

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MARKELLA

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

With the Blessings of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius

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Protopresbyter Fr. Theodoros Giannakopoulos • Archimandrite Fr. Epiphanius Antoniou

MARCH 9TH/MARCH 22ND – 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT: THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Τὸ Ἀναστάσιμον. ᾠχος βαρύς.

Κατέλυσας τῷ Σταυρῷ σου τὸν θάνατον,
ἠνέωξας τῷ Ληστῇ τὸν Παράδεισον, τῶν
Μυροφόρων τὸν θρήνον μετέβαλες, καὶ τοῖς
σοῖς Ἀποστόλοις κηρύττειν ἐπέταξας. Ὅτι
ἀνέστης Χριστέ ὁ Θεός, παρέχων τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ
μέγα ἔλεος.

Της Ἁγίας τοῦ Ναοῦ. ᾠχος πλ. α'. Τὸν Συνάναρχον Λόγον

Παρθενίαν τηρήσασα ἀδιάφθορον, ουρανοῖς
θαλάμοις νῦν συνηρίθμισαι, του πατρός το
ασελγές αποκρούσασα, τους μαστούς και
κεφαλήν απετμήθης πάρ αυτού, Μαρκέλλα
Χίου το κλέος, και νῦν ως μάρτυς στεφθεῖσαι,
πηγή θαυμάτων ἀφθονος δείκνυσαι.

Ἀπολυτίκιον. ᾠχος πλ. β'. Τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

Πάσαν στρατιάν, τοῦ κόσμου καταλιπόντες, τῷ
ἐν οὐρανοῖς Δεσπότη προσεκολληθήτε,
Ἄθλοφόροι Κυρίου Τεσσαράκοντα, διά πυρός
γάρ καὶ ὕδατος, διελθόντες μακάριοι, ἐπαξίως
ἐκομίσασθε, δόξαν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ
στεφάνων πληθύν.

For the Resurrection. Grave Tone

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death! To the
thief, Thou didst open Paradise! For the
myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into
joy! And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O
Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen,
granting the world great mercy!

For the Saint of this Temple. Plagal of 1st Tone. Let Us Worship the Word

Thy virginity thou didst preserve most incorrupt
and now thou has been numbered among those
who dwell in the mansions of heaven. Thou didst
reject thy father's advances for which he severed
thy breasts and head O Markella; the glory of
Chios! And now crowned as a martyr thou wellest
forth abundant miracles.

Apolytikion. Plagal of 2nd Tone.

Having left all the army of the world, ye did
cleave unto the Master in the heavens, O forty
passion-bearers of the Lord; for, having passed
through fire and water, O blessed ones, as is meet
ye received glory from the heavens and a
multitude of crowns.

EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

Lesson from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Hebrews (4:14-16; 5:1-6)

Bretheren, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."



Third Sunday of Great Lent: The Veneration of the Holy Cross Gospel According to St. Mark (8:34-38; 9:1)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους Ἐπιστολῆς Παύλου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (4:14-16; 5:1-6)
Κατ' ἀρχάς, Κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί· αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις· καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτούς, καὶ ἀλλαγῆσονται· σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν. Πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἴρηκέν ποτε, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου; Οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν; Διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν, μήποτε παραρρυῶμεν. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγένετο βέβαιος, καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοὴ ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν, πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας; Ἦτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη.



Τρίτη Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν: Τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως
Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Μάρκον Ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα (8:34-38; 9:1)
Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἂν θέλη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗτος σώσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελήσει ἄνθρωπον εἰάν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ εἰάν ἐπαισχυνθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυνθήσεται αὐτὸν ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων. Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT: THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

The third Sunday of Great Lent, the middle of the fasting period, is dedicated to the Veneration of the Holy Cross. This dedication is an ancient custom, since St. John Chrysostom wrote a sermon for this feast, which became general for the Church in the 7th c. with the spreading of the Typikon of the Studion Monastery of Constantinople.

The church has determined on this day that there should be read the Gospel concerning the bearing by each of us of his personal cross, of the sufferings or sorrows inseparable in this world from following Christ.

“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 i.e. deny himself and mortify all of his passions and desires 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? 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” (Mark 8, 34-38).

Saint John of Kronstadt writes about this feast:

“The Lord Jesus Christ commands us to completely deny ourselves, i.e. Satan acting within us and all his works, all his service and all his pride, and to take up our cross, i.e. to endure unavoidable severe deprivations, illnesses, sufferings and sorrows sent to us for our cleansing, instruction and confirmation in virtue and to endure temptations inflicted on us by demons and people.

