

PARISH NEWS - March 15th, 2020
3rd Sunday of Lent / 3-та неділя Посту
Veneration of the Holy Cross / Неділя Хрестопоклінна

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS / ПРОСИМ О МОЛИТВУ ЗА ЗДОРОВ'Я

... all our parishioners who are in the hospitals, care homes, shut-ins and those who are not able to join us actively due to health reasons. Remember, if you would like a hospital or home visit, please call the parish office and let us know. Due to privacy laws, all requests must come from the individual or the immediate family.

Divine Liturgy:

Sunday 9:30 a.m. (English & Ukrainian)
Weekdays & Holy Days: Please see bulletin

Your Return Gift to God:

Last Sunday's Offering: \$595.00 (18 envelopes)
Special donation to the church: \$20.00

Thank You for Your Generosity! Дякуємо за вашу щедрість!

~ Parish and Community Announcement ~

Coffee and Fellowship After Divine Liturgy - Come join us!

SAVE THE DATE - 4TH ANNUAL KofC Spring Dinner Dance

Fundraiser for Coats for Kids, St Vincent de Paul and other charities. 7 pm - Sat, 25 April 2020 - Our Lady of Mercy Parish Hall.
Semi-Formal, 5-course sit down dinner by the Giresis.
DJ, Cash bar, Dancing, 50-50, Photo Booth, Gift Baskets and more. Details to follow.

ANNUNCIATION FEAST DAY - HISTORY OF THE FEAST

Eastern Church

In Jerusalem by the 5th century the feast of the Annunciation was celebrated within the Christmas cycle. It was first considered a feast of the Lord: known as 'The Conception of Christ', 'The Annunciation concerning Christ', 'The Beginning of Redemption'.

In the 6th century, in Constantinople, March 25 was selected for this feast because it is nine months before the Nativity of our Lord on December 25.

The Liturgy for the feast was composed by St. John Damascene, St. Cosmas of Maiuma, Theophane, Bishop of Nicea and the monk John.

The feast of St. Gabriel Archangel is celebrated the day after the feast of the Annunciation.

Western Church

The feast of the Annunciation came to the West from the East in the middle of the seventh century. It was celebrated as a feast of the Lord, at first, but later was changed to a feast of Mary.

DID YOU KNOW?

Because Mary is the meeting place of heaven and earth, the Annunciation icon is always placed on the royal doors.

To Your Cross, O Master,* we bow in veneration,* and we glorify Your holy Resurrection!

Хресту Твоєму, покланяємось Владико, і святеє Воскресе To Your Cross, O Master,* we bow in veneration,* and we glorify Your holy Resurrection!

Хресту Твоєму, покланяємось Владико, і святеє Воскресення Твоє славимо!

GOSPEL REFLECTION: Mark 8:34–9:1

This Sunday we enter the time of *Mid-Lent* dedicated to the Adoration of the Holy Cross. As the Cross is at the center of our Faith, it seemed natural to the Church over the course of history, to place this "weapon of victory" in the midst of the assembly mid-way through the most spiritually intense season of the year. Gazing and meditating upon it, the faithful, who have chosen the way of the Cross as the way that leads to life, are renewed and strengthened for what remains of their Lenten pilgrimage to Pascha.

It has been said that Lent is a time for returning to "the basics" of the Faith, for re-evaluating priorities, for renewing one's commitment to Jesus Christ. Acceptance of the Cross as the way of life for Christ's followers lies at the very heart of any understanding of Lent. Remove the Cross from our lives and we have nothing. Without the Cross, both in Christ's life and in ours, there is no genuine Christianity and consequently, no reason to observe Lent or any other sacred season. This fact may seem self-evident. Yet ours is a time in which words like sin, repentance, sacrifice, the Cross and crucifixion, are misunderstood, being viewed even by some Christians with suspicion, as "negative" terms, at least when applied to our own lives. Acceptable, very popular "religious buzz words," are resurrection, triumph, victory, peace and the like. "These are the things," one is told, "that will motivate people, what they want to hear about and acquire for themselves." The problem is that these so-called "positive" elements of the Christian life are unattainable apart from the so-called "negative" elements.

The Christian must take very seriously the words of our Lord in the Gospel lesson quoted above: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." How do we deny ourselves and lose our lives, in order to come after the Lord to save our lives? The answer is very simple, but its very simplicity makes it the hardest thing on earth to accomplish. Nevertheless, it must be done, by putting God and our relationship with Him, first, above every other consideration: before business, pleasure, country, family, friends or reputation. Once again, the Cross is at the heart of our "religion."

During the Veneration of the Holy Cross, the Church reminds us that our minds and our hearts must be on the Cross. Upon it God's only begotten Son gave His life for us. In turn, we must 'lose our lives for His sake and the gospel's, and thus find salvation.

ASK THE PASTOR . . .

QUESTION: Why Do We Make Prostrations during Lent?

