



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΒΟΣΤΩΝΗΣ

## THE GREAT LENT

**March 18 marks the beginning of the Great Lent. It is known in Greek as 'Kathara Deftera' or Clean Monday. The word kathara is closely related to catharsis or cleaning.**

**Everyone needs cleanliness. Fortunately, scientific technology has given us many ways of achieving cleanliness, of keeping our bodies clean. Are our bodies entirely clean?**

**Are our tongues clean? Is it not true that they speak words which are not clean, but are offensive, words which show malice or envy, or which indicate a hostile attitude to the progress of others? It is obvious that our tongues need to be cleaned. The Great Lent is an opportunity for cleansing ourselves with silence, so that we stop saying unjust, false and offensive words against our brethren.**

**Do we have clean eyes? Christ told us that when the eyes are clean, then the whole body is radiant. Do we really regard others with contempt and envy and only find fault with them and not virtue? Are our eyes clean? The Great Lent gives us the opportunity to cleanse our eyes, so that we can discover in other people not their mistakes, but goodness and love and other qualities which adorn the image of God i.e. the image of God in each person.**

**Do we have clean ears? Do we listen attentively to idle gossip about our friends and neighbors? If so, the Great Lent gives us a chance to cleanse our hearing so that we may ignore rumors which are repeatedly circulated against other people. We know that there are people who hear exactly what they want to hear, and gossip about other people adding their own malicious condemnations. But whatever they hear and say is nothing but falsehood and idle gossip. They speak against the church, against Christ, His Bishops and priests, and lay leaders. Do our ears need cleansing? If so, Clean**

**Monday gives us a chance to cleanse our hearing from all the vicious attacks which we hear against other people.**

**Additionally, our hands and feet and the other members of our bodies need the same cleansing, not only with soap, but also with honesty. Our feet must not take us to places where the enemies of our churches congregate, and our hands must not move us against justice and dignity and against the property of others. The Great Lent invites us to cleanse our ears, our hands, our feet and our eyes, but most of all, our hearts.**

**In the book of Psalms we read: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” These words, from the 50<sup>th</sup> Psalm, contain a special significance for our repentance, which we begin on Clean Monday and continue throughout the period of Great Lent. Repentance means the cleansing of our feelings, our thoughts our intentions, and our hearts. It is redirecting our minds towards the mind of Christ. As Saint Paul says “Acquire the mind of Christ”.**

**During Great Lent, our Church guides us to the cleanliness of our eyes and tongues, of our ears and hands, our feet, our hearts and minds, that is to say, to our whole being. Our church prepares us to approach the Cross and receive His Precious Body and Blood.**

**Kali Tessarakoste.**