

Self Denial and Sure-Footedness – One who claims to abide in Christ ought to walk as He walked. Would you follow Christ? Then be humble as he was humble. Do not scorn his lowliness if you want to reach his exaltation. Human sin made the road rough. Christ's resurrection leveled it. By passing over it himself He transformed the narrowest of tracks into a royal highway. Two feet are needed to run along this highway; they are humility and charity. Everyone wants to get to the top – well, the first step to take is humility. Why take strides that are too big for you – do you want to fall instead of going up? Begin with the first step, humility, and you will already be climbing. (Saint Caesarius of Arles)

Meditations on the Holy Cross and its place in our lives:

The cross is the door to mysteries. Through this door the intellect makes entrance in to the knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is concealed in the sufferings of the cross. And the more our participation in its sufferings, the greater the perception we gain through the cross. For, as the Apostle says, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds in Christ. - St. Isaac of Syria O Savior of all men, especially of those who have faith, Because Thou were crucified of Thy own will, and were put to death voluntarily, the lawless say not of their will were the limbs of the robbers broken; But Thine, they did not break, in order that they might learn That Thou didst not come among the dead against Thy will, but willingly Thou didst give up Thy spirit, Thou Who art everywhere and fillest all things. – St. Romanos

Ikos from Matins: Hades asked its servants: Who has driven this spear into my heart? A wooden lance has pierced me, and I am torn apart. What pain penetrated my womb and my heart, what sorrow stabs my spirit? I am forced to give up Adam and his children, those whom I had received from the forbidden Tree, for a new Tree leads them to enter again into Paradise.

**Third Sunday of the Great Fast**

**Exaltation of the Cross**

Tone 2

*Menologion*

Venerable Fathers of the St. Sabbas Monastery  
Our venerable fathers, martyred in the Monastery of St. Sabbas.

**March**

- 12 Second All-Souls Saturday
- 13 Second Sunday of the Great Fast (St. Gregory Palamas)
- 19 Third All Souls Saturday
- 20 Third Sunday of the Great Fast (Veneration of the Cross)
- 25 Annunciation of the Mother of God
- 26 Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (Fourth All-Souls Saturday cancelled or transferred this year)
- 17 Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast (St. John of the Ladder)
- 31 Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

***An Explantation of the Byzantine Rite Liturgical Practice of Observing All Souls Saturdays***

***ETERNAL MEMORY! VIČNAJA PAMJAT***

- 4. From the beginning of Christianity, local churches kept registers of their living members as well as those who departed. These registers were folding tablets made of wood, ivory, or precious metals artistically decorated with carvings and

bound together by rings. They are known as diptychs, taken from the Greek word *diptychon*, which means anything folded in two. These were used in Church to commemorate the living and the dead at the Divine Liturgy since the fourth century. In the Byzantine Church, these diptychs played an important role since the names of the heretics and the excommunicated were removed from them and, by the same token, these were excluded from the liturgical prayers. They came into disuse sometime during the fourteenth century and, eventually, they were replaced by official lists of the deceased members of individual families issued by the pastor. These were called *Hramoty*, from the Greek: *grammata*, meaning a written letter or document. The list of the deceased members of a family made in booklet form was called a *Pomjanik*, taken from the Old Slavonic: *pomjanuti*, meaning to remember, and was used at the services for the deceased. The custom of announcing the names of the deceased during the liturgical services, as stated above, can be traced back to the first centuries of Christianity. Already in the fourth century, the practice was strongly defended by St. Epiphanius (d. 403) as a "firmly established tradition" in the Church. In his *Panarias*, he writes: . . . Concerning the ritual of reading the names of the deceased, what can be more useful or suitable; what can be more worthy of admiration? (*PANARIOS* 75, 8) This venerable custom was transmitted to us by our ancestors as a part of our beautiful spiritual heritage. Every year, just before Meat-Fare Saturday, the families give the lists of their departed loved ones (*Hramoty*) to the pastor with the request that they be mentioned at the services held for the deceased on the All Souls Saturday. And St. John Chrysostom assures us that: "It is a great honor to be worthy of mention, while the celebration of the Holy Mysteries is going on." (*Homily on the Acts* 21, 4) Members of the family are encouraged to attend these services on the All Souls Saturdays for by their presence and by their personal prayers and receiving Holy Communion they strengthen the bond of love with their departed loved ones and indeed keep their memory everlasting!

5. St. Gregory of Nazianz (d. 390), after celebrating the funeral services for his brother Caesarius, concluded his eulogy with the following words: "Part of my funeral gift is now completed. The remainder we will pay by offering every year, as long as we live, our honors and memorials for him!" (*Oration VII*, 17) We also should emulate St. Gregory by remembering our departed loved ones, especially during the All Souls Saturdays, as long as we live, and point out to those coming after us the wholesomeness of this beautiful and praiseworthy custom of praying for and remembering our departed loved ones.

In the burial service according to the Byzantine Rite, the Church places the following words on the lips of the deceased, as we sing the hymns prescribed in bidding our departed loved one our final farewell: . . . Come all you that love me and bid me farewell, for I shall no longer walk with you nor talk with you, since I am going to my Judge, Who shows no favors and rewards or punishes everyone according to his deeds. Therefore, I beg and implore all of you, pray for me continually to Christ our God that, on account of my sins, I may not be doomed into the place of affliction, but rather be granted a place where the light of life is shining!

"He (the Priest) acts as an ambassador on behalf of the whole city-even on behalf of the whole world-and prays that God would be merciful and forgive the sins of all, not only of the living, but also of the departed." (St. John Chrysostom, *ON THE PRIESTHOOD VI*, 4)

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