

OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

*"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge.
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

March 8, 2015

The Third Sunday of the Great Fast

The Commemoration of our Holy Father Theophylactus the Confessor

THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (*PRESIDENT*), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JENNA NEHME, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (6th Tone) Page 51

The Troparion of the Holy Cross (1st Tone)

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, and protect Your nation by the power of Your Cross.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 15

The Kontakon of the Annunciation (8th Tone): Page 16

Instead of the usual Trisagion (Holy God, Holy Mighty one..) we sing:

We bow in worship before Your Cross, O Master,
and we give praise to Your Holy Resurrection.

THE PROKIMENON:

O LORD, SAVE YOUR PEOPLE AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE!

To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

Today's Readings: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 and Matthew 8:34-9:1

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of John Dagher (6th Anniversary),
by Elias, Linda, and George Dagher

For the repose of Ernest Elhady (17th), Eugene McGrail (35th),
John Devine (39th), and Sada Kfoury (11th)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For Christians throughout the world
who suffer persecution for the sake of the Cross of Christ

For the repose of Kendall Gallant (40 Day Memorial),
by John and Kara Siwik

For the repose of Jean-Claude Safi, by his wife Andrea Haddad Safi

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Nimnoon David (41st), Lamia Solomon (30th),
and Annie Attalla (32nd)

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Fr. Matthew Baker, Greek Orthodox priest
who was killed in an auto accident on March 1

For the repose of Stewart Spencer (10th Anniversary),
by his son Deacon Robert, and Family



The Third Sunday of Lent is the Sunday of the Holy Cross. The Cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the Lenten season not merely to remind us of Christ's redemption and to keep before us the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which we 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). It is meant to be a source of power and inspiration, the support of the just and the hope of the sinner. The Cross is planted in the midst of Great Lent like the Tree of Life in the midst of Paradise, so that anyone looking upon it may find health, strength, and the courage to pursue the course of the Fast.



The Lenten Dinner, with Bishop Nicholas and Bishop John!

Bishop Nicholas Samra and Bishop John Elya will be with us for the Divine Liturgy next Sunday and the Lenten Dinner that will follow. The dinner will feature a wonderful array of traditional Lenten foods. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$3 for children, and are available at the door.

GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS!

The drawing for the winners of the Lenten Charity Raffle will be held at the Lenten Dinner. There are still some raffle tickets still remaining for those who wish to participate, and they will be available at the dinner. The tickets are \$100 each. Only 100 tickets will be sold. Prizes are: 1st prize \$2,000, 2nd prize \$1,000, 3rd prize \$500.

Lenten Mission concludes Friday, Mar. 13

The video presentation of Fr. Robert Baron's Lenten Mission concludes this Friday evening after Akathist, about 7:45 PM. The topic of the mission is "Conversion: Following the Call of Christ." This Friday evening Fr. Baron will discuss the Gospel story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well and the Journey of the Magi.

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 27 Sunday 11:00 AM: 113

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,501.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$34.⁷⁴

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 303,725.³⁰

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Mar. 9	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Wed., Mar. 11	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 13	7:00 PM	Akathist Hymn – followed by Lenten Mission
Sat., Mar. 14	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. John Climacus
Sun., Mar. 15	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of St. John Climacus

THE FATHERS SPEAK: *On the Meaning of the Cross*

The cross is the door to mysteries. Through this door the intellect makes entrance in to the knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is concealed in the sufferings of the cross. And the more our participation in its sufferings, the greater the perception we gain through the cross. For, as the Apostle says, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

-The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac of Syria

Of course, it would be easier to get to paradise with a full stomach, all snuggled up in a soft feather-bed, but what is required is to carry one's cross along the way, for the kingdom of God is not attained by enduring one or two troubles, but many!

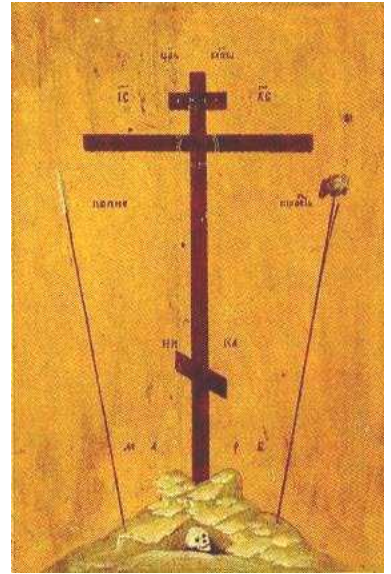
-Elder Anthony of Optina

The Most High planted in the middle of Paradise The thrice blessed wood, the gift of life for us, In order that, in approaching it, Adam might find eternal and immortal life; But he did not strive earnestly to know this life, And he failed to attain it, and revealed death. However, the robber, seeing how the plant in Eden Had been beautifully transplanted in Golgotha, Recognized the life in it and said to himself: "This is what my father lost formerly In Paradise." *-St Romanos the Melodist*

The knowledge of the Cross is concealed in the sufferings of the Cross.

