

The Third Sunday of Great Lent  
Veneration of the Holy Cross

Mark 8:34-38, 9:1

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. (KJV)

The present Gospel ascribes value to the soul as being greater than the whole world. Great Lent is the time to focus on the care and purification of the soul.

Through repentance believers take responsibility for personal sins and seek to begin anew in Jesus Christ. Facing and acknowledging personal sin before the Lord Jesus Christ and seeking forgiveness enables believers to begin anew.

Careful self-examination of the heart, mind and soul enables believers to recognize personal sin. The conscience helps believers to identify personal sins needing to be addressed.

Confession in God's Holy Church offers the new beginning for the believer. Resoluteness and faith are required to acknowledge personal sin and put the self at the mercy of the Lord God.

Taking responsibility for personal sins is a way of taking up the personal cross of life and seeking to begin anew. The Lord Jesus Christ stands ready to welcome the person desiring to reject and put sin behind in life.

The Lord Jesus Christ welcomes the repenting believer with healing love and forgiveness. Seeking Jesus Christ in Confession is a expression of faith in Christ as the Forgiver of Sins.

Sins weigh heavy on the believer and impede growth and fulfillment in life. Jesus Christ offers joy in the fulness of life. Repentance and confession open the door for the believer for the fullness intended for life.

Jesus Christ fills the heart, mind and soul when sins are forgiven. Weight is lifted from the believer during Confession and the life in Jesus Christ taken up at Holy Baptism is restored.

God's Holy Church offers nourishment, guidance and direction for believers beginning anew in Christ. Great Lent is structured to guide the believer to God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

The celebration of Pascha at the end of the Lenten journey holds the promise of unending joy in God's Kingdom. Jesus Christ defeated death when He rose from the Tomb after having died upon the Cross.

Jesus Christ is present through the centuries as proof of death's defeat. Persons putting faith in the Crucified and Risen Christ benefit from the resurrection through Baptism, Chrismation, Confession and Communion.

The journey to eternal life begins at the Baptismal font and continues with repentance and communion. Great Lent encourages and expects believers to repent and seek to continuously begin anew in Jesus Christ.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent focuses on Christ's Cross pointing the way for the rest of the Lenten journey. The Cross offers strength for believers to continue in faith.

Faithful believers draw strength from knowing Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Jesus Christ set the example for believers to address in the hardships in personal life. Jesus assures believers of the value of addressing the hardships in life.

Jesus gives believers the strength and hope to endure hardships responsibly. Illness, tragedies and other forms of stressful hardships need not be faced alone. Jesus Christ is the example for dealing with the personal crosses in life.

Draw strength from Jesus Christ in facing life's difficulties. Hope exists in Christ in life's darkest moments. The brightness of the Resurrection shines forth following the darkness created by Jesus Christ's death on the Cross.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent offers the sober experience of venerating the Cross in the middle of the Church. Believers confess and express appreciation for Jesus Christ's love when venerating the Cross.

Thank God for Great Lent in the Church. Thank God for the heart, mind and soul able to appreciate Jesus Christ's love manifested on the Cross. Thank God for Jesus' example for believers to address personal hardship.

Joy comes through picking up the personal cross and journeying to Pascha. Joy is revealed when believers die to sin and rise with Christ. Joy awaits each person choosing to repent and embrace Jesus Christ in love and faith.

The hunger in the soul is addressed and nourished when believers draw near to the Cross of Jesus Christ. Believers find unending love in Jesus Christ upon the Cross and in His glorious Resurrection.

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The Third Sunday of Great Lent. Holy 42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia. March 6/19, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic