



Introduction

THE *Triodion*¹ contains, in the modern Greek and Slavonic editions, the four Sundays before Great Lent, Cheese-fare Week, all the Forty-day Fast, and Holy Week. In 2016 we printed *Holy Week*² as a separate volume, which also included Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. At the time we intended to print the full *Triodion*, including Holy Week, after the *Octoëchos*. We noted in the introduction to the *Octoëchos*, printed in 2019,

In preparing the *Octoëchos* for publication, we have found the expense of printing a book of this size daunting, and that the sheer bulk and heaviness of it increases the possibility of damage to the spine. The *Triodion* is even bigger. To split it into two volumes to avoid straining the spine would be prohibitively expensive. Since we have already printed *Holy Week*, our thinking now is to treat the *Triodion* as a two-volume book, the second volume, *Holy Week*, having been printed, and issuing all the rest of the work as a first volume, *The Triodion*, to be used with *Holy Week* as part of a two-volume set.

The *Octoëchos* came to 464 pages, which we felt to be the absolute maximum. *Holy Week* came to 144 pages. The present volume is 400 pages long; it would have been well over 500 had we included Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week. This edition of the *Triodion*, therefore, is to be used together with our previously published *Holy Week*. It begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and ends with Matins and the Sixth Hour of Friday before Palm Sunday. *Holy Week* begins with what would be the very next service in the full *Triodion*: the Vespers of Friday Evening before Palm Sunday. These two books, taken together, provide everything in the Greek printed editions of the *Triodion*.

As a companion to the *Triodion*, our *Great Horologion* provides concise accounts explaining all the feasts of the *Triodion* (besides all those of *Holy Week*, the *Pentecostarion*, and the twelve months of the *Menologion*) beginning on page 597 of the first edition printed in 1997, and on page 348 of Volume Two of the second edition printed in 2020.

While “Lent,” “Great Lent,” “The Great Fast” and “The Forty-day Fast” and variants are generally used interchangeably, our English word *Lent* is derived from a Germanic word meaning *spring*, because of the time of year in which it always falls (which

1. Whereas most Canons have eight Odes (Ode Two usually being omitted) the majority of Canons in the *Triodion* are constituted of only three, hence the name: Τρι- “three” and -ώδιον “ode, having odes”—*Three-Ode-ion*.

Many editions entitle it more fully Τριώδιον Κατανυκτικόν—*The Compunctionate Triodion*.

2. In 2017 we published a Greek-English edition of *Holy Week and Pascha*. References here to *Holy Week* apply equally to both editions, except that the bilingual edition came to 888 pages.

is why it is incorrect to refer to, e.g., the Christmas Lent). The word Lent does not occur in our *Triodion* not out of linguistic prejudice but because the Greek exclusively uses the word νηστεία—fast—and it seemed best not to obscure the ascetical nature of the period. Similarly, the two Sundays before the Fast are not wrongly referred to as *of the Second Coming* and *of Forgiveness*, but the titles by which the service-books refer to them are *Meat-fare* and *Cheese-fare* Sunday, emphasizing that the first is the last day on which the faithful eat meat, and the second, cheese, before the Fast begins. Even before the Fast begins, the hymns are urging us to prepare for it. On Tuesday of Cheese-fare Week, while the rich food is still flowing freely, as if to prick our conscience before the time and rouse our zeal for spiritual struggles rather than for passing pleasures, we chant:

Let us gladly embrace the Fast, O ye peoples, for the beginning of spiritual struggles is come. Let us leave off the comfort of the flesh, let us increase the gifts of the soul, let us suffer affliction with Christ as the servants of Christ, that we may also be glorified with Him as children of God; and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us shall enlighten our souls. [page 47]

The hymns throughout the *Triodion* stress that fasting only from food, without the practice of mercy, faith, and love, is vain, and worse. In the Praises of Meat-fare Sunday, we chant:

. . . Take heed, O my soul: Dost thou fast? Despise not thy neighbour. Dost thou abstain from food? Condemn not thy brother, lest thou be sent to the fire and be burned up like wax; but may Christ bring thee unhindered into His Kingdom. [p. 42]

For all the many hymns that warn against trusting in a fast from food that is not united to efforts to fast from our failings, the hymnology also assures us that there is a mystical power to fasting that in and of itself will help us against those failings:

At every season, fasting is profitable for them that take it up and labour therein. For not only doth the effrontery of demons not venture against him that fasteth, but the Angels also, the protectors of our life, stand by us more diligently, when we have been cleansed by fasting.

Aposticha of the Praises of Cheese-fare Monday, p. 45

As fasting was the original and only commandment given to Adam and Eve in Paradise, so its continuance was commanded by the Holy Apostles, as they received it from our Lord, and is stated thus in the *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles:

Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on Mondays and Thursdays, but do you fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.³

3. *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I, §VIII, p. 321, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1965.