



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 4—10 April 2021

SUNDAY 4 APRIL

3rd Sunday of Lent, Veneration of the Holy Cross, Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

2021 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

(A free voluntary program organised by the Church)

Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.

We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment.

Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.

MONDAY 5 APRIL

- 8.45am
Service of Holy Unction
- 10.00am
Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

TUESDAY 6 APRIL

- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL

- 8.00am
Service of Pre-sanctified Liturgy
- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

THURSDAY 8 APRIL

- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline
- 7.30—8.30pm

⇒ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP

ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME

Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment.

: In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church

FRIDAY 9 APRIL

- 6.30pm
Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos
— Fourth Salutation to the Theotokos

SUNDAY 11 APRIL

GOSPEL READING: Mark 9: 17-31
EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 6: 13-20

Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

Forgiveness is better
than revenge.



St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. .

Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified.

Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we rise up; when we are in the way, and when we are still.

Great is that preservative; it is without price, for the sake of the poor; without toil, for the sick; since also its grace is from God.

It is the Sign of the faithful, and the dread of devils: for He *'triumphed over them in it, having made a show of them openly'* [Colossians 2:15]; for when they see the Cross they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him, who *bruised the heads of the dragon*.

Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the gift; but for this the rather honour your Benefactor.



3rd Sunday of Lent, Veneration of the Holy Cross, Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1

When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God ^[a]present with power.” *Mark 8: 34-38; 9:1*

In the first sentence of today’s Gospel passage, Jesus tells His us that if we wish to follow after Him, there are three things we must to—deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow. Many people interpret the idea of denying oneself as “seeking intentional suffering.” That is not what Jesus says at all.

To deny oneself means to fight against impulses we all have that are not in line with Christianity. For instance, if one has an impulse to use bad language, or to gossip, or to rip into someone, the goal is to deny that impulse and use good language, to say things that are complimentary and to encourage others. To make this more understandable, I like soda but soda is unhealthy. I have to use a degree of restraint to opt for the water that is healthy over the soda that isn’t. To deny ourselves means to make the Christians choices on a consistent basis.

To take up “his cross” can be interpreted in two ways, depending on whether the “his” refers to Christ’s cross, or the unique “cross” that each of us carries. Let’s first look at “Christ’s cross” in the context of this verse. To take up Christ’s cross means to act in a Christ-like manner. Specifically, when Christ was on the cross, how did He act? First, He forgave those who were killing Him. That was an incredible gesture of forgiveness. We have a difficult time forgiving small things. Imagine forgiving someone for torturing and killing you, as they as doing it and continuing to do it. Second, He showed mercy to a thief who repented at the last second. Again, He gave something to someone who didn’t deserve it. That is humility, to lower one’s ego to offer something to someone else which they don’t deserve. Third, He took care of His mother—even in His most trying moments, He still had the capacity to love and care for His mother, entrusting her care to His beloved Disciple, John. And fourth, He continued to trust in God, placing His Spirit into God’s hands. To take up Christ’s cross means to act like Christ—to be forgiving, merciful, caring and trusting in all of our circumstances.

Which brings me to the individual and unique circumstances we each face, the unique crosses we each carry. Everyone carries a cross of some kind—it might be a learning disability, or a mental deficiency, a chronic illness, or a difficult life circumstance, like losing a child, or losing a parent at a young age. There are crosses that each of us carries that cannot be overcome. Some can be managed but everyone has some nagging thing that they will probably never conquer. This is the “cross” we carry. To take up our own cross means to again follow Christ’s example when He was on the cross—to forgive, be merciful, caring and trusting.

Christ also had help carrying His cross to Golgotha. We also need help in carrying our crosses. This is one of the reasons we have the church—to provide the help in carrying our crosses. The church does this in two ways—first the church gives help through prayer, worship, and the sacraments. It is the role of the priest to help the parishioners carry their crosses. That’s why he wears a stole around his neck for all priestly duties, to remind him and everyone else of this sacred duty. Secondly, members of the church community are supposed to help one another in carrying crosses—it is the responsibility and the ministry of each church member to offer encouragement, to be a good listener, to pray for one another, to visit the sick, to assist the poor, to welcome the stranger, etc.

To take up the cross not involves carrying your own cross but to help others to carry theirs.

Finally, to “follow” is something it seems that we have an increasingly harder time doing. We are conditioned by our parents and our peers to be leaders. We have a hard time following directions—look at how many people speed when driving. The speed limit signs provide clear direction, which we have a hard time following. In a society that champions individual freedom, it becomes contradictory to be a follower. Because a follower in some ways gives up freedom. If I am driving my car alone, I can go where I want to go.

If I’m following someone in my car, I am now having to go where they want to go. To follow Christ means to let Him lead, and to follow where He leads, which does not always agree with where we want to go. For instance, Christ tells me to forgive but I want to be angry. So, will I let my anger lead, or will I follow His teaching to forgive. It’s really hard to let Him lead. It’s really hard to be a follower.

However, to get to the Kingdom of heaven requires us to be a follower. We cannot lead ourselves there. Only Christ can lead us there. Which means that we have to let Him be in the lead, which means we have to learn to be good followers. Denying ourselves, carrying our crosses and following Christ are three challenges we face on a daily basis. In fact, these ideas are so important, that this Gospel lesson from Mark 8:34-9:1 is read TWO Sundays each year—the Sunday after the Holy Cross each September and on the Third Sunday of Lent. It is the only Gospel passage that is read on two Sundays each year. (There are Gospel accounts that are similar—like the story of the rich man who went away sorrowful is read on two Sundays, but one account is from Matthew and the other from Luke. This is the only Gospel of the year that is read on two Sundays).

Deny yourself, carry your cross and follow today!

Rejoice, you are the guide for the blind, and the physician of the sick, O most precious Cross, and also the resurrection of all who died, lifting up all of us who had succumbed to corruption. Corruption has been destroyed, and incorruptibility through you has blossomed, and we mortals were deified, and the Slanderer has been utterly stricken down. Seeing you lifted up today in the hands of the Hierarchs, we in turn now exalt Him who was exalted by means of you, and bowing before you we adore you, and great mercy we draw abundantly.

(From the Aposticha of the Vespers of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)