

THE ORTHODOX Faith

FOR TEENS

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017 - SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

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THE MESSAGE

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus orients us towards his crucifixion on the cross. He warns us what the cost of discipleship will be. This is called the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross. It falls in mid-lent. The Synaxarion tells us: "Today in the midst of fasting and our perilous and strenuous journey, the Life-giving Cross was erected by the Holy Fathers to give us a rest and refreshment, to lighten our burden and give us courage for the remaining task." Lent is the time for repentance. It is the time to turn once more, over and over again towards the Lord. To truly know whether or not we need to repent we must look towards the Cross of Christ and know that it is because of the coldness of our hearts that His visit to this earth was not an occasion of rejoicing between Him and His creatures but rather an occasion for pain, suffering, sorrow and death for Him. We have added to His pain and He accepted it all because of His immense love for us, for each and every one of us. Let us now give Him joy by accepting His gifts of love and pardon and crying out with a heart warmed by His generosity: "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner."

Reverend Father Apostolos Georgiarentis

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FROM
THE
FATHERS

The devil is afraid of us when we pray and make sacrifices. He is also afraid when we are humble and good. He is especially afraid when we love Jesus very much. He runs away when we make the Sign of the Cross.

~St. Anthony the Great

THE TRUTH | *Mark* 8:34-9:1

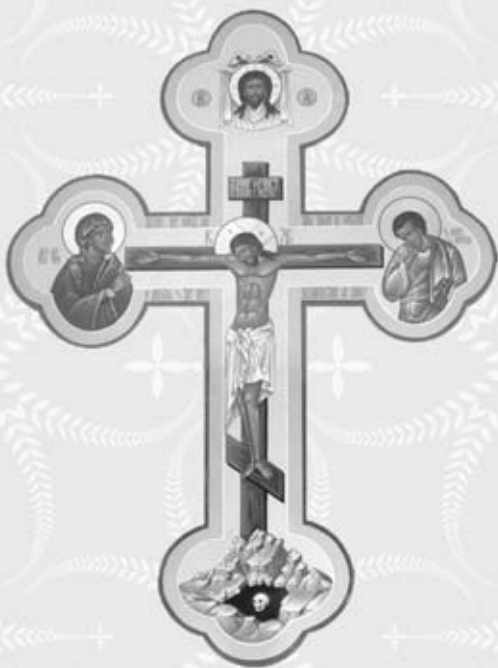
When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

1 Corinthians
1:18
FOR THE
PREACHING OF THE
cross
IS TO THEM
THAT PERISH
FOOLISHNESS
BUT UNTO US
WHICH ARE
saved
IT IS THE
POWER OF
GOD



Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

CELEBRATED ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers "planted" on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged.

Or, as before the arrival of the king, his royal standards, trophies, and emblems of victory come in procession and then the king himself appears in a triumphant parade, jubilant and rejoicing in his victory and filling those under him with joy, so does the Feast of the Cross precede the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. It warns us that He is about to proclaim His victory over death and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection. His Life-Giving Cross is His royal scepter, and by venerating it we are filled with joy, rendering Him glory. Therefore, we become ready to welcome our King, who shall manifestly triumph over the powers of darkness.

The present feast has been placed in the middle of Great Lent for another reason. The Fast can be likened to the spring of Marah whose waters the children of Israel encountered in the wilderness. This water was undrinkable due to its bitterness but became sweet when the Holy Prophet Moses dipped the wood into its depth. Likewise, the wood of the Cross sweetens the days of the Fast, which are bitter and often grievous because of our tears. Yet Christ comforts us during our course through the desert of the Fast, guiding and leading us by His hand to the spiritual Jerusalem on high by the power of His Resurrection.

Moreover, as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam's gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal. *Source: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*

LENTEN CHALLENGE

In a few weeks, your parish will be making palm crosses for Palm Sunday! Find out when your parish plans to make them and help your community make the crosses.

It is an orthodox tradition which tells us that the Holy Cross was made from three kinds of wood as a figure of the Trinity (cypress, pine and cedar wood). According to tradition, Abraham's nephew Lot planted three trees—a cypress, a pine, and a cedar. Eventually these three trees miraculously grew into one large tree. When the Temple of Solomon was being built, this tree was cut down but left unused. It is said that the Cross on which Christ our Savior was crucified was constructed from the wood of this tree.



Sing PRAISES *to the Lord*



Save O Lord, O Lord your people and bless Your inheritance. Grant victory to the faithful against the adversaries of the faith, and protect your people, by the power of Your Holy Cross.

means "instead of the table." The prefix 'anti' means "instead of" and 'mension' is Latin for "table." The antimension is a rectangular piece of cloth typically decorated with the entombment of Christ that is placed on the altar table. It is unfolded during the Divine

Liturgy. The priest celebrates the Divine Liturgy on the antimension. In the case where there is no altar table or church (such as in a village in Africa) and with the blessing of the local Bishops, Divine Liturgies can be performed using an antimension and laying it on either a table or even a tree stump (if no church is available) because the antimension is consecrated and blessed. Sometimes the antimension has relics of the Saints sewn into them.



Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered; and let those who hate Him flee from His face. As smoke vanishes, let them vanish; and as wax melts from the presence of fire, so let the demons perish from the presence of those who love God and who sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross and say with gladness: Hail, most precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord, for You drive away the demons by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ Who was crucified on you, went down to hell and trampled on the power of the devil, and gave us you, His honorable Cross, for driving away all enemies. O most precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord, help me with our holy Lady, the Virgin Theotokos, and with all the Saints throughout the ages. Amen. – Orthodox Prayer to the Holy Cross

WHAT'S THE WORD?
ANTIMENSION →
← ANTIMHNSION →