



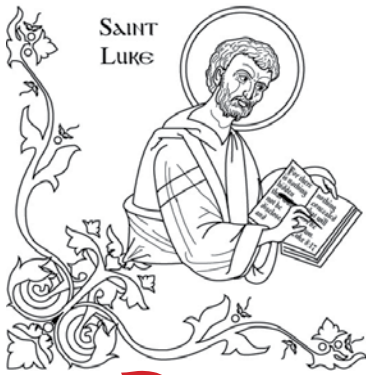
SAINTS OF THE DAY

Sunday, March 15th, 2025 • 3rd Sunday of Lent
Veneration of the Holy Cross

Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy, first bishop of Britain (1st century); Martyrs Agapius, and with him seven martyrs (303): Publius (Pauplios); Timolaus; Romulus; two named Dionysius; and two named Alexander; at Caesarea in Palestine; Hieromartyr Alexander of Side in Pamphylia (270-275); Martyr Nicander of Egypt (305); Saint Hebarestes, steward of a church located in Jerusalem; Martyr Mancius (5th or 6th century); Saint Speciosus, a monk at Terracina in Italy (c. 555); Saint Probus of Rieti, Bishop of Rieti in central Italy (c. 571); Saint Zachariah, Pope of Rome (752); Saint Leocritia (Lucretia), a holy virgin in Cordoba in Spain (859); Saint Nicander, monk, of Gorodetsk, Nizhni-Novgorod (1603); New Martyr Manuel of Crete (1792); Hieromartyr Parthenios, Deacon, at Didymoteicho (1805); New Hieromartyr Alexis Vinogradov, Protopresbyter of Novotroitskoye, Tver (1938); New Hieromartyr Demetrius Legeydo, Priest of Chimkent (1938); New Hieromartyr Michael Bogoslovsky, Protopresbyter of Simferopol-Crimea (1940); Commemoration of the deliverance of the island of Lefkada from the earthquake of 1938.



A detailed description of the cover icon can be found on our website,
www.stlukeanniston.org



ST. LUKE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Diocese of the South, Orthodox Church in America

1415 Woodstock Ave., Anniston, AL 36207

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **We welcome our visitors.** Please join us for a potluck meal after Liturgy so you can get to know us. Communion is for Orthodox Christians who have fasted before Liturgy but everyone is welcome to the blessed bread an Altar Server will offer.
- Grant, O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health, salvation, and furtherance in all good things to all Thy servants who are celebrating birthdays, namesdays and anniversaries, and preserve them for **MANY YEARS!**
- We are celebrating the **Liturgy of St. Basil** and will every Sunday until Palm Sunday. You'll find the service book in the rack by the front door.
- Our **Annual Parish meeting** is today after liturgy. Everyone is welcome but only members are allowed to vote.
- If you wish to receive **Communion** on Wednesday, please begin to fast after lunch.

This Week's Fasting, Services and Scripture Readings

Mon., 3/16	Tues., 3/17	Wed., 3/18	Thurs., 3/19	Fri., 3/20	Sat., 3/21	Sun., 3/22
<i>Great Lent</i>						
						Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
		Presanctified, 4:00 p.m.			Great Vespers, 4:00 p.m.	Brunch & Fellowship
Gen. 8:21-9:7	Gen. 9:8-17	Gen. 9:18-10:1	Gen. 10:32-11:9	Gen. 12:1-7	Heb. 6:9-12	Heb. 6:13-20
Prov. 11:19-12:6	Prov. 12:8-22	Prov. 12:23-13:9	Prov. 13:19-14:6	Prov. 14:15-26	Mark 7:31-37	Mark 9:17-31
Isaiah 14:24-32	Isaiah 25:1-9	Isaiah 26:21-27:9	Isaiah 28:14-22	Isaiah 29:13-23	1 Cor. 15:47-57	Ephes. 5:9-19
					John 5:24-30	Matt. 4:25-5:12

Service times are subject to change. Any questions, text Subdeacon Nicholas @ (256) 343-1141 or nmbailey@me.com.
You can also visit stlukeanniston.org for the latest schedule.

