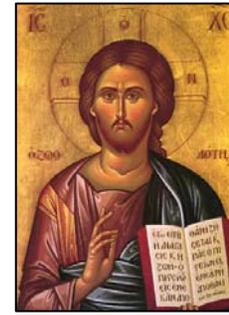
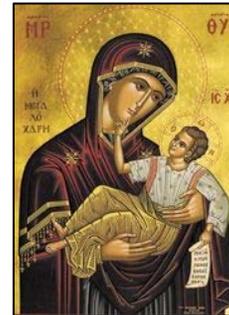




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org
St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, March 23, 2014

ON THIS DAY, THE *THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT AND HOLY LENT*, WE CALL TO MIND THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY, PRECIOUS, AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS. ON THIS DAY WE ALSO COMMEMORATE *the Holy Righteous Martyr Nikon and His 199 Disciples; Anatolios and Protoleon the Martyrs converted by the Martyrdom of St. George; Luke the New Martyr of Mytilene. Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

TODAY'S Spiritual Theme From the Triodion:

At this mid-point in Lent, the Church turns to the Holy Cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Like a Rod of Moses in the midst of the Camp, it helps us find health, strength, and courage to pursue the remainder of our Lenten journey. *"For the Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is the tree that was planted in Paradise, and for this reason our fathers have planted it in the midst of Holy Lent, remembering both Adam's bliss and how he was deprived of it, remembering also that partaking of this tree we no longer die but are kept alive..."* (Synaxarion of the Sunday of the Cross)

The *Service of the Veneration of the Cross* is traditionally offered during the singing of *The Great Doxology* concluding the *Sunday Orthros Service* on the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent. However, in recent years, pastoral considerations *conceding* the absence of most of the faithful at the end of the Orthros Service (and at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy) has caused this service often to be transposed to the *end* of the Divine Liturgy, where its meaning has less impact to the faithful who are preparing to depart from the church.

So that we can be reminded *throughout all* of today's Divine Liturgy of *our Lord's Precious and Holy Cross that brings us new life and renewal, (as announced last week)* we will once again this year return to the more traditional practice of beginning this service *after* the Choir has almost completed singing the Great Doxology. After it has sung the verse, "*Extend O Lord, Your mercy unto those who know You,*" the Choir begins to chant the Asmatic "*Holy God, Holy Mighty...*" of the Great Doxology, slowly and melodiously. *Please be prepared to sing Hymns #1 and #7 below as Fr. George directs following the Procession of the Holy Cross.*

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2./4./10. Hymn for Feast of the Holy Cross – (Hymnal-pp.180-181):

This hymn, "Save, O Lord" – is sung *after* the Doxology (in Service of the Veneration of the Holy Cross) and *before* and *after* the Small Entrance, and at the end of the service instead of "We have seen the light". *It is sung during today's Veneration of the Holy Cross on the Third Sunday of Great Lent and also on September 14th – the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross.* Save, O Lord Your people and bless Your inheritance. Give victory to those who battle evil and protect us all by Your Holy Cross.

3. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of the Second Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.118-121):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: The angelic powers appeared at Your tomb, the soldiers guarding it became as dead men, and Mary stood at Your grave seeking Your most pure body. But You made hell a captive; You were untouched by its might. You came to the Virgin and granted life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

5. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

6. Kontakion sung for Lenten Sundays – (Hymnal-pp. 268-271):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Victorious Lady, mighty champion, defending us, we your servants now inscribe to you this hymn of thanks, for you rescued us from suffering and tribulation. Theotokos, with your power that can never fail, keep us safe from every danger our whole life long that we may cry to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

7. Trisagion Hymn for Feast of the Holy Cross – (Hymnal-pp.290-291):

Instead of singing the Trisagion Hymn on pgs.38-41, we sing this hymn. It is also sung during today's Veneration of the Holy Cross on the Third Sunday of Great Lent as well as on September

14th – the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. Before Your Cross we bow down, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection. Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301)::

On the first five Sundays of Great Lent when we use the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, a different hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

9. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-p.325):

For today’s Feast of the Holy Cross, we sing the following: Let the light of Your face shine on us, O Lord. Alleluia. [Psalm 4]

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 24:36-53)

While they were talking about this, Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at My hands and My feet; see that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the scriptures,

and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up His hands, He blessed them. While He was blessing them, He withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God. Amen.

