

5 2nd Street
Herminie, PA 15637
<http://pokrov.iksnazul.com>

Cantor
Joseph Luzanski
E-mail: comments@pokrov.iksnazul.com

Liturgical Schedule

Divine Liturgy
Sunday: 8:30 am
Holyday: 9:00 am

Confessions

One half hour before
the divine liturgy or
by appointment

Served By

Father Vasyl Yakubych
Василь Якубич
Cell: 412-627-1678
E-mail: yakubichvasill2020@gmail.com

The Divine Liturgy intention is for the he parish family

If you would like to schedule a Litrgy please talk to Father Vasyl or use the sign up sheet in the vestibule.

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. (Proverbs 3:9,10 ESV)

Many years ago, I read something from Father Anthony Coniaris that has stuck with me. His analogy is: When you squeeze an orange, what comes out? Our usual response is, "orange juice." But Father Anthony says, "No; it is whatever is inside the orange that comes out." In times of stress or anger, we find out what is truly inside of us. When we get angry, do we yell at a person, or go into road rage, or say things that should not be said out loud? If we do, we betray that what is in our heart is not peace or love but turmoil and anger. When we are stressed at any situation, do we panic, make abrupt, and probably incorrect, assumptions and decisions, or do we take a deep breath and really examine the situation and act prudently. Yes, it is kind of disturbing to find what is really inside us, rather than what we think is inside. Fasting shows us who we are. It shows our weakness and our need for diligence over our hearts, minds and words, and how we cannot do otherwise without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is only then that we can call upon Him to heal us in the very depths of who we are.

The Church gives us the cross at this point, the halfway point, of the fast to inspire us. The cross is given to show us the direction in which we are headed; that we are headed to the crucifixion of our Lord and His Holy Resurrection. This should be where we are headed with our own lives; the crucifixion of our self-will that allows us to perform God's will, which allows our lives to be resurrected to the life that God intended for us.

Third Sunday of the Great Fast
(Veneration of the Holy Cross)

Tone 3

Menologion

Holy Martyr Nikon And His 199 Disciples
The Monk Martyr Nikon was born at Neapolis (Naples). His father was a pagan, and his mother a Christian. He was not baptized, but his mother secretly instructed him in the tenets of Christianity. Nikon was still a pagan when he reached adulthood. He served as a soldier, and showed unusual courage and strength.

Once, Nikon and his military company were surrounded by enemies. In deadly peril, he remembered the Christian precepts of his mother and, signing himself with the Sign of the Cross, he prayed to God, vowing to be baptized if he were saved.

Propers
Pages 135-137, 223-225

Fasts & Feasts

March

- 22 Third All Souls Saturday
- 23 Third Sunday of the Great Fast (Veneration of the Cross)
- 25 Annunciation to the Mother of God
- 29 Fourth All-Souls Saturday
- 30 Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast (St. John of the Ladder)

April

- 6 Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast (St. Mary of Egypt)
- 12 Lazarus Saturday
- 13 Palm (Flowery) Sunday
Blessing of Psalms
- 14-19 Great and Holy Week
- 17 Great and Holy Thursday
- 18 Great and Holy Friday
- 19 Great and Holy Saturday
- 20 PASCHA: The Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ
- 21 Bright Monday
- 22 Bright Tuesday
- 27 Thomas Sunday



Dear beloved, the third Sunday of Lent, the midpoint of this great annual exercise, is dedicated by the Holy Fathers to the celebration of the Holy Cross. The explanation rests in the Synaxarion of the day: "Since the Holy Cross is also called the tree of life, and this tree has been planted in the center of Paradise, in the same way the Holy Fathers have planted the tree of the Cross in the center of the Great Lent so we can eat from it and live forever."

The Holy Cross has a central place not only during Lent, but also has a central role in our daily life. We make upon ourselves the sign of the Cross in the name of the Holy Trinity every time we pray, enter the Church, venerate an icon or participate in the Holy Liturgy. In everything we do we take the Cross with us for protection and salvation.