-St. Gregory the Great

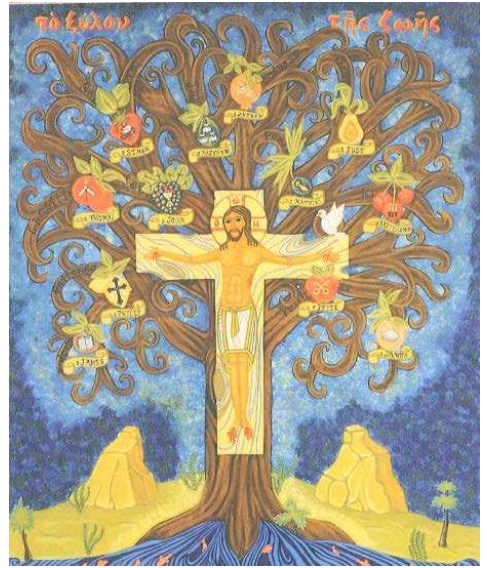
"The Cross of the Lord is unpleasant and sorrowful to the ear, but it consists of joy and gladness. It is the originator not so much of suffering as much as of passionlessness. For Jews the Cross is temptation, for pagans it is madness, but for us believers it reminds us of our salvation. When in church one reads about the Cross and one is reminded of the sufferings on the Cross, the faithful are indignant at the Cross and let out a plaintive wail and murmur not at the Cross but at the crucifiers and unbelievers. For the Cross is the salvation of the Church, the Cross is the praise of those who hope on it. The Cross has released us from the evil that possessed us and is the beginning of the blessings received by us. The Cross is the reconciliation of His enemies with God, the promise of sinners to Christ. For by the Cross we were freed from enmity and through the Cross we have become amiable to God. The Cross delivered us from the authority of the devil, the Cross saved us from death and destruction. The Cross changed human nature to the angelic, having released it from all that is corruptible, and have found lives worthy of immortality." *-St. John Chrysostom*



THE TREE OF LIFE

Since the Holy Cross is also called the tree of life, and this tree has been planted in the center of Paradise, in the same way the Holy Fathers have planted the tree of the Cross in the center of the Great Fast so we can eat from it and live forever. From the Synaxarion

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN THE GREAT FAST is the twenty-first day of the forty-day fast. We are half way to our Holy Week observance of the Lord's passion and resurrection. At this mid-point the Church directs our attention to the holy cross and to Christ's injunction, "*Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*" (Mk 8:34). Today's commemoration focuses on the meaning of the cross in our lives, especially during the Great Fast. We are encouraged to continue to "*have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*" (Gal. 5:24) during the rest of this fasting season.



The Gospel of the Cross

The Gospel read at the Divine Liturgy today is part of a series of five vignettes in which we see Christ coming to the end of His earthly ministry. Describing the first part of this ministry, Mark emphasizes what has been called the "Messianic secret." As Jesus teaches and performs miracles, people are regularly told to keep silent about what He has done. First of all He must form His disciples to see Him as the Messiah, the Christ. Finally, as Jesus and His followers are walking from one village to another, "*...He asked His disciples, saying to them, 'Who do men say that I am?'* So they answered, '*John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.*' He said to them, '*But who do you say that I am?'* Peter answered and said to Him, '*You are the Christ*'" (Mk 6:27-29). With Peter's act of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Church is born.

The Lord then begins preparing His followers to see what kind of Messiah He really is. Like many in those days, the disciples assumed that the Messiah would be a kind of Jewish Julius Caesar driving out the occupiers and restoring the kingdom to Israel. In the second vignette Jesus announces that as Messiah He will suffer, die and rise again. "*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly*" (Mk 8:31-32). There is no Messianic secret here. The disciples must be prepared for what is to come.

This is so far from the disciples' expectation that Peter objects. "*Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan – for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'*" (Mk 8:32-33). Peter objects; he knows what victorious generals – the things of men – look like. This third vignette shows that he hasn't a clue about the things of God.

Finally we come to today's Gospel selection: the fourth vignette in this sequence. My kingdom is not what you think. Its throne is the cross and whoever wants a place in this kingdom

must accept a cross as well: the cross of self denial.

