

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN MARCH 19, 2017

SUNDAY/MARCH 19

Third Sunday of Great Lent

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30am. Divine Liturgy &
Installation of New Parish Council
Coffee Hour; Church School & Teen Class
5:00p.m. Vespers in Medford

MONDAY/MARCH 20

7:00p.m. Lesser Blessing of Waters

TUESDAY/MARCH 21

7:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 22

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Passion; Confessions
6:30p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

THURSDAY/MARCH 23

3:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions
7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

FRIDAY/MARCH 24

7:00p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SATURDAY/MARCH 25

Annunciation to Theotokos (One of "12 Great Feasts")

9:30a.m. Liturgy
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/MARCH 26

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour & Question/Answer Period
5:00p.m. Vespers in Perth Amboy



Troparion to the Precious Cross

Tone 1, Russian Melody



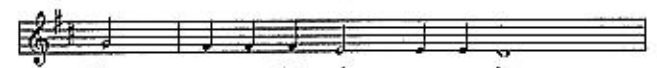
O Lord, save Thy people,



and bless Thine inheritance.



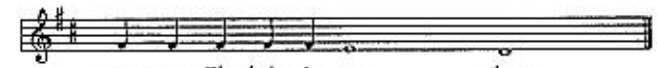
Grant victories to the Orthodox Chris-



tians over their adversaries;



and by the virtue of Thy Cross,



preserve Thy habitation.

Long ago, in Orthodox countries, the feast of the Elevation of the Cross was a national holiday. The bishop or priest would raise up the cross in the presence of all the people. This hymn would be sung like a national anthem. It means that all who sing it might live by the power of Jesus' cross; that they would win in every fight against everything which is wicked and evil; that they would always live and even die, if necessary, in their love for God and for everything that is true and right and good.

Offerings Week of March 19

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalia and Anastasia; for the health of Mark (birthday); in memory of Sarchisian and Bocai families; for the health of Reader Samuel and Robert.

Wine: for the health of Sarah; for the health of Parascevi and Sophia.

Flowers: in honor of the Holy Annunciation and in memory of Charles.

Litya Breads: for the health of Katherine.

Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Mar. 19, 2004 Anna Lisneski
Mar. 20, 2000 Theodore Adamchak
Mar. 20, 2015 Sophie Olszyk
Mar. 21, 1991 Eugenia Kozlov
Mar. 23, 1925 Peter Chabra
Mar. 23, 1975 Anna Yalsh
Mar. 24, 1959 Alexander Gromack
Mar. 24, 1970 Julia Zorzi
Mar. 24, 1974 Xenia Poletelo
Mar. 25, 1954 John Holovach
Mar. 25, 1984 Stephen Szwhala
Mar. 26, 1931 Anna Mogilevsky
Mar. 26, 1958 Henry Knaff

Coffee Hour Schedule

- Coffee Hour Hosts are reminded to prepare foods that are simple enough that you leave the church only after Communion.
- Coffee Hour Hosts, please place trash in the garbage cans outside, or if the cans are full, on top of the cans, but not on the ground.
- Please allow church school teachers and students to be first in line so they can prepare for classes.

No meat, no fish & no dairy products at Coffee Hour during Great Lent

Mar. 19 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona
Mar. 26 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Stainia & Sarchisian
Apr. 02 Wypych, Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda & Sue

Counters Schedule

Mar. 19 Irina S. & Lisa K.
Mar. 26 Larissa M. & Paulina N.
Apr. 02 Rebecca O. & Ekaterini M.

Ushers Schedule

Mar. 19 Dennis F. & Robert E.
Mar. 26 Edward S. & Kahka K.
Apr. 02 Timothy S. & Peter B.

Sunday Readers Schedule

Mar. 19 – Ciprian C. / Mar. 26 – Daniel T.

Lenten Deanery Schedule of Services

All Services are at 5:00p.m.

Mar. 12: Mother of God, Princeton
Mar. 19: Holy Cross, Medford
Mar. 26: St. Spyridon, Perth Amboy
Apr. 02: Ss. Peter & Paul, Manville

Fasting for the Evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA instructs that a total fast from all food and drink should commence from the noon day meal. Those that can fast for a longer period of time, are urged to do so.

