

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

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Sunday, April 4, 2021

3rd Sunday in Great Lent – Veneration of the Holy Cross

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – Tone 2. Veneration of the Cross. Ven. Joseph the Hymnographer (883). Ven. George of Mt. Maleon in the Peloponnesus (6th c.). Ven. Joseph the Much-ailing, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.). Ven. Zosimas, Abbot of Vorbozómok (ca. 1550). Ven. Zosimas, of Palestine (4th c.). Virgin Martyr Pherbutha of Persia, her sister, and servants (341-343). Martyr Nikita of Pojani (1808). St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville (636). Ven. Theonas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1545).

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2021/04/04>

We are halfway through Great Lent!

Lenten Confessions – Make your appointment now: Great Lent is ongoing. Each and every Christian should participate in the saving Sacrament of Holy Confession during the Lenten season, as part of his or her own “Lenten journey.” If you have not already done so, please contact Fr. John now to make your Confession appointment, even if you want your appointment to take place later on during Lent. Please make your Lenten confession before the end of Great Lent, that is, by Friday, April 23. By the time we reach Holy Week and Pascha, every member of the Parish should have participated in the Sacrament of Confession in the Lenten season.

(**NOTE:** Even if you are not regularly attending in-person services at this time, because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, it is essential for you to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. If special arrangements need to be made to meet your particular needs, please contact Fr. John Hopko directly. Fr. John can be best reached, by voice or text, at his cellphone number, which is 860-944-3486.)

A Hymn of the Lenten Feast of the Cross

This is the day of the veneration of the Precious Cross: now it is brought before us, shining with the brightness of Christ's Resurrection! Let us all draw near and kiss it with great rejoicing in our souls!

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Mitred Archbishop Basil Summer—acquaintance of the Hopkos	d. 3/26/2021
Archpriest Antonio Perdomo—Priest in Texas	d. 4/1/2021
Archpriest Vladimir Lecko—native of Terryville	d. 3/16/2021
Ramona—prayed for at request of Frank G.	d. 3/30/2021
Byron—uncle of a friend of the Parish	d. 2/26/2021

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Dimitry Pisaretz	4/5/1931
Theodore Kowal	4/5/1968
Archpriest Vladimir Sovyrda	4/5/1987
Michael Toropilo	4/7/1944
Alexander Grezuk	4/8/1952
Steven Wazorko	4/8/1958
Carol Johnson	4/8/2019
Symeon Prokomen	4/9/1932
Fadei Sarochinsky	4/9/1957

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
Archpriest Peter P.—former pastor in Waterbury; very unwell
Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
Donna—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
Dayrl—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
MaryEllen—Louine K.'s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington's Disease
Yelena "Lenna" M.—overcoming, by God's grace, serious health challenges
Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage
Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer
Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support
James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell
Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
Michael "Mike" L.—ongoing health issues

child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
Paula—friend of Jim L.; struggling with cancer
Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
Thomas—Patty N.'s nephew; battling cancer
Wayne—Donna O.'s father
Sarah—a young woman for whom we have been asked to pray (D.B.)
Vickie—a woman for whom we have been asked to pray
Sam—Vickie's husband, struggling with multiple health issues
Richard—a man struggling with cancer, for whom we have been asked to pray
Jody—Jacob J.'s father; recovering from significant back surgery
Sue—acquaintance of the Hopkos; unwell and requiring prayers
Helen—acquaintance of Helena G; in long-term care
Candace—acquaintance of Helena G; in need of prayers
Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recently injured in fall, now in PA with family
Joanne—acquaintance of the Hopkos; slow recovery from recent illness
Stephen—family member of a parishioner; quite ill and in need of prayers
George K.—our fellow parishioner; unwell at this time
Lorraine—friend of Joan M.; cancerous blood disease
Joseph—friend of Jeanne M.; in need of prayers
Joan—dear and close friend of Carolyn P.; back surgery
Marcia—wife of newly departed Thomas M.
Antonio—brother-in-law of a parishioner; suffering with COVID-19
Joseph—prayed for at the request of Jeanne M.
Elaine H.—recovering from hip replacement surgery; our fellow parishioner
Dianna—Jennifer W.'s mother; suffering some health problems
Wayne—prayed for at the request of Carolyn P.; upcoming surgery
Thomas—fighting cancer; father of a friend of the Parish

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.'s brother; suffering permanent effects of stroke
Dolores—Bob M.'s mother; resident in long-term eldercare

Expectant Mothers

Katherine and the child to be born of her—Fr. John's nephew's wife and her child

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Fr. James Parnell, Chaplain (MAJ)—deployed with the CT ARNG
Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman ("medic")
Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John's; U.S. Army officer and pilot
Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
Ian H.—Fr. David K.'s son-in-law; overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

NONE THIS WEEK

Annual ONE Stewards Appeal

ONE (Orthodox New England) Stewards is a group within the Diocese of New England who contribute money to the Diocese for the purpose of supporting outreach (and "in-reach") ministries in the Diocese beyond what the annual budget of the Diocese is able to support. These ministries include charitable grants, scholarships and youth programs. Historically, our parish membership has a wonderful record of ONE Stewards membership. Many members of our parish have been annual supporting members of ONE Stewards for many consecutive years. Every year at about this time ONE Stewards conducts its annual membership appeal. Please consider supporting this program. Donations may be made by writing a check made out to "ONE Stewards—Diocese of New England" and then sending it to ONE Stewards, PO BOX 1182, Torrington, CT 06790-1182. Alternatively, you may go to the Diocese of New England website and use the "[Donate Now](#)" feature to contribute online.