We are extremely attached to the life of the flesh; we cohabit with sins, we are accustomed to them, and we are afraid to declare a decisive war against them, to sever every tie with them. We take only half-measures against them. We somehow guard ourselves with them, because we have made them like our natural members; and because we always remain with them and they become rooted in us more and more, the battle with them is made more difficult and more stubborn. We are lost concerning God and we are made the daily spoils and inheritance of the enemy.

The words of the Lord, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, are fulfilled in us everyday. We are daily sold to our enemy by every kind of sin living and acting in us. We die spiritually every day, and oh! If we would only rise up every day and become alive to God through tearful repentance! Surely our sins separate us temporarily from the Lord (Isaiah 59,2). They can also separate us for endless ages if we do not turn back and repent with our whole heart. But look at the examples of many sinners who were made Saints: Peter, the Publican, Mary of Egypt, Eudocia and others”.



THE HOLY 40 MARTYRS MARTYRED AT SEBASTEIA LAKE

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict, from which the Christians were permitted freedom of belief and made equal with pagans under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was prevailed upon by pagans, and in his part of the empire he decided to eradicate Christianity, which had become considerably widespread there. Licinius prepared his soldiery to fight against Constantine and, fearing mutiny, he decided to rid Christians from his army.

One of the military-commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebasteia was Agricolaus, a zealous proponent of paganism. Under his command was a company of forty Cappadocians – brave soldiers – who emerged victorious from many a battle. All of them were Christians. When these soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricolaus locked them up in prison. The soldiers immersed themselves in diligent prayer, and at one point during the night they heard a voice: "Persevere until the end, then shalt ye be saved".

On the following morning the soldiers were again taken to Agricolaus. This time the pagan tried the method of flattery. He began to praise their valour, their youthfulness and strength; and again he urged them to renounce Christ and thereby win themselves the respect and favour of their emperor. And again hearing their refusal, Agricolaus gave orders to shackle the soldiers. But the eldest of them, Kyrion, said: "The emperor has not given thee the right to put shackles upon us". Agricolaus became embarrassed and gave an order to take the soldiers back to prison without shackles.

Seven days later, the reknown judge Licius arrived at Sebasteia and held trial over the soldiers. The saints steadfastly answered: "Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God". Licius thereupon ordered the holy martyrs to be beaten with stones. But the stones flew past them entirely; and the stone thrown by Licius, hit Agricolaus in the face. The torturers realised that the saints were guarded by some invisible force. In prison, the soldiers spent the night at prayer and again they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: "Believing in Me, if anyone shalt die he shalt live. Be brave and fear not, since ye shall obtain crowns imperishable".

On the following day also the judge repeated the interrogation in front of the torturer, but the soldiers remained unyielding.

It was winter, and there was a strong frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, led them to a lake located not far from the city, and placed them under guard on the ice all night. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bath-house was set up not far away on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one of the soldiers could not hold out and made a dash for the bath-house, but barely had he stepped over the threshold, that he fell down dead. During the third hour of the night the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs: suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for one who kept watch by the name of Aglaios. Looking at the lake he saw, that over the head of each martyr there had appeared a radiant crown. Aglaios counted thirty-nine crowns and realised, that the soldier who fled had lost his crown. Aglaios thereupon woke up the other guards, discarded his uniform and said to them: "I too – am a Christian" – and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed: "Lord God, I believe in Thee, in Whom these soldiers do believe. To them add me also, and esteem me worthy to suffer with Thy servants".

In the morning the torturers beheld with surprise that the martyrs were alive, and their guard Aglaios was glorifying Christ together with them. They then led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. At the time of this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son not to endure and suffer everything all the way to death. They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him to lay on the ground. His mother then pulled up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton gasped out his last breath, his mother put him on the cart amidst the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were committed to fire, and they then threw the charred bones into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up.

Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Blessed Peter, bishop of Sebasteia, and commanded him to give their remains over to burial. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the remains of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honour.

