

Today's Bulletin is Sponsored:

For the health of:

Nelly Butze on her birthday, Godchild of Lore Stefy
David Semam, brother-in law of Linda Jankowski

- Readings:**
- **Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6**
 - **Mark 8:34-38; 9:1**

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM

Sunday service:

Hours – 9:40 AM **Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

Private Confession – Half hour before any service.

See Fr Matthew for other times.

General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month

Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month

Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room

Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1st Sunday of each month)

Pre-school class meets immediately after the Liturgy every Sunday.

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **A New Jersey Deanery Mission Vespers** will be held **today** at the **Holy Cross Church in Medford, NJ** at 4:00 PM
- **The Sisterhood will again be sponsoring a Cinderella cheesecake sale this Paschal season.** The orders for cheesecakes will be due by March 22nd. Cost of the cheesecakes will be \$22, or \$25 for specialty cheesecakes. See Tamara Zimmerman.
- **The Sisterhood will be raffling off a traditional Paschal basket including delicious holiday items.** Tickets are \$1.00 and each person is asked to sell 10 tickets. The raffle will be held on March 29th. See Lore Stefy for tickets.
- **The next Parish Council meeting** will be March 29th, after coffee hour.
- **This week's services of Great Lent:**
 - March 18 6:30 PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with potluck to follow (Wednesday)
 - March 21 6:30 PM Vespers (Saturday)
 - March 22 Sunday of St. John Climacus, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
 - March 22 Deanery Lenten Vespers, 4:00 PM (Next Sunday)
- **Next Sunday, March 22, at 4:00 PM, our parish will be hosting the New Jersey Deanery South for Lenten Vespers.** The Sisterhood will be serving a light meal after the Lenten vespers. If you would like to contribute an item for the meal, please see the sign-up sheet downstairs.

Special Announcements:

- **Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:** Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org
- **Volunteers are needed to clean the church.** Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, downstairs, to indicate when you can help.

Veneration of the Cross:

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).

Today the Cross is brought in a solemn procession to the center of the church and remains there for the entire week. It is noteworthy that the theme of the Cross which dominates the hymnology of this Sunday is developed in terms not of suffering but of victory and joy.

We are in Mid-Lent. On the one hand, the physical and spiritual effort, if it serious and consistent, begins to be felt, its burden becomes more burdensome, our fatigue more evident. We need help and encouragement. On the other hand, having endured this fatigue, having climbed the mountain up to this point, we begin to see the end of our pilgrimage, and the rays of Easter grow in their intensity. Lent is our self-crucifixion, our experience, limited as it is, of Christ’s commandment heard in the Gospel lesson of that Sunday:

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

But we can not take up our cross and follow Christ unless we have His Cross which He took up in order to save us. It is His Cross, not ours, that saves us. It is His Cross that gives not only meaning but also power to others.

On this Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the veneration of the **honorable and Life Giving Cross**, and for this reason: inasmuch as in the forty days of fasting we in a way crucify ourselves and become bitter and despondent and failing, the Life Giving Cross is presented to us for refreshment and assurance, for remembrance of our Lord’s Passion, and for comfort.

We are like those following a long and cruel path who become tired, see a beautiful tree and many leaves, sit in its shadow and rest for a while and then, as if rejuvenated, continue their journey; likewise today, in the time of fasting and difficult journey and effort, the Life Giving Cross was planted in our midst by the holy fathers to give us rest and refreshment, to make us light and courageous for the remaining task.

Or, to give another example: When a king is coming, at first his banner and symbols appear, then he himself comes glad and rejoicing about his victory and filling with joy those under him; likewise, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to show us His victory over death, and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection Day, is sending to us in advance His scepter, the royal symbol the Life Giving Cross and it fills us with joy and makes us ready to meet, inasmuch as it is possible for us, the King himself, and to render glory to His victory.

All this in the midst of Lent which is like a bitter source because of its tears, because also of its efforts and despondency...but Christ comforts us who are as it were in a desert until He shall lead us up to the spiritual Jerusalem by His Resurrection...for the Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is the tree that was planted in Paradise, and for this reason our fathers have planted it in the midst of Holy Lent, remembering both Adam’s bliss and how he was deprived of it, remembering also that partaking of this Tree we no longer die but are kept alive.

- Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

See us on the web at: ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin
E-Mail us at: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

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Veneration of the Cross

Glory to
Jesus Christ

Glory
Forever

*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
Grant victory to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries;
And by virtue of Thy Cross preserve Thy habitation.*

Troparion

Today the Church remembers:

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT • Veneration of the Cross

- Martyrs Agapius, Publius (Pausis), Timolaus, Romulus, two named Dionysius, and two named Alexander, at Cæsarea in Palestine (303) • Hieromartyr Alexander of Side, in Pamphylia (270-275) • Martyr Nicander of Egypt (ca. 302).

March 15, 2015

Tone 7 of the Octoechos

**Triodion week 7
Third Sunday of Lent**