News and Notes

General Memorial Service (“Panikhida”), ONLINE: During Great Lent, we make a special effort to remember and pray for those who have departed this life, especially on each Friday evening and Saturday morning. Our usual custom here in our Parish (when not navigating our way through a public health crisis) is to serve Vespers on Friday evenings during Great Lent, and to include at the end of those Vespers services a brief memorial service for the departed. **This Great Lent, in our Parish, we will be gathering on Friday evenings, online, in a “virtual” setting, via video teleconference (“Zoom”), to memorialize and pray for the departed.** The necessary ZOOM link will be distributed using the Parish email group list, by which we usually communicate such things. Please watch for that link in your email inbox, or contact Fr. John for more details.

Bible Study this week, Tuesday, April 6, at 7:00 PM, ONLINE: We will have Bible Study this week, online, via video teleconference (“Zoom”), on Tuesday evening, April 6, beginning at 7:00 PM. Our sessions last 90 minutes. We have been reading the First Letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. However, this week (as we did last week) we may decide to do something different, pertinent to Great Lent. The necessary ZOOM link will be sent out, via the Parish email list, closer to the time of the gathering.

NO Wednesday Morning Matins Services during Great Lent: During Great Lent, since we are having Wednesday *evening* services, we are not having Wednesday *morning* services.

Wednesday evening, April 7, at 6:30 PM, Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts: On Wednesday evening, April 7, beginning at 6:30 PM, we will serve, in-person, at Church, the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday evening, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Preparation to Receive Holy Communion at Evening Liturgies: Please, be reminded that preparation for receiving Holy Communion at the evening celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts includes, among other things, both observing the Lenten fast in general and, also, completely abstaining from all food and drink for at least six hours before the beginning the actual Liturgy. (The actual discipline, historically, is to not eat or drink *all day long* before receiving Holy Communion at an evening celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts.) If you have any questions or concerns, or require clarification regarding these matters, please, contact Fr. John Hopko directly and promptly. Thank you.

Saturday, April 10, at 6:30 PM, Great Vespers: On Saturday, April 10, beginning at 6:30 PM, we will celebrate Great Vespers, in-person, at Church. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Great Vespers on Saturday evening, April 10, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Sunday, April 11, at 9:15 AM, Divine Liturgy: On Sunday, April 11, beginning at 9:15 AM, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy, in-person, at Church. Attendance for in-person services at Church presently requires pre-registration, so that we can manage attendance in compliance with our COVID-19 health safety protocols. If you wish to attend the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, April 11, please, contact Fr. John Hopko to pre-register. We limit attendance to no more than 35 persons, and we require health screening, hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation “button” (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal’s fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

Saint Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts, who died in 1879, wrote an essay entitled, *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Here follows an excerpt from that work, where Saint Innocent speaks about taking up our cross and following Christ. (NOTE: The full essay is published in various places on the Internet.)

It is necessary for a disciple and follower of Christ to take up his cross. The cross means the various difficulties and sorrows associated with a Christian life. Crosses may be external as well as internal. To take up your cross means to tolerate everything without complaining, regardless of how unpleasant things might become. For example, if someone has insulted you or laughed at you or provoked you, bear it all without anger or resentment. Similarly, if you helped someone and he, instead of showing gratitude, made up deceitful tales about you or if you wanted to do something good but were unable to accomplish it, bear it without despondency. Did some misfortune befall you? Did someone in your family become ill, or despite all your efforts and tireless labor did you repeatedly suffer failure? Has some other thing or person oppressed you? Bear all with patience in the name of Jesus Christ. Do not consider yourself punished unjustly, but accept everything as your cross.

To bear your cross means not only to accept patiently all difficulties that befall you but also to strive for spiritual perfection, as the Scriptures teach us. For example, we must do good to others: work for the prosperity of your parish, visit the sick and imprisoned, help the needy, collect money for the poor, and assist in spreading spiritual enlightenment. In other words, we must seek out tasks which will lead to the salvation and welfare of those around us and then, with perseverance and meekness, strive in that direction by our actions, words, prayer, and advice.

Should the prideful thought arise that you are better or smarter than others, quickly cast it aside because it will undermine all your good efforts. Blessed is he who carries his cross with prudence and humility, because God will never allow such a person to perish but will guide and strengthen him with His Holy Spirit.

In following Jesus Christ, it is not enough to carry only an outward cross. Indeed, external crosses are borne not only by Christians but by everyone; there exists no person free from one or more sorrows. He who wishes to become a true disciple of Christ must also carry his own inner cross.

An inner cross comes more readily than an outer one. In a state of repentance, you need only direct your thoughts inward to study your soul, and instantly a multitude of crosses will appear. For instance, reflect on how you were created and what is the purpose of your life. Are you living according to Christ's teaching, are you accomplishing something good, are you growing spiritually? Meditate about this in some depth, and soon you will come to realize that you are failing in many important areas. God created you so that with all your works, life, and being you should contribute to the spreading of good and the strengthening of His Kingdom. You, however, have not only failed in this, but, by your sins, you have rejected and even insulted Christ. Reflect on what awaits you beyond the grave and on what side you will find yourself at the Last Judgment: with the righteous or with the evildoers? And if you seriously reflect on all this, you will naturally become distressed and will regret your many words and deeds—and these painful feelings and the desire for repentance will become your inner cross. If you continue attentively to study yourself, you will find many other inner crosses. For instance, hell, which you have so carelessly avoided considering until now, will suddenly appear to you as a very real threat. Paradise, which the Lord has prepared for you and which has barely crossed your mind, will vividly present itself to you as it really is: a place of eternal and pure joy from which you have deprived yourself by your careless way of life.

If, in spite of the inner turmoil brought about by such reflections, you firmly resolve to repent and amend your ways and, if, instead of consoling yourself with earthly enjoyments, you diligently pray to the Lord to save you and you decide to surrender yourself totally to His will, then the Lord will reveal to you more clearly the state of your soul so that you may be totally healed. Our problem is that the actual condition of our spiritual sickness is hidden from us under a thick mantle of self-love and passions. Only occasionally, thanks to our conscience, do we get a glimpse of our major and most obvious spiritual wounds.

Usually the devil, knowing how good it is for us to recognize our moral illness, uses all his wiles to prevent us from doing so and tells us that all is well and there is no need to worry. But when he sees that we are really serious about becoming true Christians and with God's help are on the way to restoring our spiritual health, then the devil uses craftier means: he presents to us our internal illnesses in such a hopeless condition that we become bewildered and despair of our salvation. If the Lord permitted the devil to use this trick on all of us, few of us would find the strength to continue the struggle. However, the Lord, as a knowledgeable physician, protects us from despair. He heals our spiritual ulcers and encourages us as we heal.

Therefore, as the Lord restores your spiritual sight, you will begin to comprehend more clearly that your heart is corrupt and that your passions obstruct your path to God. You will begin to understand also that the little good you have to your credit so far is damaged by your selfishness and conceit. Then you will certainly grieve, and you will become frightened and saddened: frightened because you are in danger of perishing forever, saddened because you have declined for so long to listen to the gentle voice of God who was calling you to salvation, and saddened because you have accomplished so little good.

Although these inner crosses present themselves as burdensome, do not despair and do not think that the Lord has abandoned you. No! He is always with you and invisibly sustains you, even when you forget Him. He will not burden you with trials beyond your capacity. Fear nothing, but with total humbleness and devotion bear your cross and pray. He is the gentlest of fathers that could be wished for. If on occasion He allows His faithful servants to be tempted, it is only to remind them of their feebleness and to completely cleanse their hearts from pride. In our hearts is where He intends to reside with His Son and His Holy Spirit.

In time of sorrow do not seek comfort from people. Most people are not experienced in affairs of salvation and are poor advisors. Make the Lord your only helpmate, comforter, and tutor, and from Him alone ask help. The man to whom the Lord sends afflictions is blessed a hundredfold, because it is afflictions that cure our souls. In enduring sorrows, a Christian is likened to Jesus Christ, who suffered for us. We should consider sorrows a gift from the Lord and a sign of His care for our salvation.

If you bear your cross with perseverance and seek comfort only from Him, then He, through His mercy, will not abandon you but will touch your heart and will impart to you the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is then that you will feel an indescribable delight, a wonderful inner peace and joy such as you have never experienced before, and at the same time you will feel an influx of spiritual strength; prayer will become easier and your faith stronger. Then your heart will be kindled with love of God and all people. All these are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When the Lord decides to honor you with such gifts, do not consider them as rewards for your labors, and do not think that you have attained perfection. Such thoughts come from pride. The comforts and grace of the Holy Spirit are not rewards but gifts of divine mercy. Occasionally the Lord allows us to get a foretaste of future blessings so that we will put forth a greater effort in seeking His eternal Kingdom.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the Third Sunday of Great Lent, which is Sunday of the Lenten Veneration of the Cross

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (Heb. 4:14-5:6)

Brothers and Sisters: Since then 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 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."

The Reading from the Gospel according to Saint Mark (Mk. 8:34-9:1)

The Lord said, "If any man would 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 of 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 that the kingdom of God has come with power."

Scripture Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, on which we commemorate especially the memory of St. John of the Ladder

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (Heb. 6:13-20)

Brothers and Sisters: when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark (Mk. 9:17-31)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

