

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR THE DAY

Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Letter to the 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 Lesson: Gospel According to St. 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."

Lenten Discussion Group Continues This Week. Our discussion group did not meet following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy held this past Wednesday evening due to Father's trip to St. Clair Shores for the funeral of Alexander Stoukas. This week we will pick up where we left off two weeks ago and look at particular examples of the "Temptation Scenario" from the Old Testament—especially examples taken from Israel's wilderness wanderings—to see if we can gain insight into our own experiences of temptation. Anyone is welcome to join us and we meet right after the pre-Sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evening.

Holy Confession Class. Our youth have had two classes so far dealing with the mystery of Holy Confession. The third class will take place on Wednesday, 9 April at 4:45 PM immediately preceding the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. At the class they have covered a unit dealing with a general introduction to Holy Confession explaining the nature of sin, and the effects of sin on our relationship with God, our neighbor, the parish community and ourselves. Our next class will start to deal with the mechanics of Holy Confession and how to prepare to make a private confession. Parents are encouraged to have their young people from Grade 6 up attend these important classes. The class will conclude with private confessions during Holy Week. For more information, or to get materials, please contact the rectory.



TRAVERSE CITY ORTHODOX MISSION

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

Meeting at 1030 Hastings St., Traverse City, Michigan

www.tcorthodoxchurch.org

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Sunday, 30 March 2008

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✠ PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS ✠

Sunday 30 March

Third Sunday of Great Lent. Sunday of the Holy Cross.

Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed

9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

11 AM Church School

11:15 AM 4th Anniversary Memorial Service for +Peter Stamos

11:30 AM Fellowship Hour hosted by Ann Fromholz and Angie Dunlap

Church Maintenance Duty

4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Monday 31 March

St. Hypatios the Wonderworker. St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow.

Strict Fast Day

Tuesday 1 April

St. Mary of Egypt.

Strict Fast Day

Wednesday 2 April

St. Titus, the Wonderworker.

Strict Fast Day

5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

7 PM Discussion Group Topic—Israel in the Wilderness

Thursday 3 April

St. Nikitas, the Confessor.

Strict Fast Day

Friday 4 April

St. George of Maleon.

Strict Fast Day

9 AM Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

5:30 PM Akathistos Hymn Stasis Δ'

Saturday 5 April

St. Claudios and Companions.

Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed

4:30 PM Ninth Hour and Vespers

5:30 PM Choir Rehearsal

Sunday 6 April

Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. St. John Klimakos.

Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed

9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

11 AM Church School

11:15 AM 3rd Anniversary Memorial for +Archbishop Iakovos

11:30 AM Fellowship Hour

Church Maintenance Duty

4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Collecting For Flowers. We are currently collecting funds to purchase flowers for the decoration of the tomb as well as the templon for the services of Holy Week. Ongoing, we are collecting funds for the decoration of the icon of the Theotokos used for the Akathist services on Friday evenings. Persons interested in underwriting the flowers for the Theotokos may do so at a cost of \$60 for each Friday. Donations for flowers given as memorials will be recognized in the weekly parish bulletin and on our web site. Please speak with Helen Knapp or Fr. Iakovos if you'd like to make a donation.

April Calendar Available Today. The monthly calendar showing services scheduled for April is available in the narthex of the church as well as on our parish web site. Be sure to pick up a copy so that you can coordinate your activities for the month. Of special importance is the schedule of services for Holy Week, 20-27 April. In order to enter into the fullness of your personal experience of the salvific work of our Lord, it is highly recommended that you try to attend as many of these services as possible during Holy Week as well as in the "run up" to that week. It is the length of these services, the repetition of the themes and your participation in these events that drive home their reality, gravity and significance. Failure to participate in the services of Holy Week almost assures that on Resurrection night you will be unable to see, experience or witness anything. Make a decision now to clear your date book for the month so that you don't cheat yourself out of this life-altering experience. May God grant us all to witness His glorious Resurrection on the third day!

