

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 11, 2018



SUNDAY, MARCH 11TH

Holy and Precious Cross

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

MONDAY, MARCH 12TH

7:00p.m. Vespers

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14TH

6:00p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
 Potluck Lenten Meal

SATURDAY, MARCH 17TH

Memorial Saturday

5:00p.m. Memorial
 5:30p.m. Bible Study
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 18TH

St. John Climacus

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

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 18th

Daniel Moss

Sunday, March 25th

Joanne Patrick



A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all our visitors. It's good to have you with us!

Thinking/Planning Ahead

The entire schedule of Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha is available on our website. Take off work well in advance for the High Holy Days.

Thank You to Special Donors

- ❖ A new commercial grade pool cover w/ 30-year full warranty (\$2,000)
- ❖ A new camera-based security system upgrade (\$1,000)
- ❖ A new smart, high efficiency, lighting system with LED/solar (\$500)
- ❖ May the Lord bless the donors for their generosity!

Spiritual Reading

is necessary for Christians to grow in their relationship with God because the more we come to understand our Faith the better we can live it. What spiritual book are you reading now? Want a recommendation, ask Fr. John.



Have Something on Your Mind?

Fr. John is available via: 302-537-6055 or frjohn@orthodoxdelmarva.org.



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 all lenten periods, as well as whenever the conscience is burdened.

Did You Know?

Usually children make their first confession around age 7 or 8. If you have any questions about this, please just ask Fr. John.

Only Three Left!

One of the most important services of Lent is the Presanctified Liturgy of which there are only three left: March 14th, 22nd, and 28th.



Parish Center/Grounds Clean-up – Sat., March 24th

Your assistance is needed for the pre-Paschal clean-up. Please let Fr. John or Nicholas Borodulia know in advance if you can come. Work will begin at 9:00am. The more people come, the sooner we finish!

Choir Practice for Pascha – Sunday, March 25th

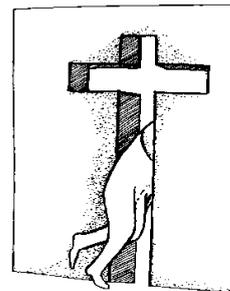
There will a choir practice for Holy Week & Pascha on Sunday, March 25th. All choir members are asked to please reserve this day for this important practice.



CASH FLOWS THROUGH 2/28/18					CASH FLOWS IN MARCH 2018					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	AS OF: 3/11		
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Available	Restricted	Savings
14,781	18,466	2,100	0	-3,685	1,801	9,233	2,000	2,000	-7,432	7,037	5,234	12,000

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

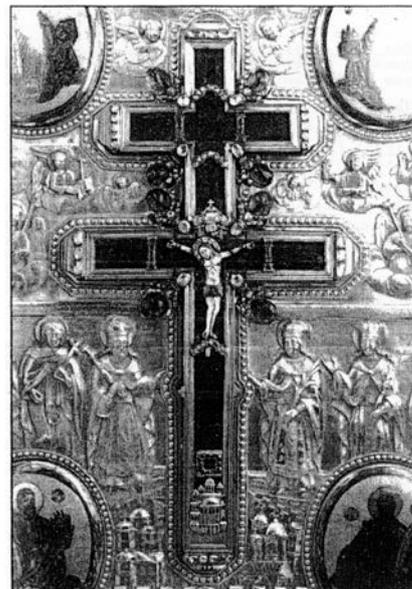
- ❖ Have I accepted Great Lent as a "gift" from God, with thanksgiving?
- ❖ Have I spent the last three weeks in a meaningfully different way?
- ❖ Have I participated in the lenten services that are held during the week, Monday through Friday?
- ❖ Have I used the lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim in my 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?



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CROSS ITSELF?

