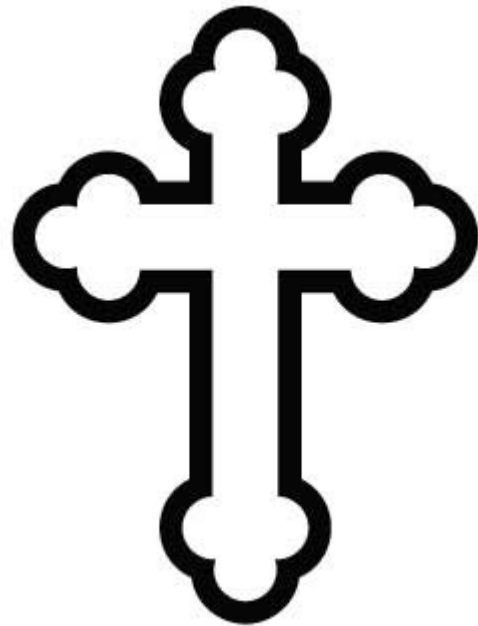


Hymns for the Third Sunday of Great Lent

Hail, O life-bearing Cross, bright Paradise of the Church, Tree of incorruption! You have obtained for us the enjoyment of everlasting glory. Through you, the hosts of devils are driven out, the choirs of Angels rejoice as one, and the company of the faithful hold celebrations. Unconquerable weapon, impregnable stronghold, triumph of kings and pride of priests: grant that we may be witnesses to Christ's Passion and Resurrection!

Seeing the precious Cross of Christ placed before us today, let us venerate it and rejoice in faith. With love let us greet the Lord who by His own free will was crucified upon it, asking Him to make us worthy to adore His holy Passion and to reach the day of the Resurrection free of all blame.



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM
March 15, 2020



Third Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of the Cross

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Extol the Lord our God and worship at his footstool, for He is holy.

O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

2: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

3: Feed them and carry them forever.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!**

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7 , Pg. 42)

You destroyed death by Your Cross, You opened Paradise to the Thief, You changed the weeping of the Myrrh-bearers, and commanded Your Apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen granting to the world great mercy.

Troparion for the Cross (Tone 1)

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Grant victory to our country over its enemies, and preserve Your community by the power of Your Cross.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8)

We Your servants ascribe to you, O Mother of God, thank offerings of victory, O Champion Leader, for we have been liberated from terror but as you have that invincible power do you free us from every kind of danger so that we may cry out to you: Hail, O Bride ever-Virgin!

Instead of the Trisagion

We bow in worship before Your Cross, O Master, and we give praise to Your Holy Resurrection. (3 times)

Glory... now, and we give praise to Your Holy Resurrection.

St Paul saw the power of the cross uniting all peoples, even the Jews and Gentiles, separated by the barrier imposed by the Law. By His death Christ "...abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (Phil 2:15, 16).

Not only all peoples but all creation was affected by the cross. "... it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:19, 20). Through the cross Christ overcomes all the divisions and separations in creation, bringing everything to the fullness and unity which was designed at the original creation and then lost.

The Sign Rejected

Not everyone had the insight of St Paul concerning the power of the cross "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God ... For Jews demand a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:18, 22-24).

The idea of God emptying Himself and being crucified appeals to no human logic. The Jews expected the Messiah to be manifested with signs of divine power: "*glorious things which have never been,*" according to one ancient text in the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Some of the signs Jews looked for were the ingathering of all Jews into the land of Israel and an era of world peace in which there would be no hatred, oppression, suffering or disease. They generally saw the picture of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53:3-7 as referring to the people of Israel, not to the Messiah.

The philosophically-minded Greeks "seek after wisdom." There were a host of rival philosophical schools among first-century Greeks: Epicureans, Neo-Platonists, Sophists, Stoics and a host of others, all based on reason and logic. Thus when St Paul spoke about the resurrection in Athens (see Acts 17:16-34) some mocked him, others brushed him off. The Lord was not a philosopher; curiously many Gnostics sought to make Him one, which is why many of their writings (apocryphal gospels) were rejected by the early Church.