Paradoxically the Cross, an ancient instrument of torture and death, radiates life into the world. This may seem odd to the uninitiated observer, but for us, as Christians, we know that at the intersection of its two arms rests the Giver of Life, the maker of the Universe, accepting death so we can receive life.

The tradition says that when the holy Empress Helen went to find the Holy Cross in Jerusalem she unearthed three crosses from the pagan temple of Venus. Trying to decide which one is the true cross of our Savior they brought a sick woman and touched it with the three crosses. When she touched the true Cross, she immediately recovered and the True Cross was therefore revealed. This is the power of the Cross, transformed from an object of death into a fountain of immortality through the one that sacrificed Himself on it.

The Cross has the power to transfigure our lives, because accepting the cross we also accept Christ; the cross becomes therefore the main symbol of our Christian faith. For this reason we receive one at baptism and we carry it around our necks for the rest of our lives. However not all properly understand this symbol. A friend of mine, a non-denominational Protestant lady, who fashions every day various shapes and sizes of crosses, told me one day "I like the crosses but I don't like the Christ on the crosses because is kind of creepy." What she doesn't realize is the fact that if you take Christ away from the Cross, the cross is nothing but ordinary wood.

Christ is the pivotal stone that gives meaning to the Cross, because through Him, nailed with His stretched hands on the wood, man is linked again with God on the vertical axis and the same man is reunited with his brothers on the horizontal.

Jesus died on the cross embracing the world, reuniting at His fatherly breast all those that through sin have grown apart from God and from each other. Thus says St. Athanasius. Through Christ love flows in all directions: from God down to us and from man to man all around.

The cross is the true compass that points toward the only essential cardinal point in our lives: Upwards! Sailing on the sea of life in the motherly ship of the Church, the Cross is the lighthouse that shows us the way home, to the Kingdom of heaven.

Dear beloved, today the Cross of salvation is taken into precession around the Church on a bed of daffodils. The daffodils are chosen because as the first flowers of spring, the time when nature is reborn, they remind us of Resurrection. We do this because we cannot think of the Cross without remembering of Resurrection. We cannot imagine the death and the passions of Christ without having in mind the empty tomb radiating hope. Christ's death has no meaning without His Resurrection.

Eastern Rite Christians have always emphasized this aspect of balance and have never inclined toward exaggerating the suffering, as happened many times in the Western depictions of Crucifixion.

In any Eastern Rite Christians Crucifixion Christ is shown as standing on the cross, almost supporting it, not hanging on it. Even though Christ suffered on the Cross, the image does not lose its peace and pondered sadness, because our Lord willingly took the Cross for us, knowing that the Resurrection follows. The Eastern Rite Christians icon of Crucifixion radiates peace and hope.

Some of the Western crucifixion depictions however, like the Grunewald crucifixion, one of the most famous Renaissance scenes, reflect the opposite. Christ, the Savior of the world, is represented as a horrible corpse nailed to a cross, with a body contorted in a grueling agony, a repulsive sight from which the viewer turns away in horror. It is nothing other than a work of despair that casts away every hope from the Christian soul. No one looking at this sight could hope in the Resurrection and in eternal life. Other modern renderings like the movie of Mel Gibson, The Passions of Christ, suffer from the same disease: too much suffering and much less hope.

As Eastern Rite Christians we do not have this vision of pain. We know that Christ suffered on the cross, but we rejoice at the sight of the Cross, because we know what follows. Therefore we adorn our Cross with daffodils and continue our journey toward Resurrection.

Let us therefore rejoice once again at the sight of the elevated Holy Cross and sing in unison, "Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy resurrection of Christ. For behold, through the cross joy has come to all the world. Blessing the Lord always, let us praise His resurrection. For enduring the cross for us, He destroyed death by death." Amen.

