

## March 23, 2014: The Third Sunday of Lent (Of the Holy Cross)

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

*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*

**Gospel: Mark 8:34-38; 9:1:**



*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he*

*gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."*

Just as the pilgrim who embarks on a long journey needs, after a while, to stop and replenish his/her energy, the same is true with us, the Orthodox Christians who embark every Spring on the spiritual journey of Great Lent, whose destination is the Lord's Resurrection or Pascha. The Fathers of the Church have wisely decided to give us the opportunity to stop, on the third Sunday of Lent, rest in the shade of the Tree of life (the Cross), ponder and continue our journey with renewed determination and faith.

The Cross, the instrument of Christ's victory over death and the evil forces, is a reminder of the fact that, on one hand we should understand our Lenten journey and even our entire life in the context of Christ's suffering on the Cross, and that in order to receive the light of Resurrection we must carry our own cross, experience our personal Golgotha, on the other hand. In other words, there is no Resurrection without the Cross.

This is why the gospel reading of this Sunday begins with the Lord's invitation: *“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

The purpose of our Lenten journey is to cleanse ourselves spiritually and physically as part of our preparation for the voluntary and redeeming Passion of our Savior and His third day Resurrection, aware all the time that the soul is the most valuable part our being, as the Lord teaches us today: *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

**Fr. George Bazgan**

## **CHURCH SERVICES DURING GREAT LENT:**

**Fridays at 7:00 PM: AKATHIST TO THE HOLY VIRGIN.**

**Saturdays at 5:00 PM: VESPERS.**

**CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD AFTER EACH OF THESE SERVICES.**

**Sundays at 10:00 AM: DIVINE LITURGY.**

## Sunday Fellowship

The following families are scheduled to look after  
this Sunday's fellowship:

Antonie & Angelica Stan  
Florin & Luminița Ștefănescu  
Șerban & Mădălina Stoleru

Thank you all very much!

Note: We kindly ask all participants in this program to bring cooked food only, which can be warmed up using the stove in the small fellowship hall.

Thank you!

## MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership before Easter.

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

## Food Collection

Once again, a food drive is under way in our parish.

Please bring nonperishable foods and deposit them at the entrance of the church.

*"Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed on earth" (Psalm 41:1-2).*

THANK YOU!

## **On Mixed Marriages**

Living in a pluralistic society, such as ours, has its share of advantages and challenges as well, especially for the young people.

When it comes to mixed marriages, the Orthodox parents and their children need to know what the position of the Church is. Based on the teaching of the Orthodox Church, mixed marriages must meet the following conditions:

1. The non-Orthodox party must be a Christian. This means that that person must have been or must be baptized (before the wedding service) in one of the other two Christian denominations: Catholic or Protestant. Of course, it would be ideally that such a person be baptized in the Orthodox Church.

**Therefore, an Orthodox person cannot marry a non-Christian in the Orthodox Church.**

2. The wedding service must take place in an Orthodox Church and be officiated by an Orthodox priest. Just because the wedding takes place in an Orthodox church does not mean that the non-Orthodox party becomes Orthodox. This is done only as a favor to the Orthodox party.

3. The children resulted from this union must be baptized and raised/educated in the Orthodox Church.

Should an Orthodox person enter a marriage union with a non-Christian, such a person must understand that by so doing they have forfeited their right/possibility to receive Communion and be a Godparent at a Christening or a Wedding.

For further details, please talk to the priest.

**Fr. George Bazgan**