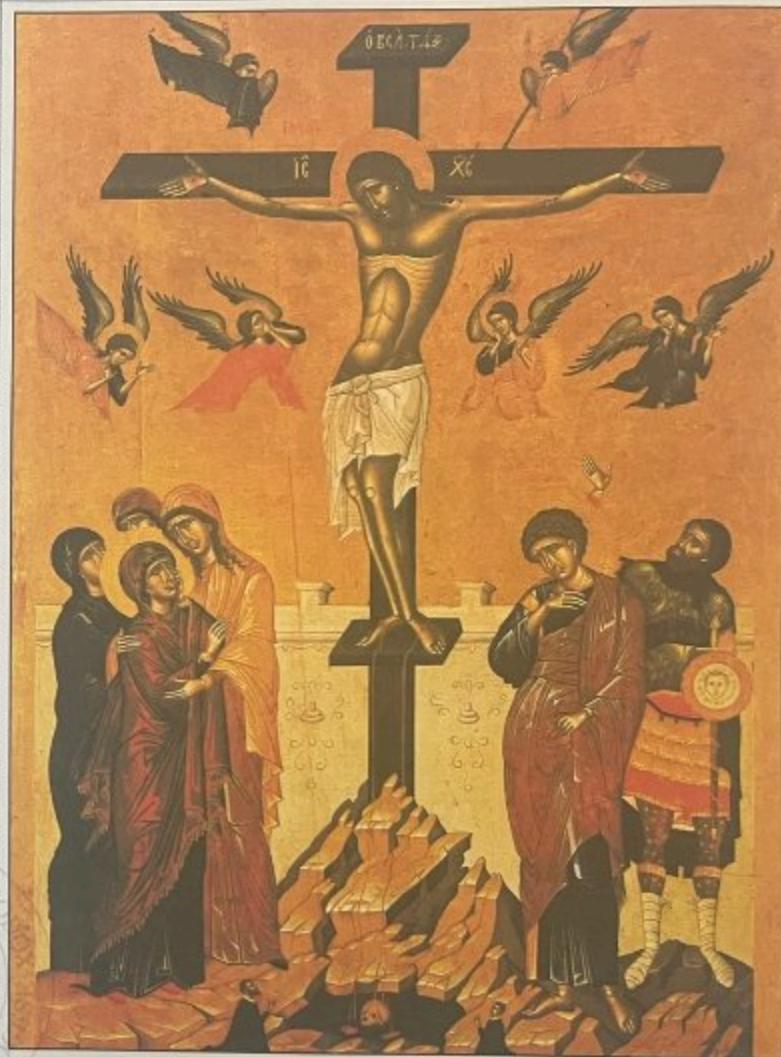


"SWEETENING" THE BITTERNESS OF OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

Soon after Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea — the first step in their journey to the Promised Land — a new crisis confronted the children of Israel. They had run out of water, and when they finally reached a place called Marah, they discovered that the water there was too bitter to drink. While the Israelites were lamenting their fate, God instructed Moses to cast a tree into the water, and when he had done so, it became sweet and drinkable.

Today we have reached the middle of the Lenten season — the Third Sunday of the Great Fast. This can be a hard and bitter time for all of us, and no doubt many have already become physically and spiritually weary. Not only are the disciplines of Lent demanding, but the knowledge of our own sinfulness brought to light during this penitential period can be overwhelming as well. The Church knows this, and today She places before us the Precious and Life-giving Cross for veneration. Just as the tree sweetened the water at Marah, the Tree, that is, the Cross eases the bitterness of these grueling days. It comforts and refreshes us, making us eager to push forward to reach our ultimate destination: the empty Tomb of our Lord. It encourages us and gives us hope that, indeed, we will prevail on this difficult journey. It is no wonder that we fervently sing at Vespers on this Sunday: "Rejoice, O Life-giving Cross, most beautiful Paradise of the Church, Tree of Immortality, which gave us the joy of everlasting glory, by which the legions of demons are driven away, the choir of angels rejoice and the assembly of the faithful celebrate."

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin West, Cliffwood, New Jersey Lino in U.S.A.



Welcome our Visitors! We invite you to venerate the cross at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. However, only Orthodox Christians who are in good standing and who have prepared by prayer, fasting, and Confession may receive Holy Communion.

A Gift of Blessing

Visit the Church Gift Shop.

