

RAISING SAINTS

CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS + PARENTS

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – SUNDAY OF EXPULSION

Have you wondered why the curtain on the altar is closed beginning on Great Barekendan? In the **Book of Directory of Feasts of the Armenian Church** (ՏօՒաղոյց, Jerusalem, 1915) the instruction at the end of Vespers on Saturday preceding Great Barekendan states “and they shall draw the curtain.”

Great Barekendan is considered the first Sunday of Great Lent, even though it is not a fasting day. Rather it points to a biblical theme presented to us in the first chapters of Genesis in the story of creation, specifically pointing to the happy life of Adam and Eve in Paradise. Archbishop Shnork Kaloustian of blessed memory says, “Even though this point is not indicated in the Church calendar, but the assigned hymns of the day clearly establish that fact. We must remember that quite often the hymns offer more accurate designations about the meaning of the feast, than the actual name of the feast day.” (Shnork Kaloustian, **The Golden Chain of Lenten Sundays**, Istanbul, 1971.) Here is the Jashou (Synaxis Hymn) sung before the Scripture readings on Great Barekendan, Tone VIII.

*The Word, of the same essence of the
Father and coexistent with the Holy Spirit,
joined his divine image with our human nature,
he adorned it with glory and placed it
in the Garden of Eden.*

*In Eden did man exult in joy without pain, for
he could see God always present in the garden
and the imprint of the divine light was ever on his soul.*



The Holy Table on the altar signifies life with God, since the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned there. It is reminiscent of humanity’s joyful, pain free life in the presence of God in Eden. When the curtain is closed, visually we are reminded of our loss of being with God. Adam and Eve were expelled from God’s presence, they felt shame and could not look at God’s face because they knew they had broken God’s trust and disobeyed. This reminder on Great Barekendan leads us to the next Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of Expulsion. As we sing the Synaxis Hymn of the Sunday of Expulsion, Tone VII we are reminded of the effort we need to make in repenting of our sins through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

*The law of fasting in holiness
you established first in paradise,
the first creatures broke the law and with the tasting*

*of the fruit tasted the bitter fruit of sin and death;
O Lord, grant us now to taste the sweetness of your
commandments.*

*Wounded in our souls by the
Adversary with the pain of our sins,
in the multitude of sins we yearn for you to heal our
wounds with your love for us; O Lord, grant us now to taste
the sweetness of your commandments.*

We are called as parents and teachers to teach our children the pillars of the Lenten effort to repent, to realign our thoughts, words, and actions with our Lord's teachings. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving, or more simply, connecting to God, developing self-control, and doing charitable works support that effort. We can do this best by modeling it in our own lives. In the Students Guide we shall provide some thoughts and activities for each age level based on the Gospel of Matthew 6:1-21. I urge you parents and teachers to work with your children on these activities so that they will come to know that this is important to you as well. You are the best models and teachers of your children.

May God bless you, and through the prayers of our Holy Mother of God Mary, may you be supported in your God given responsibility of raising children for the glory of God.

YN. SIRARPI AIVAZIAN

Note: The material for the children will be presented in three levels in order to make it age appropriate:

Level 1: Ages 5-8 (K-3rd grades)

Level 2: Ages 9-12 (4-7th grades)

Level 3: Ages 13-17 (8-12th grades)