Divine Liturgy

of St. Basil the Great

Troparia/Kontakia

REFER TO PAGE 6 IN THE LITURGY BOOK.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. * To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. * For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, * and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, * to proclaim that Thou art risen, ** granting the world great mercy.

Troparion for the Holy Cross (Tone 1)

O Lord, save Thy people, * and bless Thine inheritance! * Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians * over their adversaries; * and by virtue of Thy Cross, ** preserve Thy habitation!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion for the Holy Cross (Tone 7)

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; * it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross. * The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished; * for Thou, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell: ** "Enter again into Paradise!"

Trisagion

(Instead of "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal...", we sing:)

Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify. (3x)

(A rare exception for Sunday, we prostrate after each time we sing this verse.)

Prokeimenon

Tone 6

(for the Holy Cross)

Save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.

vs: To Thee, O Lord, will I cry; O my God, keep Thou not silent toward me.

The Epistle Reading

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

(for the Holy Cross)

Brethren, seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for

himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Alleluia

Tone 8

(for the Holy Cross)

vs: Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old!

vs: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth!

The Gospel Reading

Mark 8:34-9:1

(for the Holy Cross)

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

John 10:9-16

(for St. Gregory Palamas)

The Lord said: "I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd."

Theotokion

(for the Liturgy of St. Basil)

REFER TO PAGES 21-22 IN THE LITURGY BOOK.

*All of creation rejoiceth in thee, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of Angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a Child:*

*our God before the ages.
He made thy body into a throne,
and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoiceth in thee, O Full of Grace.//
Glory to thee!*

Veneration of the Holy Cross

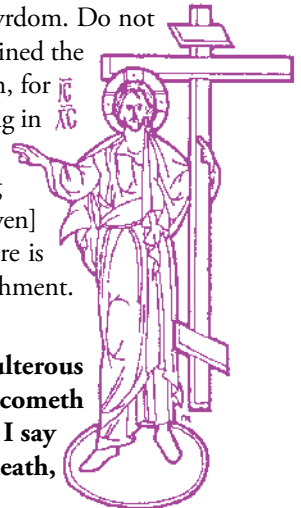
Mark 8:34-9:1

From *The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Mark*
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

34-37. And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever desireth to follow after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever desireth to save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospels, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

[In this passage of St. Mark, and in the following commentary, the single Greek word, *psyche*, has been translated as either “life” or “soul” as it has both these meanings. Tr.] Since Peter had rebuked Him for wanting to be crucified, the Lord called the people unto Him, and said in the hearing of all, but directing His words mostly towards Peter, “Do you find fault with Me, Peter, because I take up the cross? I say to you, that neither you, nor anyone else, will be saved unless you die for the sake of goodness and truth.” See that Christ does not compel a man to die on a cross against his own will. Instead He said, *Whosoever desireth*. The Lord is saying: “I compel no one. I invite him to something good, not to something bad to which he must be forced. Whoever does not want these things is not worthy of them.” We can learn what it means to deny oneself if we understand what it means to deny another. He who denies another is he who, when he sees his brother, or servant, or father, being flogged or even murdered, does not turn towards him and pity him in his suffering, but acts as if he were a stranger to him. In this same manner the Lord wants us to show no pity towards our own bodies, so that even if we are flogged, or worse, let it make no difference to us. Let him take up his cross, that is, accept a most shameful death, for at that time to die on a cross was considered the most shameful of deaths. But since many were crucified for being bandits, the Lord added to the crucifixion something else: that one ought to have virtue. This is what it means to *follow Me*. Although His command that one give oneself over to death seemed hard and cruel, the Lord straightway shows this commandment is given out of love for mankind. For *whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find life*. (But the death of a condemned man, or of one who hangs himself, is not for Christ's sake and brings no such reward.) And, on the contrary, he who appears to have saved his life, far from finding life, shall lose it by not remaining steadfast during his time of martyrdom. Do not say to Me, “But he has saved his life” it means nothing. Even if you say that he has gained the whole world as well, it is of no benefit. No one can exchange money for his salvation, for if that were so, a man who had gained the world but lost his soul, could, while burning in the flames of hell, use his money to buy innocence. But at that time and in that place no such trade can be made. Here let us shut the mouths of those who say, following Origen, that all the souls in hell will be restored [and reunited with those in heaven] after they have been punished in accordance with their sins. Let them hear that there is no exchange that can be made there for one's soul. No one is kept in hell as a punishment. Rather, it is the weight of his own sins which holds him there.

