

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

9230 Old Bustleton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19115

215-676-3311

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann – Rector (860-861-7468)

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Third Sunday of Great Lent – Veneration of the Cross

TONE 7

**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 2
Troparion
(Cross)**

*O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation,
O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians,
O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace,
always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!*

**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.

✠ **Prokeimenon** ✠

Tone 6 (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*)

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ’s redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. “He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Mt.10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both “the power of God and the wisdom of God” for those being saved (1 Cor.1:24).

The Epistle Reading

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

(Epistle)

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"

Hebrenjve 4:14-5:6

Duke pasur pra një kryeprift të madh që ka përshkuar qiejt, Jisuin, të Birin e Perëndisë, le të mbajmë rrëfimin tonë. Sepse s'kemi kryeprift që të mos mund t'i vijë keq për dobësitë tona, po një që u nga në të gjitha si ne, por pa mëkatuar. Le t'i afrohem pra me guxim frontit të hirit, që të marrim përdëllim dhe të gjejmë hir për ndihmë në kohë nevojë. Sepse çdo kryeprift që merret prej njerëzve, vihet për njerëzit në gjërat që kanë të bëjnë me Perëndinë, për të blatur dhurata dhe flijime për mëkatet; të cilit mund t'i vijë keq për ata që janë të paditur e të gënjer; sepse edhe ai vetë është veshur me dobësi. Edhe prandaj ka detyrë, si për popullin, kështu dhe për veten e tij, të blatoj theror për mëkatet. Edhe asnjë nuk e merr këtë nder prej vetes së tij, po ai që thirret nga Perëndia, si Aroni. Kështu edhe Krishti nuk e lavdëroi veten e tij që të bëhet kryeprift, po ai që i foli: "Ti je Biri im, unë sot të kam lindur". Sikurse edhe në tjetër vend thotë: "Ti je prift për gjithë jetën sipas urdhërit të Melkisedekut".

К Евреям 4:14-5:6

Итак, имея Первосвященника великого, прошедшего небеса, Иисуса Сына Божия, будем твердо держаться исповедания [нашего]. Ибо мы имеем не такого первосвященника, который не может сострадать нам в немощах наших, но Который, подобно [нам], искушен во всем, кроме греха. Посему да приступаем с дерзновением к престолу благодати, чтобы получить милость и обрести благодать для благовременной помощи. Ибо всякий первосвященник, из человеков избираемый, для человеков поставляется на служение Богу, чтобы приносить дары и жертвы за грехи, могущий снисходить невежествующим и заблуждающим, потому что и сам обложен немощью, и посему он должен как за народ, так и за себя приносить [жертвы] о грехах. И никто сам собою не приемлет этой чести, но призываемый Богом, как и Аарон. Так и Христос не Сам Себе присвоил славу быть первосвященником, но Тот, Кто сказал Ему: Ты Сын Мой, Я ныне родил Тебя; как и в другом [месте] говорит: Ты священник вовек по чину Мелхиседека.

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

V. God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth! *(Ps. 73:13)*



✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

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."

Markut 8:34-9:1

Edhe si thirri pranë turmën bashkë me nxënësit e tij, u tha atyre: Kush të dojë të vijë pas meje, le të mohojë veten e tij, edhe le të ngrejë kryqin e tij, edhe le të më vijë pas. Sepse kush të dojë të shpëtojë jetën e tij, do ta humbasë; po kush të humbasë jetën e tij për hirin tim dhe të ungjillit, ky do ta shpëtojë. Sepse ç'dobi do të ketë njeriu, në fitoftë gjithë botën, edhe të dëmtojë shpirtin e tij? Apo ç'do të japë njeriu në këmbim të shpirtit të tij? Sepse cilitdo që t'i vijë turp për mua dhe për fjalët e mia në këtë brez kurorëshkelës e mëkatar, edhe Birit të njeriut do t'i vijë turp për atë, kur të vijë në lavdinë e Atit të tij bashkë me engjëjt e shenjtë. Edhe u thoshte atyre: Me të vërtetë po ju them juve, se janë disa prej këtyre që rrinë këtu, që nuk do të ngjërojnë vdekje, deri sa të shohin mbretërinë e Perëndisë të ardhur me fuqi.

От Марка 8:34-9:1

И, подозвав народ с учениками Своими, сказал им: кто хочет идти за Мною, отвергнись себя, и возьми крест свой, и следуй за Мною. Ибо кто хочет душу свою сберечь, тот потеряет ее, а кто потеряет душу свою ради Меня и Евангелия, тот сбережет ее. Ибо какая польза человеку, если он приобретет весь мир, а душе своей повредит? Или какой выкуп даст человек за душу свою? Ибо кто постыдится Меня и Моих слов в роде сем прелюбодейном и грешном, того постыдится и Сын Человеческий, когда придет в славе Отца Своего со святыми Ангелами. И сказал им: истинно говорю вам: есть некоторые из стоящих здесь, которые не вкусят смерти, как уже увидят Царствие Божие, пришедшее в силе.