OCMC – Orthodox Christian Mission Center – Lenten Coin Boxes

Every Great Lent our parish undertakes this project to help Orthodox Mission Projects around the world. Please take a box and return in on Palm Sunday, April 9th.

The Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion in the 40 Day Great Lent

All the faithful should receive these Holy Mysteries during the period of the 40 Days. They are ample times offered for Confession during the week. During the Great and Holy Week (April 9-15), Confessions are not scheduled, please make your Confession before Palm Sunday (April 9). College students can make arrangements for Confession during Great and Holy Week if they are presently away at school.

Annunciation (March 25) and Palm Sunday (April 9)

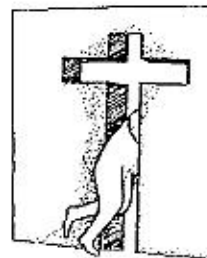
During Great Lent, on these two feasts day, fish is permitted.

NJ Deanery Vespers in Manville – Apr. 2nd

Our parish will host the Vespers this day. Plan to attend and join in the Lenten supper to follow.

HAVING COME TO THE MIDPOINT OF THE 40 DAY GREAT AND HOLY FAST... LET ME REFLECT...

- ❖ Have I accepted Great Lent as a "gift" from God, with thanksgiving?
- ❖ Have I spent the last three weeks in a meaningfully different way?
- ❖ Have I participated in the lenten services that are held during the week, Monday through Friday?
- ❖ Have I used the lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim in my morning and evening prayers, and at other times throughout the day?
- ❖ In addition to the Holy Scriptures, what kind of spiritual reading have I done? Have I learned more about my Faith? Have I read spiritual works which can help me in my prayers, dealing with others, and spiritual faults and needs?
- ❖ Am I preparing myself to make a good, honest, and humble Confession? Do I really believe that I am confessing my sins to Jesus Christ? Am I aware that the Lord sees my inner heart and will know if I only recite my sins, instead of being truly sorrowful and deeply committed to avoid repeating them?
- ❖ In what ways will I struggle in the second part of Great Lent that I have so far left unattended?
- ❖ Am I willing to die to my old self in order to live in Christ? Am I willing to trade the earth for heaven? Am I willing to deny myself, take up my cross and follow Him to His heavenly Kingdom?



ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR ON LOVE

Fight the good fight until you reach the end, clinging fast to those qualities that will assure your passage to love's goal. I mean: love of humankind, brotherly and sisterly love, hospitality, love of the poor, compassion, mercy, humility, meekness, gentleness, patience, freedom from anger, long-suffering, perseverance, kindness, forbearance, goodwill and peace towards all. Out of these and through these the grace of love is fashioned, which leads one to God who deifies the human being that He Himself fashioned.

Through Isaiah the Lord has told us: 'I am the Lord your God, Who leads you in the way of righteousness, in which you should go, and you have heard My commandments.' Therefore, 'your peace has become like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea' (Isa. 48:17-18)."

ABOUT MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

1) The three fingers symbolize the three Persons of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2) The two fingers symbolize the two natures of Jesus Christ: divine and human.



We make the Sign of the Cross on our 1) forehead, 2) waist, 3) right shoulder, and then 4) left shoulder, thereby offering our whole mind, heart, and strength in service to the Lord.



A REFLECTION FROM ST. NIKOLAI VELIMIROVICH

Even in His pain on the cross, the Lord Jesus did not condemn sinners but offered pardon to His Father for their sins saying, "They know not what they do!" (St. Luke 23:34). Let us not judge anyone so that we will not be judged. For no one is certain that before his death he will not commit the same sin by which he condemns his brother.

Saint Anastasius of Sinai teaches, "Even if you see someone sinning, do not judge him for you do not know what the end of his life will be like. The thief, crucified with Christ, entered Paradise and the Apostle Judas went to Hell. Even if you see someone sinning, bear in mind that you do not know his good works. For many have sinned openly and repented in secret; we see their sins, but we do not know their repentance. That is why, brethren, let us not judge anyone so that we will not be judged."