38-9:1. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.



Intellectual faith does not suffice, but confession of faith with ones mouth is required as well. Since man himself is two-fold, let his sanctification be two-fold as well. The soul is sanctified by faith, but the body is sanctified by confessing. *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed to confess that the Crucified One is his God, of him also shall the Crucified One be ashamed.* For the Lord shall judge that man to be an unworthy servant, when He comes with glory, escorted by the angels, and no longer in lowly form. At the second coming He will not appear, as He did before, to be of base origin and circumstance, and an object of scorn. Since He speaks of His own glory, He desires to show that He is not vainly boasting, and says, *There be some of them that stand here*, namely, Peter, James, and John, who shall not die until I have shown them at the Transfiguration the glory with which I shall appear at the second coming. For the Transfiguration was nothing less than a foreshadowing of the second coming, and as He appeared in radiance then, so will He shine at the second coming, as will also all the righteous.

A Compassionate High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

From *The Explanation of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews*
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

4:14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.

It is as if someone asked: “Counsel us how to avoid falling and losing heart!” Paul responds: “What I have already said is enough to train us to fear and make us cautious, but we also *have a great high priest* who can help us, if we only *hold fast our profession*. He is not just any common *high priest*, but a *great high priest—the Son of God*. He is not like Moses, who did not even enter into God’s rest or lead the people in. *Jesus is passed into the heavens*, is seated with the Father, and can grant us entrance into heaven and make us heirs of the promised rest.” **Let us hold fast our profession.** Our *high priest* does not give us everything, but seeks a contribution from us as well. He himself is able, but only if we ourselves are also worthy.” What *profession* is Paul talking about? That we *profess* that there will be a resurrection, and a recompense with countless blessings, and that Christ is God. *Let us hold fast this profession*, and not let it slip away from us. What we *professed* when we first began to believe, let us maintain it firmly, and all these horrors will go away.

4:15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Paul crafts his speech to inspire confidence in ta hearers, exhorting them to trust: “Our *high priest* is not ignorant of ci situation, as most *high priests* are who do not even know what affliction and are not willing to help the afflicted, but our *high priest* has endured everything, and after enduring it has ascended that he might *be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*. **But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.** That is, “He was persecuted, spat on, falsely accused, driven awany, and ultimately crucified.” “He endured all these things *like as we are*, meaning, ‘similarly to us,’ *yet without sin*. He neither committed any sin in general, nor did he say or do anything sinful when he suffered these things; therefore you too can survive afflictions *without sin*. How can you lose heart and falter?” Some have taken without sin to mean that he did not suffer these things in return for having sinned.

4:16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

“Since we have a sinless high priest who has overcome the world, who has said, *be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*, (JOHN 16:33) we ought to *come boldly*, meaning, ‘without a guilty conscience, without doubting, but trusting in the high priest.’ Though we may have sins, he is sinless, and his *throne* is a *throne of grace*, not of judgment. *Therefore let us come boldly*, meaning, ‘confident that he will grant us what we wish.’ There are two *thrones*: the *throne of grace*, to which we come now and receive the forgiveness of sins by divine *grace*, and the *throne* of the second coming, not a

throne of grace (for in that day none will receive *grace*), but of judgment.” Paul speaks of a *throne* so that you do not picture the high priest standing up. Though the high priest is spoken of in human terms out of grace and condescension to us, he is seated upon the *throne* of God. **That we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help at the right time.*** If we come now, we will find mercy and grace, for we come at the right time. But if we come then, we will not find them, for it will not be a throne of grace. Now the king sits enthroned and dispenses grace-then he shall arise in judgement. It is written: Arise, O God, judge the earth.”*