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

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices 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 rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace.
Glory to thee!

Communion Hymn

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

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		Church Lectionary
<p>Newly-Departed Jonas, Tamara, Kola, Robert</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>March 19 – 25</i> Belinda Mentzer (B) Rose Shaloka (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Michael - health Jimmy - citizenship Georgia – health</p>	<p><u>Today</u> Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Mark 8:34-9:1</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Milorad, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Luke and his family, Natalia, Otari, Lasha</p>	<p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. Often, people will donate these candles in honor of a loved one or along with special prayers. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Monday</u> Isaiah 14:24-32 Genesis 8:21-9:7 Proverbs 11:19-12:6</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Juliya and the child to be born of her, Isaac, Jemima and the child to be born of her, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, Nicholas, Catherine and the child born of her, Enoch, John, Marianna and the child born of her</p>		<p><u>Tuesday</u> Isaiah 25:1-9 Genesis 9:8-17 Proverbs 12:8-22</p>
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p>	COFFEE HOUR	<p><u>Wednesday</u> Isaiah 26:21-27:9 Genesis 9:18-10:1 Proverbs 12:23-13:9</p>
<p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p>March 19 – Rubis Family 26 – Dellermann family</p>	<p><u>Thursday</u> Isaiah 28:14-22 Genesis 10:32-11:9 Proverbs 13:19-14:6</p>
<p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for our spiritual well-being, • unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith, • commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name. <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><u>Friday</u> Isaiah 29:13-23 Genesis 12:1-7 Proverbs 14:15-26 Genesis 28:10-17 Ezekiel 43:27-44:4 Proverbs 9:1-11</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> Hebrews 6:9-12 Mark 7:31-37 Hebrews 2:11-18 Luke 1:24-38</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Mar 19: 1 Kings 18-22 Mar 20: 2 Kings 1-4 Mar 21: 2 Kings 5-8 Mar 22: 2 Kings 9-12 Mar 23: 2 Kings 13-16 Mar 24: 2 Kings 17-20 Mar 25: 2 Kings 21-25</p>

Annunciation

The feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary comes nine months before Christmas on the twenty-fifth of March. It is the celebration of the announcing of the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary as recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her (Lk 1.26–38).



The services of the feast of the Annunciation, the Matins and the Divine Liturgy, stress again and again the joyous news of the salvation of men in the birth of the Saviour.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the virgin, as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you (Troparion).

A special feature of this feast is the Matinal Canon which has the character of a dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Also among the more popular elements of the feast is the Magnification which has the form of our own salutation to the virgin mother with the words of the archangel:

With the voice of the archangel we cry to Thee, O Pure One: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee! (Magnification).

The celebration of the Annunciation, therefore, is the feast of our own reception of the glad tidings of

salvation, and our own glorification of the maiden Mary who becomes the Mother of God in the flesh.

Because the feast of the Annunciation normally comes during the season of Great Lent, the manner of celebration varies from year to year depending upon the particular day on which it falls. If the feast comes on a weekday of Lent, which is the most common case, the Divine Liturgy of the feast is served in the evening with Vespers and thus is celebrated after a full day of total abstinence. When this happens, the fasting rules for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts are followed. The Divine Liturgy of the Annunciation is the only celebration of the eucharistic liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom allowed on a weekday of Great Lent.

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/annunciation>

The Tree Heals The Tree

Fr. Stephen Freeman



A birch tree on Anzersk Island, Solovki. This tree, which marks otherwise unmarked graves of victims of Soviet repression in the Solovki camps, miraculously grew in the form of a cross.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent is given to meditation on the Holy Wood of the Cross. I offer this meditation.

Readers of the New Testament are familiar with St. Paul's description of Christ as the "Second Adam." It is an example of the frequent Apostolic use of an allegoric reading of the Old Testament (I am using "allegory" in its broadest sense – including typology and other forms). Christ Himself had stated that He was the meaning of the Old Testament (John 5:39). Within the Gospels Christ identifies His own death and resurrection with the Prophet Jonah's journey in the belly of the fish. He likens His crucifixion to the serpent raised on a staff by which Moses healed the people of Israel. Without the allegorical use of the Old Testament – much of the material in the gospels and the rest of the New Testament would be unintelligible.

Orthodox Christians are very accustomed to this manner of handling Scripture – the hymnography (largely written during the Patristic period) of the Church's liturgical life is utterly dominated with such a use of allegory. The connections between New Testament and Old – between dogma and the allegory of Scriptural imagery is found in almost every verse offered within a service. Those who are not familiar with the Eastern liturgical life are unaware of this rich Christian heritage and of its deep doctrinal piety and significance.

