

# The Veneration of the Cross

Prepared by Fr. George Tsahakis

## OVERVIEW

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### *Veneration of the Cross*

#### THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Father Leonid Kishkovsky

*Through the Cross joy has come into all the world.*

At the midpoint of Great Lent, Orthodox Christians are invited to the Veneration of the Cross of Christ. In the Lenten journey, we are taught to be mindful of the importance of repentance, fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and forgiveness. Without these, our spiritual pilgrimage is lacking in meaning. We cannot be disciples of Christ without these marks of Christian life and practice.

After an enthusiastic beginning of Great Lent, little by little we show signs of being tired, our attention begins to flag, our love for God and neighbor begins to wear out. In other words, our own comfort again becomes the priority.

The veneration of the Cross renews and refocuses our Lenten journey by bringing our attention back to Christ, back to the love of God for us. This love is given as a gift to us in the form of the Cross, the symbol both of Christ's suffering and of the resurrection. We are taught by Jesus Christ to take up our own cross and follow Him. To venerate the Cross of Christ is to be inspired, strengthened, and enabled to carry our cross.

All of the above is true. Yet it is incomplete. An important dimension is missing – the dimension of joy. "Through the Cross joy has come into all the world." These words in a hymn of the Resurrection reveal the dimension of joy as central and essential. Where there is faith without joy, faith is deficient. Where there is almsgiving without joy, charity is deficient. Where there is love, there is joy. Where there is Christ, there is joy.



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

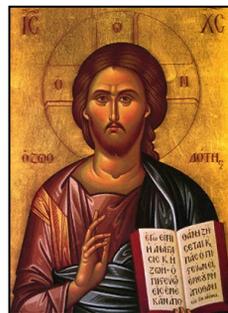
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: [www.atlmetropolis.org](http://www.atlmetropolis.org)

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)

## St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

## Liturgical Guide for Sunday, March 19, 2022

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 Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria and Demetrios the New Martyr. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

### Welcome to our Parish

We welcome our parishioners who are attending services in person today and we also are grateful for those who are viewing our online video streaming at home. Parishioners and visitors who are sick are asked to remain at home to recover and rest. *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, 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. 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 14<sup>th</sup> – 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 (Grave Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.122-125):**

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: By Your Cross, O Lord, You destroyed death; to the thief You opened paradise. The myrrhbearers' sorrow You transformed into joy, and You sent Your apostles forth to proclaim that You had risen from the dead, Christ our God, bestowing on all the world Your great mercy.

### **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 14<sup>th</sup> – 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 (John 20:1-10)**

*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that He must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.*

### **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:**

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.

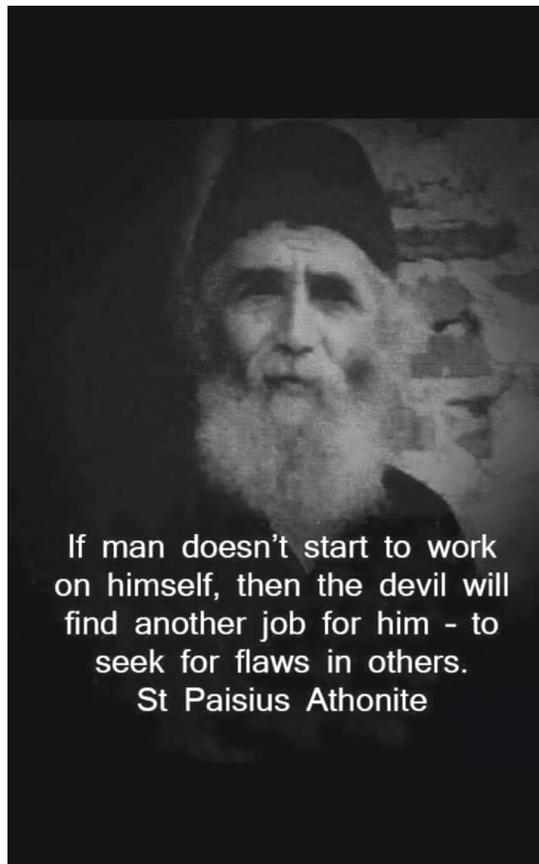
Please do not misunderstand. This was *not* your typical condominium conversion. He was selling them their apartments at a much lower rate than they could obtain them on the open market. This was *his gift* to these six young people *who had been there when he needed them*.