AN EXPLANATION OF THE ORTHODOX THREE-BAR CROSS

By Fr. Theodore Jurewicz

The Top Bar - The Explanation:

The top bar is the title-board, which Pilate ordered to be hung in mockery over Christ's head on the Cross. On this board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials 'INBI' or the Latin initials 'INRI' in the Western tradition). This is replaced with the Christian inscription: "King of Glory" – below the knees of the angels. On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek. In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: 'NIKA', which in Greek means: "He conquers" or "He is victorious." Frequently, we see these last two inscriptions together: 'IC XC NIKA', meaning: "Jesus Christ is victorious" (over death and sin).



The Middle Bar - The Explanation:

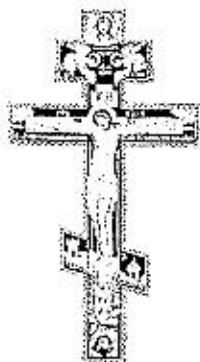
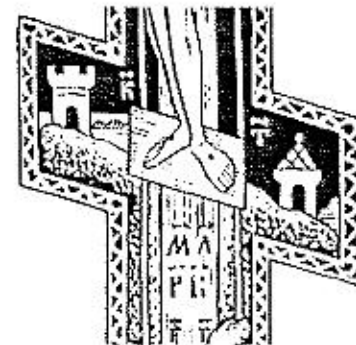
The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun (left) and the moon (right), for "The sun hid its light, and the moon turned to blood." (Joel 2:31)



The inscription: "Son of God" is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.

The Bottom Bar - The Explanation:

The slanted bottom bar is the footrest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words [Let us] worship the footstool of His feet... (Ps. 98:5). In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness: "Between two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to Thee." The meaning of this prayer is as follows: the Cross of Christ stood for a scale of justice between the two thieves: for one of them sank in to hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the other, the wise thief, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance. The church fathers attempted to render tangible the thought of the unfaithful thief going to hell for his blasphemy through the just judgment of God (the lower end of the bar), and of the wise thief going to heaven for his repentance and his praise of God (the upper end).



The Images - The Explanation:

On the Cross is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Note that He does not wear a crown of thorns, and that His feet are nailed with two nails. Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are a lance (which pierced Him) and a sponge (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing forth from His side. Below the feet of Christ is four Slavonic letters meaning: "The place of the skull became Paradise". Hidden in a cave under the earth is 'the skull of Adam'. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for He was crucified outside the city walls.



Death by Baptism

Nowadays, children get baptized for any number of reasons: because their family is Russian (Ukrainian/Greek/Serbian, etc.), because it is what they have “always done,” because the grandmother insists, because the parents want the child to be able to take communion or to go to Sunday school, or for any number of other reasons. But the Apostle Paul says that baptism is a manifestation of Christ’s death in our lives (Rom. 6:3)—no, no, not a symbol of His death, not a theatrical re-enactment, not a remembrance, but the “making-real,” the “making-present” of His death. Paul says that the baptized “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27)—but what kind of Christ? The one who was tortured. The One who was crucified. The One who died. The One whose wounds did not heal even in His glorious resurrection (Luke 24:39).

The fundamental vision of Christ’s death in our lives begins with the full acceptance of our own physical death. Unfortunately, here in the U.S., we have outsourced our death to various companies and are not acquainted with it anymore. Not all that long ago, people would die in their family homes, surrounded by several generations of relatives. Their bodies would remain in the home, in full view of everyone, for as long as was practical. Young siblings would die of disease, adult relatives would die in accidents, older people would die of old age... Death was all around, it was real, tangible, visceral. Nowadays, babies no longer die, and if they do, it happens in neonatal ICUs; adult deaths are whisked away and disposed of; old people are hidden in hospices. Relatives come to visit hospice patients and say the strangest things: “How are you feeling? Hope you get well soon. You and I are gonna go fishing together!”—knowing very well that the person has a few days or hours to live, but being in denial all the same, denying the loved ones the right to say: “I am dying. Pray for me. See you on the other side.”

