

## March 22, 2020: 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**

## **Sunday Service Attendance**

**Based on the recent State of Emergency, declared by the Premier of Alberta, which limits to 50 (fifty) the number of people attending Church services, we are asking our members to make sure that, for time being, only 1 (one) adult and one child from each family attend our Sunday Divine Liturgy.**

**We apologize for this inconvenience, especially now during the special season of Great Lent.**

**Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: washing their hands, social distancing, etc.**

**Thank you all and may God keep us safe!**

**Sunday Fellowship**  
**Canceled**

**Due to the coronavirus pandemic, our Sunday fellowships  
are being canceled until further notice.**

**Thank you all very much!**

**Altar boys for this Sunday:**

**Cotfasa Matthew  
Pătru Nicolae Stelian**

**SPECIAL SERVICES DURING GREAT LENT:**

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

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

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