

From the Divine Office for the 3rd 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! (Vespers)

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!" (Kontakion)



**THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
SUNDAY OF THE CROSS
MARCH 3, 2024**



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Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Antiphon (Feast)

1: O Lord, let the light of Your countenance shine upon us.

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

2: O Lord, for those who fear You, You have raised a banner to which they may flee out of the range of arrows.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.

3: You have ascended on high, taken captives, and received men as gifts.

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.51

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 of the Holy Cross (Tone 1)

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.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg.13

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.

Kontakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8) Pg. 14-English this week

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 Virgin and Bride ever pure!

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 +Ron Abraham. Requested by Antoinette Arraj & Lisa Jagielski

March 10 +Agnes Esper (10th). Requested by Lauri Moossa.

This morning's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Eric Ewanco

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Lauri Moossa

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Sandra Hanlan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,414
Coffee Hr.	\$ 44
Candles	\$ 24
Memorials	\$ 225
Stole	\$ 285
Easter Fl.	\$ 115
Other	\$ 40
TOTAL	\$2,147



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE THIRD WEEK OF GREAT LENT

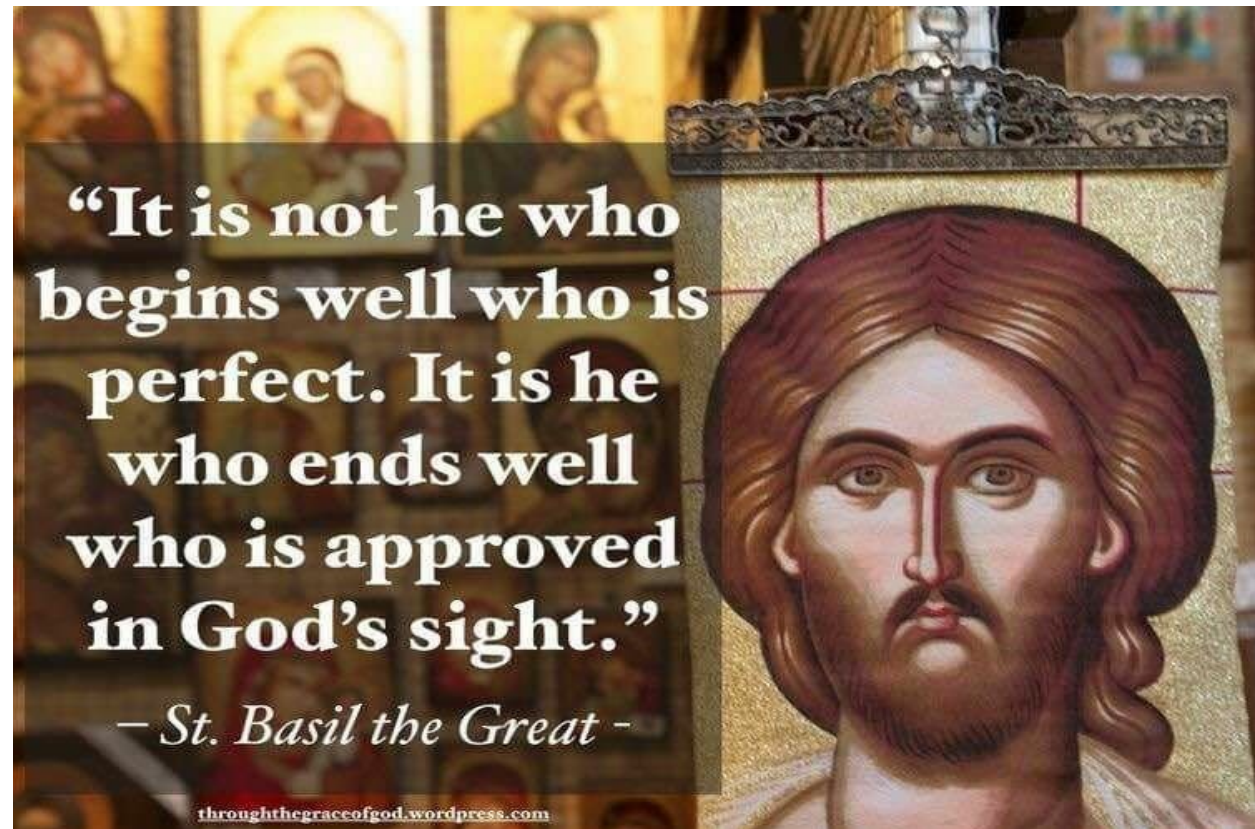
Mon 4, 6pm - Great Compline

Wed Mar 6, 6pm - Presanctified Liturgy

Fri Mar 8, 6pm- Compline & Akathist

Sun Mar. 10, 10am-Sunday of St. John Climacus

Please join us!



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.”*

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).

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

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. 8:34-38; 9:1

Hirmos (Tone 3)-Arabic the week

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the human race as well: O Sanctified Temple, Spiritual Paradise, and Glory of Virgins, from whom our God, who exists before all eternity, took flesh and became a little Child! He has taken your womb as His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. Therefore, O Full of Grace, in you all creation rejoices: glory to you!

