

## Living Lent 1

### Weekly Reflections by Metropolitan Tikhon

*His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon offers a series of reflections on the themes contained in the Triodion hymns sung on Monday of each week during Great Lent.*



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The first week of Great Lent is, for Orthodox Christians, second only to Holy Week in terms of spiritual and liturgical intensity. The reality of this intensity should not be a cause of dread or foreboding for us, but rather, should bring us to a fuller experience of the same joy that we experience on the feast of Holy Pascha. The hymns appointed for this week remind us of this:

“Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; and let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer, with the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So clothed in raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, that shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life.”

Even though this is indeed a “time of combat” for us as we struggle to overcome the passions, it is also a time for renewal of our souls and a time to “accept the grace of the fast as a gift from God.” Forty days may seem like a long time, but the time will pass quickly for those who labor with love and with joy since this time was consecrated by our Lord Himself through His own fasting for forty days. So, “clothing ourselves in the shining raiment of the fast, let us cast off the dark and hateful garment of drunkenness; and illumined by the divine virtues, we shall gaze with faith upon the radiance of the Saviour’s Passion.”