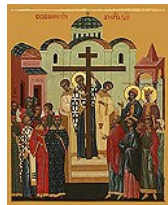


✠Bulletin✠

Week of September 21st to September 27th



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

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6

Leavetaking of the Elevation of the Cross Sunday after Elevation

Apostle Quadratus of the Seventy (ca. 130). Uncovering of the Relics of St. Dimitry, Metropolitan of Rostov (1752). Ven. Daniel, Abbot of Shuzhgórsk (Novgorod—16th c.). Ven. Joseph of Zaonikiev Monastery (Vologdá—1612). Hieromartyr Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus, and his Presbyter, Andrew (ca. 730-735). St. Isaac (Isacius) and Meletius, Bishops of Cyprus. Martyr Eusebius of Phœnicia. Martyr Priscus of Phrygia. Twenty-six Monastic Martyrs of Zographou (Mt. Athos—1285). Ven. Cosmas the Bulgarian of Zographou (Mt. Athos—1323). Ss. John and George, Confessors (Georgia, 20th c.—Sept. 8th O.S.).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday September 21, 2025

9:10 am – Hours

9:30 am – Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday September 21, 2025

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

The Spiritual Exaltation of the Cross From Letters on the Spiritual Life Saint Theophan the Recluse

The Cross was erected on a high place, so that the people could see it and render honor to it. Now, the cross is raised in the churches and monasteries. But this is all external. There is a spiritual exaltation of the cross in the heart. It happens when one firmly resolves to crucify himself, or to mortify his passions—something so essential in Christians that, according to the Apostle, they only are Christ's who have crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts (cf. Gal. 5:24). Having raised this cross in themselves, Christians hold it exalted all their lives. Let every Christian soul ask himself if this is how it is and let him hearken to the answer that his conscience gives him in his heart. Oh, may we not hear, "You only please your flesh in the passions; your cross is not exalted—it is thrown into the pit of the passions, and is rotting there in negligence and contempt!"

When the Lord was taken down from the Cross, the Cross remained on Golgotha, and then it was thrown into the pit that was in that place, where this instrument of execution was usually thrown, together with other refuse. Soon Jerusalem was razed, and all of its edifices were leveled to the ground. The pit containing the Cross of Christ was also filled over. When the pagans rebuilt the city (the Jews were forbidden to come near the place where it was), it happened that on the place where the Cross of Christ was hidden, they placed an idol of Venus, the pagan Goddess of fornication and all manner of lusts. This is what the enemy suggested to them. This is how it is with our inner cross. When the enemy destroys the spiritual order in the soul, this is our mental Jerusalem, and then the spiritual cross is thrown down from the Golgotha of the heart and is covered over with the garbage of the affections and lusts. Lustful self-pleasure then rises like a tower over all our inner peace, and everything in us bows down to it and fulfills its commands until grace shines upon us, inspiring us to cast down the idol and lift up the cross of self-crucifixion.

What is a Reader?

By Reader Theophan

A Reader is a rank of minor clergy, along with subdeacons, whose responsibilities include reading the Holy Scriptures (Old Testament, Acts, and Epistles) during divine services, ministering the altar by assisting the priests and deacons, and can include participating in the choir and assisting in the arrangement of services. The tonsuring of a Reader, like all minor clergy, takes place in the Nave and not in the Altar as does ordination for the major clergy. A layman can, and in fact many do, perform the duties of the Reader in the Church. Why, then, has the role not been phased out for the sake of “efficiency?”

As the first degree of the Priesthood, the tonsured Reader is set apart to dedicate himself more zealously to his duties and to prepare himself for higher service in the Church, should he be called. The Reader is admonished to read the Scriptures daily and to be familiar enough with them that those in Church can understand him and will be edified by his reading. A Reader, like all Christians, is expected to lead a chaste, holy, and righteous life although this is especially the case for the clergy.

The following quote from Fr. Geoffrey Korz concisely sums up the modern importance of the Reader:

In societies where literacy has flooded the human heart and mind with disharmony, noise, and confusion, the sacred responsibilities of the Reader are even more critical, since by the prayerful and holy exercise of his ministerial responsibilities, the Reader offers the Holy Scriptures as a correcting balm, and a healing of the spiritual hearts of the faithful.

Prayer Requests

Carolyn – Robert & Debra’s Forster’s daughter
Anne and Scott Peatross
Robert (John) Forster
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.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

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.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 6 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, //
glory to Thee.

Tone 1 Troparion *(Feast of the Elevation 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 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.//
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Feast of the Elevation of the Cross)

As Thou wast voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake,
grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name, O Christ God;
make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power,
granting them victories over their adversaries//
by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace!

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

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)*

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (Feast)

Extol the Lord our God: / worship at His footstool for He is holy!
(Ps. 98:5)

Galatians 2:16-20

(Epistle, Sunday After Elevation of the Cross)

Brethren: knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Epistle)

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Tone 6

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. (Ps. 90:1)

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust." (Ps. 90:2)

Tone 1

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

Mark 8:34-9:1

(Gospel, Sunday After Elevation of the Cross)

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."

Matthew 22:35-46 (Gospel)

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

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?" 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 desires." For 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 another, such as 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 completely estranged from 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. For 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; and 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, follow the heresy of 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. 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. 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, 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, He 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 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:)

Tone 8

Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord!
You are a mystical Paradise, O Theotokos,
who, though untilled, has brought forth Christ;
through Him the life-bearing wood of the Cross was planted on earth.
Now at its Exaltation,
as we bow in worship before it, we magnify you.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The light of Thy countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord. *(Ps. 4:7)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!