Epistle Reading (Hebrews 4:14-5:6):

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten You" as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

Gospel Reading (Mark 8:34-9:1):

He called the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed,

what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“May I never boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” *(Galatians 6:14)*

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

Today's Remembrance & Adoration of the Holy Cross

Many years ago, *The Los Angeles Times* carried a touching story about an 80 year-old man who entered into an agreement with three young couples who were renting apartments in his building. He agreed to allow them to buy their apartments at a very low rate.

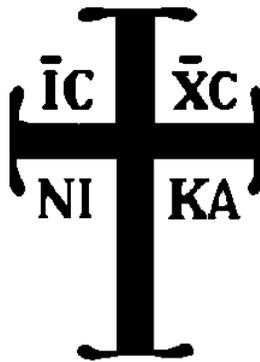
Please do not misunderstand. This was *not* your typical condominium conversion. He was selling them their apartments at a much lower rate than they could obtain them on the open market. This was *his gift* to these six young people *who had been there when he needed them*.

Dan Sullivan's wife of fifty years, Ruby, had been dying of cancer. For much of that time she was beyond help and pain relievers. Nights were the worst. When her cries of pain tore him apart, all Dan Sullivan could do was to bang on the apartment wall for support. One of the young couples would be at his door instantly to help Ruby in any way they could, and to ease Dan's burden.

They entered into the older couple's agony. "Two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning, they were there in a minute," says Dan. "You don't find that in a human being anymore." Fortunately for him, Dan Sullivan found it in these six young people.

It is a beautiful thing when one human being is willing to enter into another human being's agony. But there is something more special still – that is when the Lord of all creation comes into the world to share in His children's agony. *"May I never boast of anything," writes St. Paul, "except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."* (Gal. 6:14)

Today's remembrance and adoration of the Holy Cross of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ speaks "to our faith and reverence. It is to proclaim the part played by the Cross in the history of salvation and to prepare us for the vision, still far-off, of the Cross which, on Holy Friday, will be erected on Golgatha."



The meaning of today's Feast of the Holy Cross of Christ is well expressed by the following hymn that was sung during this morning's Orthros Service: *"When, on this day, we look, at the Precious Cross of Christ, in faith let us adore it, let us rejoice, and embrace it ardently, appealing to our Lord, who of His own choice gave Himself to be crucified on it, to make us worthy of adoring His most precious Cross so that, free from all defilement, we may attain the day of Resurrection."*

In this morning's Gospel, we heard this verse from Mark 9:1: *"And He said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.'" "This does not imply the Second and Glorious Coming of Christ at the end of the world. It means the coming of Christ with the power inaugurated by Pentecost, which the first generation of Christians was about to witness.*

"But it also means an invisible, unspectacular, coming of the Kingdom in fervent and believing hearts.

"Oh, that this may be my own destiny, and that before I die, the Kingdom of Jesus will have taken possession of my soul."

(Adapted from *The Year of Grace of the Lord*. A Monk of the Eastern Church. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. Crestwood, NY. 1980.)



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And on this *the five hundredth and third* Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Great & Holy Lent.

Sunday, March 23 (3rd Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of the Holy Cross;

Philoptochos Retreat at Diakonia Retreat Center):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros Service
- 8:45 a.m. Veneration of the Holy Cross
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes
- 11:30 a.m. Let's EAT! (at Broadway Diner in Fayetteville)

Monday, March 24 (Eve of the Feast of the Annunciation):

- 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers Service
- 5:45 p.m. Divine Liturgy, Doxology for 3/25, followed by Lenten Dinner (fish permitted)

Wednesday, March 26 (3rd Wednesday of Great Lent):

- 5:00 p.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy
- 6:15 p.m. Community Family Dinner & Lenten Program

Thursday, March 27: 6:30 p.m. – Choir Practice

Friday, March 28 (Church Services at Annunciation Cathedral Tonight):

- 7:00 p.m. 4th Salutations to the Theotokos Service (Cathedral)

Sunday, March 30 (4th Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of St. John Climacus;

Church Services at Annunciation Cathedral Today):

- 8:15 a.m. Orthros Service – Annunciation Cathedral, Atlanta
- 9:30 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy - Annunciation Cathedral
- 11:30 a.m. Deadline to schedule Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation Before Feast of Holy Pascha

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!