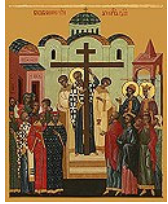


✠Bulletin✠

Week of March 15th to March 21st



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

V. Rev. Fr. Leonid Palceski
2365 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33905
www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org
Phone: 239-265-6562
Cell: 239-699-3119
HolyCrossFtMyers@gmail.com

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 7

Veneration of the Cross

Martyrs Agapius, Publius (Pausis), Timolaus, Romulus, two named Dionysius, and two named Alexander, at Cæsarea in Palestine (303). Hieromartyr Alexander of Sídē, in Pamphylia (270-275). Martyr Nicander of Egypt (ca. 302).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday March 8, 2026

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Sunday March 15th

5:00 pm – Deanery Lenten Great Vespers

Lenten Meal to follow

Wednesday March 18th

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Saturday March 21st

9:30 am – Baptisms and Chrismations

Weekly Schedule

Sunday March 15th

- Short Choir Practice following Divine Liturgy
- Inquirers & Catechism Class

5:00 pm - Fr. Philip Kontos has scheduled Lenten Vespers at Holy Cross for our deanery. **Lenten Meal to follow**

Sunday of the Cross By Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

One of the Fathers tells us that the memory of the Cross has been placed halfway between the beginning of Lent and the week of the Lord's Passion because when people start on a journey they are full of life and of energy; when they see the end, again, energy and courage flood into their hearts; but there is a moment half-way when despondency comes, when the tiredness of the journey begins to tell and when the end of it is not yet in sight. When we come to the Holy Week, we will be confronted with the Crucifixion, the Cross as the ultimate tragedy, the moment when the Lord God in an act of total surrender, of a gift of Himself unreserved dies, dies for us and dies our death with all the tragedy, the horror of it. But now the Cross is presented to us as victory.

The Cross is not only the instrument of Christ's death; it's also the instrument of Christ's victory and of our salvation. And it is with hope that we can look at it and say, 'Yes! If God has so trusted us, if He believes in us to such an extent as to give His life for us, then we can truly take up our own cross and follow Him, because this cross is not a sign of defeat, this cross is the sign of victory.

But the first step on this way is given us by the Lord Who says, 'Whoever wishes to follow Me...' — and He does not force us to do so, He leaves us free to turn away from Him, to let Him die for us while we have no concern for it. But if we want to follow Him, the first thing we must do is to renounce ourselves.

What does that actually mean? It means that we must turn away from our continuous concern with us and look farther afield, see the whole world in its tragedy, in its significance, in its meaning to God, and also turn to God himself. We concentrate so continuously on what we are, what we have, what we do not possess, what we need, what we long for, what we are afraid of. Is that the way in which we can live: in continuous hope for little things, in continuous fear, continuously tormented by greed, and fear, and dislikes, and hatred? What is there what we can regain, what we can make our own, which we can identify with? Very little!

Saint Paul says: what is there that you possess which is yours? — Nothing! Everything is given. Our existence is a gift of God, our life is a gift of God, our

knowledge of Him is a gift of God, our physical well-being, our friendships, the beauty of the world — all this is given and we can do nothing either to possess it or to regain it if we begin to lose it. We cannot retain the vision of the world when we become blind, we cannot hear the harmony of the world if we go deaf... Then why should we concentrate so continuously on our own selves as though we were what we possess while we do not even possess what we are!

Let us therefore have the courage to recognize the meaning of the first Beatitude: Yes, I am poor, everything what I am, what I have, what I treasure or what I fear is a gift of God for which I can be grateful, it is an act of Divine love for which I can be so grateful! And if it is so, then I have understood what it means to be in the Kingdom of God, because the Kingdom of God is that relationship between us and God which is love, between me and my neighbor which is love. And the moment we have understood this, we are in the Kingdom provided we have freed ourselves from our foolish imagination, foolish idea that “I am in my own right, I possess by my own power and strength”.