ANSWER: Yes, we Christians, make prostrations, both in our times of personal prayer and in our liturgical services, particularly during the Great Fast. Why do we do that? Is it some odd carry-over from traditional monastic spirituality, with its emphasis on rigorous ascetic discipline? Or is it a practice that has special value for anyone who wishes to enter seriously, deeply, into the Life in Christ? Is it, in other words, a peculiar exercise, taken on perhaps for some health benefit, as a kind of "Christian yoga"? Or is it a practice that works an actual and positive transformation in our life, one that is both physical and spiritual? Canadians these days are thoroughly familiar with the prostrations made by Muslims during their ritual of daily prayer; we see images of it almost daily in the media. Most are not aware that we, Eastern Christians, practice the same discipline, kneeling in a place of worship and touching the head to the ground, before rising to stand in the usual attitude of prayer. The importance of prostrations, from the Fathers of the Church point of view, is far more spiritual than physical. In bending our knees we assume an attitude of humility before God to whom we offer our prayer. By kneeling, then touching our forehead to the ground, we acknowledge our sinfulness; we create a living image of our fall into sin. Our very posture represents a confession of that state, a calling to mind of our spiritual poverty, of our susceptibility to passions of greed, lust, anger and malice. As we make our descent in body and in spirit, we confess as well the Name above every name, the Name that "upholds the universe," and upholds our personal world as well: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" Then, as we rise to our feet, this confession both of Christ and of our sinfulness becomes a bodily symbol, a virtual promise, that change will occur in our life. We commit ourselves to repentance, to a turning from the old Adam to the new one, who is Jesus Christ.

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PUPPIES FOR SALE (Understanding)

A shop owner placed a sign above his door that said: “Puppies For Sale.” Signs like this always have a way of attracting young children, and to no surprise, a boy saw the sign and approached the owner:

“How much are you going to sell the puppies for?” he asked.

The storeowner replied, “Anywhere from \$30 to \$50.”

The little boy pulled out some change from his pocket. “I have \$2.37,” he said. “Can I please look at them?” The shop owner smiled and whistled. Out of the kennel came Lady, who ran down the aisle of his shop followed by five teeny, tiny balls of fur. One puppy was lagging considerably behind. Immediately the little boy singled out the lagging, limping puppy and said, “What’s wrong with that little dog?”

The shop owner explained that the veterinarian had examined the little puppy and had discovered it didn’t have a hip socket. It would always limp. It would always be lame. The little boy became excited. “That is the puppy that I want to buy.” The shop owner said, “No, you don’t want to buy that little dog. If you really want him, I’ll just give him to you.” The little boy got quite upset. He looked straight into the store owner’s eyes, pointing his finger, and said; “I don’t want you to give him to me. That little dog is worth every bit as much as all the other dogs and I’ll pay full price. In fact, I’ll give you \$2.37 now, and 50 cents a month until I have him paid for.”

The shop owner countered, “You really don’t want to buy this little dog. He is never going to be able to run and jump and play with you like the other puppies.”

To his surprise, the little boy reached down and rolled up his pant leg to reveal a badly twisted, crippled left leg supported by a big metal brace. He looked up at the shop owner and softly replied, “Well, I don’t run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!”

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Third Sunday of the Great Fast - Veneration of the Holy Cross

The Holy Martyr Agapius and the Six Martyrs with Him (284-305)

Great Fast Day 21.

Troparion, Tone 7: By Your cross You destroyed death;* You opened Paradise to the thief;* You changed the lamentation of the myrrh-bearers to joy,* and charged the apostles to proclaim* that You are risen, O Christ our God,* offering great mercy to the world.

Troparion, Tone 1: Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance.* Grant victory to Your faithful people against enemies,* and protect Your community by Your cross.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 7: No longer does the flaming sword guard the gate of Eden;* the tree of the Cross has quenched its flames gloriously.* The sting of death and the victory of Hades are banished,* and You O my Saviour came and called to those in Hades: “Return again to Paradise!”

Instead of Holy God, we sing:

To Your Cross, O Master,* we bow in veneration,* and we glorify Your holy Resurrection!

Prokeimenon, Tone 6

Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance.

verse: Unto You I will cry, O Lord my God, lest You turn from me in silence. (*Psalm 27:9,1*)

Epistle - Hebrews 4:14-5:6

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.”

Alleluia, Tone 8

verse: Remember Your congregation which You acquired from the beginning.

verse: But God is our king before the ages; He has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth. (*Psalm 73:2,12*)

Gospel - Mark 8:34-9:1

The Lord said, “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.”

Hymn to the Mother of God

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices: the angelic ranks and all the human race. Sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, virgins’ pride and boast, from whom God is made flesh and became a little Child; and He who is our God before all ages, He made your womb a throne, and He made it wider than all the heavens. In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices. Glory be to you.

Communion Hymn

Let the light of Your countenance, O Lord* shine upon us.* Alleluia, alleluia,* alleluia. (*Psalm 4:7*)

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. (*Great Prostration, which is kneeling and touching the forehead to the floor, then standing and making the Sign of the Cross*). But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. (*Making a prostration*). Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Making a third prostration*)