

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the
British Isles and Ireland
Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East**

Charity number: 1192469

Sunday 22 February 2026. Issue 17.

Tone 4.

**Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheese Fare) Uncovering of the Seven
Martyrs' relics at Gate of Eugenios in Constantinople; Martyr
Anthusa and her twelve servants**

**Epistle Reading
Romans (13:11-14:4)**

Prokeimenon in Tone IV

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God Thou art very great.

Brethren, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. But as for the one who is weak in faith, receive him, but not for disputes over opinions. For one believes he may eat anything; but the weak person eats herbs. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to be the judge over the servant of a stranger? To his own master he either stands or falls; but he will be made to stand; for God is able to make him stand.

Alleluia.

Verse 1: Gird thee and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

Verse 2: Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Gospel Reading Matthew (6:14-21)

For if you forgive people their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive people their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites with their gloomy faces. For they disfigure their faces so that people may see that they are fasting. Amen, I tell you: they have received their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that people may not see that you are fasting. Only your Father who is in secret will see, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly. Do not store up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Troparion of the Resurrection. Tone 4.

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection; they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles; Death is over thrown! Christ our God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

St Martin the Merciful Troparion

In signs and in miracles thou wast renowned throughout the land of Gaul. By grace thou art a light for the world, O Martin, Bishop blessed of God. Deeds of mercy and compassion filled thy life with their splendours, teaching and wise counsel were thy riches and treasures, which still thou dost dispense freely to those who honour thee.

St Helen Troparion

We behold thee, glorious Helen, with thy God-inspired son, in the joys of the kingdom of Heaven, and we magnify Christ, for he hath revealed to us thine honoured festival, giving light more brilliant than the sun. Therefore we cry in faith: O People, exalt Christ above all forever!

Sunday of the Cheese Fare Kontakion

Thou hast made radiant the company of the God-bearers, making them shine throughout the earth as preachers of godliness and silencers of impiety. By their supplications, preserve in perfect peace all those who glorify and magnify thee, that they may sing to thee: Alleluia.

Forgiveness Sunday

On this last Sunday before Great Lent, the last day that traditionally Orthodox Christians eat dairy products until Easter, the Church remembers the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. God commanded them to fast from the fruit of a tree (Gen. 2:16), but they did not obey. In this way Adam and Eve and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption.

On Forgiveness Sunday many attend Forgiveness Vespers on the eve of Great Lent. They hear on the Lord's teaching about fasting and forgiveness and enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive them. *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses* (Matthew 6:14).

The Gospel reading of the day also gives advice on fasting. *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.* (Matthew 6:16-18).

After the dismissal at Vespers, the priest stands beside the analogion, or before the ambon, and the faithful come up one by one and venerate the icon, after which each makes a prostration before the priest, saying, "Forgive me, a sinner." The priest also makes a prostration before each, saying, "God forgives. Forgive me." The person responds, "God forgives," and receives a blessing from the priest. Meanwhile the choir sings quietly the irmoi of the Paschal Canon, or else the Paschal Stichera. After receiving the priest's blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of each other.

Source: Orthodox Wiki



Services this week

Wednesday 25 February, 6pm
Presanctified Liturgy, St Martin's Church.

Friday 27 February, 6pm
Akathist - First Salutations, St Helen's Chapel.