Let us then, in weeks to come, get more and more free of this concern, this centeredness on what we imagine we have or we imagine we are; and realize that all that is a gift of God and therefore it cannot be lost. It is enough to be with Him to be possessed of all things; it is enough to be with Him to be free of the things earthly and yet as rich as God because God does not give only the little we long for or we need; He gives His whole own self, His life, and all He possesses.

Let us therefore make a start. But then, what is the self which we are, which is worth renouncing all the rest? Let us read the Gospel with attention and let us single out those things of which we can say, ‘My heart is burning within me!’ Those things which cast a ray of light in our life, which give us courage and inspiration, which cleanse and renew us — because these things show us what we have in common with God, the way in which we are already now the likes of God, the way in which His image is already shining through the twilight of our being. Isn’t that a wonder! And if we concentrate on looking at what is of God in us then we may let go of what is not of God, of that very twilight or darkness to which we cling all the time imagining that it is us. While the twilight exists only because there is light in it, that light which the darkness cannot receive, but which dispels all darkness and lead us step by step to the day when there will be nothing but light, the light of God, the life of God.

Let us therefore concentrate in weeks to come towards this ascent, towards that freedom which will allow us to enter into the Passion of the Lord without a thought of ourselves, thinking only of Him, of the Mother of God in the horror that pierces Her heart and the distress and agony of the disciples. Amen.

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

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Prayer Requests

Heather (Helen) Auld

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

James Clark – Parishioner of St. Herman’s

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

Schedule of Weekly Services

Tuesday March 24th

5:30 pm - Vesperal Liturgy **Feast of Annunciation**

Lenten Meal to follow

Saturday March 28th

9:30 am – Baptisms and Chrismations

Wednesday April 1st

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Saturday April 4th

Lazarus Saturday

8:45 am - Hours

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Sunday April 5th

Palm Sunday

9:15 am – Hours

Blessing of Palms

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Holy Monday – April 6th

5:30 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Holy Tuesday – April 7th

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Lenten Meal to follow

Holy Thursday – April 9th

3:00 pm - Mystical Supper Vesperal Liturgy

Good Friday – April 10th

3:00 pm - **Great & Holy Friday**

Burial of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

Holy Saturday – April 11th

9:00 am Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy

HOLY PASCHA Sunday – April 12th

TBA

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 7 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

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.

Tone 1 Troparion of the Cross

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!

Tone 7 Kontakion *(Cross)*

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, hast come and cried to those in hell://

“Enter again into Paradise!”

(Instead of the Trisagion, we sing:)

Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master,

and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon *(Cross)*

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! *(Ps. 27:9a)*

V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!

(Ps. 27:1a)

Hebrews 4:14-5:6 (Epistle)

Brethren Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to 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 appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek";

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*V. Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old!
(Ps. 73:2a)*

*V. God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the
midst of the earth! (Ps. 73:12)*

Mark 8:34-9:1 (Gospel)

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."

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

34-37. 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?"

[¹In 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.]

Since Peter had rebuked Him (Mark 8:32-33) 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, *Whoever desires*. The Lord is saying: I compel no one. I invite him to something good, not to something bad to which I must compel him. 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 loses 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. For 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. And here let us shut the mouths of those who say, following Origen, say 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.² 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.

[²This is a false teaching of Origen, apokatastasis, the general restoration of the fallen creation, was condemned by the church as a heresy at the Fifth Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople in 553 A.D.]

38-9:1. 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.” Intellectual faith does not suffice, but confession of faith with one's mouth is required as well. Since man himself is two-fold, let his sanctification be two-fold as well. For 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, an object of scorn. Since He speaks of His own glory, wishing to show that He is not vainly boasting, and He says, *there are some standing 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 else than a foreshadowing of the second coming, and as He appeared shining then, so will He shine at the second coming, as will also all the righteous.

(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing the following)

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices in you, 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 your body into a throne,
and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.//
Glory to you!

Communion Hymn

The light of Thy countenance has shone on us, O Lord. *(Ps. 4:7a)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!