ΑΓΙΟΙ 40 ΜΑΡΤΥΡΕΣ ΠΟΥ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΗΣΑΝ ΣΤΗ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΕΙΑ

Και οι σαράντα αυτοί Άγιοι ήταν στρατιώτες στο πιο επίλεκτο τάγμα του στρατού του Λικινίου. Όταν αυτός εξαπέλυσε διωγμό κατά των χριστιανών, οι Άγιοι σαράντα συλλαμβάνονται αμέσως από τον έπαρχο Αγκικόλα (στη Σεβάστεια). Στην αρχή τους επαινεί και τους υπόσχεται αμοιβές και αξιώματα, για να αρνηθούν την πίστη τους. Τότε ένας από τους σαράντα, ο Κάνδιδος, απαντά: «Ευχαριστούμε για τους επαίνους της ανδρείας μας. Αλλ' ο Χριστός, στον όποιο πιστεύουμε, μας διδάσκει ότι στον καθένα άρχοντα πρέπει να του προσφέρουμε ό,τι του ανήκει. Και γι' αυτό στο βασιλέα προσφέρουμε τη στρατιωτική υπακοή. Αν, όμως, ενώ ακολουθούμε το Ευαγγέλιο, δεν ζημιώνουμε το κράτος, αλλά μάλλον το ωφελούμε με την υπηρεσία μας, γιατί μας ανακρίνεις για την πίστη που μορφώνει τέτοιους χαρακτήρες και οδηγεί σε τέτοια έργα;» Ο Αγκικόλας κατάλαβε ότι δεν μπορούσε να τους επιβληθεί με ήρεμο τρόπο και διέταξε να τους βασανίσουν. Οπότε, μια παγωμένη χειμωνιάτικη νύχτα, τους ρίχνουν στα κρύα νερά μιας λίμνης. Το μαρτύριο ήταν φρικτό. Τα σώματα άρχισαν να μελανιάζουν. Αλλα αυτοί ενθάρρυναν ο ένας τον άλλο, λέγοντας: «Δριμύς ο χειμών, αλλά γλυκύς ο παράδεισος. Λίγο ας υπομείνουμε και σε μια νύχτα θα κερδίσουμε ολόκληρη την αιωνιότητα».

Ενώ προχωρούσε το μαρτύριο, ένας μόνο λιποψύχησε και βγήκε από τη λίμνη. Τον αντικατέστησε όμως ο φρουρός (Αγλάϊος), που είδε τα στεφάνια πάνω από τα κεφάλια τους. Ομολόγησε το Χριστό, μπήκε στη λίμνη και μαζί με τους 39 παίρνει και αυτός το στεφάνι του μαρτυρίου, αφού μισοπεθαμένους τους έβγαλαν το πρωί από τη λίμνη και τους συνέτριψαν τα σκέλη. Τα μαρτυρικά λείψανα ευρέθησαν από τους Χριστιανούς σε κάποιο γκρεμό, όπου είχαν συναχθεί κατά θεία οικονομία και ενταφιάστηκαν με ευλάβεια.

Στον Ευεργετινό αναφέρεται ότι ενώ οι Άγιοι Τεσσαράκοντα Μάρτυρες βρίσκονταν στο στάδιο της αθλήσεως έχοντας παραμείνει όλη τη νύχτα μέσα στην παγωμένη λίμνη και καθώς τους έσερναν στον αιγιαλό για να τους συντρίψουν τα σκέλη, η μητέρα ενός Μάρτυρος παρέμεινε εκεί πάσχουσα με αυτούς, βλέποντας το παιδί της που ήταν νεότερο στην ηλικία από όλους, μήπως και λόγω του νεαρού της ηλικίας και της αγάπης προς την ζωή, δειλιάσει και βρεθεί ανάξιο της τιμής και της τάξεως των στρατιωτών του Χριστού. Στεκόταν λοιπόν, εκεί και άπλωνε τα χέρια της προς το παιδί της λέγοντας: «Παιδί μου γλυκύτατο, υπόμεινε για λίγο και θα καταστείς τέκνο του Ουράνιου Πατέρα. Μην φοβηθείς τις βασάνους. Ιδού, παρίσταται ως βοηθός σου ο Χριστός. Τίποτε δεν θα είναι από εδώ και πέρα πικρό, τίποτα το επίπονο δεν θα απαντήσεις. Όλα εκείνα παρήλθαν, διότι όλα αυτά τα νίκησες με τη γενναιότητά σου. Χαρά μετά από αυτά, άνεση, ευφροσύνη. Όλα αυτά θα τα γεύεσαι, διότι θα είσαι κοντά στον Χριστό και θα πρεσβεύεις εις Αυτόν και για μένα που σε γέννησα».