5:1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. In this section, Paul aims to demonstrate that the new covenant is much greater than the old. He first begins by comparing the two *priesthoods*— that of the *priests* of old, and that of Christ. In doing so, he proves that Christ’s priesthood is far superior. Many objected, however, that Christ does not have many of the attributes that *priests* must have: he was not from a priestly tribe, he did not serve as a priest on earth, he was not ordained by men, nor did the form of his priesthood have any of the physical trappings such as bells and miters—it was all spiritual. Paul counters this by first listing all the things that Christ had in common with the other priests, and then adds what sets him apart. One can only really be said to surpass another when they have some things in common, but he is superior in others. The fact that Christ was *taken from among men* is common to both him and other priests. Christ only became a *high priest* after becoming Likewise, being *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*, meaning, “serving as mediator,” is also a shared attribute. **That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.** Paul explains what he means by, *ordained for men in things pertaining to God as for sins*, meaning, “to make atonement with God.” This too is common to both Christ and other high priests, but not entirely so. While other high priests *offer* something else as *sacrifices*, Christ *offered* himself. Technically, there is a distinction between a *gift* and a *sacrifice*, but you will see later that Scripture uses them both interchangeably.

5:2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. That means, “*who can* exercise moderation, have sympathy, condescend, and pardon those who sin in *ignorance*.” Note that all sin begets *ignorance* and error. Even if a person thinks they know what is evil, when the time comes to act their mind is clouded, they suffer an attack of *ignorance* and error and plunge over the cliff, loaded down with the weight of pleasure. **For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.** The simplest (and in my opinion the most plausible) interpretation is this: “The high priest *can have compassion* [*metriopatheō*] *on the ignorant* because *he himself is compassed with infirmity* and personally knows the *measure* (*metron*) of human *infirmity*, and so can adequately *apportion* (*epimetreō*) forgiveness.” Some have taken it this way: “The only difference between the high priest and his people is that he is the one who pardons. In all other regards, *he also is compassed with infirmity* just like the multitudes.”



5:3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. All these are things that Christ does not have in common with other high priests in them he is superior. The Lord did not have any infirmity due to *sins*, nor did he *offer also for himself*, but only *for the people*.

5:4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God. Here Paul cites another hallmark of a high priest that is shared with Christ: he does not usurp the priesthood for himself, but only *he that is called of God* can assume the office. Paul also implicates the contemporary Jewish high priests who did usurp the *honour* and paid money to obtain it in violation of the law. **As was Aaron.** Even Aaron was originally *called by God* through Moses to serve as priest, and did not usurp the role. And again he was vindicated as God’s choice when his rod budded,

and when fire consumed those who were trying to usurp the priesthood.

5:5–6. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Paul is here stating what Christ said everywhere he went: “I am sent from the Father, I have not come of myself.” So too Paul demonstrates that Christ was sent from God, that *he glorified not himself*, but *he that spoke unto him glorified him*. This should be taken as common to both Christ and other high priests. But Paul goes on to prove that Christ is moreover attested as God’s choice by prophecy, since Aaron had had many outward tokens of God’s favor, as we mentioned before, whereas Christ had no outward signs, and those who opposed him and put him to death were held in honor and had great influence. The prophecy from the second Psalm appears out of place in the preceding context.