As Metropolitan Anthony Bloom once said, “The Lord has told us that in the Christian Church and in the Kingdom, a King is not one who overpowers others to exact from them unconditional and slavish obedience, but He is the one who serves and gives His life for others. “St. John Chrysostom teaches us that anyone can rule, but that no one but a king gives his life for his people, because he so identifies with his people that he has no existence, no life, no purpose but to serve them with all his life and if necessary with his death.”

As followers of Christ today we may find that our stations in life will give us many opportunities for self-denial. The clergy are continually called upon to make sacrifices for the Church they have been called to serve. Monastics in their communities and spouses in their homes have daily opportunities to offer themselves for one another and the members of their families. Every Christian with open eyes will see that God gives us countless opportunities to humble ourselves for the service of others in the parish or the wider community in which we live. Taking up the cross means putting others first every day.

Our changing society is increasingly giving us opportunities to shoulder the cross in a more drastic way. You may lose your job. You may lose your health. You may lose your home. You may lose your pension or your reputation. You may lose everything on which you rely.

In this we look to Christ as our model. In the words of St. Paul, “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:5-11).

Christians living in countries dominated by other religions or by an aggressive secularism are finding themselves increasingly isolated and discriminated against for their faith in Christ. They might find it easier to see the choice that they are called to make than we in our as yet more accepting society. Their choice may be to deny Christ or leave town. Our choice may be to affirm a neighbor’s abortion or to lose the friendship of their family.

In either case these cautionary words of our Lord apply: “*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*” (Mk 8:35-38).

Fasting and Taking Up the Cross

We still have a few weeks of the Fast remaining. They give us the opportunity to assess whether we are more committed to our small comforts or to the call of Christ. If we are so enslaved to certain foods and entertainments, how will we be able to give up something more serious for the sake of God's kingdom? The Great Fast helps us to see the depth of our willingness to take up the cross in our daily life.

Prayers from Orthros on the Sunday of the Holy Cross

SESSIONAL HYMN

In Paradise of old, the Enemy stripped me bare. By making me eat from the forbidden tree, he brought in death. But the tree of the Cross was planted on earth. It brought mankind the garment of life and the whole world is filled with unbounded joy. Seeing the Cross exalted, let us all cry aloud to the Lord with one voice: "Your temple is filled with Your glory!"

KONTAKION

The Angel's fiery sword will no longer guard the gate of Paradise, for the Cross of the Lord has put it out wondrously. The power of Death has been broken, the victory of Hades wiped out, and You, my Savior, have stood up and called out to all those bound in Hell: "Come now; enter again into Paradise!"

IKOS

Pilate set up three crosses on Golgotha, two for the thieves and one for the Lord of life. Seeing this, Hades asked its servants: "Who has driven this spear into my heart? A wooden lance has pierced me, and I am torn apart. What pain has penetrated my womb and my heart! What sorrow stabs my spirit! I am forced to give up Adam and his children, those whom I had received from the forbidden Tree; for a new Tree leads them to enter again into Paradise.

Don't Forget:

THE WEEKDAY SERVICES DURING LENT

To assist us in our Lenten effort, we are called to come to make a special effort to pray. Let us come together as a parish family to support and encourage one another at the special prayer services that are offered throughout Lent:

Monday evenings, 7:00 PM: Great Compline:

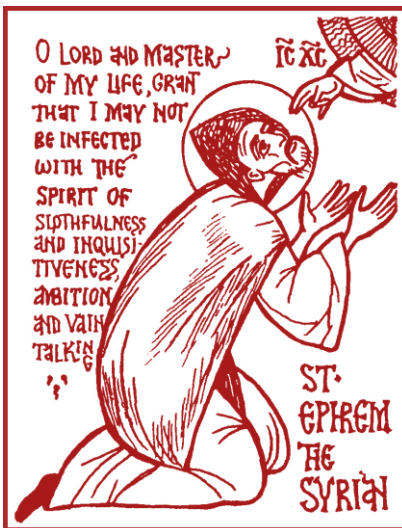
The Office of Compline is the nighttime prayer of the church. It is enhanced during Lent to contain beautiful prayers of repentance and to remind us during our Lenten struggle that "*God is with us!*"

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM: Presanctified Liturgy:

During the season of Great Lent, we traditionally "fast" from the joy of the Divine Liturgy on weekdays. However, so as not to be denied the strength that comes from receiving from the Lord's Table, the church offers us this service, which is Lenten vespers followed by Holy Communion.

Friday evenings, 7:00 PM: The Akathist Hymn:

This service presents a beautiful series of hymns to the Mother of God. We pray this service during Lent in anticipation of the great feast of the Annunciation that comes on March 25th.



Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Ernie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Sarah Beadle, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Russell Pond, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, Laura Weingast, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled **"Welcome to this Holy House,"** located on the table in the back of the church.



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