

BEFORE THY  
CROSS.  
WE  
BOW



## CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**BULLETIN OF MARCH 7, 2010**

### Please Remember in Prayer

Gabriela Jones, Connie Mitsopolous, Melvin Woodall, Patty Leyse, Mat. Dunia Hubiak, Anna Varone, Jerrie Rife, Michelle Wilson, Bill & Kathy Parrish, Carole Boris (newly-departed), Archpriest Michael, Archpriest Andrew, Monk Christian, Marie, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Steven, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Todd & Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Constantina & Christos, Mirela & Chris, Jaroslav, Troy Paul Duker, Frank & Mary Miranda, Kathy T. Requests? See Fr. John.

### Choir Practice

There will be a special choir practice following the coffee hour today, Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. We will be going over music for Holy Week and Pascha. Fr. John's mother, Daria, who will direct the choir for us again this Pascha, has made a special trip to be here for this choir practice. All choir members are asked to please make an effort to be present. Thank you!



### SUNDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE CROSS

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour  
Paschal Choir Practice

### MONDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Lenten Vespers  
Greatest Story: Part III

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Presanctified Liturgy  
Lenten Potluck

### SATURDAY, MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup> MEMORIAL SATURDAY

9:00a.m. Memorial  
5:00p.m. Orthodoxy 101  
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

#### ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

O LORD JESUS CHRIST SON OF GOD  
HAVE MERCY ON ME A SINNER

#### READER SCHEDULE

**Sunday, Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Bruce Eckerd

**Sunday, Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Kathy Parrish



### St. George's in Ocean City's Paschal Dinner

All are invited for a Paschal Dinner on Sunday April 4 2009. A flyer with details of the event is available in the back.



### A Special Thank You

Mat. Emily would like to thank you all for your birthday wishes, card, and generous gift on the occasion of her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. The love you have shown to her is most appreciated!



### Only Two Left!

As the Lenten season is now half way past, we are running out of time to capitalize on the special lenten services. One of the greatest services is the Presanctified Liturgy of which there are only two left, both on Wednesdays: March 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.

### The Mysteries of Confession and Communion

should be received by all Orthodox Christians on a regular basis and at the very least during the Great Fast and Pascha. If you have not availed yourself of these life-giving sacraments, please be sure to do so. Likewise, frequent communicants should make a confession during this and every lenten period, as well as whenever the conscience is burdened. To schedule a confession, please see Fr. John.



### Did You Pick Up

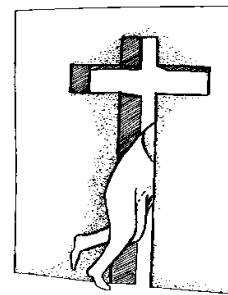
your cookie dough order? If not, please see Alice Peters. In case you missed the sale, there are 5 tubs left to sell at \$10 each if anyone would like to make a purchase now. Thanks!

### Did You Know

that donations can now be made through our website?

## HAVING COME TO THE MIDPOINT OF THE 40 DAY GREAT AND HOLY FAST... LET ME REFLECT...

- ❖ Have I accepted Great Lent as a "gift" from God, with thanksgiving?
- ❖ Have I spent the last three weeks in a meaningfully different way?
- ❖ Have I participated in the lenten services that are held during the week, Monday through Friday?
- ❖ Have I used the lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim in my morning and evening prayers, and at other times throughout the day?
- ❖ In addition to the Holy Scriptures, what kind of spiritual reading have I done? Have I learned more about my Faith? Have I read spiritual works which can help me in my prayers, dealing with others, and spiritual faults and needs?
- ❖ Am I preparing myself to make a good, honest, and humble Confession? Do I really believe that I am confessing my sins to Jesus Christ? Am I aware that the Lord sees my inner heart and will know if I only recite my sins, instead of being truly sorrowful and deeply committed to avoid repeating them?
- ❖ In what ways will I struggle in the second part of Great Lent, that I have so far left unattended?
- ❖ What price am I willing to pay in order to die and live in Christ? Am I willing to trade the earth for heaven? Am I willing to deny myself, take up my cross and follow Him to His heavenly Kingdom?



