

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)^{he}

The present Gospel reveals the great value of the soul. The present Gospel verifies the value of confessing the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers put on Christ at Baptism. Being a Christian is the highest of honors.

Daily life is to be lived in and for Jesus Christ. Daily behavior is to conform to and represent the values and teachings of Jesus Christ. Personal behavior should clearly reveal that Jesus Christ fills the heart, mind and soul.

The Cross of Jesus Christ rests in the center of the church. The Cross is a constant and enduring reminder of Jesus Christ's love for each person. Take time to think deeply about Jesus voluntarily ascending the Cross to experience death.

Jesus Christ merits first place in the heart, mind and soul of the believer. Believers commit to Jesus Christ as King and as God at Baptism. Daily life following Baptism will reveal the extent believers honor Jesus Christ as King and as God.

Great Lent is the time for believers to honestly assess if Jesus Christ is truly and completely loved and honored as King and as God. Believers have the opportunity and are encouraged to repent if they fall short of fully honoring Jesus as King and as God.

When a person sins, he or she falls short in honoring Jesus as King and as God. When a believer's life does not conform to the teachings and standards of Jesus Christ, repentance is in order.

Great Lent is a time to nourish the hunger of the soul. Peace and tranquility abide in the soul when all that is not of Jesus Christ is repelled and rejected from the heart, mind and soul.

Following Jesus Christ is completely voluntary. No one is forced to follow Christ. No one is compelled to choose Jesus as King and as God. Wise believers know the value of loving Jesus as King and as God.

Believers having experienced the life in Christ willingly confess love for Christ. Love for Christ is manifested and demonstrated in personal speech and behavior. Love for Christ is known through personal demeanor.

Anger is absent in personal relationships of those loving Christ. Jealously and greed are non-existent in persons loving Jesus Christ. Deceit and lies have no part in a person loving Jesus Christ.

Purity is dominant in the lover of Christ. The highest moral standards prevail in persons committed to the way of Jesus Christ. Serious followers of Jesus Christ are constantly mindful of and grateful for Christ's love.

Jesus Christ's Cross in the middle of the church is inspiration for believers to address the crosses in their personal lives. Jesus set an example for believers on how to deal with the crosses arising in life.

Jesus Christ is present and within reach of each believer to address personal crosses. With the help of Jesus Christ, personal crosses are addressed in the best possible way. Peril exists when believers try to address personal crosses without help from Christ.

Prayer addressed directly to Jesus Christ on a personal basis and within the Church is sound action. Jesus Christ helps believers to face personal crosses resolutely. Jesus Christ enables believers to find understanding in the crosses that arise.

Personal crosses help believers to put their lives in perspective. Life in Christ is more intense when believers embrace Christ in facing personal crosses. Joy is experienced in personal crosses when Jesus provides help for believers.

Each moment of life is a gift from God. Crosses in life enable believers to focus on the value of life and to appreciate the goodness of God. Without the Lord God, there is no life. Without the Lord God, joy is absent in life.

Jesus Christ's death on the Cross preceded the Resurrection. Believers experience new life in Christ when facing personal crosses with the help of Jesus Christ. The Cross in the middle of the Church facilitates believers in dying to sin and rising with Christ.

With the help of Christ, faithful believers battle sin and remove sin from personal life. Repentance, confession and communion unite the believer with Jesus Christ. The Church in Great Lent encourages repentance, confession and communion.

Thank God for Great Lent in the Church each year. Thank God for the immeasurable love embracing each person. Jesus' death on the Cross is beyond full human comprehension.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent inspires believers to think more carefully about the Cross and the meaning for personal life. Jesus Christ's Cross helps attentive believers to be renewed and reoriented in their journey to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

The Third Sunday of Great Lent. Holy Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia
March 2/15, 2026. Father Rodney Torbic.