Paul has ostensibly been talking about how Christ was approved as God’s chosen high priest, and now this passage reveals that he is begotten of the Father. In fact, being begotten of God was foundational to his ordination by God. Consider also that Psalm 109 says: *I have begotten thee from the womb before the morning*, (Ps. 109:3 [110:3]) and shortly thereafter it reads: *Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*. (Ps. 109:4 [110:4]) Paul combines what both psalms have to say about Christ’s begetting, as if to say: “Do not suppose that, *thou art a priest for ever* is referring to anyone but the one *begotten before the morning*. He is none other than the one mentioned in the second Psalm: *today I have begotten thee*. The phrase *before the morning* means ‘he is timeless,’ *today* means ‘from the beginning,’ that is, “ever since the Father has been.” It is obvious that the whole second Psalm refers to Christ—therefore the phrase, *thou art a priest for ever* must be about Christ as well. Let the Jews say what they will, what other priest could be *after the order of Melchisedec* if not Christ? Were they not all under the law? Did they not all keep the Sabbath and make offerings? Clearly, then, this is spoken of Christ, for he alone sanctified his offering with bread and wine, just like Melchizedek. (GEN. 14:18) What does *for ever* mean? It means that even now Christ is still interceding for us with his God and Father in the body that he sacrificed on our behalf. That means that the very sufferings he underwent for us present a strong case of their own, pleading wordlessly with the Father: “Your Son suffered all this on behalf of the human race. Therefore, have mercy on them, those for whom I have deigned to suffer.” Or else it could also mean that the sacrifices made every day by the ministers of God, and all those that will sanctifies himself for us, (JOHN 17:19) “is broken, and disit priest and offering, who happens, *the Lord’s death is shown forth*. (1 COR. 11:26)

* KJV: *in time of need*. The KJV interprets *eukairōs* as “in time of need,” but Theophylact take it more literally as “at a good time.”

Sunday of the Cross

On the Third Sunday of Great Lent, we venerate the Holy Cross of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. This veneration of the cross helps prepare us for the coming of the Crucifixion, while at the same time invigorating us to finish the

Great Fast with strength. And perhaps most importantly, it reminds us that “he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:38). In this post, we explore the true meaning of the Cross for us as Orthodox Christians.

What is so special about the Cross?

St. John Chrysostom, a fourth century Patriarch of Constantinople, describes the Cross this way: “The Cross is the proof of the love of God. The Cross is the unshaken wall, the unconquered weapon, the Kingdom of virtue. It has torn asunder our mortgage and rendered useless the prison of death. The Cross has opened Paradise, it has admitted the thief and has guided the human race from impending disaster to the Kingdom of God.”

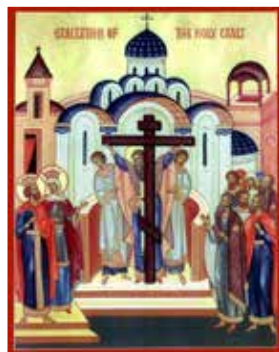
Our Lord’s Cross reminds us of His Passion. By presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering, we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

Our Lord Jesus Christ changed everything through His Crucifixion on the Cross. He very well could have avoided His own death and destroyed those who sought to kill Him. But He didn’t. Because He loved them just as He loves every single one of us. Because He desires for us to be saved! When Christ died on the cross, He defeated our enemies—sin, death, and Satan. Now we can become like Him and enjoy the communion with Him that we lost after the Fall.

This is why we bow before the cross and put it at the center of everything in our lives. God took an instrument of evil and death, and transformed it into a symbol of victory and life.

Icon of the Feast

The icon for this Feast is the same as that of the Veneration of the Cross celebrated on September 14th. In this icon, Patriarch Macarius I stands in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. We see many clergy and laypeople surrounding the Cross, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine.



“Take up your cross and follow Me”

In the Gospel lesson for this Sunday, Jesus says, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34). But what does it mean to deny ourselves? What does it mean to “take up your cross”? The original Greek word translated as deny in this passage is *aparnisastho*, absolute rejection. This means renouncing everything in our lives that would prevent us from attaining salvation. Christ-like self-denial goes much deeper than many of us realize. It penetrates the façade which hides our hidden sins, our shortcomings and our faults.

However, absolute rejection doesn’t mean depriving ourselves the things we need to live, nor does it mean we lose our individuality, personality and identity. When Jesus speaks of denying ourselves, He means we must subordinate our will to the will of God. “Take up your cross and follow Me” means to begin the journey to salvation. It means subduing our anger, insensitivity, impatience, and childishness, and mastering them, rather than allowing them to control us. In short, it means becoming like Christ. That is the call He gives us; this is what it means to truly be a Christian.

The half-way point: We are almost there!

