

### Cross Veneration Sunday

In the Matins (Orthros) of our Church, we find a brief section of spiritual instruction for each particular day that is referred to as a synaxarion. Here are some profound thoughts expressed in the synaxarion for the 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast—they give us a wonderful insight into the reason this particular Sunday is set aside to worship and venerate the Precious and Life-Giving Cross: “Inasmuch as in the 40 days of fasting we, in a way, crucify ourselves and become despondent, the Cross is presented to us for refreshment, assurance and comfort. We are like those following a long and difficult path, who in their tired and weakened state, see a beautiful tree with many leaves. They sit in its shadow and rest for awhile and then, as if rejuvenated, continue their journey. Likewise the Cross has been planted in our midst by the Holy Fathers to lighten our burden and strengthen our courage for the remainder of our Lenten journey. For the Cross is called the Tree of Life, and it is placed before us in Mid-Lent to remind us that while Adam’s partaking of the fruit from the tree in Paradise brought him death, our partaking of this Tree will bring us eternal life.”

Yes, today the Cross is placed before us to show us God’s infinite love for us, to remind us of Christ’s suffering for our sake and to highlight our own obligation to carry our daily cross with great fervor and perfect obedience. Our Lord’s words in today’s Gospel lesson are meant for all of us: “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.” (Mark 8:34)

Let us all bow reverently before the Cross today and proclaim as we venerate it: Your Cross we adore, O Master, and Your Holy Resurrection, we glorify!”

#### *What Happened on the Cross* by John of Damascus (c. 675-749)

By nothing else except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has death been brought low:

The sin of our first parent destroyed, hell plundered, resurrection bestowed, the power given us to despise the things of this world, even death itself, the road back to the former blessedness made smooth, the gates of paradise opened, our nature seated at the right hand of God, and we made children and heirs of God.

By the cross all these things have been set aright...

It is a seal that the destroyer may not strike us, a raising up of those who lie fallen, a support for those who stand, a staff for the infirm, a crook for the shepherded, a guide for the wandering, a perfecting of the advanced, salvation for soul and body, a deflector of all evils, a cause of all goods, a destruction of sin, a plant of resurrection, and a tree of eternal life.

### To Our Visitors:

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Just a reminder, however: the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a manifestation of the *unity of the Body of Christ*. As such, only those who are members in spiritual good standing of the Orthodox Church – and who have prepared themselves for the Sacrament – may partake of the Holy Chalice. However, *everyone* is welcome to come up with our people at the end of the service to receive blessed bread. *Please be sure to join us at Coffee Hour following Services.*

## Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific



SAINTS CONSTANTINE & HELEN  
GREEK ORTHODOX  
CATHEDRAL OF THE PACIFIC

50<sup>TH</sup>  
Anniversary  
1965-2015

March 15, 2015

3rd Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of Holy Cross

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March 15, 2015

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Commemoration of: Agapios the Martyr and his Companions; Manuel, the New Martyr of Crete; Aristobulos of the 70

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#### Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

*Soson Kirie* (Holy Cross) Tone 1  
*Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over the enemy, and by Your Cross protecting Your commonwealth.*

*Katelisas to Stavro* (Resurrection Hymn) Tone 7

*Soson Kirie* (Holy Cross) Tone 1

*Tou Stavru Su* (Hymn of the Church) Tone 8  
*Having seen in the sky the form of Your Cross and, like Paul, having received his calling not from men, Your apostle among Kings, Lord, placed his reigning city in Your hand, which forever you guard in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, for You alone love mankind.*

Kontakion Tone 6

*Ti ipermaho*  
*O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you \* triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, \* being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. \* Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, \* from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you \* I may cry aloud: \* Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.*

Instead of the Trisagion Hymn

*Ton Stavron su proskinumem*  
*Before Your Cross, we bow down, O Master, and Your Holy Resurrection we glorify.*

Epistle Reading Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

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 for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Gospel Reading

Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

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."

#### Activities & Announcements

Today

SUN 3/15– Veneration of the Holy Cross; Special General Assembly

Announcements

**Special General Assembly**– Please join us today, following services. In order to vote, you will need to have pledged and filled out a 2015 Stewardship Card.

#### Symbols, Rituals, and the Health of our Soul

Dr. Deacon Michael Bressemer is offering a special class every Tuesday, from 7 to 8 p.m. at Holy Theotokos of Iveron Russian Orthodox Church. For more details please see flier which is available in the narthex and Social Hall.

This Week

TUE 3/17– Dr. Deacon Michael Bressemer's Class at Theotokos of Iveron: 7 to 8 p.m.

WED 3/18– Presanctified Liturgy 6 p.m.

FRI 3/20– 4th Salutations to the Theotokos 6:30 p.m.

SUN 3/22– 4th Sunday of Lent: St. John of the Ladder; Greek Independence Luncheon sponsored by Alexandra Helene (see flier)

#### Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

*God reminds us in different ways of His presence. We, however, quickly forget about it --- especially when things are going well for us. We forget that we are here for a short time only, and we think that we will be around forever; but when misfortune strikes, we cry, 'Lord have mercy!' This is why we should try hard to change our character for the better.*

~ Elder Thaddeus of Serbia

*There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbor. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge; then you are laying down your life for your neighbor."*

~Abba Poemen