



HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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VENERATE ICONS BY BECOMING ONE: HOMILY FOR THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY Fr. Philip LeMasters



One of the great dangers of our age is the tendency to set our sights too low, to expect too little of ourselves and others. It is so appealing to think that being true to ourselves means indulging every desire and finding fulfillment by getting whatever

want at the moment. It is so easy to envision our neighbors and even God in our own image, as though the meaning and purpose of all reality boils down to whatever makes us comfortable here and now. The blessed season of Lent, however, calls us to an entirely different way of life that reveals the holy beauty for which God created us in His image and likeness.

Today we celebrate the restoration of icons to the Orthodox Church at the end of the iconoclastic controversy, during which emperors ordered the destruction of images of our Lord, the Theotokos, and the Saints in the name of opposing idolatry. Of course, icons are not false gods to be worshiped, but visual symbols of the salvation that the incarnate Son of God has brought to the world. They reflect the true humanity of Jesus Christ, as well as how people like you and me may participate in His holiness in every dimension of our lives. They remind us not only that we are surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses” (Heb.

12:1) who have gone before us, but that our Savior calls and enables us to join them in shining radiantly with the divine glory, even as we live and breathe as flesh and blood.

When we make a procession after Liturgy today with our icons, we will proclaim that our identity is not determined by whatever is popular, easy, or appealing. As those created in God’s image and likeness, we will never be fulfilled by the false gods of this world, such as indulgence in money, power, and pleasure in its various forms. We are called to something much higher, for Christ told Nathanael that he would “see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (John 1:51) He comes to make us all participants in the divine glory by grace.

The Triumph of the Icons



At the end of the day, the only way to answer that calling is by becoming better icons of Christ, better visible and tangible witnesses of His salvation. That is why we must fast from whatever keeps us from radiating the holy light of God. It is why we must refuse to feed our tendencies to dwell on the failings of others. It is why we must starve our inclination to speak words of self-righteous judgment and condemnation. It is why we must abstain from indulging in actions that harm, weaken, or take advantage of anyone. It is why we must refuse to nourish our passions by allowing into our eyes, ears, and stomachs anything that enslaves us to self-centered desire.

Even as we turn away from what diminishes us in the divine likeness, we must also feast on what helps us embrace more fully our true identity in Christ. That means putting our souls on a steady diet of prayer; of reading the Bible, the lives of the Saints, and other spiritually edify-

ing works; and of mindfulness in all things such that we remain alert to the spiritual significance of what we think, say, and do. The more that we fill ourselves with holy things, the less appetite we will have for unholy things.

The journey of Lent is not about punishment or legalism, but instead about helping us grow personally into our exalted identity as those called to share in the eternal life of our Lord. It is about turning away from the idolatry of self-centeredness in order to become a more beautiful icon of the divine glory. It is about refusing to set our sights low concerning what it means to be a human being in God's image and likeness. It is about crucifying our self-centered desires so that we may enter into the holy mystery of our Lord's cross and resurrection. For it is through His Passion that we will "see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

From: <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/easternchristianinsights/2016/03/19/venerate-icons-becoming-one-homily-sunday-orthodoxy-2/>



Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; and let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendour of prayer, with the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So, clothed in raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, that shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life.

Lenten Triodion, Matins, First Week of Lent

The time for repentance has begun; be not heedless, O my soul. Give bread to the hungry, and pray unto the Lord each day and night and hour, that He may save thee.

As we observe abstinence from meat and other foods, so let us abstain also from all hatred of our neighbour, from lust and falsehood and from every evil.

Triodion, Matins, Sunday of Forgiveness

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moleben on our property: We will continue serving a weekly short prayer service on our property in Kernersville. This is a service of supplication (Molieben) that Archbishop Dimitri of blessed memory blessed for the use of parishes in the diocese. Fr. Christopher will be serving it on Friday mornings at 10 AM except where noted in the calendar. Our property is located at 1320 Masten Drive in Kernersville.

Sisterhood of the Holy Myrrhbearers: The Sisterhood will meet from 11:00AM-1:00PM on Saturday February 15 for a brunch Baby Shower for Amelia Weesner, hosted by Becki King in Jamestown.

Order Gift Cards Through Holy Cross! Scrip cards are available from hundreds of retailers and don't cost any more than the face value of the gift card. It's a "free" fundraiser to benefit the Holy Cross building fund! Contact Karen Brudnak-Slate.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February	Actual	Budgeted
Income	\$14,741	\$12,925
Expense	\$11,578	\$11,161

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday of Forgiveness 9AM Church School & Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 1PM Forgiveness Vespers	2 Great Lent begins. 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	3 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	4 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typica Prayers 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	5 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	6 10AM Prayers at the Property	7 6 PM Great Vespers
8 Sunday of Orthodoxy 9AM Baptism 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 6PM Vespers: Annunciation GOC	9	10	11 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typica Prayers 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	12	13 10AM Prayers at the Property	14 6 PM Great Vespers
15 St. Gregory Palamas 9AM Church School & Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 6:30PM OCAT Home Meeting	16	17 6:30PM Sisterhood	18 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typica Prayers 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	19	20 10AM Prayers at the Property	21 9AM Soul Saturday Liturgy 6 PM Great Vespers
22 Adoration of the Holy Cross 9AM Church School & Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	23	24 7PM Annunciation Vespers, Annunciation GOC, Winston-Salem	25 ANNUNCIATION 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typica Prayers 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	26	27 10AM Prayers at the Property 5PM Open Door	28 6 PM Great Vespers
29 St. John of the Ladder 9AM Church School & Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	30	31				