Imitating the Cross

As a rule, Jews today reject the notion that the Lord Jesus is the promised Messiah. Muslims teach that He only appeared to die on the cross and that God "took Him." There are members of both groups who have a thinly disguised contempt for our display of the cross. When the president of Israel visited Pope Francis in 2015 his ultra-Orthodox assistant refused to shake the pope's hand (he was a man) or greet him with a bow (he was wearing a cross). The pope responded by covering the cross and bowing to her. Some other ultra-Orthodox Jews were triumphant, while some traditionalist Roman Catholics were ashamed of the pope. Others saw his action as an imitation of the kenosis of Christ who humbled himself. He venerated the cross, not by displaying it, but by living it.

Describing the kenosis of Christ, St Paul urged us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). He would, no doubt, be pleased to see us reverence the cross today; he would be even more pleased to see us imitate the kenosis which brought Christ to that cross.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today

+Charles Welsh. Requested by Antoinette Arraj

March 22

+Charles Welsh (40 Day memorial). Requested by his family. Coffee Hour sponsored by the family

**IMAGE OF GOD—CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR
52nd NATIONAL MELKITE CONVENTION
JULY 9 - 12, 2020
ATLANTA, GA**

St. John Chrysostom Melkite Catholic Church will host the 52nd National Melkite Convention at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel. Go to their website, 2020melkite.org for more information.



Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of the Holy Cross. At the midpoint of Lent, the Church presents the Cross to us as an oasis to refresh us from our Lenten struggles. The prayers of the Church say,

“O Cross of the Lord to which the world aspires, let the light-giving flashes of your grace lift up the hearts of those who honor you. We welcome you with divine love, O you through which the dismay of tears has passed away, and by which we have been saved from the snares of death and carried up into imperishable joy. Through Your Cross, O Lord, reveal to us the splendor of your beauty, granting reward for their abstinence to Your servants who ask in faith for Your generous help and Your great mercy.”

This Sunday reminds us, as it has taught catechumen for centuries, that in order to be a disciple of Christ, we must take up our personal cross and follow Jesus. Christian discipleship requires sacrificing our egos; it requires acknowledging that we are not the center of the universe. Once we do that, we can see the Cross of Christ as an instrument of salvation and eternal life!

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

Glory to Your Sacred Cross!

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN THE GREAT FAST is highlighted in the Byzantine Churches by the veneration of the holy cross. We adorn it with flowers, carry it in procession and prostrate ourselves before it. The Fast is preparing us to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ; halfway through the Fast the cross is venerated to encourage us to persevere in our efforts for this season.

Honoring a cross in any way would seem ridiculous to a first-century citizen of the Roman Empire. Crucifixion was a humiliating disgrace and an extraordinarily painful method of execution reserved for slaves and other non-citizens, people who did not matter in Roman eyes. Yet St Paul found the cross of Christ a source of pride. *“God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”* (Gal 6:14).

The cross had become the sole source of his boasting, knowledge of Christ his sole treasure. *“Indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ”* (Phil 3:8).

The Ultimate Sign

For the apostles the cross represented the depth of the mystery of Christ. His passion showed the extent of His love for His people. *“Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end”* (Jn 13:1). It represents the totality of His incarnation. He became man in every way, accepting suffering, abandonment, and a painful death to be one with His creatures who endure such things every day. We can never portray our Savior as a “distant God” – He has shared the totality of humanity with us while remaining one with the Father.

The profundity of His descent in order to share our humanity is expressed in the term *kenosis*. St Paul uses it in what has become a well-beloved synopsis of the Christian’s faith in the incarnation and its meaning for us. *“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 bond-servant, 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).

In this passage St Paul describes the condescension of the Word of God to us. The only-begotten Son and Word of God *“made Himself of no reputation”* by taking our nature, and then by accepting the degrading death of a convict, the cross.

This self-abasement or kenosis, however, resulted in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ in glory, proclaimed as Lord by *“every tongue.”*

Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance

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

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance

Reader: O Lord, save Your people

People: And bless Your inheritance

Epistle: Heb 4:14-16, 5:1-6

Alleluia Verses

Remember Your congregation which You have acquired from the beginning: You redeemed the scepter of Your inheritance.

Verse: God is our King forever: He brought about salvation in the midst of the earth.

Gospel: Mk 8:34-39

Hirmos: In you, O full of grace...

LENTEN SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Wed. 3/18 - Great Compline - 7:00PM

Fri. 3/20 - Compline & Akathist - 7:00PM

Sun. 3/22 - Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. Commemoration of St. John Climacus