See the Beautiful Icons, Crosses & Home Censers

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Fr. Gabriel's cell: 713-357-8871

Email: stgeorge2709@gmail.com

web page: www.stgeorgevicksburg.org



Church Calendar: Check the Link. <http://www.stgeorgevicksburg.org/service.html>

SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Very Rev. Father Gabriel Karam, Pastor

Saturday Great Vespers 6:00 p.m. - Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. - Confessions: By Appointment

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

TONE 7 / EOTHINON 7

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION FOR THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE ONE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliver of Captives: And defender of the Poor, Healer of the Infirm, champion of Kings, Victorious Great Martyr George, Intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

We Celebrate Today

On March 15 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the **Martyr Agapios** of Palestine and those with him; **Apostle Aristoboulos** of the Seventy, first bishop of Britain; and **New-martyrs Manuel** of Crete and Parthenios.

On this same day, the Third Sunday of the Fast, we keep the feast of the Veneration of the honorable and life-creating Cross.

Verses

Let the whole world entire worship the Cross
through Which it truly knew to worship Thee, O Word.

Every hard and strenuous work is accomplished with great difficulty, which appears especially in the middle of such work; for the effort in this performance brings with it fatigue which makes the accomplishment of the rest difficult. Having arrived with God's grace at the middle of the Fast, our compassionate Mother—the Holy Orthodox Church—thought fit to reveal to us the Holy Cross as the joy of the world and power of the faithful to help us carry on the struggles of the divine Fast. By its power, O Christ God, preserve us from the crafty designs of the evil one and account us worthy to worship Thy divine Passion and life-giving Resurrection, as we achieve the

course of the Forty Days with ease, and have mercy on us, as Thou alone art good and the Lover of mankind. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Healing & Recovery Fr. Paul Yerger. Fr. Leo. Deacon Terry. Kh. Janet Henderson. Joy Logue. Dolores Nosser. Rick Collins. George Michael Nasif. Lynne Abraham. Pam Smith. Irene Tzotzolas. Maha Habeeb. Michael Farris. Athena. Georgia. Andrea Simon. Chuck Abraham. Drew Anderson. Jackson Ballinger. Carla Leese.

+Birthdays & Anniversaries. Mar: Will Mackay (23), Paula Shaw (25), Tea & Scott Blackburn (26), Peggy Thomas (27), Jeff West, Chris Maxwell (28), Kaylee Wright (29), Madeline Hull (31).

+Keep in your prayers. Our Catechumens, Cole Gary, Jacob Milliken & John Morgan Mcright. Who are preparing themselves for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism & Chrismation.

+House Blessing. Make your arrangement with Fr. Gabriel to bless your home.

+Parish Council Meeting Tuesday March 17 at 7 pm after the Great Compline service.

+Save the Date. Thur. March 26. A Family Night will be hosted at the house of Buddy & Janice Stricklan, @ 6pm. The Crucifixion, Biblical, Historical and Scientific facts.

+Antiochian Men Meeting, Monday March 16 at 7pm after the Great Compline prayer. The Akathist Service for the Virgin Mary. History and meaning.

+Great Holy Lent The traditional fasting discipline (no poultry, meat, eggs, dairy, fish, wine) is observed Monday through Friday with katalysis for wine on Saturday and Sunday (on March 25th [Annunciation] and April 5 [Palm Sunday] there is also katalysis for fish.)

No eating from Midnight till noon every day except on the weekend.

+Next Week's Prayers @ 6:00pm. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday **Great Compline.**

Wednesday | **Presanctified Liturgy & Potluck.**

Friday **Akathist Service for the Theotokos.**

The Church Fathers Teach

Do you fast?

Give me proof of it by your works. If you see someone who is poor, take pity on that one. If you see a friend being honored, do not be envious. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eyes, and the feet, and the hands and all the member of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful. Let the ears by not listening to evil talk and gossip. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers and sisters?

— St. John Chrysostom

DIVINE LITURGY MARCH 15, 2026

****DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT****

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

THE EPISTLE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry, O my God!

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (4:14-5:6)

Brethren, since we have a great High Priest, Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to sympathize with our infirmities, but one Who has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest, being taken from among the people, is appointed on behalf of the people in things pertaining to God, that he may offer up both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant and on those who are erring, since he himself also is encompassed with infirmity. Because of this he is bound, as for the people so also for himself, to offer up for sins. And no one takes the honor upon himself, but as being called by God, as was Aaron. So, Christ also did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but it was by the One saying to Him, "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee." As He says also in another place, "Thou art a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (8:34-9:1)

The Lord said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."