## RELICS, ICONS AND CROSSES ARE ONBOARD INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION, COSMONAUT SAYS

*From catholicnewsagency.com*

Moscow, Russia, Jan 20, 2010 / 12:11 am (CNA).- The Gospels, four icons, crosses and a relic of the True Cross have been taken aboard the Russian segment of the International Space Station (ISS), a Russian cosmonaut has reported. A photo taken by the station crew shows an icon and a crucifix floating in zero gravity in the ISS.

Writing on his blog at the website of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), Cosmonaut Maksim Suraev responded to readers' questions about religious symbols on the space station.

"We have four holy icons on the Russia segment. We also have the Gospels and a big cross," he said, according to a blog entry translated by Russia Today in November 2009.

Russia Today reported that the Lord's Divine Cross was given to A.N. Merminov, the head of Roscos-

mos, by the late Patriarch of Moscow Aleksy II. The cross was delivered to the station in 2006 by the crew of Soyuz TMA-8.

Suraev added that he has a reliquary cross in his cabin. "A priest gave it to me at Baikanur before the launch. Father Job told me a piece of the original cross on which Jesus was crucified is contained in mine." He added that his cross was blessed in the major monastery of Sergiev Posad.

"It will be with me the whole expedition and will return with me to Earth," the cosmonaut wrote.

Holy relics and other objects have been on previous spaceflights. U.S. astronaut Ronald Garan brought a relic of St. Therese of Lisieux with him on the space shuttle Discovery in 2008. He plans to bring another relic of the saint with him on a mission to the ISS in 2011.



## A REFLECTION FROM ST. NIKOLAI VELIMIROVICH

Even in His pain on the cross, the Lord Jesus did not condemn sinners but offered pardon to His Father for their sins saying, "They know not what they do!" (St. Luke 23:34). Let us not judge anyone so that we will not be judged. For no one is certain that before his death he will not commit the same sin by which he condemns his brother.

Saint Anastasius of Sinai teaches, "Even if you see someone sinning, do not judge him for you do not know what the end of his life will be like. The thief, crucified with Christ, entered Paradise and the Apostle Judas went to Hell. Even if you see someone sinning, bear in mind that you do not know his good works. For many have sinned openly and repented in secret; we see their sins, but we do not know their repentance. That is why, brethren, let us not judge anyone so that we will not be judged."



## AN EXPLANATION OF THE ORTHODOX THREE-BAR CROSS

By Fr. Theodore Jurewicz

### The Top Bar - The Explanation:

The top bar is the title-board, which Pilate ordered to be hung in mockery over Christ's head on the Cross. On this board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials 'INBI' or the Latin initials 'INRI' in the Western tradition). This is replaced with the Christian inscription: "King of Glory" – below the knees of the angels. On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek. In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: 'NIKA', which in Greek means: "He conquers" or "He is victorious." Frequently, we see these last two inscriptions together: 'IC XC NIKA', meaning: "Jesus Christ is victorious" (over death and sin).



### The Middle Bar - The Explanation:

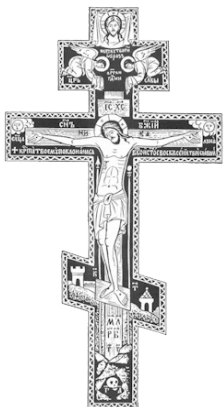
The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun (left) and the moon (right), for "The sun hid its light, and the moon turned to blood." (Joel 2:31)



The inscription: "Son of God" is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.

### The Bottom Bar - The Explanation:

The slanted bottom bar is the footrest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words [Let us] worship the footstool of His feet... (Ps. 98:5). In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness: "Between two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to Thee." The meaning of this prayer is as follows: the Cross of Christ stood for a scale of justice between the two thieves: for one of them sank in to hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the other, the wise thief, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance. The church fathers attempted to render tangible the thought of the unfaithful thief going to hell for his blasphemy through the just judgment of God (the lower end of the bar), and of the wise thief going to heaven for his repentance and his praise of God (the upper end).



### The Images - The Explanation:

On the Cross is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Note that He does not wear a crown of thorns, and that His feet are nailed with two nails. Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are a lance (which pierced Him) and a sponge (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing forth from His side. Below the feet of Christ is four Slavonic letters meaning: "The place of the skull became Paradise". Hidden in a cave under the earth is 'the skull of Adam'. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for He was crucified outside the city walls.

