

## **“Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation”**

[In English](#) /



**By the Metropolitan of**

**Limassol, Athanasios**

The Church offers us Lent (or Great Fast) as the grand and joyful stage set for spiritual struggles. It calls us to begin this period with great joy and eagerness in order to work spiritually harder on the virtues, while offering this time as a present to the Lord through our repentance and our spiritual struggle.

We hear “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (B Corinthians 6, 12) during the vespers of Lent. This is the time favorable to the Lord, the time for repentance and redemption. Lent is distinguished by the presence of the virtue of repentance, which attracts the grace of the Holy Spirit into people’s hearts. The Church sets forgiveness as the prerequisite of Lent, right from the very first day. Thus, the first vespers of Lent ( katanyktikos esperinos) are called the ‘vespers of forgiveness’. Just as Jesus said: “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”(Matthew 6,14-15). One needs the presence of grace in order to wage any spiritual struggle.

Fasting during Lent is not a diet which one may follow just by sheer will for health reasons. Fasting here has a totally different purpose: the advent of grace in one’s heart, the avoidance of sin which kills one’s soul and the acquisition of divine illumination which leads one to the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, one needs the assistance and the presence of the Lord along with the physical struggle and the pain of fasting. ([περισσότερα...](#))