Bookstore News. Now that Great Lent is here, one cannot imagine a better time to renew the "human spirit" from an Orthodox Christian perspective. The Traverse City Orthodox Mission BOOKSTORE stands ready to assist in this regard. In addition to our selection of books, gifts & religious items, we now offer new icons, music CDs, & greeting cards—all pertinent to Orthodox Lent culminating with Great Pascha. Don't forget children's books, too—especially selected for impressionable young minds. So . . . if you have not perused the Bookstore lately, we invite you to look around. There is apt to be something there that will grab you. Remember, your support helps in two ways: it benefits our church as well as the "human spirit"!

The Third Sunday of Lent. On this day the service of Mattins concludes with the solemn veneration of the Previous and Life-Giving Cross; the ceremonies are closely parallel to those at the feasts of the Exaltation of

the Cross (14 September) and the Procession of the Cross (1 August). The veneration of the Cross on this third Sunday in Lent prepares us for the commemoration of the Crucifixion which is soon to follow in Holy Week, and at the same time it reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ; as the Synaxarion at Mattins says, 'Through the forty-day Fast, we too are in a way crucified, dying to the passions'. The dominant note on this Sunday, as on the two Sundays preceding, is one of joy and triumph. In the Canon at Mattins, the irmoi are the same as at the Midnight Service for Holy Pascha, "This is the day of Resurrection...", and the troparia are in part a paraphrase of the Paschal Canon by St. John of Damascus. No separation is made between Christ's death and His Resurrection, but the Cross is regarded as an emblem of victory and Calvary is seen in the light of the empty tomb. *From The Meaning of the Great Fast by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia.*

Pearls from Optina. The following are excerpts taken from the book, Elder Barsanuphius of Optina by Victor Afanasiev.

*The Holy Church, like a mother, takes care for our salvation and gives us the means for this. Consequently, how important, how essential, it is to fulfill all of the Church's rules. The enemy attacks a man strongly, wishing to divert him from fulfilling the commandments. **The Church commands us to go to church without exception every Sunday and feast day.** But the enemy tempts us suggesting, "What are you going so often for?" However, he makes a compromise, saying, "Well, go ahead on the great feasts—that's all right, but why every Sunday? That's totally superfluous!" And that's how it is with everything. It's good for a person not to listen to the suggestions of the enemy.*

*St. John Klimakos was asked if there are reliable signs by which it's possible to know whether a soul is drawing near to God or moving away from Him. After all, regarding ordinary things there are clear signs as to whether they're good or not. When, for instance, cabbage, meat or fish begins to rot, it's easy to notice it, since the rotting object begins to give off a foul odor, the colour and taste change, and its external appearance witnesses to its deterioration. Well, and what about the soul? After all, it's bodiless and can't give off a bad smell or change its appearance. To this question the Holy Father replies, "**A sure sign of the deadening of the soul is the avoidance of church services.**"*

A man growing cold towards God begins first of all to flee attending church. At first he tries to come to services later, and then he ceases altogether to visit God's temple.

In Our Hearts and In Our Prayers. This week we offer up heartfelt prayers for the health and salvation of the following persons who are struggling with illness or difficult life situations. Please remember them in your prayers. They are: Brigette Barbas, Frances Batsakis, John Batsakis, George Baryames (E. Lansing), Nancy Brieghner (California), Niki and Alexander Chibucos (Chicago), Helen, Bob, Samantha, and Elisabeth Dalbo, Eugene, Barbara and Gerasimos Denos, Kalliope Drudge (Frankfort), Angeliki and Nicholas Dunlap, David Ealy, James Elliot (New York), Peter Farougi, Rebekah Foster (France), Bud Fromholz, Novice Michael (St. Nektarios), Irene and Elias Govatos (Florida), Elizabeth Husby, Alexandra Karagiannis (Chicago), Helen Knapp, Stephanie Long, Pamela and Leon Lysaght (Plymouth), Fr. Michael Michalopoulos (New York), Elan Nichols, Rebekah Olechnowicz (Ypsilanti), James Olszewski, Angeliki O'Non, Constantinos Pappas (New York), Jerry Slomba (Flint), Christina and Katerina Stavros, Gabriel Underwood (Florida), Judy Weston, George, Catherine, Konstantinos, Mary, Anastasios, Nicholaos, George, Catherine, Zefira, and Argyris.