



Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church of San Diego

# Shepherd

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From the desk of

FATHER ANDREW

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You will notice that from the ecclesiastical calendars that were recently sent to you homes that on Sunday, January 24, 2010 marked the beginning of *Triodion*. Triodion is both a period of time and a liturgical text of the Orthodox Church. It is a period of time, in that Triodion begins four Sundays prior to Great and Holy Lent and continues until Great and Holy Saturday evening. Since Pascha is a *moveable feast*, this year Triodion began on Sunday, January 8, 2010, which is known as the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee; and continues until Great and Holy Saturday evening, which falls on April 3rd, 2010.

**The Triodion as a liturgical text** of the Church is a book of *Lenten* hymnology, biblical readings and prayers. Its basic structure of hymns, readings and prayers is for the services of Vespers, Orthros, and the Divine Liturgy. It also contains hymns for both Great and Small Compline, and for the *Hours* of prayer. The Triodion as a text is a book of biblical hymnology, readings and prayers, which not only relates to us the truths of the New Testament, but of the Old Testament as well. It is, in a sense, a *return to our biblical roots*, which, for the most part, is put to music.

The hymns within the text of the Triodion not only concentrate on the Sunday Gospel lessons, like the Publican and the Pharisee and the Prodigal Son and so on. They also focus upon the historical books of the Old Testament like Genesis and Exodus. The Triodion also makes good use of the Prophetical books of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and the Wisdom books of Proverbs and Job.

**The Triodion, as a period of time**, as was stated above, takes place from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, until Great and Holy Saturday evening. The period of Triodion can further be divided into three other periods (odes) of time: 1) From the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee until the beginning of Great and Holy Lent *proper* (February 15, 2010). This is a three-week time of *preparation* and it is interesting to note, that the Orthodox Christian is even preparing to enter Great and Holy Lent. 2) From *Clean Monday* (February, 15, 2010) until the Saturday of Lazarus marks the second period, which (should) include(s) an intense period of fasting, prayer, reflection, good works and attending the many and varied divine services of the Church. 3) From the evening of Palm Sunday until Pascha (Sunday, March 28, 2010 until April 4, 2010) marks the third period of time, known as Great and Holy Week.

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Triodion is both a beautiful text and a period of time used to assist Orthodox Christians in their continued spiritual growth. Triodion begins and eases the faithful into a period of preparation, which starts out rather simple and as the faithful advance in their journey, the path becomes more difficult, only to end with the joy of the resurrection. Triodion helps the Orthodox faithful understand biblical truths as they prepare to meet the Risen Lord (on the morning of Pascha). Therefore, as Orthodox Christians we must make an earnest attempt to be present at the many and varied Lenten services throughout the period of Triodion or that period of time will remain void; but maybe more importantly, we must make an earnest attempt to make the words of the Triodion our own or the Triodion will remain a beautiful liturgical text unable to bear fruit. The text and period of Triodion is about change, about transforming our lives in order to grow in our relationship with the Living God. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ continue to illumine and guide you during Triodion, and always. ❀

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*...and be kind to  
 one another,  
 tenderhearted,  
 forgiving  
 one another,  
 as God in Christ  
 forgave you*  
 (EPHESIANS 4:31;32).