Τα λείψανα των Αγίων βρήκε με θεία οπτασία, το έτος 438 μ.Χ., η αυτοκράτειρα Πουλχερία (βλέπε 17 Φεβρουαρίου) κρυμμένα στο ναό του Αγίου Θύρσου, πίσω από τον άμβωνα, στον τάφο της διακόνισσας Ευσέβειας σε δύο αργυρές θήκες, οι οποίες κατά την διαθήκη της Ευσέβειας, είχαν εναποτεθεί στον τάφο της στο μέρος της κεφαλής της. Στην συνέχεια η Πουλχερία οικοδόμησε ναό έξω από τα τείχη των Τρωαδησίων. Σπουδαία από ιστορικής απόψεως θεωρείται από νεότερους ερευνητές η Διαθήκη των Αγίων Τεσσαράκοντα Μαρτύρων, η οποία αποσκοπεί στο να παρεμποδίσει τον διασκορπισμό των ιερών λειψάνων τους μεταξύ των Χριστιανών, πράγμα συνηθισμένο στην Ανατολή κατά τους χρόνους εκείνους. Οι γονείς του Μεγάλου Βασιλείου (βλέπε εδώ), που κατείχαν «κόνιν» και τεμάχια των ιερών λειψάνων των Αγίων Τεσσαράκοντα Μαρτύρων, ανήγειραν τον πρώτο ναό στην Ανατολή εις τιμήν των Αγίων, όπου και ετάφησαν, σε κτήμα τους στον Πόντο. Ναός αφιερωμένος στους Αγίους Τεσσαράκοντα Μάρτυρες υπήρχε στην περιοχή Μέση της Κωνσταντινούπολης, που είχε ανεγερθεί από τον αυτοκράτορα Τιβέριο Α' (579 - 582 μ.Χ.) και συμπληρωθεί από τον αυτοκράτορα Μαυρίκιο (582 - 602 μ.Χ.). Το ναό κατεκόμησε ο Ανδρόνικος ο Κομνηνός (1183 - 1185 μ.Χ.). Στο ναό αυτό λειτουργούνταν κατά την ημέρα της μνήμης των Αγίων Μαρτύρων οι αυτοκράτορες. Άλλοι ναοί υπήρχαν: α) στο παλάτι, και ο οποίος πανηγύριζε στις 27 Αυγούστου, β) στη νήσο Πλάτη, ή Πλατεία, γ) στη μονή της Χώρας, δ) στην Έμμεσα της Συρίας.

Η Σύναξη αυτών ετελείτο στο αγιότατο Μαρτύριό τους πλησίον του Χαλκού Τετραπύλου. Τέλος αξίζει να αναφέρουμε ότι οι Άγιοι Τεσσαράκοντα Μάρτυρες είναι προστάτες της Ι. Μ. Ξηροποτάμου στο Άγιον Όρος, το Καθολικό της οποίας τιμάται στη Μνήμη τους.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

Monday, March 23rd

Martyr Codratus and those with him (258)

Venerable Anastasia the Patrician of Alexandria (567)

Tuesday, March 24th

St. Sophronius Patriarch of Jerusalem (638)

St. Euthymius Bishop of Novgorod (1458)

Wednesday, March 25th

St. Theophanes the Confessor of Sigriane (818)

St. Gregory the Dialogist Pope of Rome (604)

Thursday, March 26th

The Translation of the Relics of St. Nicephorus the Confessor (846)

Venerble Aninas the Presbyter of the Euphrates

Friday, March 27th

St. Benedict of Nursia, Abbot (543)

St. Theognostus Metropolitan of Kiev and Moscow (1353)

Saturday, March 28th

Martyrs Agapius, Publius, Timolaus, two named Dionysius, and two named Alexander, at Caesarea in Palestine (303)

Hieromartyr Alexander of Side in Pamphylia (270-275)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Construction continues on the entryway of the Cathedral. To donate to the Entryway Fund, please see the inside of the Newsletter or speak to someone at the pangari.
- Services during Great Lent are as follows:
 - Presanctified Liturgy every Wednesday at 7 PM and Friday at 9 AM
 - Salutation to the Theotokos every Friday at 7 PM
- This year's Greek Independence Day Parade has been postponed. We will keep you informed of the date change.
- As we start the Lenten season, we know that Holy Week and Pascha will soon be here and we are reminded of the many needs of our Cathedral. Please help as much as you are able to offset the cost of the flowers needed for the Epitaphio of our Lord.

ENTRYWAY FUND DONATIONS

Please mark next to the item you would like to donate:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Column | \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steps | \$3,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platform (5 SF) | \$1,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Donation | _____ |

To donate- tear off this slip from the Newsletter and give it to a member of the office.

Please make checks payable to
"Cathedral of Saint Markella"