The elderly man's wife of fifty years 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 her husband could do was to bang on the apartment wall for support. One of the young couples would be at his door instantly to help her in any way they could, and to ease her husband'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," recalled the elderly man.

"You don't find that in a human being anymore." Fortunately for him, he 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. This Sunday, when we offer special veneration to the Precious Cross of our Lord, may we recall St. Paul's words: *"May I never boast of anything, except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."* (Gal. 6:14)





*All Sundays in March:  
Bloom Our Youth in  
Fayetteville, Georgia*



***Hands of Love*** will be accepting **monetary and in-kind donations** to benefit ***Bloom Our Youth*** through March 2023



**Bloom Our Youth** is a shelter, a resource and a foster agency finding homes for neglected and abused children. Founded in 1986 as the Fayette Youth Protection Homes by **airline pilot Jim Friday** when he discovered there was no shelter for abused children. At ***Bloom our youth***, support is provided to children and their families through counseling and advisors.

- **Bloom Foster Parent Program** is licensed to recruit, train, and support a network of family foster care homes
- **Bloom Closet** is stocked with lightly worn clothing in child and youth sizes
- **Bloom University** trains and supports foster families

**There is a year-round need for new backpacks, school supplies and toiletry items. Each child is given a backpack as a welcome gift upon joining the Bloom program.** You may bring your donations to the **red "Hands of Love" box** in the church narthex, or donate online at:

<https://stchristopherphilo托chos.square.site>

<https://saintchristopherhoc.org/hands-of-love-ministry>

*Faithfully yours,*

*Anna Andreeva-Naydenova, "Hands of Love" Philoptochos Ministry Chair*



## *Family Connections*



*Family Activities for the  
Sundays of Great Lent*



## *Family Connections*

### *Veneration of the Holy Cross*

#### *Decorated Cross*

This Sunday, the priest places a cross standing upright on a tray surrounded by flowers. Do the same in your home so that it can be a source of strength as you complete the fast. If you don't have a large cross, make one out of whatever you like and decorate it. Place it in a prominent place in your home.





["Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.](#) *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*

On this the 947<sup>th</sup> 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** *(CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)*

**Today is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great & Holy Lent.**

**Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent – Veneration of the Holy Cross):**

7:45 am Orthros

9:00 am Service of the Veneration of the Holy Cross & Divine Liturgy

10:45 am Religious Education Classes *(for all ages)*

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Fr. George & Presbyteria Marinda Tsahakis offered the yellow daffodils used in today's special Veneration of the Holy Cross in loving memory of their parents, *John & Charlotte Catherine Tsahakis & Robert & Mina Philips* and in loving memory of Fr. George's brother and sister-in-law, Nicholas & Despina. Her funeral is tomorrow in Huntsville, AL. *May their memory and that of all those who have fallen asleep in the Lord be eternal.*



***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***

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*The veneration of the Cross  
renews and refocuses  
our Lenten journey  
by bringing our attention  
back to Christ, back to the  
love of God for us.*

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As we walk the pilgrimage of Great Lent, let it be full of joy, and therefore full of Christ.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Read the reflection above with your family. To help you apply its message to your daily lives, discuss the following questions:*

1. Does every family member have a personal cross? Do they wear it?
2. Discuss if any in your family is weary from Lent. What roadblocks are occurring?
3. Remind each other how the Cross of Christ “renews and refocuses our Lenten journey by bringing our attention back to Christ, back to the love of God for us.”
4. Invite your family to venerate the Holy Cross this Sunday and receive a yellow daffodil reminding us of Christ’s victory with His Cross.
5. Explain what Jesus means “to take up our own cross and follow Him.”

6. Have you experienced joy in your Lenten journey being part of the Body of Christ? Explain your answer to your family and help them if it is missing in their Lenten journey.
7. What does it mean to be “full of Christ”?

### **FOR FURTHER REFLECTION**

If you are feeling apart from Christ and His Body, consider letting Fr. George, a family member, or a parishioner of St. Christopher Church help you now.



*Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky’s message is reprinted from “Spiritual Reflections for Great Lent: Journey to Pascha” for IOCC. Discussion questions were developed by Fr. George Tsahakis for St. Christopher Church. Share this resource with your family and friends. Come and worship God with us often. Offer charity to those in need. Witness the power and presence of God to the world through your loving acts of mercy in His behalf. Commune with Him and His Holy Body as His Royal Priesthood. Amen.*