When running a marathon, hearing you are halfway to the end can really be inspiring. It can fill you with hope that you're almost there, that there isn't much farther, and you will have crossed the finish line. So it is with Great Lent. The Church wisely gives us this Third Sunday – halfway to Golgotha – to refresh ourselves spiritually in Christ, to assess our Lenten journey and continue with greater determination.

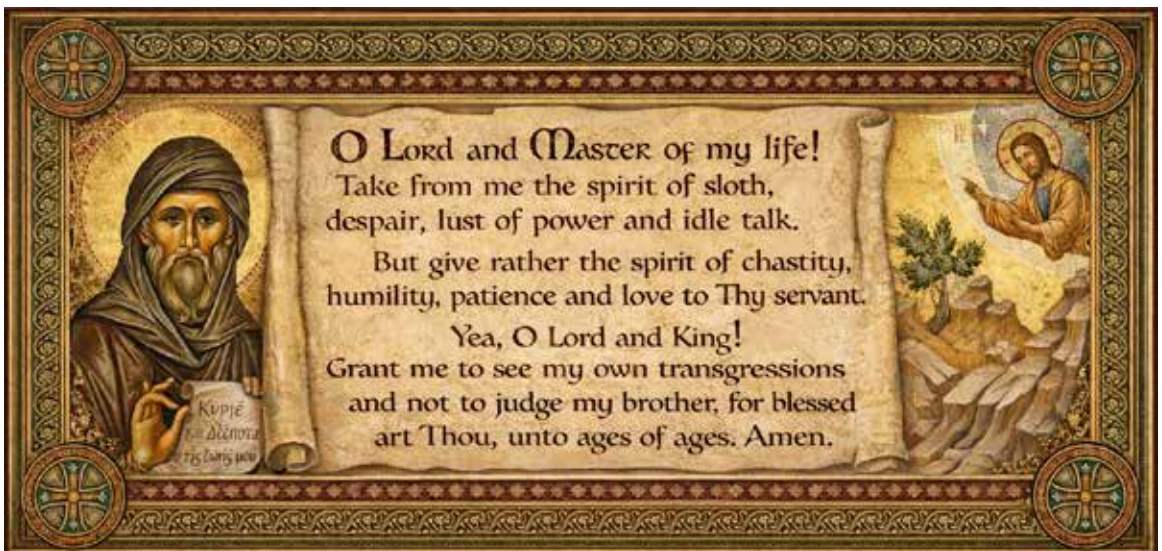


But the initiative is still ours. Just as you cannot enter spring without having first endured the winter, so too we cannot achieve eternal life with God if we do not deny ourselves and follow Christ. If we want to share in the joy of His resurrection, of His victory over death, we must first participate in the struggle, pain, and sacrifice of crucifixion. We must crucify the habits of thought, word, and deed that lead us to worship and serve ourselves instead of God and neighbor. We must kill our pride, our selfishness, and our slavery to pleasure. If we don't crucify these passions, our souls will be too sick, dark, and weak to share in the glory of the Resurrection.

Conclusion

No matter what we may think at times, our Savior is no stranger to temptation, suffering, pain, and death. He sympathizes with our struggles because He endured them. So as we begin the second half of Lent, let us keep our eyes on the prize, looking to the great trophy of our Savior's victory over sin and death, the cross, through which joy has come into all the world. Let us offer our lives in free obedience to the Father, accepting whatever He wills. And no matter what burdens we may bear, no matter our frustrations and failures, let us press on the joy of Pascha. Let us deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him. For this alone is the way to the brilliant light and eternal blessedness of the Kingdom of God.

<https://www.saintjohnchurch.org/sunday-of-the-holy-cross/>



Let my prayer...

During the season of the Great Fast, this being the time of repentance, the ancient discipline did not permit joyous and triumphant celebrations such as the Divine Liturgy.

The liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is a special service. It is a combination of Vespers and a Communion service and is traditionally celebrated on Wednesdays of the six weeks of Great Lent.



... arise like incense
before You.

Liturgy of The Presanctified Gifts

Every Wednesday during Lent @ 4:00 p.m.

St. Luke Orthodox Church
1415 Woodstock Ave., Anniston, Alabama