

RUTHENIAN RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

Parents: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Parents: Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.

Children: Holy ✠ God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy! *(Three times)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE 2

When you descended to death, O Immortal Life,
you destroyed Hades by the brilliance of your divinity;
and when you raised the dead from the depths of the earth,
all the heavenly powers cried out:
O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to you.

EPISTLE: HEBREWS 4:14 - 2:3

Brethren, since we have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, let us hold fast our profession of faith. For we have not a high priest unable to pity our weaknesses, but one tried as we are in all things, save sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in matters pertaining to God, so that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and erring, because he himself also is beset with weakness, and therefore must make offerings for sin in his own behalf as in behalf of the people.

And no one invests himself with this honor: only one who is called by God takes it, as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself with the high priesthood, but glorified the One who had spoken to him, "*You are my son, I this day have begotten you* (Ps. 2:7). As he says also in another place, "*You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek*" (Ps. 109:4).

GOSPEL: MARK 8:34 - 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who would save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of Good News will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father." And he said to them, "Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God coming in power."

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

WHY IS THE CROSS THE SIGN OF OUR SALVATION?

In the Gospel today, we hear Jesus' teaching that if someone wants to follow Him, he must "deny himself, and take up his cross." Why is self-denial and the cross the necessary "road" which the followers of Jesus must walk if they are going to find eternal life? The key which unlocks the answer to the mystery of the cross is found in Saint Paul's epistle proclaimed in the Church today. "For we have not a high priest unable to pity our weaknesses, but one tried as we are in all things, save sin." When Jesus was born of the Ever-Virgin Mary, he took to himself all

that we are, except sin. And when he did this, he embraced the totality of our humanity, even the effects of sin. Yes, the Word of God united himself to all that we had become – to our tears, to our sorrow, to our sickness, and even to our death. And in this act of total love he redeemed and lifted up our fallen state as a way of salvation.

Because God has been united to our life in every way except sin, our difficulties, challenges, hardships, sicknesses, and even our death have become the road to everlasting life. In them, we meet God himself.

“Take up your cross, and you will find me,” Jesus says to us today. Unlike Adam who sought to gain eternal life through the fulfillment of his own desires, Jesus says to us today, “follow me” and “deny yourself” and you will find joy through the tears of this world. The cross, then—the cruel instrument of Roman torture and death; the instrument used to murder Jesus—is for us the sign of the depth and breadth of God’s love. It is the total embrace of our humanity.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to “deny yourself?”
2. What does it mean to “take up your cross?”
3. What are some practical ways during Lent in which we can deny ourselves and take up our cross?