St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in a letter written around 350 AD to Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great, states that the true Cross was found in Jerusalem during the reign of Constantine. From the beginning of the fifth century, church writers and historians attribute the finding of the true Cross to St. Helena, the mother of St. Constantine. In his *Catecheses*, theological discourses which Cyril delivered in Jerusalem beginning in 347 AD, he frequently mentions the sacred Cross. St. Cyril briefly describes a tradition that was followed in Jerusalem on the morning of Holy Friday. The bishop, the clergy and the faithful would gather in the Chapel of the Cross which had been constructed by Constantine near Golgotha, and there they would venerate a large relic of the true Cross which was kept in a beautiful silver and gold reliquary.

St. Cyril is the first writer to comment on the fact that relics of the true Cross had been distributed all over the world. By the beginning of the fifth century, fragments of the true Cross were found in churches, monasteries and even in homes. In fact, St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) observed that many individuals in his day wore small gold reliquaries containing particles of the Cross around their necks. The expression "knock on wood" comes from the time Christians touched their reliquary crosses in times of trouble.



Cross in existence – Mount Athos, Greece

ABOUT MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

1) The three fingers symbolize the three Persons of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2) The two fingers symbolize the two natures of Jesus Christ: divine and human.



We make the Sign of the Cross on our 1) forehead, 2) waist, 3) right shoulder, and then 4) left shoulder, thereby offering our whole mind, heart, and strength in service to the Lord.



ASK FATHER: 3 QUESTIONS / 3 ANSWERS

Question: Why does Christ say that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable? The commentary I've read from the Fathers says that God can forgive this sin too. Is this a contradiction?

Answer: Although this looks like a contradiction, it is actually just two different perspectives, complementary ones in fact; like two sides of the same coin.

All sins, including blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, can be forgiven by God in that He loves everyone unconditionally, truly and eternally. It is His very nature to love and forgive, and this will never change, no matter what we do – the Cross being the supreme sign of this. Even though we rejected Him, putting Him to death on the Cross, He still overcame all of this hatred by His divine love. This is why when speaking about God's side of the equation; the Fathers say that even this sin is forgivable. Yet, on the human side, forgiveness (God's love) can only be received by a willing and repentant heart. This is why blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, from a human perspective, can never be forgiven because this sin is the conscious rejection of God and His love and forgiveness.

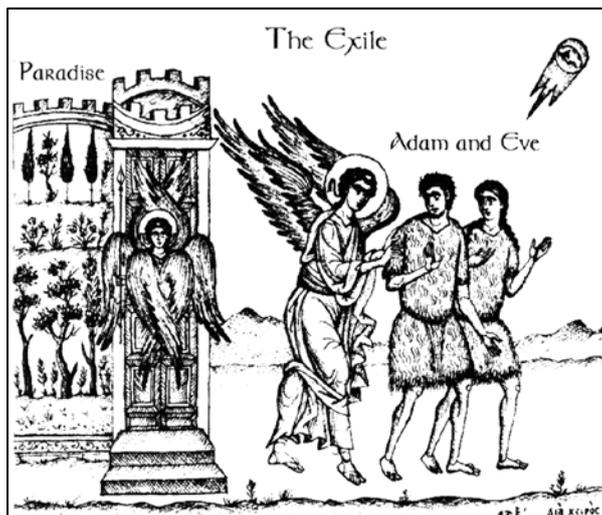
Without this seeming contradiction, we would be forced to deny either 1) the supreme love of God by saying that God will not forgive us if we do or say such a thing, or 2) man's free will, his God-given ability to accept or reject love, which is the determining factor in our relationship with God. In fact, it is these two things, God's love and man's free will, which make for Heaven or Hell. God offers His love to all of mankind. Those who receive and return this love, experience His presence as Paradise and Heaven. Those who reject this love, experience His presence as Hades and Hell.

Question: What is the difference between Paradise and Hades, and between Heaven and Hell? Are there any people in Heaven or Hell now? What about Elijah the Prophet?

