

Holy Cross Orthodox Church

2365 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, Florida
Very Rev. Leonid Palceski - (239) 540-0618
Website & Directory Information.
www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Meatfare Sunday – Tone 3 Sunday of the Last Judgment. Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (167), Ven. Gorgonia, sister of St. Gregory the Theologian (372). Ven. John, Antiochus, Antoninus, Moses, Zebinas, Polychronius, Moses and Damian, Ascetics, of the Syrian deserts (5th c.). Ven. Damian of Mt. Athos (1280). Monk-Martyr Damian, Ven. Polycarp of Br.

1 Cor. 8:8-9:2 Matthew 25:31-46

Announcements

On Sunday, Feb. 23 -- Father will speak on the understanding the "Christ The Conqueror of Hell" after coffee hour.

Sunday Feb 23rd ~ Baby **BOY** Shower following Divine Liturgy for Viktoria.

Sunday, March 8th – 5:00 pm Lenten Mission Vespers at Holy Spirit Church in Venice, Florida

Sunday, March 22nd – after Divine Liturgy & coffee hour, **Dr. Constantine Kallaur will speak on the, "Road to Autocephaly"**

Sunday, March 15 – Mission Services at Holy Cross – Vespers at 6:00 pm
Church School and Fellowship following Divine Liturgy on Sundays.

Choir Rehearsal Saturday 3:30pm prior to Great Vespers.

Votive Candles: Donations have been provided through July, and the month of October.

Liturgical Schedule:

Divine Liturgy Sundays: 9:30 am – Saturday Great Vespers: 4:00pm

Memorial Saturday – Feb. 22 – Divine Liturgy 9:00am -- Saturday of Meatfare.

Bishop Thomas will attend Divine Liturgy on Saturday - Feb. 22 and will preside at the interment of his departed father Thomas Joseph with Fr. Leonid at Lee High Memorial Park at 3:00 pm.

Sunday, March 1st – Forgiveness Vespers following Divine Liturgy.

Monday, Great Fast begins with the Great Cannon at 5:30 pm

Tone 3 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 1 Kontakion *(from the Lenten Triodion)*

When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory,

all things shall tremble,

and the river of fire shall flow before Thy judgment seat;

the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed;

then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,//

and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O Righteous Judge!

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

On the previous two Sundays, the parables of the Publican and the Pharisee, and of the Prodigal Son were read. These two parables make us aware of man's need for humility and repentance. They also illustrate God's ineffable goodness and great love for mankind, and His forgiving mercy.

On this day, the Sunday of the Last Judgment, we remember the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Righteous

Judge. There are many of us who are spiritually lazy and we spend a great deal of our time and effort in sin. We fail to use our time appropriately for the benefit of our salvation, for acquiring virtues and for spiritual growth. We tend to forget about God's Judgment in our Life. And so by bringing the Last Judgment to our attention, the Holy Fathers give us due warning and caution us to keep a closer watch over our souls, lest death should suddenly overtake us without being changed and purified.

By this commemoration, the Holy Fathers intend to remind us that God is not only good and loving and gracious. But that He is also a very just Judge who shows no partiality and judges each equitably according to his deeds. The purpose of the Holy Fathers is to awaken us from our slothfulness by making us more aware of the awesome Judgment Day that awaits all of us. We are reminded that each and every person will be judged by the content and quality of his being and Life: By his words, attitudes, thoughts, feelings and actions. By this reminder, we are encouraged towards changing and renewing our life in accordance with God's teachings and directives, and thereby be prepared for a more favorable judgment by God on that Judgment Day.

From the Synaxarion)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each man may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

(St. Paul)

Using the loving kindness of God to excuse the magnitude of their sins and to increase the excess of their spiritual disregard, many of the more careless sorts of persons speak in this way: "There is no hell; there is no future punishment; God is gracious; God forgives everything".

To stop these mouths, the Apostle Paul declares: "**D**o you suppose, O men, that you will I escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume upon the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hardened and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For God will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and who obey wickedness rather than the truth, there will be wrath and fury."

Yet even so, the loving kindness of God is great. He has divided our existence into two periods, into the present life and the life to come. The present life, He made to be a place of trial and testing; the future life, He made to be a place of crowning and glory.

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There are really two Advents of Christ: The first, which has already taken place, when Christ became man and dwelt among us. The second is yet to be, when Christ shall come to judge the living and the dead. The first advent came to pass so that He might instruct, guide and forgive. The second advent will come to pass so that He might inquire, judge and exact. I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world. After saying that the gospel is the cause of salvation and of life, that it is the power of God, that it engenders salvation and righteousness.