Lord! *(bow)*

*(4 times)*

*(Then again the whole prayer from the beginning to end, and after that one great prostration. Note: If one cannot make prostrations, then make bows, or simply the sign of the Cross.)*



## ABOUT THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

*From the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese – goarch.org*

Lent was in origin the time of final preparation for candidates for baptism at the Paschal Vigil, and this is reflected in the readings at the Liturgy, today and on all the Sundays of Lent. But that basic theme came to be subordinated to later themes, which dominated the hymnography of each Sunday. The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, that Sunday been commemorated as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

The name of this Sunday reflects the great significance which icons possess for the Orthodox Church. They are not optional devotional extras, but an integral part of Orthodox faith and devotion. They are held to be a necessary consequence of Christian faith in the incarnation of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in Jesus Christ. They have a sacramental character, making present to the believer the person or event depicted on them. So the interior of Orthodox churches is often covered with icons painted on walls and domed roofs, and there is always an icon screen, or iconostasis, separating the sanctuary from the nave, often with several rows of icons. No Orthodox home is complete without an icon corner, where the family prays.



Icons are venerated by burning lamps and candles in front of them, by the use of incense and by kissing. But there is a clear doctrinal distinction between the veneration paid to icons and the worship due to God. The former is not only relative, it is in fact paid to the person represented by the icon. This distinction safeguards the veneration of icons from any charge of idolatry.

## What is Kolyva / Kutia?

Kolyva is boiled wheat which is traditionally offered at memorial services. Orthodox Christians consider kolyva to be the symbolic of death and resurrection, according to the words of the Gospel:

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. (John 12:24)*

Wheat which is planted in the earth and rises in new life is symbolic of those beloved departed who have died in the hope of resurrection, in accordance with St. Paul:

*So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body....(I Corinthians 15:42-44)*

This symbolism has its highest expression in the Saints, whose blessed state in heaven have been manifested to the world. For this reason, kolyva is blessed not only at memorials for the departed, but also in commemoration of saints.

Kolyva: from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koliva>

### St Theodore Saturday

The tradition of blessing and eating koliva at the end of the first week of Great Lent is connected with an event in the reign of Julian the Apostate. The tradition states that the Emperor knew that the Christians would be hungry after the first week of strict fasting, and would go to the marketplaces of Constantinople on Saturday to buy food. So he ordered that blood from pagan sacrifices be sprinkled over all the food that was sold there. This made the food unsuitable as Lenten fare (since the Christians could not eat meat products during Lent), and in general as food for Christians, who are forbidden to eat food from such sacrifices. However, St. Theodore Tyro appeared in the dream to Archbishop Eudoxius and advised him that the people should not eat food bought at the marketplace that day, but only boiled wheat mixed with honey.

### Memorial services

During requiem services (Greek: *Parastas*, Slavonic: *Panikhida*), the family or friends of the departed will often prepare a koliva which is placed in front of the memorial table before which the service is chanted.



Postcard (ca 1916) showing a service with the blessing of kolyva

Memorial services are held on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after the repose of an Orthodox Christian, as well as on the one-year anniversary. In addition, there are several Soul Saturdays during the church year (mostly during Great Lent), as well as Radonitsa (on the second Tuesday after Pascha), on each of which general commemorations are made for all the departed.

### Commemoration of saints

It is also customary in the Slavic practice on the feast of the Patron Saint of a church or of a family, or on the feast of saints of special significance to offer koliva. Instead of serving a memorial service, the koliva is set in front of an icon of the saint and a Moleben is served to that saint.

**Святкуємо 50-років!**

**Celebrating 50 Years!**

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*The Holy Images*

In former times God, who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do not worship matter; I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take His abode in matter; who worked out my salvation through matter. Never will I cease honoring the matter which wrought my salvation! I honor it, but not as God. How could God be born out of things which have no existence in themselves? God's body is God because it is joined to His person by a union which shall never pass away. The divine nature remains the same; the flesh created in time is quickened by a reason endowed soul.

Because of this I salute all remaining matter with reverence, because God has filled it with His grace and power. Through it my salvation has come to me. Was not the thrice-happy and thrice blessed wood of the Cross matter? What of the life bearing rock, the holy and life-giving tomb, the fountain of our resurrection, was it not matter? Is not the ink in the most holy Gospel-book matter? Is not the life-giving altar made of matter? From it we receive the bread of life! Are not gold and silver matter? From them we make crosses, patens, chalices! And over and above all these things, is not the Body and Blood of our Lord matter? Either do away with the honor and veneration these things deserve, or accept the tradition of the Church and the veneration of images.

*St. John of Damascus*