Answer: While sometimes these terms are used interchangeably, when a distinction is made the terms are used as follows:

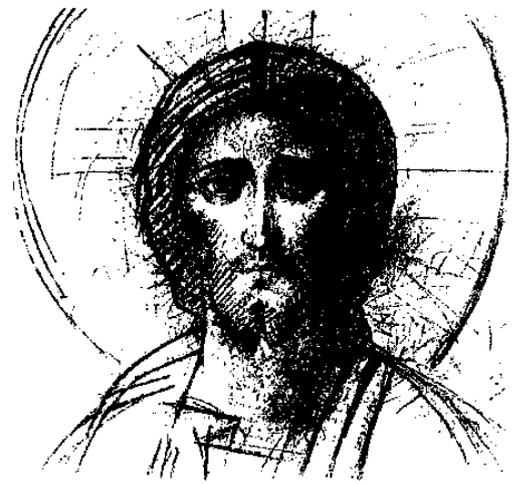
Hades and Paradise are the terms often used to describe the condition of the soul when it is separated from the body through biological death. Hades describes a negative condition, where the soul is tormented by its sinful relationship with God and its neighbor, and thus fearfully awaits the general resurrection and final Judgment. Paradise describes a positive condition, where the soul is comforted by its healthy relationship with God and its neighbor, and thus peacefully anticipates the bodily resurrection and final Judgment.

Heaven and Hell are the words usually used to describe man's condition after the bodily resurrection. The joys of Heaven and the torments of Hell exceed those of Paradise and Hades because in this final state, the body too experiences God's presence, and like the soul has either a positive or negative reaction to Him.



Paradise and Hades are experienced only by the soul, and therefore are considered incomplete and temporal realities in comparison to Heaven and Hell which are experienced by the soul and body for all eternity.

Christ reigns in Heaven, accompanied by His Mother, who He granted bodily resurrection to after her physical death. All others await the general resurrection. Elijah was carried up "as if into heaven". Although it is unclear exactly what this means, it is the understanding of the Church that this expression describes something other than bodily entering into Heaven.



Question: How did Christ through the Cross and Resurrection effect Hades and Paradise?

Answer: Before Christ's Descent into Hades, when people died, they all went to Hades – the region of the dead. To the degree that they sinned, they suffered torment. To the degree that they were righteous, they received comfort. It was much like how the conscience can inflict torment or offer consolation to us in this life. Although the righteous still went to Hades, since they too had fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), they did receive comfort through their God-pleasing lives and their hope for deliverance through Christ. Because of this they were said to dwell in Abraham's bosom, which is referenced by our Lord Himself in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The Father's see in the great chasm between the rich man and Lazarus not so much a description of physical geography but rather one of spiritual disposition (ie. distance or closeness to God and one's neighbor).

When Christ descended into Hades, He offered relief from spiritual torment and complete forgiveness of sins to everyone, sinners and righteous alike, just like He had done on earth. Those who accepted the invitation entered into Paradise – the state of joyful and peaceful communion with God.

It is important to note that Paradise had been opened to man through Christ's work; not because He changed God the Father, as some incorrectly believe, but rather because He changed us, drawing all men to Himself by being lifted up on the Cross, changing the world by the revelation of His divine love, the glory which He shared with the Father before the world was. This love, glory, life, light, power, wisdom, etc., had been revealed to mankind at the fullness of time – the time when mankind was sufficiently prepared to repent and return to the Father.

In Christ and through the Holy Spirit, man is able to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow the Lord, dying to the old ways of selfishness and living in self-sacrificial love, returning to the Father, the Source of Life. In and through God, he is able to truly love, fulfilling the new commandment given by Christ, to love one another as He Himself loves us – that is to love self-sacrificially even to the point of death. "No greater

love can a man have than this to lay down His life..." (John 15:13). Through the work of Christ, "we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 John 4:16)

Formerly, Hades had held men captive because through sin they had lost communion with God and were bereft of His life-giving power, His self-sacrificial divine love. In this state, they could not fully repent of their sin, like suffering patients unable to heal themselves because they lacked not only the means for healing but even the full and perfect desire for it.

Now, through Christ, the means for the healing of soul and body are available, and man is gifted, through the unutterable groans of the Holy Spirit to truly desire full repentance and salvation.

Hades now exists as a reality only for those who, through blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, reject the selfless love of God. The gates have been broken and everyone is free to leave the torment of selfishness, unless of course they or we want to remain in it. God forbid!