***“But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18)***

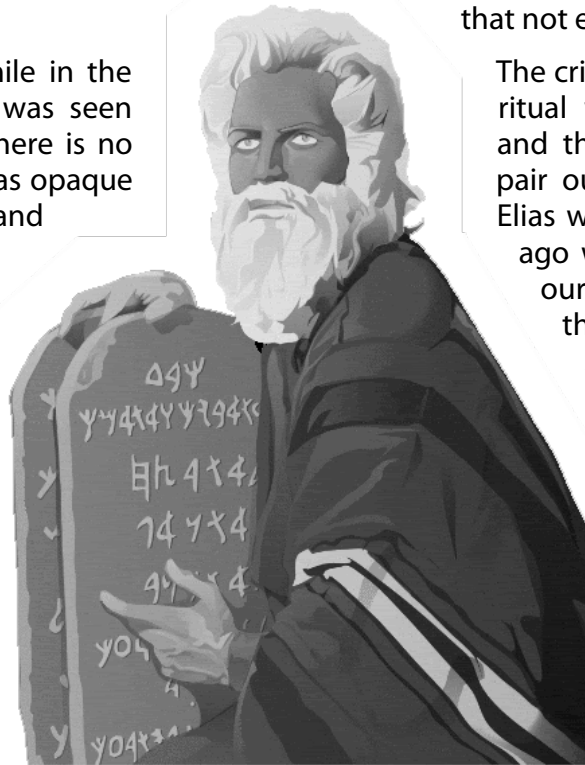
To understand what St. Paul means by unveiled face we must recall Moses descending from Mt. Sinai where he had been speaking with the Lord (Exodus 34:33). His face shone with light, and it frightened Aaron and the people. So he wore a veil when talking with them, but he removed the veil when speaking with God. Paul takes it to mean that the glow of glory eventually faded from Moses' face, but the Holy Spirit is transforming Christians into a fuller awareness of God's glory. Rather than fading away, Christ's glory transforms true believers into ever-brighter icons of His image in us.

Another meaning is that while in the Old Testament God's glory was seen through a veil, with Christ there is no need for a veil, since what was opaque and obscure is now clear and brilliant. Once baptized and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, those who continue to open their hearts to all the implications of being in Christ polish His image and progress from one stage of glory to another. There is no end of the possibilities to become like Christ, and to grow in grace. We are dust and earth invited to become like God in all ways except to share the essence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even after this life on earth is ended, we have the potential to continue growing in glory.

As for us, when we look at ourselves in a mirror, do we recognize the image of Christ staring back at us? We are called to be living icons, examples like those on our walls of true Christians with God's likeness shining from their faces. But there are veils:

A. Dreadful to admit that our churches harbor those with prejudice against people who are unlike them in some way. Maybe our parishes would grow if all of us were more accepting of what makes humanity different in various ways.

- B. Some pick and choose what they like about the Orthodox Church and ignore the rest. They may like the music and ritual but not the personal confessions, fasting rules or tithing. Cafeteria Christianity is part of the American scene, but it hardly fits the discipline of true believers.
- C. Others are simply unteachable. They are determined to follow their own stubborn rules set by themselves and will be buried with the same blind irrational opinions that not even the Holy Spirit can soften.



The critical challenge is to wage a spiritual war against our sinful nature and the demonic thoughts that impair our good intentions. The priest Elias who lived about eight centuries ago wrote that our task is to make our hearts fertile and pure, so that the virtues and fruit of the Holy Spirit will multiply there. But we have two basic categories of spiritual foes to deal with: Passions of the body, such as sexuality, anger, depression, hatred, prejudice and other so-called natural emotions, and our thoughts which are even harder to suppress, because we think of them as somehow part of who we are.

Just when we feel that we have surrounded the garden of our heart with a fence that has no openings for the wild animals of lust, greed, laziness, overeating – after all the passions that afflict us have been kept out – the birds of the air alight on our hearts and invade us with ideas that are meant to confuse and bewilder us with all sorts of contradictory proposals.

From a human point of view, such a vision of glory seems out of reach. But when we make the effort and prove our desire to grow into the fullness of grace, God comes to us in the Holy Spirit, pointing us to Jesus Christ Who leads us to the Father.