When the death is finally undeniable—that is to say, when the person is actually dead—they still try to deny its reality: they embalm the body to prevent natural decay, they decorate the dead body with makeup and dress it in nice clothing and spray perfume; by the time they are done with it, this dead body looks and smells far better in the coffin than it did in real life! All is fake, all is denial, all is pretense. It is as if Christ did not suffer and did not die. It is as if one minute He is teaching and preaching, and the next minute He is risen. But it does not work that way. In order for there to be Pascha, there has to be the Cross; in order for there to be resurrection, there has to be death. He, who has not died, cannot rise from the dead.

A Christian is to die every day, day after day, even minute after minute, for 525,949 minutes each year. The death that we accept at baptism is not symbolic at all; it is as real as the life that we accept. The life in Christ is no symbol, and neither is the death. Both are an ever-present reality of our condition. If we want to *be* living, we have to *bedying*. Christ’s death did not happen on that Good Friday. It was ever-present since at least before He agreed to create Adam. Maybe, this is the mystery of the Son’s ever-being-born—He is also ever-dying for the sins of mankind. A Christian’s death is not something that is “symbolized” when he is “dunked” in the font, but is something that he puts on as his very essence, his nature—the nature of life in Christ.

In this context, Christian asceticism is foundational to Christian life and is the very core of our daily dying in Christ—dying to sin, dying to the world, dying to self, in order to be born in Christ to the life with God. As Christians, we are called to live our life as a sacrament, or, even better, as a sacrifice.



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I think that one very troubling modern phenomenon deserves special attention: the phenomenon of morphine. Modern Americans most often seems to die in one of two ways: in hospice care or at a hospital. In both cases, the relatives often go through a denial of the approaching death and do not call the priest until the very last moments when it is already too late. By that time, the person is pumped full of morphine—either because they have become “restless” or because they are in pain. At that point, it is impossible for the person to have a confession, to pray, to take communion, or to hear words of comfort from the reading of the Psalms or the Gospel. Very often, these are also the people who have never had a confession or taken communion in their entire life or in the last several decades of their life—chronic illness, lack of mobility, extreme busyness of the relatives are some of the realities of the life of an older person that tend to prevent them from participating in the sacramental life of the Church. Thus, modern ways of dying in the “comfort” of morphine coupled with the lack of understanding of the progression of dying and the reality of death on the part of the relatives, deny these people their last rites even before death. It is as if the devil has successfully kept those people away from church sacraments during their life and has won a victory even in their death. Or, maybe, it is not “as if”? maybe, this really is what is happening?

THE ANNUNCIATION – CELEBRATED MARCH 25TH

From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich

When the All-Holy Virgin completed the fourteenth year after her birth and was entering her fifteenth year, after having spent eleven years of living and serving in the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could not remain in the Temple but was required to be betrothed and enter into marriage. What a great surprise to the priests was the answer of the All-Holy Virgin that she had dedicated her life to God and that she desired to remain a Virgin until death, not wanting to enter into marriage with anyone! Then, according to Divine Providence, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, under the inspiration of God, and in agreement with the other priests, gathered twelve unwed men from the Tribe of David to betroth the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and to care for her. She was betrothed to Joseph of Nazareth who was her kinsman. In the house of Joseph, the All-Holy Virgin continued to live as she did in the Temple of Solomon, occupying her time in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in Godly-thoughts, in fasting and in handiwork. She rarely went anywhere outside the house nor was she interested in worldly things and events. She spoke very little to any-

one, if at all, and never without special need. More frequently she communicated with both of Joseph's daughters. When the fullness of time had come, as prophesied by Daniel the Prophet, and when God was pleased to fulfill His promise to the banished Adam and to the Prophets, the great

Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber

of the All-Holy Virgin and, as some priestly writers wrote, precisely at that same moment when she held open the book of the Prophet Isaiah and was contemplating his great prophecy: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son!” (Isaiah 7:13). Gabriel appeared in all of his angelic brightness and saluted her: “Rejoice, highly favored one! The Lord is with you” (St. Luke 1:28), and the rest in order as it is written in the Gospel of the



saintly Luke. With this angelic annunciation and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, the salvation of mankind and restoration of all creation began. The history of the New Testament was opened by the words of the Archangel Gabriel: “Rejoice, highly favored one” This is to imply that the New Testament was to signify joy to mankind and to all created things. It is from this that the Annunciation is considered not only a great feast, but a joyful feast as well.