Veneration of the Precious and Life Giving Cross

Lent.goarch.org/Sunday_of_the_cross

As we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, and depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. In other words, we must experience what the Lord experienced during His Passion - being humiliated in a shameful manner. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

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.

March 22, 2020 – Third Sunday of Great Lent
Veneration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

Basil the Holy Martyr of Ancyra, Kalliniki & Vassilisa the Martyrs, Euthemios the New Martyr

Matins Gospel Reading: John 20:1-10

Troparion of the Resurrection ( Tone 7):
Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast Risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

Apolytikion of the Holy Cross (Tone 1):
O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese :: www.antiochian.org
Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest :: www.antiochian.org/midwest
Fr. Pat’s Daily Reflections :: touchstonemag.com/daily_reflections
“Homilies from All Saints” podcast :: ancientfaith.com/podcasts/allsaints
Please send bulletin submissions to Kim A. at Keggers854 [at] aol [dot] com by Wednesday of the week.
**Kontakion for the Sundays in Lent (Tone 8):**
O Champion Leader, to Thee I offer thanks of Victory! O Theotokos, thou hast delivered me from terror! As thou hast invincible power, O Theotokos, thou truly can set me free from all danger! Set me free and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: “Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom!”

**Troparion of All Saints (Tone 4):**
Adorned in the blood of Thy martyrs, throughout all the world as in purple and fine linen, Thy Church through them doth cry unto Thee, O Christ God: Send down Thy compassion upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls.

**Prokeimenon Psalm:**
O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God

**Epistle Reading:** St. Paul to the Hebrews 4:14-5:6

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 8:34-9:1

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**News and Announcements**

**Evening Services are canceled until Palm Sunday, that includes all Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgies.**

**Lenten Coin Boxes:** Once again please remember to fill the coin boxes that are supplied by the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, in accordance with our archdiocese, to feed the hungry around the world. **Please use these boxes all during Lent and turn them in at Pascha to be blessed.** Please replace the coins with a check marked “For the Poor” in the memo line, both for the sake of our priest, who has to lift the boxes for a blessing, and for our treasurer, who has to carry them to the bank. Thank you and God bless you for remembering the poor during our fasting season! If you have any questions, contact Pat K.

**Elinor Bourjaily scholarships:** The Archdiocese is making available 3 college scholarships of $500 each. If anyone is interested, please see Fr Pat or Dcn Walid for details. Application deadline is April 15.

"Whatever you may do for your brother, being hungry, and a stranger, and naked, not even the devil will be able to despoil, but it will be laid up in an inviolable treasure.”

~ Saint John Chrysostom