In the feast of the Holy Cross, the hymnography at one point makes the statement, "The Tree heals the Tree." It is one of the marvelous commentaries on the life of grace and its relationship to the human predicament. It refers to the relationship between the Cross of Christ and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The latter was the source of the fruit that Adam and Eve consumed that was the source of their fall from grace. The "Tree that heals" is none other than the Cross of Christ.

I am struck particularly by this treatment of Biblical imagery. The meditation does not say that the Cross destroys the tree whose fruit, along with our disobedience, brought the human tragedy. The Tree heals the Tree. In the same manner, the Kingdom of God does not destroy creation – it makes it whole.

There is a tendency within our lives to view failure and disasters (whether self-inflicted or otherwise) as deep tragedies that derail our lives and the world around us. Our heart becomes confused when the thought of “if only” takes up residence. But the Tree heals the Tree. In God, nothing is wasted.

It is the spiritual habit of the Church’s liturgical life to see the story of Christ in everything. Every story involving wood or a tree seems to find its way into the hymnography of the Cross. The same is true for many other images. I believe this way of reading Scripture is also a key to the Christian life. Our hearts are such that they generally do not see the Kingdom of God – we see only the tree and our disobedience. But Christ Himself became sin that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). He took our life upon Himself that He might bestow His own life upon us. Thus Christ has entered all things that He might make all things new. Nothing is wasted.

*Used with permission from Glory to God for All Things.
Fr. Stephen Freeman
4/10/2013*

<https://orthochristian.com/60750.html>

The Greater Philadelphia Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood

invites everyone to attend the 2023
Lenten Vespers Services

**March 19
4:00pm**

**Sunday of the Cross
Saint Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church
1855 Middletown Rd, Glen Mills, PA 19342**

**March 26
4:00pm**

**Sunday of St. John Climicus
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
8210 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, PA 19082**

**April 2
4:00pm**

**Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church
2300 W Huntington Dr, Wilmington, DE 19808**

**April 9
4:00pm**

**While not usually included with the Lenten Vespers, all are welcome to attend the service of Bridegroom Matins at St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral
8598 Verree Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19115**



Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>

March/April Events

March

19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
22 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
25 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy
Feast of the Annunciation
26 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
29 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study

April

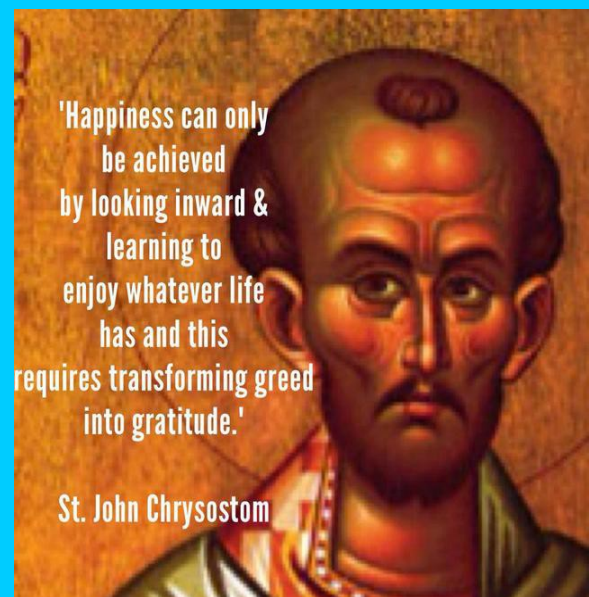
02 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
05 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
08 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy
Lazarus Saturday
09 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Palm Sunday
11 – 6:30pm Bridegroom Matins

The Orthodox Faith is Nothing Without Transformation of Life

If your spiritual life is concentrated only on external practices and traditions, but does nothing to bring about real change, you have gained nothing. Too many people think as long as they keep the fasting rules, do their prayers, and attend the services, they are good Orthodox Christians. Yet if there is no love, no charity, and forgiveness of others, and your life is filled with gossip and judgement, your Orthodox Christian faith is worth nothing.

Christ condemned the Pharisees not because they kept the law and attended to the traditions of the Jewish faith, but because they did so while filled with pride and arrogance. Without sincere repentance and holiness of life, their encounter with God led to an emptiness of heart.

Because our Orthodox faith is one of tradition and liturgical structure, it is easy to fall into the trap of being nothing more than a Pharisee. Being strict in one's observance of Orthodox practices can easily lead to pride and arrogance. If you find yourself feeling



better than others and proud of your piety, you have gained absolutely nothing. The external practice of the Orthodox Christian faith without heartfelt humility and repentance leads down the road of spiritual ruin. The Church is the hospital of the soul, but healing can only come if we put effort into it. If your doctor prescribes medication for your condition but you fail to follow your doctor's orders, you will not get well. The Church has all that you need for spiritual transformation, but healing only comes if you cooperate with the healing process.

The goal is holiness (wholeness) and is the direct result of our having submitted in all humility to a life of repentance. When you do this Christ changes you. If you simply go through the motions of your Orthodox faith, you are no better off than the Pharisees whom Christ condemned.

Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon