27/02/2025

Metropolitan of Poland: “Great Lent is a time of spiritual toil”



His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland in his message for Great Lent 2025, calls upon the faithful to enter this sacred period with a spirit of repentance, prayer, and self-restraint.

As he himself emphasises, “Great Lent, known as the Holy Forty Days, is a time of spiritual toil, prayer, self-restraint, and ascetic struggle – the wonder of the angels.” It is the path that leads us to the purification of the soul and the preparation for Pascha, the brightest day of our faith.

With paternal love, the Metropolitan reminds us that “fasting and prayer are the wings of the soul that lift man toward God” and urges us to follow the example of Christ, the Theotokos, and the Saints, who walked the path of fasting and repentance on their way to union with God. At the same time, he calls upon us to experience the tradition of mutual forgiveness, as prescribed by the Church, for “the joy of repentance” is the beginning of true salvation.

Find below the message of Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland for Great Lent 2025
Brothers and Sisters!

By God’s will, we now stand on the eve of Great Lent 2025, a period that prepares

us, the people of faith, for the greatest event in the universe—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Holy Pascha. The time has come for spiritual struggle and victory over demons. The time for the illumination of our souls. The time for repentance, self-restraint, and trust in God.

Great Lent, known as the Holy Forty Days, is a time of spiritual toil, prayer, self-restraint, and ascetic struggle—the wonder of the angels. Its roots go back to Paradise, where obedience and the fulfillment of God's will and righteousness prevailed. Jesus Christ Himself fasted for forty days, giving us an example of self-discipline. The Theotokos fasted, the Apostles fasted, holy men and women fasted, and the pious Orthodox people have fasted and continue to fast. Let us remember that the evil of Satan is overcome only through prayer and fasting. "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting," Jesus Christ taught us (Matt. 17:21).

Fasting and prayer are the wings of the soul that lift man toward God. In other words, they are the only path to inner perfection, the only weapon against Satan—the adversary of our salvation. Fasting liberates us from Satan and his works.

Today, Satan tirelessly works within us, beside us, and around us. He is among us, in our parishes, in our homes, on our streets… How much evil and hatred do we see around us today! Satan rejoices in all of this. Lawlessness, lack of self-restraint, pride, absence of repentance and humility—all these form a wall that separates us from Jesus Christ, our Savior. We cannot destroy it by our own strength. The Holy Fast is the path that leads us to the demolition of this wall and our return to Christ. All these things guide us toward Holy Pascha, toward our Risen Savior.

Saint Ambrose of Milan said, "Whoever wishes to be with Christ must live as Christ taught." The righteous of God, throughout history, having a living faith in the Savior, bore witness to it through fasting, spiritual struggle, and repentance.

Brothers and Sisters!

Fasting does not mean fasting as we please, but as the Church instructs us, for it is the Church that Christ said, "I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The Church was established by Christ to lead man from earth to heaven. In all of this, repentance assists us. The most appropriate time for repentance is Great Lent. In the act of repentance lies the omnipotence of God. Thus, no matter how far a person has fallen, God always extends His saving hand to the repentant. The Lord has promised, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like

crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

Everything that torments us will disappear. Pain and evil will subside, and the love of our Heavenly Father will embrace the repentant, always calling us to salvation. Then will come the joy of repentance. The joy of purification. The joy of mercy! The joy of those who have been forgiven and have risen again to eternal life.

Brothers and Sisters!

On the eve of Great Lent 2025, according to our Orthodox tradition, let us ask one another for forgiveness for our sins. The Apostle Paul urges us, “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Eph. 4:26) and “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). May the Almighty Lord help us in this sacred endeavor, filling us with the strength of faith, the beauty of good deeds, and the light of love for God and for our fellow man.

Brothers and Sisters!

According to the Holy Tradition of our Church, on the eve of Great Lent, I ask for forgiveness, on behalf of myself and the clergy, for our sins—forgive us, sinners.

I wish you all a blessed and grace-filled Lent, with good health, so that we may venerate Christ on the Cross and in His Holy Resurrection.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (Phil. 4:23)

By the Grace of God,

Savvas,
Orthodox Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland

vema.com.au